

Mircea Eliade and Surendranath Dasgupta

The History of their Encounter

Dasgupta's Life, his Philosophy and his Works on Yoga

**A Comparative Analysis of Eliade's Chapter on Patañjali's
Yogasūtra and Dasgupta's
*Yoga as Philosophy and Religion***

by Claudia Guggenbühl

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1. Eliade's *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*

1.1. Genesis and importance

In 1936 Mircea Eliade published his doctoral thesis *Yoga, Essai sur les origines de la mystique indienne*, simultaneously in French (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Guethner) and in Romanian (Bucharest: Fundatie pentru Literature si Arta Regele Carol II). The first draft of this book (begun in English in India in 1929) was translated into Romanian by Eliade himself and reached completion in 1932. For the French version Eliade not only added new material (“[it] is actually over twice the length of the Romanian version”¹), but he also rearranged the content.² This becomes clear when the tables of content of both the Romanian and the French book are viewed synoptically.

“Eliade seems to have aimed at a roughly chronological ordering of topics in the version of 1932 [...]. The version of 1936, however, begins [...] with the classical darśanas of Sāṃkhya and Yoga (Chapters II and III) and follows with chapters on yoga practice and theory in Vedic, Brahmanic, and Epic literature; then it discusses yoga in Buddhism, tantrism, and alchemy; and it continues with brief discussions of yoga in popular cults, before concluding with hypotheses about origins, etc. This arrangement – which was followed in subsequent versions also – has the effect of making the classical system of Patañjali in the *Yoga Sūtras* the norm by which the reader judges other forms of yoga.”³

The 1936 *Yoga* book “suffered from unfortunate misunderstandings resulting from the double translation; in addition, the text was disfigured by a large number of linguistic and typographical errors.”⁴ Therefore, and encouraged by favourable reviews, Eliade decided to write a new edition. His corrections and added material finally led to a “text that differs considerably from that of the 1936 publication. Except for a few paragraphs, the book has been entirely rewritten in order to adapt it as much as possible to our present views.”⁵ This new work was published in 1954 as *Le Yoga: Immortalité et Liberté* (Paris, Payot).⁶ It very quickly became the authoritative standard work on *Yoga*, described (for example) as “the

¹ Ricketts, *Eliade I*, 489.

² For a detailed account of the genesis of the *Essai*, cf. Ricketts, *Eliade I*, 488 ff.

³ Ricketts, *Eliade I*, 491-492. His dissociation from a chronological presentation of the *Yoga* material was explained by Eliade as follows: “We do not believe that the establishment of dates plays an essential rule in the understanding of a religious phenomenon and above all in the establishment of its laws of evolution.” (Quoted by Ricketts, *Eliade II*, 1305, Note 20), and: “We think that the value accorded to the ‘most ancient texts’ of the Sanskrit literature is exaggerated. They do not represent, for the religious history of India, anything but the conceptions of the Indo-Aryans. For knowledge of the religious life of the aboriginal populations – the peoples who provided the majority of the anti-Vedic and anti-Brahmanic reforms – the later texts are much more valuable. As for the *Yoga-Sāṃkhya* practices and concepts, they were transmitted for a long time orally, outside of Brahmanism, and appeared in Sanskrit literature rather late. Thus, the chronology of the texts is not decisive for the history of the practices.” (Quoted by Ricketts, *Eliade I*, 492).

⁴ Eliade, *Yoga*, xx.

⁵ Eliade, *Yoga*, xxi.

⁶ It was translated into English in 1958 (*Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*. London: Routledge, New York: Pantheon Books) and into German in 1960 (*Yoga: Unsterblichkeit und Freiheit*, Zürich, Stuttgart: Rascher). Translations into other languages followed (Spanish, Italian etc.). A second English edition in 1969 added corrections and more bibliographical notes (London: Routledge).

first really comprehensive description of yoga in a perfect synthesis”,⁷ “an indispensable reference book for the specialist”,⁸ “without question a standard work of religious science”⁹ or simply “groundbreaking”.¹⁰

The importance of Eliade’s book is also reflected in the following observation: In 2003, there were 143 books on Yoga in the Department of Indology at the University of Zurich, 46 of which contained a bibliography with secondary literature on the subject. 34 of these 46 bibliographies (or some 74%) listed Mircea Eliade’s *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*, turning this book by far into the most quoted one. It must be noted however that the authors of 29 of those 34 bibliographies were Western – only 5 Indian writers mentioned Eliade. Without pretending that the library of the Department of Indology at Zurich provides enough evidence for any significant statistics, we can still draw the very general conclusion that Eliade’s work on Yoga seems to have had a major impact mainly in the West. The following chapter will corroborate this impression.

1.2. Virtually unknown in Calcutta

Eliade’s work on Yoga was mostly a result of his stay in India between 1928 and 1931. For nearly two years (from the end of 1928 until September 1930) he studied Sanskrit and Indian philosophy in Calcutta under the guidance of the eminent scholar Surendranath Dasgupta, a specialist in Yoga and Sāṃkhya. Eliade’s *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom* is dedicated to (among others) “my guru, Professor Surendranath Dasgupta, Principal, Sanskrit College, Calcutta” who (as he writes in the foreword) “lead us into the very center of Indian thought.”¹¹ Since the (Western) world owes one of its foremost studies on Yoga to Calcutta (so to speak), we were curious to find out whether Eliade’s voice had been heard in the city which had provided him with so much knowledge or whether *Immortality and Freedom* had ended up being an export article only. Therefore, in January and February 2003, I talked to nine (some active, some retired) professors and lecturers of both Sanskrit and Philosophy of various universities in and around Calcutta.¹² Only one of them has read Eliade’s book on Yoga, the others have either never heard about it or they have seen it but were not interested. Needless to say that it does not appear on any of the university department’s reading lists I saw. According to one of my interlocutors, the West has had absolutely no

⁷ „[...] die erste wirklich umfassende Beschreibung des Yoga in vollendeter Synthese [...]“ (Horsch, Eliade, 156; transl. C.G.).

⁸ „[...] zu einem unentbehrlichen Nachschlagewerk für den Fachmann.“ (Horsch, Eliade, 157; transl. C.G.).

⁹ „[...] ohne Frage ein Standardwerk der Religionswissenschaft [...]“ (Hacker, Eliade, 318; transl. C.G.).

¹⁰ White, *Body*, xiii.

¹¹ Eliade, *Yoga*, xxii.

¹² Prof. Govinda Gopal Mukhopadhyay (Sanskrit College, Calcutta; University of Burdawan), Prof. Debabrata Sen Sharma (University of Kurukṣetra, currently lecturer at Ramakrishna Mission, Gol Park), Prof. Amar Kumar Chattopadhyay (University of Calcutta, Ashutosh College), Prof. Amita Chattarji (Jadavpur University), Dr. Lalita Sen Gupta (Jadavpur University), Dr. Uma Dhar (Jadavpur University), Prof. Minati Kar (Viśvabhāratī University, Shantiniketan), Prof. P. K. Sen (University of Calcutta), Prof. Pareshnath Bhattacharya (University of Calcutta, Presidency College).

influence on and no importance for the study of Yoga or Sāṃkhya in India. Eliade's name however was familiar to most people I talked to (also outside the academic world) because of Maitreyi Devi's *Na hanyate (It Does not Die)* or Eliade's *Maitreyi*, in other words: Eliade remains in Calcutta's memory because of the scandal caused by his falling in love with his preceptor's daughter and the subsequent literary accounts given by the two protagonists. Arabinda Dasgupta, director of one of the oldest and most prestigious bookstores in Calcutta¹³ who could procure for me nearly any book I asked for, confirmed this fact. He had never heard that Eliade had written a book on Yoga but he did have Eliade's novel in stock.

2. Eliade in India¹⁴

2.1. Eliade's interest in Yoga

In spring 1928, Mircea Eliade (then 21 years old) spent three months in Rome, working on his licentiate thesis on Italian Renaissance philosophy. One afternoon in May, at the library of the Institute for Indian Studies, he came across the first volume of Dasgupta's *History of Indian Philosophy* and, while reading the preface, learned about the Maharaja Sir Manindra Chandra Nandy of Kassimbazar who had so generously sponsored Dasgupta's career.¹⁵ Instantly he decides to write to the Maharaja, telling him that he would like to study Sanskrit and Indian philosophy with Dasgupta, for two years. He also sends a letter to Dasgupta whose *Yoga as Philosophy and Religion* he had bought during winter and whom he knew to be "the most celebrated historian of Indian philosophy."¹⁶ In August he receives an answer from the Maharaja.

"He congratulated me on my decision to study Indian philosophy with Surendranath Dasgupta, but he added that two years would not suffice. I would require at least five years to be able to learn Sanskrit and penetrate the mysteries of Indian philosophy. He was ready to offer me a five-year scholarship."¹⁷

¹³ Dasgupta & Co. Private Ltd., 54/3, College Street, Kolkata 73, booksellers since 1886.

¹⁴ Eliade's stay in India is well documented (cf. Eliade, *Autobiography*, 143-209; Eliade, *Labyrinth*, 33-64; Ricketts, *Eliade I*, 329-521); in this chapter I will provide only a minimum of general information and otherwise concentrate on events and facts related to Yoga.

¹⁵ "It gives me the greatest pleasure to acknowledge my deepest gratefulness to the Hon'ble Maharaja Sir Manindrachandra Nundy, K.C.I.E. Kashimbazar, Bengal, who has kindly promised to bear the entire expense of the publication of both volumes of the present work. [...] Like many other scholars of Bengal, I am deeply indebted to him for the encouragement that he has given me in the pursuit of my studies and researches, and my feelings of attachment and gratefulness for him are too deep for utterance." (Dasgupta, *History*, xi).

¹⁶ Eliade, *Autobiography*, 145.

¹⁷ Eliade, *Autobiography*, 150.

Apparently Eliade already then knew that he would concentrate his studies in India on Yoga.

“Eliade had selected Yoga as his thesis subject even before leaving for India in 1928; he wrote to his friend Petru Comarnescu less than two months after arriving in Calcutta: ‘My book about the psychology and metaphysics of Yoga will serve as a doctoral thesis.’”¹⁸

Whence this interest in Yoga in the young Romanian student?

First of all, Eliade’s character had a natural affinity with certain aspects of Yoga. In *Ordeal by Labyrinth* he tells about his „war against sleep“ when he was a youth.¹⁹ Feeling that he was losing too much time by sleeping seven or seven and a half hours each night, he began to set his alarm clock two minutes earlier every day, gaining thus 14 minutes in one week. When he was down to six and a half hours he interrupted the process for three months and then resumed it. Once he had reached four and a half hours of sleep he started having fits of dizziness and had to give up. Yoga, in its endeavour to control natural processes of body and mind, is akin to this battle against sleep.

“The body desires movement, so you immobilize it in a single position – an *āsana*; you cease to behave like a human body but like a stone or a plant instead. Breathing is naturally arhythmic, so *prāṇāyāma* forces you to breathe to a strict rhythm. Our psychomental life is in a constant state of agitation – Patañjali defines it as *cittavṛtti*, „whirlpools of consciousness“ – so „concentration“ enables one to control that whirling flux. Yoga is in a way a war against instinct, against life.”²⁰

Living a yogic life at Shivananda’s Svarga Ashram, Eliade, for a few months in 1930/31, enjoyed an ascetic existence defying the laws of physiological nature.²¹ Yoga thus finally enabled him (at least temporarily) to defeat sleep.

¹⁸ Ricketts, Eliade I, 487.

¹⁹ Eliade, *Labyrinth*, 43-44.

²⁰ Eliade, *Labyrinth*, 44. Ricketts writes (1988, I, 352): “Eliade acknowledges that Yoga is an exercise of the will over the flesh, and therefore akin to his efforts from adolescence on to develop an invincible will.”

²¹ “I was restricting myself to only a few hours of sleep, and I was able to do a great many things without becoming tired or bored. Outside of the hours devoted to meditation and yogic exercises, I read Sanskrit texts every day, I worked on my thesis, I wrote articles for *Cuvântul*, and at nights I continued *Lumina ce se stinge*. [...] (Eliade, *Autobiography*, 191). “Sometimes I slept only two or three hours a night, yet I was never tired. I worked all the time, and I worked better than ever before. I understood then the basis of all that vainglorious beatitude that some ascetics, masters of Haṭhayoga, proclaim. I understood, too, the reason why certain yogis consider themselves to be like the gods, if not even superior to them, and why they talk about the transmutation and even the immortality of the body.” (Eliade, *Autobiography*, 198).

Another reason why Eliade felt drawn towards Yoga was his disinterest in monism and his preference of a philosophy which did not declare the world and the body to be an illusion.²²

“[...] that which seemed to me original, and that which tended to be neglected by the Indian elite as well as by Western scholars, was Tantric yoga. I discovered in the Tantric texts that India was not entirely ascetic, idealistic, and pessimistic. There exists a whole tradition that accepts life and the body; it does not consider them illusory nor the source of suffering, but exalts incarnate existence as the only mode of being in the world in which absolute freedom can be won. From then on I understood that India has known not only the desire for *liberation* (*eliberare*), but also the thirst for *freedom* (*libertate*); India has believed in the possibility of a blessed and autonomous existence, here on earth and in Time. I was to develop these ideas in my doctoral thesis [...].”²³

The possibility to exploit an academically still barren field combined with the promise of practical experience in a world and with a body that actually existed attracted Eliade to Yoga. In a letter to a friend he wrote in 1936, when his *Yoga, Essai sur les origines de la mystique indienne* had been published:

“I believe I have been able to demonstrate a wholly new thing: the tendency toward the *concrete*, toward real and immediate experience, of the Indian spirit.”²⁴

2.2. Calcutta

2.2.1. Yoga philosophy vs. Yoga practice

When, in August 1928, Eliade got the Maharaja's favourable reply to his request, he could hardly believe his luck. “It was like a dream”²⁵ - which came true. After finishing his thesis and overcoming all administrative and financial obstacles Eliade left Bucharest at the end of November of the same year. He travelled as the Romanian representative for an international conference of the YMCA which was going to be held in Poonamallee, near Madras, in December. This explains why he went to South India first and how it was possible that he met Dasgupta for the

²² “Although he studied classical Vedānta philosophy with Dasgupta and practiced Yoga later under the Vedantin Shivananda, neither the ancient nor modern forms of Indian monism ever appealed to Eliade's spirit.” (Ricketts, Eliade I, 381). “[...] if I became interested in such Yoga techniques, it was because it was impossible for me to understand India solely through what I had learned by reading the great Indianists and their books on Vedāntic philosophy, according to which the world is an illusion – *maya* – or through the monumental system of rituals. [...] I knew that somewhere there existed a third way, no less important, and that it entailed the practice of Yoga.” (Eliade, Labyrinth, 44) „Both Yoga and Sāṃkhya profess dualism: matter on the one hand, spirit on the other. However, it was not this dualism as such that interested me; it was the fact that, in both Sāṃkhya and Yoga, man, the world, and life are not illusory. Life is real, the world is real. And one can master the world, gain control of life. What is more, in Tantrism, for example, by performing certain rituals, which must be prepared for the use of Yoga over a long period, human life can be transfigured. [...] Life can be transfigured by a sacramental experience.” (Eliade, Labyrinth, 54)

²³ Eliade, Autobiography, 176.

²⁴ Quoted by Ricketts, Eliade II, 745.

²⁵ Eliade, Autobiography, 150.

first time, quite by chance, in the Theosophical Library at Adyar.²⁶ Eliade arrived in Calcutta on New Year's eve of 1928 where he settled at the boarding house of Mrs. Perris at 82 Ripon Street. He immediately started to learn Sanskrit, "working for twelve hours a day with a grammar, a dictionary, and a text,"²⁷ and he also attended Dasgupta's classes at university.²⁸

"Dasgupta displayed toward Eliade the utmost consideration and gave him all the assistance he could. Besides lecturing in English and finding him a tutor, he let him come to his home two or three times a week, to work in his private library [...]."²⁹

Soon it became evident that Eliade's interests did not coincide with Dasgupta's, as far as Yoga was concerned. Professor Dasgupta had published three books on Yoga philosophy³⁰ and he was the greatest authority on the subject of Sāṃkhya-Yoga of his time.³¹ He did not share Eliade's wish to explore Tantric texts or to even venture out into practical Yoga experiences.³² On the other hand, Eliade "knew that Dasgupta had said everything essential on the subject of Yoga philosophy and its place in the history of Indian thought" and that "it would have been useless for [him] to review this problem again"³³ and, last but not least, Yoga as a system of philosophy could not captivate Eliade's attention as much as it had fascinated his preceptor's mind: "Beside Vedānta or Mahayana, Yoga 'philosophy' seemed to me rather commonplace."³⁴ He therefore insisted on including Tantric material in his thesis.

"Little by little, Dasgupta let himself be persuaded. His reservations were mainly of a practical nature. It seemed to him that I was in danger of being drawn into many domains in which I could not always master the documentation at first hand. He was right, of course, but in the fall of 1929 I had an infinite faith in my capacity to learn."³⁵

²⁶ "He had come there to examine certain Sanskrit manuscripts that he needed for the third volume of his *History of Indian Philosophy*. At that time he was about forty-five; he was short, almost fat, and his round face was lighted by a big smile." (Eliade, *Autobiography*, 159).

²⁷ Ricketts, *Eliade I*, 341.

²⁸ "I was the only European, and for my sake Dasgupta gave his lectures in English for almost two years." (Eliade, *Autobiography*, 160)

²⁹ Ricketts, *Eliade I*, 343.

³⁰ *The Study of Patañjali*. Calcutta: University, 1920; *Yoga as Philosophy and Religion*. London, New York: K. Paul Trench Trubner, 1924; *Yoga Philosophy in Relation to other Systems of Indian Thought*. Calcutta: University, 1930.

³¹ Cf. Ricketts, *Eliade I*, 487.

³² "Dasgupta preferred me to concentrate on the history of the doctrines of yoga, or on the relationships among classical Yoga, Vedānta, and Buddhism. I, on the contrary, felt attracted by Tantrism and the different forms of popular yoga; that is, as it is found in epic poetry, legends, and folklore." (Eliade, *Autobiography*, 176)

³³ Eliade, *Autobiography*, 176.

³⁴ Eliade, *Autobiography*, 176.

³⁵ Eliade, *Autobiography*, 176. "Dasgupta had some reservations about his pupil's proposed thesis subject, but he approved it, perhaps because a large part of the writing would deal with Sāṃkhya philosophy and Patañjali's Yoga, whose texts Eliade had studied thoroughly under his supervision." (Ricketts, *Eliade I*, 499).

Finally, “the title agreed upon [...] was *A Comparative History of Yoga Techniques*” indicating that “the thesis was to deal with the subject historically, with emphasis on the practice of Yoga, rather than the underlying theory of ‘metaphysics’.”³⁶

Thus, Eliade’s preoccupation with Yoga in Calcutta ran along two lines. On the one hand he studied Yoga philosophy with Dasgupta, on the other hand he was free to pursue what interested him most,

“the ‘popular’ forms of yoga that existed all around him in India, and even more so in the all-pervasive presence of yoga in the manifold religious traditions (Vaishnavite, Shaivite, Buddhist, Tantric, etc.) of India and their literature after a certain time.”³⁷

As a historian of religions he wanted to compile a history of Yoga and for this he had to study all manifestations of Yoga, not only read about its philosophy. Dasgupta, on the other hand,

„[...] did not in his books speculate on the origins of yoga *practice*. He believed Yoga had developed prior to the inception of Buddhism and had been joined with Sāṃkhya philosophy by Patañjali, sometime between the fourth and second centuries B. C. [...] Thus, he recognized yoga practice as something existing prior to and independent of any philosophical school, but this kind of yoga was of no particular concern to him, and he paid scant attention to it in his books. He was interested only in the origins of yoga *philosophy*, which he seems to have regarded as something that evolved *within* Brahmanism.”³⁸

His disciple eventually filled the gap left by his master (as far as yoga practice was concerned) and reached the following conclusion:

“It is [...] difficult to admit that the structure of yogic practices in general appertains to the Indo-Aryan spirit. Everything urges us to believe that they are the creation of the Indian soil, and therefore are pre-Aryan.”³⁹

Given Dasgupta’s apparent disinterest in the practical side of Yoga it is curious to learn that Eliade again and again asked him to initiate him into yogic practice. Quite obviously he thought the professor capable of doing that.⁴⁰ But Dasgupta never showed Eliade any exercise, even though at least once he spontaneously promised his pupil to do so.⁴¹ To Eliade’s pleading he would reply: “Wait a little; it really is essential to know it all from the philological and philosophical viewpoint,” and: “Practicing Yoga is even more difficult for you Europeans than it is for us Hindus.”⁴² When, in spring 1929, Eliade for the first time witnessed a demonstration of yogic powers in a Bengal village, Dasgupta had nothing to do

³⁶ Ricketts, Eliade I, 494.

³⁷ Ricketts, Eliade I, 499.

³⁸ Ricketts, Eliade I, 499.

³⁹ Quoted by Ricketts, Eliade I, 501.

⁴⁰ „[...] he was from a family of pandits, in a Bengali village, so that he was master of the entire traditional culture of such Indian villages.” (Eliade, Labyrinth, 36)

⁴¹ „On the road to Shanti Niketan, without my asking him, he had promised to initiate me into the practice of yoga. But in the visits he made to me on Ripon Street, he concerned himself more with the technical vocabulary of Sāṃkhya-Yoga, on which I had begun to work, and with my doctoral thesis.” (Eliade, Autobiography, 175-176)

⁴² Eliade, Labyrinth, 36.

with the event.⁴³ But, in an indirect and sadly ironical way, Dasgupta ended up being responsible for a period of intense Yoga practice in Eliade's life: When he expelled his beloved pupil from his house, in September 1930, Eliade took refuge in Rishikesh and finally got plenty of opportunities to experience what so far he had only read about (cf. chapter 2.3).

2.2.2. Interlude: Yogendra's visit of Dasgupta

Eliade was not the first man to be disappointed by Dasgupta's unwillingness to say or do much as far as Yoga practice was concerned. Some six years prior to Eliade's arrival in India, in the early months of 1923, the young yogi Yogendra⁴⁴ travelled from the West Coast of India to Chittagong where Dasgupta used to live at that time. The two had met by chance, in 1922, on a boat from London to Bombay.

"The erudite don saw the young man browsing through books in the ship's library. Intrigued by this interest he casually asked him his name and where he had come from. Prof. Dasgupta was amazed to learn that the young man was not just a book worm but a great Yoga teacher, scholar and Founder of The Yoga Institute in India and America. Greatly impressed by his earnestness and knowledge the two became great friends. They sometimes played chess together and discussed Yoga philosophy. At parting, the international authority on Indian philosophy and professor of Sanskrit invited Swamiji to visit him in Chittagong, Bengal."⁴⁵

Upon his return to India, after more than two years spent in the USA, Yogendra felt the need for a scientific and academic corroboration for all he had learned from his guru Madhavdasji, prior to his travel to the West.

"It was time for more research in Yoga. The West was a witness to the wonders of Yoga but more proof of a scientific nature were [sic] required to make a lasting impact. Shri Yogendra set his mind on looking for documented evidence. Not much was known about the history of Yoga and he decided to find out more to make the history more factual. The apocryphal sources had to be verified and an academic investigation seemed to be the only way to lending authenticity to the ancient lore."⁴⁶

With this in mind he set out for Chittagong where he spent two months at Dasgupta's house. They talked about philosophy and Yogendra demonstrated Yoga at the Medical College of Chittagong, and yet he remained unsatisfied and ultimately disappointed. According to Yogendra's son, Vijayadeva Yogendra, Dasgupta advised the young yogi from Gujarat mainly along business lines⁴⁷ and

⁴³ Ricketts, Eliade I, 382-383.

⁴⁴ Who, in 1918, had founded the Yogendra Institute in Santa Cruz, Bombay.

⁴⁵ Rodrigues, Yogendra, 116.

⁴⁶ Rodrigues, Yogendra, 120.

⁴⁷ "Like so many of the "intellectuals" of the time, he saw every venture in terms of "success" and economy. Deft in theory, but gullible when it came to practice, the doctor told Shri Yogendra his mission lacked appeal. There was a need for many followers, flowing yellow robes and a dedicated disciple – such things were indispensable in impressing the public and creating the required air of mysticism. [...] The doctor's suggestion was that Shri Yogendra should meet the Maharajah of Kashimbazar so that the yoga renaissance could be organized on a more elaborate scale. Inquiries

failed to understand that the latter was working “towards a noble goal in a singlehanded way, and with scrupulously honest and independent foundations.”⁴⁸ Vijayadeva’s verdict about Dasgupta is as clear as it is blunt:

“[...] the famous doctor did not live up to his reputation for wisdom.”⁴⁹

Yogendra’s other biographer, Rodrigues, finds kinder words for Dasgupta, but only as far as his theoretical knowledge is concerned.

“The two had quite a few successful philosophical exchanges, the theorist could extend his empirical mind to investigate the problems posed by the young mind, but when it came to the practical aspects, the learned Professor was unable to do much.”⁵⁰

This is the point where Yogendra’s experience joins that of Eliade. And the Indian yogi and the Romanian student have yet something else in common: Both turned to the Himalayas looking for what they could not get in Bengal. Eliade went to Rishikesh and Yogendra “moved Northwards in quest of more knowledge.”⁵¹ Whereas Eliade found what he had been searching for (cf. chapter 2.3) Yogendra’s “harvest” appears to have been rather mixed, according to the following account.

“Shri Yogendra spent two months in Punjab – March and April 1923 visiting Bohar and Tillah hermitages and taking notes for a comprehensive book on Hathayoga which he intended to write. [...] he made notes on what he saw in Yoga techniques. Here he came in contact with the oldest traditional institution of Goraksha and Matsyendra, known popularly as *nathayogins*. [...] The place [one of the *maths*] was interesting, but not much knowledge was gained. [...] Kashmir was no different. By rail or road, on foot or horseback or donkey-back, Shri Yogendra was on the trail of knowledge but the trip yielded nothing, or at best, precious little.”⁵²

Since we have no first-hand testimony of how much Yogendra actually learned about Yoga during his visit of North India, it may be legitimate to think that it was a bit more than what Rodrigues would like to make us believe... And I would also like to add that Dasgupta’s endeavour to help Yogendra get in touch with a possible sponsor for his yogic mission was not as inappropriate as

revealed that the Maharaja was not in Calcutta, and Shri Yogendra, with his characteristic indifference, parted company with his academic colleague [...].” (Yogendra, Yogendra, 71-72).

⁴⁸ Yogendra, Yogendra, 71.

⁴⁹ Yogendra, Yogendra, 71.

⁵⁰ Rodrigues, Yogendra, 120. Yogendra’s disappointment with Dasgupta’s lack of knowledge with Yoga practice (or unwillingness to part with any of it) did not hamper their personal relationship. When the young yogi started to look for a suitable wife, he also contacted the professor from Bengal who gave him the following answer: “I cannot propose any easy solution but I suppose if you want a beautiful and educated Bengali bride, you must have a residence here and you must be known as a man of means. Both these require that you should remain for some time in Calcutta and get properly introduced to the right persons and become intimate in the elite social circle of Calcutta. You cannot get a suitable bride with a fourteen day return ticket.” In fact Mrs. Dasgupta was so charmed with him from his earlier meeting that she would have been happy to suggest that her sister marry him. But Shri Yogendra was hardly the type who would settle down in Calcutta as would be required.” (Rodrigues, Yogendra, 130-131)

⁵¹ Rodrigues, Yogendra, 122.

⁵² Rodrigues, Yogendra, 124-126.

Vijayadeva presented it: While on his tour through North India, and encouraged by Pandit Thakur Dutt Sharma, Yogendra tried to open an institute near Simla, but “the untimely death of the Pandit’s son in Europe took the impetus from the scheme”⁵³ – read: took the money from the scheme. After another failure Yogendra felt very frustrated:

“In America money had been given freely with a sense of duty towards a noble cause, but in India, it seemed he was looked upon as a beggar trying to eke out a living.”⁵⁴

2.2.3. Dasgupta – a secret yogi?

Yogendra’s visit to Chittagong gave rise to a testimony which is interesting for two reasons: First of all, it indicates that Yoga in the 1920-ies still belonged to the realm of people who had renounced the world and were free of family-ties, and, secondly, we very indirectly learn something about Dasgupta and Yoga. In a letter to Yogendra’s son, Dr. Jayadeva Yogendra, Surendranath’s daughter, Maitreyi Devi, wrote many years later:

“Yes, I remember Yogendradada quite well. I was then eight to nine years old. He was handsome, very handsome indeed. [...] Yogendra was accepted like a family member. My father and Yogendra sat in the library discussing philosophy. Yogendra demonstrated some yogic acts, *dhouti, neti etc.*, for the benefit of my father’s friends. He would show many *asanas*, many impossible positions and postures and create a commotion among the professors of Chittagong College, neighbouring household friends and relations. At that time no one knew that Yoga could be practised by ordinary men [...].”⁵⁵

Maitreyi attributes the surprised reactions to Yogendra’s demonstrations to everybody except her immediate family, particularly her father – this may be just a simple inadvertence on the part of the writer, but Dasgupta could hardly have been astonished, let alone shaken by them, since he himself used to practise *āsanas* when he was a boy.

“During the ages of five to eight [...] I could [...] demonstrate the various Yogic postures (*āsanas*) and also give practical instruction to people regarding the complicated processes of internal and external washings technically known as the *dhouti* by the Yogins.”⁵⁶

His second wife and biographer comments on this as follows:

“I failed to understand also how he could show the different yogic postures, without being initiated into them. Whenever asked about this, he used to say that he could not explain this fact, but added that this was no reason to postulate the theory that he must have acquired these practices in a previous birth.”⁵⁷

⁵³ Yogendra, Yogendra, 72.

⁵⁴ Yogendra, Yogendra, 73.

⁵⁵ Quoted by Rodrigues, Yogendra, 121.

⁵⁶ Dasgupta, Emergence, 251.

⁵⁷ Dasgupta, Quest, 47.

In Surama Dasgupta's book about her husband we also read that he experienced spontaneous "trance-states or *samādhi*" from his early childhood and that these states "never left him and continued all through his life."⁵⁸ I will get back to this subject in chapter 3.4.; for the time being it is enough to notice that Dasgupta did have some practical experience in Yoga and that Eliade was right in assuming that his teacher could have helped him in this field. After all, he had encountered sages at Dasgupta's who were well-versed in meditation and it is likely that Dasgupta did talk with them about their (and maybe even his own) experiences.

"I had [...] listened to other *saddhu* [sic] and contemplatives, in Calcutta, in Dasgupta's house, and in Santiniketan, where I had met Tagore; one had constant opportunities to meet people who had already practiced some particular method of meditation."⁵⁹

But Dasgupta always "kept this [mystical] side of his life as a guarded and sacred secret"⁶⁰ and did not want to share any of it with either his favourite pupil from Romania or with the young yogi from Gujarat. Maybe this has got something to do with the fact that both *āsanas* and altered states of consciousness had come to him spontaneously, whereas the "real yogis" had to labour hard for them.

2.2.4. Love and its consequences

At the end of 1929 Dasgupta thought Eliade fit enough for a life in an Indian household and he invited his student to join his family. On January 2, 1930, Eliade moved from Ripon Street to Dasgupta's house on Bokulbagan Road in Bhawanipore where he stayed until September 18. On that day, the professor summoned his pupil to his study and told him to leave his residence and his family immediately. "None of us ever saw one another again after that."⁶¹ September 18 also meant the end of Dasgupta's protection and teaching of Eliade. Thus, instead of "three years of study at the University of Calcutta (1928-31) under the direction of Professor Surendranath Dasgupta"⁶² Eliade has benefitted from the guidance and vast knowledge of his tutor no longer than 21 months.⁶³ What had preceded the sudden and (for both sides) painful expulsion of Eliade was what he later called "a long, blessed, and yet terrifying dream of a summer night."⁶⁴ The young and promising Romanian student, then aged 23, and Dasgupta's daughter Maitreyi, 16, who was just about to publish her first book of poems, had fallen in love with each other. They were both working on the index for the second volume of *A History of Indian Philosophy* in Dasgupta's library when "one day our hands met over the little box of cards, and we could not unclasp them."⁶⁵

⁵⁸ Dasgupta, *Quest*, 43-44.

⁵⁹ Eliade, *Labyrinth*, 41.

⁶⁰ Dasgupta, *Quest*, 45.

⁶¹ Eliade, *Autobiography*, 186.

⁶² Eliade, *Yoga*, xx.

⁶³ In other words: Eliade got roughly two years with Dasgupta, which, ironically, is what he had originally asked for, in his very first letter to the Maharaja of Kassimbazar.

⁶⁴ Eliade, *Autobiography*, 185.

⁶⁵ Eliade, *Autobiography*, 185.

Whatever happened afterwards remains subject to debate. According to Eliade, “love grew and was fulfilled as it was destined to be.”⁶⁶ Back in Romania, in 1933, he wrote a highly autobiographical novel entitled *Maitreyi*, describing the tragic course of their secret love. Maitreyi Devi learned about the contents of this book only in 1972 when she met Sergui Sebastian, a friend of Eliade’s.

“[...] off and on I have heard about the book, named after me, but I never asked anyone about the contents of that book. Is it a story, or a book of poems, or a dissertation? I never cared to enquire. Today I ask you, tell me, what is in that book?”⁶⁷

Upon hearing “He has written that you used to visit him at night,” she cried out: “Scandalous! Believe me, Sergui, that is not true!”⁶⁸ and although Sebastian reassured her that Eliade “took shelter in the world of fantasy” and that this “was the only way left to him to escape from the suffering,”⁶⁹ Devi immediately started writing her counterstatement, anxious to restore her reputation. *Na hanyate (It Does not Die)* was published in Bengali in 1974 and is a puzzlingly honest account of the intense and bewildering feelings both the young and old Maitreyi were subject to in connection with Eliade. In simple yet very poetic language Dasgupta’s daughter blends the events of 1930 with her life in 1972 and gives a rough outline of what has happened in-between. She does not even try to hide the fact that somehow she never got over the loss of her first love. *It Does not Die* definitely deserves a careful literary analysis but this would, unfortunately, go beyond the scope of this paper.

During the nine months Eliade spent in Bhawanipore he increasingly felt that “the whole family was conspiring to cause us [Maitreyi and him] to be together as much as possible”⁷⁰ and he was sure that Dasgupta would let him marry Maitreyi. Much later he saw that he had fallen victim to a misunderstanding.

“There was no such conspiracy. It is probable that Dasgupta had something entirely different in mind: namely, to introduce me into his family by a kind of “adoption.” It is probable that he was planning to relocate to Europe. King Carol II was then on the throne in Romania, and Nae Ionescu [Eliade’s professor in Bucharest] had become one of his intimate counselors. Dasgupta had written the king, describing me as one with a great future in Indian studies, and suggesting that the king establish an Oriental institute at Bucharest. He had written likewise to Nae Ionescu, insisting that he allow me to stay three or four years in India to study with him. Perhaps Dasgupta had in mind to come to Romania for some length of time as a guest of the institute. The political situation in India was being aggravated constantly, and the climate of Bengal did not agree with him (he suffered from hypertension and was threatened with the loss of his right eye.) He would have liked, certainly, to have settled in Europe – to live in Rome, where Tucci had invited him, or in Bucharest, where he would have had me, his favorite pupil and, in a certain sense, his adoptive son.”⁷¹

⁶⁶ Eliade, *Autobiography*, 185.

⁶⁷ Devi, *It Does not Die*, 12.

⁶⁸ Devi, *It Does not Die*, 13.

⁶⁹ Devi, *It Does not Die*, 14.

⁷⁰ Eliade, *Autobiography*, 184.

⁷¹ Eliade, *Autobiography*, 184-185.

Whether Dasgupta's kindness towards Eliade was motivated by any ulterior motive or not is impossible to tell, but it is very likely that on September 18, 1930, not only Eliade's and Maitreyi's hearts broke but also Dasgupta's.⁷² Despite his wife's pleading for the happiness of their love-stricken daughter he remained absolutely adamant and ejected his beloved student as soon as he learned about this illicit relationship.

Eliade returns to Ripon Street for a few days and then leaves Calcutta for Rishikesh.

"[...] I felt there was nothing to keep me in a place where, without Dasgupta, I had no reason for being."⁷³

After some weeks in the Himalaya, he resorted to a way of looking at things which maybe consoled his wounded heart: He viewed his breakup with Dasgupta in the light of a real guru-disciple relationship which would outlast the span of their earthly life.⁷⁴ Although they never met again, Dasgupta remained Eliade's *guru*,⁷⁵ and the professor, on his part, acknowledged Eliade's help for the index of the second volume of his *History of Indian Philosophy*, published in 1932,⁷⁶ and a few years later he even contacted his former student in Europe.⁷⁷

⁷² In January 1930, Dasgupta had written, in the preface to his book *Yoga Philosophy in Relation to Other Systems of Indian Thought*: „I beg to acknowledge my gratefulness to [...] my friend and pupil Dr. [sic!] Mircea Eliade Licèncié [sic] es lettres, doctorand en philosophie of the University of Bucharest, who helped me in preparing the index.”

⁷³ Eliade, *Labyrinth*, 40.

⁷⁴ “[...] I understood that my drama itself followed a traditional model: it was necessary that my relations with Dasgupta pass beyond the phase of candor and superficiality and know the tensions and conflicts that characterize the beginning of true rapport between guru and disciple. Marpa, for instance, persecuted his favorite disciple, Milarepa, for years. I told myself that I was now in the phase of ‘trials.’ Although I had been banished in a brutal way from Bhawanipore, Dasgupta would acknowledge me someday as his true disciple – but this would take place on another plane, *in aeternum* and not *in saeculum*.” (Eliade, *Autobiography*, 189)

⁷⁵ *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*, is dedicated to “my guru, Professor Surendranath Dasgupta”.

⁷⁶ “My thanks are also due to my pupils, Dr M. Eleade (Bucharest), Mr Janakiballabh Bhattacharyya, M.A., and my other friends, Messrs Satkari Mookerjee, M.A., Durgacharan Chatterjee, M.A., Srish Chandra Dasgupta, M.A., and my daughter, Miss Maitreyi Devi, for the assistance they rendered me in getting the manuscript ready for the press, inserting diacritical marks, comparing the references and the like, and also in arranging the index cards.” (Preface, vii-viii)

⁷⁷ „In the spring of 1939, after I had published *Yoga* and the review *Zalmoxis*, when he was en route to England, Dasgupta telegraphed me from Rome that he wanted to see me. But due to conditions beyond our control, we were unable to meet.” (Eliade, *Autobiography*, 189)

2.3. Yoga in Rishikesh

Eliade reached Rishikesh at the end of September 1930, and as soon as he saw Śivānanda's Svarga Ashram he knew that this was the place where he wanted to stay. He was given a solitary hut which would be his home for the next six months. At that time, Śivānanda had been living in Rishikesh for about six years and he was still unknown.⁷⁸ Eliade felt drawn towards the Swami

„[...] because he had been given a Western education. Like Dasgupta. He was a man who knew the culture of India through and through and could also communicate it to a Westerner. He wasn't particularly well educated in an academic sense, but he did have many years' experience of the Himalayas: he knew all the Yoga exercises, all the meditation techniques. And he was a physician, which meant that he understood our problems.”⁷⁹

Unfortunately Eliade remains vague when it comes to describing the yoga practice he learnt at Svarga Ashram and which turned him into a “changed man” by Christmas.⁸⁰ But whatever he does reveal clearly indicates that the main focus was on concentration and meditation rather than on physical exercises.

„[...] their yoga is a private discipline, a course of treatment for the body, an agent of circulation in the mental torrent, a pure and powerful aid in exercises of concentration, meditation, and *samādhi*. The more successfully the discipline proceeds, the more silent and withdrawn the disciple becomes.”⁸¹

Only once he mentions that he also practised *āsanas*.⁸² Apart from that, the sentence „treatment for the body“ in the quotation above is as close as he gets to the physical aspect of Yoga. Regulation of breath (*prāṇāyāma*) however, which can be regarded as a physical practice too, at least partly, is referred to as a preliminary exercise for meditation.

„[...] he [Śivānanda] helped me a little with the practical side of breath control, meditation, contemplation.”⁸³

⁷⁸ The medical doctor from South India (who never completed medical school, though), had returned to India in 1923, after working as medical practitioner and assistant in Malaya for 10 years. On June 1, 1924, he was initiated into *saṃnyāsa* by Paramahansa Viswananda Saraswati in Rishikesh and took up a solitary life at Svarga Ashram. From 1925 to 1931 he visited many pilgrimage places and, by 1933, his popularity started growing. (Cf. Miller, *Divine Life*, 92-97)

⁷⁹ Eliade, *Labyrinth*, 41.

⁸⁰ “What can be said about the results of the various preliminary exercises, I have described as precisely as I can in my works on yoga. The other exercises and experiences must be passed over in silence, because I am bound to remain faithful to the Indian tradition that agrees to communicate the secrets of initiation only from guru to disciple. Besides, I doubt that I should be able to describe exactly – that is, in scientific prose – certain experiences.” (Eliade, *Autobiography*, 190).

⁸¹ Quoted by Ricketts, 1988, I, 351.

⁸² During the night before definitely leaving the *āśram*, „[...] I remained motionless, seated beside the wall where I had learned the first yogic postures and had accustomed myself to rhythmic respiration, concentrating on a single mental object.” (Eliade, *Autobiography*, 199)

⁸³ Eliade, *Labyrinth*, 41.

Prāṇāyāma as an essential element in reaching altered states of consciousness was also what Eliade observed in the practice of his next-door neighbour, “a *nāga* ascetic from the south [who] spent a good part of the day and night meditating.”⁸⁴ He did

„[...] ‘that terrifying technique by which he carries consciousness over into sleep – a sleep without dreams – and even into the state of catalepsy.’ The method entailed reducing the breathing intervals to four minutes. Eliade was amazed but he does not say he ever attempted to learn this kind of yoga.”⁸⁵

Yet in his short novel *The Secret of Dr. Honigberger* Eliade talks at length about exactly this method, employed by the fictitious Dr. Zerlendi in his efforts to step out of time and space in order to travel to the mystical place Shambala. Zerlendi starts with the practice of *prāṇāyāma*, regulating his breath “according to Patañjali’s text,”⁸⁶ fixing his thoughts on one object. This leads him to the following experience (put down in his notebook):

„I seemed to be in the midst of a raging sea, which gradually became calmer before my eyes, until nothing remained but a limitless sheet of water, without a single wave, without even the slightest tremor. Then came a feeling of abundance, which I can compare with nothing except the feeling that sometimes comes over you after listening to a lot of Mozart. [...] I ran through the exercise once again, but after some time had passed the result was the same: reverie, sleepiness, or an incomparable mental calm...”⁸⁷

Two months later Zerlendi reaches a stage where he can inhale, hold his breath and exhale in a rhythm of 12 seconds for each phase while he concentrates on the element fire.

„I really don’t know how it happened, but after some time I *woke up sleeping*, or, more precisely, I woke up in *sleep*, without having fallen asleep in the true sense of the word. My body and all my senses sank into deeper and deeper sleep, but my mind didn’t interrupt its activity for a single instant. Everything in me had fallen asleep except the clarity of consciousness. I continued to meditate on fire, at the same time becoming aware, in some obscure way, that the world around me was completely changed, and that if I interrupted my concentration for a single instant, I too would quite naturally become part of this world, which was the world of sleep...”⁸⁸

The narrator (which Eliade explicitly identified with himself⁸⁹) comments as follows:

„He [Dr. Zerlendi] had achieved what is called in technical terms continuity of consciousness – passing from the consciousness of the waking state to the consciousness of the sleeping state without a break of any sort.”⁹⁰

⁸⁴ Eliade, *Autobiography*, 191.

⁸⁵ Ricketts, *Eliade I*, 351.

⁸⁶ Eliade, *Honigberger*, 97.

⁸⁷ Eliade, *Honigberger*, 97-98.

⁸⁸ Eliade, *Honigberger*, 98-99.

⁸⁹ Eliade, *Labyrinth*, 48: “[...] what other Romanian had gone to India, had written on Yoga? The narrator must therefore be Eliade.”

⁹⁰ Eliade, *Honigberger*, 99.

In great detail Zerlendi then describes the transformation of the world around him while he remains in this state of waking sleep, for example:

„[...] hypnosis was completely excluded, especially since I maintained uninterrupted clarity of consciousness; I knew who I was, why I found myself in such a position, why I was breathing rhythmically, and for what purpose I was meditating on fire.

And yet, I was at the same time aware that I was in a different space, a different world. I no longer felt my body at all, only a vague warmth in my head, and this too disappeared in time. *Things* seemed to be constantly flowing, yet without changing their shape very much. At first you would have said you were seeing everything as if through turbulent water – but the comparison is not at all exact. Things actually were flowing, some more slowly, others very rapidly, but it would be impossible to say *where* they were flowing or by what miraculous process their substance was not consumed by this pouring out beyond their natural limits [...].“⁹¹

This sounds like a report of somebody who has actually lived what he describes, and we can assume that Eliade is giving here an account of some of his own experiences with Yoga. At several occasions he has mentioned that in fiction (and particularly in his short novel on Dr Honigberger) he wrote about the practical aspect of Yoga in a way he could not have done in a scientific work.⁹² If Zerlendi's notes really reflect (at least partly) Eliade's yogic achievements, we can determine quite clearly how far they reached. Dr Zerlendi filled several pages about his experiences of being awake in a dreaming state, but as soon as he goes deeper in his meditation the notes become scarce. As the narrator (Eliade) states: „Concerning the transition from the state of dreaming sleep to the state of deep sleep without dreams I find very few details.“⁹³ The only clear statement is that *prāṇāyāma* (in the sense of extending the time of inhaling, exhaling and holding the breath) is again the key exercise which leads the mind to other spheres of consciousness:

„I have succeeded in letting still more time pass between exhalation and inhalation: some fifteen seconds for each phase, occasionally reaching twenty seconds.“⁹⁴

What happens in these new spheres however remains vague – Zerlendi writes a few lines about colours and sounds and the narrator has to resort to Mantra-Yoga texts in order to speculate about where the doctor's mind has gone.⁹⁵ This could be the point where Eliade no longer drew from his own experiences but had to rely on books and on his knowledge about India, occultism and psychology in

⁹¹ Eliade, Honigberger, 100.

⁹² „In describing Zerlendi's Yoga exercises in *The Secret of Doctor Honigberger*, I included certain pieces of information, drawn from my own experiences, that I omitted from my books on Yoga.“ (Eliade, *Labyrinth*, 47) „Later, in 1939, I tried to evoke some yogic experiences in a novella, *Secretul Doctorului Honigberger* (The Secret of Doctor Honigberger). The freedom of the artist to 'invent' allowed me to suggest more, and to do it with more precision, than it would have been possible for me to do in a strictly scientific description.“ (Eliade, *Autobiography*, 190)

⁹³ Eliade, Honigberger, 105.

⁹⁴ Eliade, Honigberger, 105. The narrator comments: „This means that he was breathing only once a minute, for he held his breath for twenty seconds, took twenty seconds to inhale, and twenty to exhale.“ (Eliade, Honigberger, 105)

⁹⁵ Cf. Eliade, Honigberger, 105.

order to continue Dr Zerlendi's story. On the one hand he keeps repeating how scanty, short or nebulous Zerlendi's notes have become,⁹⁶ on the other hand he refers to written sources in his attempt to explain the doctor's progress.⁹⁷ And often he is reduced to speculating about Zerlendi's spiritual evolution.⁹⁸ In the end, Dr Zerlendi achieves the power to step out of time and space and make himself invisible. The narrator flatly refuses to render these passages of the doctor's notes.

„And then suddenly, on the 11th of May, 1910, he returned once more to the yogic exercises through which one can achieve the invisibility of the body. For readily understandable reasons I will not reproduce here these astounding revelations. A strange feeling of panic seized me when I read these lines of Dr. Zerlendi's. There had come to my attention up to that time numbers of documents, more or less authentic, which dealt with this yogic miracle, but never before had I seen the facts stated so plainly and in such detail. When I began the present account, I was still vacillating, uncertain whether or not I really ought to include this horrifying page. Now that I have got this far, after so many weeks of indecision and worry, I realize that things of this sort cannot be revealed.“⁹⁹

Eliade believed in the reality of such yogic power and he was fascinated by it.¹⁰⁰ It is likely that he had some personal experiences with it, but most probably not of the self-achieved kind (as Zerlendi) but rather as a "victim" of somebody else's deluding force. This at least is what his short novel *Nights at Serampore* suggests where the I-narrator describes an event which allegedly happened to him and two men called van Manen and Bogdanof. Since the latter two are historical people whom Eliade knew in Calcutta, and since everything the narrator tells about himself coincides with what we know about Eliade's life in that city (address, activities etc.) we can safely assume that the narrator again is Eliade

⁹⁶ For example: „The more startling the results of the yoga techniques become, the more reticent he is in telling about them.“ (Eliade, Honigberger, 105) „This is an obscure passage.“ (Eliade, Honigberger, 107) „This passage is rather cryptic.“ (Eliade, Honigberger, 147) „Moreover, the difficulties with the text constantly increase. Some entries seem quite contradictory.“ (Eliade, Honigberger, 117) „And these entries, furthermore, are all but indecipherable.“ (Eliade, Honigberger, 118)

⁹⁷ „I recall that all the Indian occult treatises speak of the new cosmic levels which the ascetic reaches through yoga techniques as being just as 'illusory' as the cosmos to which everyone has access in his normal condition. On the other hand, I am not sure whether the 'centers' he refers to are nerve centers or the occult plexuses known to yoga and the other traditions.“ (Eliade, Honigberger, 107) „I wouldn't go so far as to say that this refers to the negative and positive currents of European occult therapeutics. It is more likely that the doctor had in mind the two fluids of the Indian occult tradition, 'currents' which run all through the human body, and which according to yogic and tantric teachings correspond to the moon and the sun.“ (Eliade, Honigberger, 108)

⁹⁸ „I must emphasize, however, that I wouldn't dare to assert anything too positively, since I have only a fragmentary acquaintance with the stages of initiation he went through.“ (Eliade, Honigberger, 108) „I surmise that they [the entries] refer to what Dr. Zerlendi called „impersonal consciousness“.“ (Eliade, Honigberger, 118) „Oder handelt es sich hier um einen ‚Einfluss‘, von dem er nicht spricht? Oder vielleicht auch setzte er sein Studium nicht im eigentlich gelehrten Sinne weiter fort, indem er die Texte erforschte und über sie nachdachte, sondern indem er durch die genaue Aussprache der heiligen Worte, die man in Indien für eine Offenbarung des Logos hält, eine geheimnisvolle Kraft zu erwerben versuchte, wie man es dort in Indien für möglich hält.“ (Eliade, Serampore, 161)

⁹⁹ Eliade, Honigberger, 120.

¹⁰⁰ „Do you think that what happens to the characters in *Midnight in Serampore* could happen in fact? – Yes, in the sense that one can have an experience so 'convincing' that one is forced to regard it as real.“ (Eliade, Labyrinth, 47)

himself. Nevertheless, the fictitious element is there, but only on a superficial level.

„For example, there is mention of a Serampore forest, whereas in fact there is no forest there at all. So that if anyone tried to check the plot of the story *in concreto*, he would find that the author is not acting simply as a reporter, since the setting is an invented one. He would then be led to conclude that all the rest is invented – imaginary – too, which isn't the case.“¹⁰¹

In *Nights at Serampore* the yogic power belongs to somebody called Suren Bose, a professor from Calcutta who every once in a while retreats into the (fictitious) woods around Serampore to participate in tantric practices. When one night the three friends get lost in the forest and witness the murder of a young woman and the grief of her husband, in a setting which is clearly of a time long gone, and when later they learn that all this had happened 150 years ago, they attribute their being dislocated from one time and space into another to Suren Bose's magical tantric power.¹⁰²

Nights at Serampore is an interesting text also because it ends with a conversation between the narrator and Śivānanda of Rishikesh who in this text is said to have some tantric knowledge.

„[...] he himself had studied and practiced Tantra many years earlier, and I hoped to get from him the solution to so many mysteries which I lacked the experience to comprehend.“¹⁰³

Śivānanda, after listening to the narrator's account of what had happened in Serampore, provides the standard Vedānta answer.

„[...] no event in our world is *real*, my friend. Everything that occurs in this universe is *illusory*. Not only the death of Lila and her husband's grief, but also the encounter between you, living men, and their shades – all these things are illusory. And in a world of appearances, in which no thing and no event has any permanence, any reality of its own – whoever is master of certain forces can do anything he wishes. Obviously he doesn't create anything real either, but only a play of appearances.“¹⁰⁴

Seeing that his interlocutor is not convinced, Śivānanda proceeds to a practical demonstration: He transfers his disciple back to the same night, to the very same house of the grief-stricken Nilamvara. The narrator, terrified at this sight, faints and collapses at his *guru's* feet.

Fictitious or not, Eliade in any case attributes to his Himalayan (and Vedāntic!) *guru* the same yogic power as a practitioner of Tantra would have had.

¹⁰¹ Eliade, *Labyrinth*, 47.

¹⁰² „[...] the fact is that in one way or another we interrupted Bose in the midst of his meditation. And then, in order not to be disturbed, Bose cast us, by means of his occult powers, into another space and another time; [...] and we became witnesses, you might say, to the murder of Dāsa's young wife...“ (Eliade, *Serampore*, 54)

¹⁰³ Eliade, *Serampore*, 53.

¹⁰⁴ Eliade, *Serampore*, 59.

In real life, Eliade in Rishikesh became engaged in a tantric adventure of a different kind which led to his leaving the āśram earlier than he had planned to. Ricketts sums it up as follows.

„During an absence of Shivananda from the ashram, Eliade was drawn into mystico-erotic Tantric yoga practices with a young woman named Jenny, an ex-cellist from South Africa who had come to the Himalaya ‘in search of the Absolute.’ [...] On learning of Eliade’s interest in Tantric yoga, she drew out of him as much information as possible, then induced him, one night, to take her for his partner in a Tantric ritual, even though they had no guru to initiate them. Once begun, the ‘Tantric rituals’ became a nightly routine, until Eliade’s nāga neighbor advised him of the perils of the course he was pursuing. Jarred out of his ‘magical trance,’ he realized that having broken his brahmacārya vows, he must quit the ashram.”¹⁰⁵

Thus, in March 1931, Eliade found himself again leaving a place which initially had seemed so promising (Śivānanda had even evoked the possibility of Eliade’s becoming another Vivekananda).¹⁰⁶

“I had failed my ‘adoption’ by Dasgupta and had, therefore, lost ‘historical’ India. And now, as soon as Swami Shivananda’s back was turned, I had also lost my chance to integrate ‘eternal,’ trans-historical India. I had no right to remain in that ashram.”¹⁰⁷

He returns to Ripon Street in Calcutta where he stays until the end of 1931. He works furiously at the Imperial Library and at the library of the Asiatic Society, continuing his thesis on Yoga. Van Manen and Bogdanov, who were to be his companions in *Nights at Serampore*, became his friends. Eliade was mostly interested in pre-Aryan culture and religiosity at that time. As far as Yoga practice is concerned, he was introduced, in September, to a young guru at Howrah (Calcutta) who turned out to be “the spiritual master I needed, the one who could help me better, and more, than all the others.”¹⁰⁸

“He impressed me from the start by his lucidity and originality. Almost without my confessing them, he guessed all the trials through which I had passed. [...] He discovered and evaluated unfailingly the experiences I was having in connection with the techniques of meditation; and from the second meeting with him he helped me to recover everything he calculated I could use out of my Himalayan lessons.”¹⁰⁹

Again, Yoga corresponds to meditation.

¹⁰⁵ Ricketts, *Eliade I*, 355.

¹⁰⁶ „Swami Shivananda marveled at how quickly I mastered the rudiments of yoga practice. He predicted for me a sensational career: I would become a second Swami Vivekananda, destined to shake the Western world and bring it back to its spiritual wellsprings, no well on the way to being forgotten. Personally, the comparison with Vivekananda did not flatter me. Although I admired Sri Ramakrishna, I did not feel attracted to the suave, moralizing writings of Vivekanand; I considered his works of propaganda and ‘popularization’ to be hybrid and non-Indian.” (Eliade, *Autobiography*, 190-191)

¹⁰⁷ Eliade, *Autobiography*, 199.

¹⁰⁸ Eliade, *Autobiography*, 208.

¹⁰⁹ Eliade, *Autobiography*, 207.

When Eliade's father calls his son home for military service, Eliade complies with this wish, convinced that he would return to India within about two years. But, in December 1931, he leaves India never to go back again.

2.4. Conclusions

Eliade spent exactly three years in India, from December 1928 until December 1931. After one year at Ripon Street he moved to Dasgupta's residence in Bokulbagan Road, early January 1930. The day he was forced to move out (September 18, 1930) marked the end of his studying Sanskrit and Yoga philosophy under the guidance of Dasgupta. Eliade travelled to Rishikesh and practised Yoga until March 1931, when he moved back to Calcutta and resumed his academic studies, this time concentrating mainly on tantric texts. In December he left India in order to complete his military service in Romania.

Eliade's interest in Yoga was, at least partly, due to an inborn tendency to develop strong will power and to control body and mind as well as a disliking for a monistic philosophy which declared world and body to be an illusion. His curiosity was not only intellectual but concerned the whole human being. Therefore he not only wanted to study Yoga but also to practise it. The fact that Dasgupta had already published several books on Yoga philosophy certainly made it easier for Eliade to convince his teacher in Calcutta to let him write a thesis which not only incorporated Patañjali but also dealt with Tantra. He pursued the study of tantric source material with great fervour and was very much aware that he was thus exploring an academically still quite unknown area. In the end he was delighted to show to his Vedānta-imbued Western audience that India had also a tradition where life, time, the human being and the universe were real.

Eliade's thirst for Yoga practice was not quenched as long as he worked with Dasgupta. But after the painful discord between the two, when Eliade found himself hurled out of Calcutta and its academic life and settled in his lonely hut in Śivānanda's āśram, he was finally able to start practising what before he had only read about. Unfortunately, he remains nearly silent as far as those practices are concerned and only says that parts of his yogic experiences have been woven into the two tales *Nights at Serampore* and *The Secret of Dr. Honigberger*. If we gather and analyse all the information from these various sources we see that Eliade was mainly engaged in exercises of concentration and meditation. He also practised *āsanas* but never commented upon them; they could be understood as part of the preparatory exercises which preceded *prāṇāyāma*. Such an interpretation is nourished by the narrator's surprise in *The Secret of Doctor Honigberger* when he discovers that Dr Zerlendi "started directly with 'that difficult experiment of rhythmic breathing, *prāṇāyāma*'."¹¹⁰ Breathing and its regulation is shown as the starting point for a journey into altered states of consciousness and it can be assumed that Eliade had managed to reach a state where he could remain awake

¹¹⁰ Eliade, Serampore, 97.

or conscious while actually having fallen asleep. The aim would have been a cataleptic state which Eliade had observed with his ascetic neighbour who was able to control his breathing to a high degree and spent the whole day meditating. Dr Zerlendi calls the aim of his yogic efforts “your own deliverance from futility, from ignorance, and from suffering.”¹¹¹ Such yogic practice, after a certain point, leads to supernatural powers: Dr Zerlendi, Śivānanda (in the novel) as well as Suren Bose, through his (non described) tantric exercises, gain control over space, time and matter, a phenomenon which Eliade is likely to have been exposed to by others.

When he finally meets the young guru at Howrah, yoga practice again is described as synonymous to meditation.

Eliade’s stay in India shows a strange parallelism: Two gurus (one academic, the other spiritual) with Western education opened the door to what Eliade called “historical” and “eternal” India. In both fields the young Romanian was progressing exceptionally fast, to the delight of his teachers. But both times his soaring flight met with an abrupt end and the door was shut again, both times by a woman. In retrospection Eliade interpreted Maitreyi and Jenny to have been the manifestation of some kind of divine intervention - his future lay in the West and not in India.

“[...] eternal māyā, in her blind wisdom, had set those two girls on my path in order to help me find my true destiny. Neither the life of an ‘adopted Bengalese’ nor that of a Himalayan hermit would have allowed me to fulfill the possibilities with which I had come into the world.”¹¹²

¹¹¹ Eliade, Serampore, 96.

¹¹² Eliade, Autobiography, 199.

3. Surendranath Dasgupta

3.1. A dazzling career¹¹³

Surendranath Dasgupta was one of the most outstanding scholars India has ever produced. Born in 1887 in a village called Gaila in the district of Nadia of today's Bangladesh as the son of a family of eminent sanskritists and āyurvedic doctors he showed signs of extraordinary abilities and strange powers from a very early age.

“During the ages of five to eight, when I had a very elementary vernacular education and no knowledge of Sanskrit or English, I could, in some intuitive manner, explain the purport of the Sanskrit verses of the Gītā. I could also demonstrate the various Yogic postures (*āsanas*) and also give practical instruction to people regarding the complicated processes of internal and external washings technically known as the *dhouti* by the Yogins. I could also give pretty satisfactory answers in a simple manner to most questions on Indian philosophy and religion. As a result therefore my house was crowded from morning till night with ardent enquirers seeking instruction on Indian religion and philosophy. At the age of seven I also delivered a lecture before a large gathering in the Theosophical Society Hall in Calcutta [...].”¹¹⁴

Quickly, little Surendranath became famous as “*khokā bhagavān*” (“the boy God”) and the great vaishnavite saint Vijay Krishna Goswami declared him to be a *jātismara*, one who remembers knowledge from previous births. A daily newspaper of 1894 (the name of which Dasgupta unfortunately does not disclose) collected some of the questions the boy was asked as well as his answers; for example:

“Q. What is the relation between knowledge and devotion? A. It is through knowledge that devotion springs. Q. What is the nature of God? A. He is a spiritual illumination which cannot be compared with any physical illumination. Q. What is the relation between Prakṛiti (primordial-nature-cause) and Puruṣa (the soul)? A. The creation happens spontaneously from the Prakṛiti under the direction of the Puruṣa and both are intimately associated with each other, like a lame man sitting on the shoulder of a blind man and directing him.”¹¹⁵

When the publicity reached a certain level Surendranath's father removed his son from Calcutta to protect him from the constant onrush of people.

¹¹³ This chapter is mainly a summary of an account of Dasgupta's life in a collection of essays on indologists (Sengupta, Dasgupta [in Bengali; I thank Arup Sen Gupta for his English translation]), supplemented by a few details taken from Dasgupta, *Quest*, 285-287 (appendix: academic career & service; honorary offices & distinctions; works in English; works in Bengali) and from Dasgupta, *Emergence*. For more details of Dasgupta's early and later life and career, cf. Dasgupta, *Quest*, chapters III, IV and VI.

¹¹⁴ Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 251.

¹¹⁵ Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 251-252.

Dasgupta studied at the Krishnanagar Collegiate School and College and passed his M.A. in Sanskrit in 1908 from the Sanskrit College. In 1910 he obtained another M.A., this time in philosophy. One year later he was appointed as assistant lecturer of Sanskrit at the Rajshahi College and within a short time he became professor of Sanskrit at Chittagong College. In 1915 he was awarded the Griffith Memorial Prize of Calcutta University, for his essay on Patañjali's philosophy,¹¹⁶ and in 1920 he obtained his Ph.D. from the same university. From 1920 to 1922 Dasgupta was in England where he studied European philosophy under Dr. McTeggart at the Trinity College of Cambridge. He got another Ph.D. from Cambridge (on contemporary idealists and their critics)¹¹⁷ and became a lecturer at that university. In 1921 he represented the University of Cambridge at the Inter-allied Congress of Philosophy at Paris. 1922 saw the publication of the first volume of his *History of Indian Philosophy* by the Cambridge University Press.¹¹⁸ Back in India he resumed his work as professor of Sanskrit at the Chittagong College. Still in the same year his *General Introduction to Tantra Philosophy* was published in Calcutta.¹¹⁹ In 1924 Dasgupta was promoted to the I.E.S. (Indian Education Service), as Senior Professor of European Philosophy, Presidency College, and Lecturer in Philosophy at the University of Calcutta. His work *Yoga as Philosophy and Religion* appeared also in 1924. In the same year Dasgupta attended the International Philosophical Congress at Naples as a representative of the University of Calcutta and two years later he was at the same congress, this time at Harvard, representing the Bengal Educational Department. When the conference was over he gave lectures on Indian philosophy at the Universities of New York, Columbia, Chicago, Michigan, Iowa and Illinois. Under the auspices of the Norman Wait Harris Foundation he delivered six lectures on Hindu spiritual thought, published in 1927 in Chicago as *Hindu Mysticism*.¹²⁰ He was invited by the University of Vienna and went there directly from the States.

In 1931 he presided over the Great International Buddhist Religious Conference held in Benares, and he was appointed Principal of the Sanskrit College, Calcutta. While he remained in this position (until 1942) he delivered many lectures on Indian philosophy and culture as a visiting professor between 1935-1936 and again in 1939 at Rome, Milan, Breslau, Koenigsburg, Berlin, Bonn, Cologne, Zurich, Paris, Warsaw and various universities of England.

Dasgupta had a deep knowledge in various branches of science, like chemistry, physics, anthropology etc. He was invited at the Rome Conference of the International Science Congress in 1936 and presented a lecture on scientific practices in Ancient India. He represented India at the International Congress of Religion in London in 1936 and in Paris in 1939. In 1936 an outline of his own, personal philosophy (which had emerged from his deep knowledge of both

¹¹⁶ Published in 1920 as *The Study of Patanjali*.

¹¹⁷ Cf. Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 525.

¹¹⁸ Volumes II – V were published in 1932, 1940, 1949 and 1955, respectively.

¹¹⁹ Sengupta, Dasgupta, 187 calls it "an important book" but I have not been able to locate it anywhere. There is, however, a chapter with the same title in Dasgupta, *Essays*, 151-178.

¹²⁰ Dasgupta, *Mysticism*.

Indian and Western philosophy) appeared in *Contemporary Indian Philosophy*, ed. by S. Radhakrishnan and J. H. Muirhead.¹²¹ When he visited Rome in 1939 he was given a military reception by Mussolini as a state guest and the University of Rome presented him with an honorary D.Litt. On that occasion he gave a lecture in Italian on the basic theory of Indian art. The translation of this lecture was posthumously published as a book in Bombay.¹²² He was honoured by being made a fellow of the Academy of Science of Warsaw as well as a member of the Royal Society of Literature, London. He also became Honorary Member of the Poets' Club in London. Still in 1939 (or 1941)¹²³ Dasgupta gave a series of lectures on comparative religion at the University of Calcutta which were published posthumously.¹²⁴

Dasgupta was decorated with the title of C.I.E. (Commander of the Indian Empire) by the Government of India and as soon as he had retired from the post of Principal of the Sanskrit College in 1942 he was appointed Head Professor of the Department of Philosophy of the University of Calcutta. In 1945 he left this position and moved to England. He had been invited to join the University of Edinburgh as a professor of Sanskrit, but, being in very bad health,¹²⁵ he only went as far as Cambridge where, at the Trinity College, he held his last lecture in public. He spent five years in Cambridge, facing all kinds of hardships in post-war England and being confined to his bed most of the time. Still Dasgupta tried to work as much as possible, assisted by his second wife Surama Dasgupta.¹²⁶ He returned to India in 1950 and moved to Lucknow where Surama was offered a post as professor of philosophy at the University. His greatest wish was to complete the last volume of his *History of Indian Philosophy* and he nearly succeeded: after finishing the main part of it he breathed his last on December 18, 1952.

Dasgupta was also gifted as a poet. He published several books of poems in Bengali and translated a selection from them into English.¹²⁷ He also wrote five books in his mother tongue on the analysis of fine art and the theory of *rasa*.¹²⁸

In the beginning of his career Dasgupta was generously helped by the Maharaja Sir Manindra Chandra Nandy of Kassimbazar¹²⁹ who sponsored his stay in

¹²¹ Dasgupta, *Emergence*.

¹²² Dasgupta, *Fundamentals*.

¹²³ 1939 according to Sengupta, *Dasgupta*, 188; 1941 according to Surama Dasgupta in her preface to *Dasgupta, Outlook*, vii.

¹²⁴ *Dasgupta, Outlook*.

¹²⁵ He was suffering from heart trouble and fell seriously ill as soon as he reached England.

¹²⁶ For a detailed account of the years in England cf. *Dasgupta, Quest*, 244-261.

¹²⁷ They were published after his death as *Vanishing Lines*, Calcutta: Thacker, Spink & Co, 1956.

¹²⁸ For bibliographical references of Dasgupta's Bengali works, cf. *Dasgupta, Quest*, 287.

¹²⁹ "The Maharajah [...] was truly a legendary figure in Bengal. He had devoted his whole life and all his princely fortune to educational, religious, and other benevolences throughout the state of Bengal. In fact, when he died, Kassimbazar was deeply in debt and passed into the hands of a receivership, the heir to the throne becoming a salaried employee of the holding company! The Maharajah had sought for years to raise the educational level of the entire population, establishing village schools (*tolas*) throughout Bengal and hiring the best pandits he could find (through competitive examinations). The brightest pupils were given prizes and scholarships to enable them to attend the

Cambridge from 1920-1922, paid for the publication of the *History of Indian Philosophy* and provided him with enough funds to “build the richest collection of books on philosophy and religion that I [= Eliade] had ever seen.”¹³⁰ After retiring from the University of Calcutta Dasgupta donated his huge collection of nearly 15.000 books to the Hindu University of Benares where it is kept as the Dasgupta Collection.¹³¹

3.2. The fall

3.2.1. A scandal, silence, and three testimonies

Given Surendranath Dasgupta’s brilliant career and academic recognition both in India and in the West as well as his undisputed authority not only in Yoga and Sāṃkhya but many other academic disciplines as well, one would expect his home town to be proudly preserving his memory. Yet when I interviewed professors and lecturers in Calcutta I quickly felt that something had gone wrong with Dasgupta. I learned that “he has become almost forgotten,”¹³² that “he is now falling into oblivion,”¹³³ that “he was a great man, like Radhakrishnan, but had no follower;”¹³⁴ I was also told that “his books on Yoga do not play any role in academic teaching any more,”¹³⁵ that his books “are just reference works which might be consulted by the students but which are not on the compulsory book list”¹³⁶ and that “when Dasgupta left, the interest in the Yoga-darśana vanished from Calcutta.”¹³⁷ One of my interlocutors was even asked to assist Dasgupta in helping him finish the last volume of his *History* but turned down the offer, saying that he was busy with some other work. As soon as I had come to know that Dasgupta had a second wife I started asking questions about his personal life – and met with a wall of silence. Everybody refused to talk about Dasgupta’s life

University of Calcutta - which he also personally built up into a first-class institution. The top university students were awarded scholarships to study in Europe. Eliade’s professor, Dasgupta, was an outstanding example of what the Maharajah’s benefactions had created. He had received a generous allotment monthly for six years while studying at Cambridge, then thousands of dollars more for his personal library, plus a huge sum to underwrite the publication of his monumental *History of Indian Philosophy* (in five volumes). Besides aiding schools and scholars, the Maharajah built hospitals and houses of worship; a Catholic cathedral, a synagogue, and Anglican, Lutheran, and Armenian churches owed their existence to his beneficence. [...] A Sanskrit scholar in his own right, Mahindra Nandy had assembled a fabulous library which was housed in Dasgupta’s home. The library required three rooms: one for European books, one for Sanskrit and Tibetan manuscripts and editions, and a third for translations and studies by Asian scholars.” (Ricketts, *Eliade I*, 379-380)

¹³⁰ Eliade, *Autobiography*, 162. – Dasgupta dedicated *Yoga as Philosophy and Religion* to his great benefactor: „As a humble token of deepest regard and gratefulness to the Maharaja Sir Manindrachandra Nundy, K.C.I.E., whose noble character and self-denying charities have endeared him to the people of Bengal and who so kindly offered me his whole-hearted patronage in encouraging my zeal for learning at a time when I was in so great a need of it.”

¹³¹ Cf. Dasgupta, *Quest*, 66.

¹³² Prof. Debabrata Sen Sharma, January 18, 2003 (oral communication).

¹³³ Prof. Amar Kumar Chattopadhyay, January 19, 2003 (oral communication).

¹³⁴ Prof. Govinda Gopal Mukhopadhyay, January 26, 2003 (oral communication).

¹³⁵ Prof. Debabrata Sen Sharma, January 18, 2003 (oral communication).

¹³⁶ Prof. Amar Kumar Chattopadhyay, January 19, 2003 (oral communication).

¹³⁷ Prof. P. K. Sen, February 5, 2003 (oral communication).

and the drama it obviously concealed. I was warded off with sentences like, for example, “there was a great scandal and finally Dasgupta had to leave Calcutta.”¹³⁸

During my various stays in Calcutta I gradually came across three people who had witnessed the events of 1941-1945, either directly or indirectly. In the following three subchapters I will present their testimonies side by side in order to show how fragmented and partly biased and/or contradictory their statements are. The only undisputed fact is that Dasgupta left his wife and children; as to when, how and why exactly, opinions vary.

3.2.1.1. Pareshnath Bhattacharya

A direct student of Dasgupta, Prof. Pareshnath Bhattacharya¹³⁹ was the first person who was willing to tell me about the tragic events which disrupted his professor’s life and career. He still has the highest respect for Dasgupta as a scholar, but he also turned his back on him when Dasgupta left his family. According to Prof. Bhattacharya Dasgupta did this for Surama Mitra, an extremely talented student who had been working with him for about ten years. Before the scandal broke out, Dasgupta once asked Bhattacharya: “Do you believe in monoganism?” Bhattacharya replied “yes.” Das Gupta contradicted: “No, no, this is not our śāstra. Yajñavalkya, for example, had two wives.”¹⁴⁰ His student answered: “But these days are gone.”¹⁴¹

According to Prof. Bhattacharya, leaflets flooded the University when the scandal broke out, and Dasgupta was criticised and caricatured in a weekly magazine. Everybody forsook the famous professor who instantly lost everything: his family, his friends, his reputation, his name and fame. Bhattacharya visited Dasgupta about a month after the outbreak of this hostility, and at the sight of his student the professor burst into tears and said: “You don’t know my condition. My son has slapped me, my daughter has slapped me.” Bhattacharya replied: “Why did you close the door when Surama was in your study? Why did you let

¹³⁸ Adinath Chatterji, February 11, 2003 (oral communication).

¹³⁹ He was 90 years old in 2003, still completely sharp and clear in his head and granted me an interview of more than two hours. He was a bit hard of hearing but he could still read without glasses.

¹⁴⁰ There is a passage in *Religion and the Rational Outlook*, written in 1941, where Dasgupta briefly exposes his views on marriage and fidelity: “Sex-relations other than marital are regarded as immoral. But we have the evidence of the śāstras that in ancient India extramarital relation, except in the case of incest, and a few restrictions was regarded as unobjectionable. Again the Roman Catholic priest cannot marry, but with Hindu priests in the past, marriage and procreation were compulsory immediately after the cessation of his studentship. Among Hindu marriages we find legal status given to sex-unions when the girl was forcibly carried away in cases of rape, marriage with a pregnant woman and so on. We thus see that the status of sex-relation is only a matter of convention of a particular society at a particular time. It has no universality in its nature and as such any refraction of marriage conditions cannot be regarded as a moral fall. It is not the place here to enter into an elaborate discussion about the nature of morality and our views on the subject, but we are of opinion that whatever may appear to an individual as his duty, clear of consequences, is for him his moral urge, and his failure to effectuate it would be his moral fall.” (Dasgupta, *Outlook*, 340)

¹⁴¹ Prof. Pareshnath Bhattacharya, February 13, 2003 (oral communication).

the affair happen?"¹⁴² In 1945 Dasgupta and Surama Mitra got married and left India for England. Dasgupta tried to get in touch with Bhattacharya through a common friend but Bhattacharya told that person to write to Dasgupta that he did not want to have any connection with him any more.

3.2.1.2. Malati Guha Ray

A slightly different story of the course of events was given to me in October 2004, by Mrs Malati Guha Ray, a 93 year old lady who was Surama Dasgupta's first student (when Surama started teaching in Calcutta).¹⁴³ Later on, they became friends: Mrs Ray lived in Lucknow when Surama and her husband returned from England and she went to see them nearly every day. In 2002 Ray published a biography on her friend, in Bengali, entitled *Suramā*.¹⁴⁴ When I visited Mrs Ray, she gave me a brief summary of her book. As far as the tragic events of the early 1940-ies are concerned, she clearly stated that it was Maitreyi who started the whole scandal. Initially, Maitreyi and Surama were close friends, but then things changed.

After the Maitreyi – Mircea story the Dasgupta family had to move away from Bakulbagan Road and came to live near Hindusthan Park. Surama was then staying at Hindusthan Park Nr. 9, in her elder sister's home. She used to walk to Dasgupta's house in order to study and spent hours reading in his library. When Maitreyi started to complain about this to her mother, Dasgupta's wife tried to reason with her daughter, saying that this was just a teacher-student relationship and that, after all, Maitreyi was helping Dasgupta a lot with his studies. But Maitreyi would not listen, and when Surama continued coming to her father's house even after her Ph.D. thesis was completed (which was in 1941),¹⁴⁵ she grew more and more vicious. According to Mrs Ray, Maitreyi, who by then was married and lived far away in the hills, came back home more and more often to check on her father and Surama. She spied on them through the shutters of the library and sometimes she abruptly opened the door of the study (which was never locked). One day, as Surama was approaching the house, Maitreyi climbed on the rooftop terrace and yelled at all the neighbours and people in the street: "Come and see what is going on in our house!" She managed to provoke her younger brothers and sisters and even Dasgupta's wife, and ultimately, Dasgupta was beaten up by his children and thrown out of the house. After the last violent discussion with his wife, Dasgupta suffered a heart attack and was given shelter in the guestroom of Sanskrit College, supported and nursed in turn by friends and colleagues. Since Surama was going to go to England on a scholarship, these friends and colleagues suggested that she should take him with her. When Surama asked how this should be possible, how she could travel with somebody who was not related to her, they told her that she had to marry him. According to Mrs Ray,

¹⁴² Prof. Pareshnath Bhattacharya, February 13, 2003 (oral communication).

¹⁴³ The following account is based on an oral communication by Mrs Ray, October 21, 2004, at her home at Hindusthan Park 3, Calcutta 29.

¹⁴⁴ Ray, Surama.

¹⁴⁵ Surama Mitra was the first Indian woman ever to get a Ph.D.

Surama was completely shocked and said “How can I marry somebody who is so much older and ill and like my guru?” But she asked for a weeks’ time to think it over. Her family was utterly against it, but Surama came back after one week and said she was willing to do it. So they got married and left for England.

Mrs Ray’s account is entirely focussed on the personal side of the scandal and does not mention any hostile public reactions (for example at university, as in Pareshnath Bhattacharya’s version). She concentrates on the Maitreyi angle which, in a way, turns the whole story more gruesome and tragic. When I met her, she added a particularly horrifying anecdote to underline how thoroughly Dasgupta’s daughter had indoctrinated her family against their father: Chitra, one of Maitreyi’s sisters, hunted her father down in Cambridge. Since Dasgupta was very ill, his doctors had put up a note outside the house saying that he should not be disturbed (apparently he was constantly visited by many people). Chitra called on the landlady and said that she was Dasgupta’s daughter. The landlady was very surprised because she had thought that Surama was Dasgupta’s only wife, but she asked Chitra what she wanted of her father. Chitra replied: “I have not come to see him, I came to kill him.”

Mrs Ray certainly does her best to “beatify” her friend Surama; in her account there is no hint of any disreputable action or even attitude in the relation between Surendranath and his student. They were simply guru and disciple, linked on a purely intellectual level, working together on philosophical topics. Of course it is impossible now to ascertain up to which point Maitreyi had any reason to behave the way she did or whether the scandal she provoked was the result of her own frustrated psyche only, taking revenge on the man who had bereaved her of her first and only great love. On another level she might also have felt jealous of Surama who was such a brilliant scholar whereas she herself was cut off from all erudition, living isolated in the hills.

Given the fact that Dasgupta had started writing personal letters to Surama (even though full of philosophical discussions) as early as 1932,¹⁴⁶ and taking in account their intense collaboration over many years, there is no doubt that they were united by a very strong bond. In one of his first letters, Dasgupta mentions his spiritual loneliness:

“I have been without any companion; nobody asked me what I was doing and none offered to share this quest with me.”¹⁴⁷

It is equally certain that Surama with her fine intellect and sharp inquisitiveness became this badly missed companion and it is possible that other feelings grew in time. Dasgupta’s defense of polygamy in *Religion and the Rational Outlook* (1941)¹⁴⁸ at least can be interpreted as an indication that his attachment to Surama went beyond a purely mental one. As to Surama, we have no testimony except the one she herself gave to Malati Ray, according to which her feelings remained those of a devoted disciple towards her genius guru.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. Dasgupta, *Quest*.

¹⁴⁷ Dasgupta, *Quest*, 80 (letter from Darjeeling, dated May 20th, 1932)

¹⁴⁸ Cf. *supra*, note 140.

As far as the year is concerned in which Dasgupta left his family, I got two different answers. Whereas Pareshnath Bhattacharya could not say when the scandal took place, Maitreyi Devi in her book claims that her father moved out in 1941.¹⁴⁹ Mrs Ray's version however makes it sound as if Dasgupta left his family (or rather was thrown out by his wife and children) only in 1945. 1945 was also upheld by Sudhir Kumar Nandi, a retired professor of philosophy (and one of Dasgupta's students at the time), who told Ratna Dutta, Mrs Ray's daughter, that 1941 is not acceptable and that Dasgupta left his house in 1945 and then went to England with Surama.¹⁵⁰ The last and certainly most important witness however, Sukumar Mitra, corroborates the earlier date, as we shall see in the next chapter.

3.2.1.3. Sukumar Mitra

A retired professor of History, Sukumar Mitra as a young student was hurled right into the centre of events by accidentally being present in Dasgupta's library the morning his family violently attacked him. He intervened, preventing Dasgupta from being hurt, and from that day onward, Sukumar Mitra became a "protector, confidant and aide"¹⁵¹ of the famous professor, eventually helping him to escape from India.¹⁵²

From Sukumar Mitra's testimony the following course of events can be reconstructed:

Dasgupta moved out of his Monaharpukur Road residence in 1942 "and took shelter at the Russa Road house of Benoy Das Gupta, a cousin of his."¹⁵³ After a short while "he took a large first floor apartment on rent, nearby, at Rajani Sen Road sometime later in 1943. He lived in the apartment for a year and a half, until he stole out of his country to live in Britain, in 1945."¹⁵⁴ In the Rajani Sen Road house,

"Das Gupta felt freer and more cheerful, and regained, to an extent, his health [...]. He was able to return to his work: mainly to complete the fourth volume of History of Indian Philosophy. Besides, he dictated a novel, a fairly large one, in Bengali and a brief history of Indian philosophy in Bengli too. He became attentive to the men and women doing researches [sic] under him; some of his old pupils and friends and academic colleagues resumed their visits to him; and he found time to educate me. It was during this period that we – he, I and a servant took two trips to Puri."¹⁵⁵

¹⁴⁹ "In spite of her [Maitreyi's mother's] unwavering loyalty to her husband, her constant endeavour to cover up his faults, she could only postpone the ultimate collapse that happened in 1941. Father left her with her four minor children to fend for herself." (It Does Not Die, 196)

¹⁵⁰ Oral communication to Ratna Dutta on February 5, 2005.

¹⁵¹ Statement S. Mitra, 1.

¹⁵² Sukumar Mitra granted my research assistant Arup Sen Gupta a series of interviews in Bengali between April 21st 2005 and May 25th 2005. Arup Sen Gupta translated them into English and I submitted the typed version to Mr Mitra who then corrected a few things and sent me a five pages long text which I am allowed to quote freely (cf. letter from S. Mitra, dated July 10, 2005). In the following I shall call this text "Statement S. Mitra".

¹⁵³ Statement S. Mitra, 2.

¹⁵⁴ Statement S. Mitra, 2.

¹⁵⁵ Statement S. Mitra, 2.

In the beginning of 1945 however,

“Prof. Das Gupta’s family broke in, one evening, at Rajani Sen Road House. I was not there then. The family took complete control over him, and often pestered him. Within a very short time they succeeded in isolating him, and rendering him miserable. His health began to deteriorate. I was the only one who could, in defiance of all kinds of ugly opposition and obstruction, manage to stick to him. It was this crisis, in fact, that drew the curtain on the goings-on. Slowly a plan of escape was made, and matured. Prof. Das Gupta and Surama Mitra got married. And finally they could be whisked out of the country. It was Prof. Das Gupta’s family, I’m still inclined to believe, that forced the conclusion.”¹⁵⁶

Like Malati Guha Roy, Sukumar Mitra also claims that Maitreyi was one of the foremost figures to induce the downfall of Dasgupta.

“I do not know when the scandal involving Prof. Das Gupta and Surama Mitra began and what was its source. We, as students, heard about it. I do not remember ever to have read anything about it in newspapers or magazines or pamphlets, but I heard about its being published. Maitreyi had a major part in fulminating against her father.”¹⁵⁷

Maitreyi also “spoke rudely to my father and wanted him to stop me from having any connections with Prof. Das Gupta.”¹⁵⁸

Apart from Dasgupta’s immediate family

“a powerful cabal consisting mainly of P. N. Roy, another brother of Himani Das Gupta [Dasgupta’s wife], P. N. Banerjee, a few Pundits and others was formed against Prof. Das Gupta at Calcutta to bring him to disrepute and to cause his downfall.”¹⁵⁹

One sentence in Surama Dasgupta’s book on her husband alludes to the enmity the professor was facing from certain pundits.

“As Principal of the Sanskrit College, he had to face constant opposition from a group of persons of the orthodox community in various forms, mostly unjustified and biased.”¹⁶⁰

Sukumar Mitra puts it slightly more bluntly, writing that

“[t]he Pundits were not exactly angry with Prof. Das Gupta. There was a disgruntled lot who were his critics and denigrators and questioned his right to be principal of the College.”¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁶ Statement S. Mitra, 3.

¹⁵⁷ Statement S. Mitra, 4.

¹⁵⁸ Statement S. Mitra, 3.

¹⁵⁹ Statement S. Mitra, 3.

¹⁶⁰ Dasgupta, Quest, 56.

¹⁶¹ Statement S. Mitra. 3.

As to Surama, she apparently was extremely possessive of Dasgupta and believed that nobody could take as good care of him as herself. She also was, according to Sukumar Mitra,

“a good person, learned, affectionate and mild mannered. [...] She was perhaps best equipped to write an intellectual and personal biography of Prof. Das Gupta, her guru and husband, but chose instead, to wrap him up in an aura of a demigod, and to conceal herself behind an untidy hagiography.”¹⁶²

As far as Dasgupta’s relationship with Surama Mitra is concerned, Sukumar Mitra believes that it was platonic. He still cannot understand why Dasgupta did not manage to stop rumours as soon as they started.

“He [...], it seemed to me, was at a loss as to what to do about Surama Mitra. Often, he opened his mind to me, and more often fell into thoughts.”¹⁶³

Sukumar Mitra cannot but describe the whole affair as an ultimately inexplicable tragedy.

“In that high drama we all – Prof. Das Gupta, his family, his admirers and detractors, Surama Mitra and I, acted fools.”¹⁶⁴

“Things moved inexorably towards an end: the dramatis personae seemed all to be possessed. In this episodic entanglement, however, the real loser was Prof. Das Gupta who got pathetically hoist with his own petard.”¹⁶⁵

In the end a number of questions remain unanswered, summing up the tragic character of events which seemed to have gained, after a certain point, a drive which nobody could stop any more.

“My mind has since been racked by many questions: couldn’t Prof. Das Gupta retract his romantic steps? Couldn’t he awaken Surama Mitra to the utter untenability of their relationship? Couldn’t Surama Mitra wake up to the utter falsity of her claims of indispensability? I read the letters, all instinct with love, concern and intimate exchanges between a husband [Dasgupta] and a wife [Himani]. Hadn’t Himani Das Gupta to be more than human in order to remain unperturbed at the dismal deception by someone whom she loved, trusted and respected? Couldn’t all the friends and admirers of Prof. Das Gupta raise their voice against his calumniators? Couldn’t the calumniators have realised that they were merely debasing themselves? Couldn’t I take the sage counsel of my father? Was it necessary for Prof. Das Gupta to flee the country to redeem his health, to vindicate his honour and to complete his life’s great work? Was it necessary for Prof. Das Gupta and Surama Mitra to be acclaimed as man and wife? Ironically, a short time before, Prof. Das Gupta dedicated his novel to Surama Mitra as if she were his dear daughter.”¹⁶⁶

¹⁶² Statement S. Mitra, 5.

¹⁶³ Statement S. Mitra, 2.

¹⁶⁴ Statement S. Mitra, 5.

¹⁶⁵ Statement S. Mitra, 5.

¹⁶⁶ Statement S. Mitra, 5.

3.2.3. Some official traces

When I returned to Calcutta in 2003 I tried to get more information on Dasgupta, this time from a more official side: I visited the Sanskrit College, the Presidency College and the West Bengal State Archives.

Apart from a marble bust of Dasgupta at the top of the stairs leading to the entrance of the Sanskrit College there is nothing to commemorate the man who was the Principal of this institution from 1931-1942. A professor of Sanskrit took me to the library and we searched for any book on Dasgupta – in vain. In no historical or commemorative volume about the Sanskrit College we found anything about the famous scholar.

In Presidency College I met a professor of philosophy who accompanied me to the office and also to the library of the College. Here we came across Gaurangagopala Sengupta's Bengali book on famous Indologists (which contains a chapter on Dasgupta¹⁶⁷), and that was all. I was not allowed access to any original documents the college might still have had.

In the West Bengal State Archives I went through the following *Proceedings*: March, Sept. and Dec. of 1931, June, Sept. and Dec. of 1932, March, June and Sept. of 1933 and all four volumes (March, June, Sept. and Dec.) of 1936, 1937, 1940, 1942 and 1943. Each volume is entitled *Proceedings of the Government of Bengal, Education Department, Education for the Quarter ending...* Eventually I was told that most of the files had been destroyed and that out of those which had been preserved only the files dating of years with an even number are stored in Calcutta (those created in a year with an odd number are now either in Dhaka or in Bihar). Unfortunately all the files on Dasgupta had been destroyed or were no longer in Calcutta. The only source of information remained eight entries in the *Proceedings* from March 1931 to December 1943.¹⁶⁸

I thus learnt that in 1931, when he became the Principal of the Sanskrit College, Dasgupta was granted the permission to “admit research students into the Sanskrit College for working under him.”¹⁶⁹ In the same year the Government approved that Dasgupta could “accept Mr. K. T. Behanan, an advanced student of the Yale University as a research student under him,”¹⁷⁰ which is a proof of Dasgupta's international renown.

In 1932, Dasgupta, in his function as Secretary to the Calcutta Sanskrit Association, wrote two letters to the Director of Public Instruction of Bengal, the first dated February 18, the second one April 27.¹⁷¹ In the first letter he speaks in

¹⁶⁷ Sengupta, Dasgupta, which I used for chapter 3.1.

¹⁶⁸ I cannot rule out the possibility that I might have overlooked other entries.

¹⁶⁹ *Proceedings of the Government of Bengal, Education Department, Education for the Quarter ending December 1931*, 8.

¹⁷⁰ Same proceedings, p. 10.

¹⁷¹ *Proceedings of the Government of Bengal, Education Department, Education for the Quarter ending December 1932*, 30a and 30b.

favour of one of two candidates for the Central Organisation which have been elected with equal votes; he asks the Director to settle the matter quickly. In April Dasgupta asks for more money.

“[...] the anticipated expenditure under the head “Examination charges” [...] will be quite inadequate to meet the travelling allowance of the members of the Central Organisation as well as the members of the Council of the Bengal Sanskrit Association.”

Both these incidences show that Dasgupta did not hesitate to speak his mind and that he might have appeared somewhat non-deferential in the eyes of some people.

In the March volume of 1936 we read, under the heading “Leave:”

“Of Dr. Surendra Nath Das Gupta, Principal, Sanskrit College, out of India, Ceylon and Nepal, to attend the World Conference of Faiths, to be held in London.”¹⁷²

One year later, Dasgupta was allowed to “give evidence before the Bengal Sanskrit Enquiry Committee,”¹⁷³ but unfortunately the matter in which he was to speak up is not mentioned.

The only entry which might carry a trace of the scandal which shook Calcutta in 1941 and 1942 is the following one:

“Dr. S. N. Das Gupta I. E. S., Sanskrit College, Calcutta, is allowed leave up to 15th October 1942 and called upon to retire from the following day.”¹⁷⁴

Since this note dates from March 1942, we see that Dasgupta was granted to back out of his academic duties six months before he officially retired. Nobody knows whether there is a link with the Surama scandal or not. Sukumar Mitra writes:

“I don’t know why Prof. Das Gupta retired from Sanskrit College at the age of 56. It might be that he took early retirement to take up the professorship at the University.”¹⁷⁵

As soon as he had left the Sanskrit College, Dasgupta applied for a permission to get access to its library.

“Use of the Sanskrit College Library by Dr. S. N. Das Gupta, lately Principal of the Sanskrit College, Calcutta.”¹⁷⁶

¹⁷² *Proceedings of the Government of Bengal, Education Department, Education for the Quarter ending March 1936, 12.*

¹⁷³ *Proceedings of the Government of Bengal, Education Department, Education for the Quarter ending September 1937, 3.*

¹⁷⁴ *Proceedings of the Government of Bengal, Education Department, Education for the Quarter ending March 1942, 18.*

¹⁷⁵ Statement S. Mitra, 3.

¹⁷⁶ *Proceedings of the Government of Bengal, Education Department, Education for the Quarter ending December 1942, 4.*

I could not find any entry on his being appointed by the University of Calcutta in 1942 (or 1943). All in all my research in the West Bengal State Archives confirmed what I had found before: Dasgupta has literally been erased from public memory. Sukumar Mitra writes:

“His books are still widely read, but personally he was long forgotten.”¹⁷⁷

After his stay in England Dasgupta never returned to Calcutta and he died without having met his family again. In the words of his daughter Maitreyi Devi:

“My father, immensely talented and universally respected for his scholarship, could have risen higher and higher. Instead, he lost his family, peace of mind, prestige and respect. After ten years of separation from his devoted wife and six children, estranged from friends and relations, his personality mutilated, he died in disgrace. We have heard that before his death he told several persons secretly that he wanted to come back to mother to seek her forgiveness. The news reached us too late. That was the final tragedy of my greatly talented father and virtuous mother.”¹⁷⁸

Before ending this chapter I would like to point to a noteworthy fact if not strange coincidence concerning Dasgupta and Eliade. When Dasgupta in 1930 refused to listen to the pleading of his wife on behalf of their daughter and adamantly proceeded to throw out his beloved disciple, hurt, disappointed and furious, crushing a love he did not want to tolerate,¹⁷⁹ he did not know that only one year later he would start admitting his student Surama to his home until

“[g]radually, she is becoming one of us. Mother attends to her needs as she does to ours. Rama [= Surama] is helping father in his work and remains always with him.”¹⁸⁰

To put it a bit bluntly, one could say that Eliade moved out and Surama moved in or that one secret love was replaced by another (whatever its precise nature may have been). Maitreyi Devi established a direct link between Eliade’s leaving and Surama’s appearance¹⁸¹ and her mother, in a conversation with her daughter, indirectly (but unmistakably) interpreted Surama as some kind of karmic fate befalling them, due to her husband’s failure to accept Eliade as his son-in-law.

“For no fault of yours, you had to go through this trial. It’s all your father’s fault. And then, who knows how the wheel of karma turns? From the very next year after we turned out that poor boy, our family began to disintegrate.”¹⁸²

¹⁷⁷ Statement S. Mitra, 5.

¹⁷⁸ Devi, *It Does not Die*, 197.

¹⁷⁹ Cf. Devi, *It Does not Die*, 117-124.

¹⁸⁰ Devi, *It Does not Die*, 154.

¹⁸¹ “Exactly eleven years after Rama came to us, that is twelve years after Mircea’s departure, my mother’s life became a shambles.” (Devi, *It Does not Die*, 196)

¹⁸² Devi, *It Does not Die*, 207.

3.3. Dasgupta in other people's eyes

3.3.1. The scholar

Depending on who talks or writes about Dasgupta, a completely different man emerges in front of our eyes – from the tyrannical father and husband the range goes straight to sainthood. The only point where the various opinions converge is his tremendous learning. Several of my interlocutors equalled Dasgupta to Radhakrishnan, one put him even above the famous philosopher from South India.¹⁸³ His student Pareshnath Bhattacharya told me that Dasgupta was the most wonderful scholar and that he had never ever seen anybody like him. Whenever he went to visit his professor there were always all kinds of books scattered around him, on a wide variety of subjects: physics, chemistry, biology, botany, astrology, art, philosophy and even on cooking. Dasgupta was always at study, whenever Bhattacharya met him. He could read from an Italian book on logic and translate it instantly into English.

“The width of his knowledge was wonderful, unfathomable, he had a tremendous horizon. He could go further and further, and still the horizon would recede. In width of knowledge, Dasgupta surpassed everybody else. [...] Dasgupta could also foretell many things, without having practised any Yoga. He was a genius.”¹⁸⁴

And Maitreyi Devi wrote:

“My father's talents are varied, his qualities are immeasurable. There is no one to equal him in erudition. Impenetrable Sanskrit texts he deciphers and interprets in a minute. He has never needed help to go into the depth of abstruse philosophy written in archaic Sanskrit. His memory is sharp. He has read all the books in his library, some six or seven thousand volumes. His powerful personality awes even learned pandits – he can defeat anyone in argument, he can prove to any man that that man does not know even the proper use of dental and cerebral “n”.”¹⁸⁵

In the last sentence of this quotation we see a hint of the irascible and contemptuous side of Dasgupta's character. Sukumar Mitra also commented on this, writing:

“Learning, however, did not confer modesty or humility on Prof. Das Gupta. Though a large hearted man, he was capable of being hurtfully rude and dismissive.”¹⁸⁶

¹⁸³ “Surendranath was extremely learned and a greater scholar than Radhakrishnan.” (Prof. Rabindra Kumar Das Gupta on October 23, 2003, oral communication).

¹⁸⁴ Prof. Pareshnath Bhattacharya, February 13, 2003 (oral communication).

¹⁸⁵ Devi, *It Does not Die*, 105.

¹⁸⁶ Statement S. Mitra, 4.

3.3.2. The head of a large family

Maitreyi Devi, who had greatly suffered from Eliade's eviction by her father and who later allied herself with her forsaken mother, is the only (and certainly not unbiased) witness of Dasgupta as a family man.

"Father, when angry, lost all sense of balance. [...] [He] was without a peer in breaking a rhythm or striking a wrong chord in a melody. Had he been in the heavenly court of Indra he would certainly have been banished many times and sent down to earth as a penalty, but this was not the court of heaven. This was father's own family – so everyone had to submit to him with patience."¹⁸⁷

In the following quotation, Devi attributes the tyrannical behaviour of her father partly to the fact that he was the head of a large household in the Bengali society – a role which she harshly criticises.

"It is not only in our house but in every household where the master of the house is the most important. He is ninety five percent, and all the others together make up five percent only. That means that his wish, his convenience are more important; others hardly matter. In our family this attitude is stronger than in other families; the master of the house is also the ruling deity. [...] The master of the house is the bread-earner, so he also had absolute right to dismiss all other views and lead every member of the family according to his own views. Maybe this is a necessary and useful custom to maintain discipline in a large joint-family, but it invariably turns the ruler into an arrogant and selfish person. He considers himself to be a god ruling over that particular household. But actually he is no god; he is just a human being full of weaknesses and bound down by the pleasures and sorrows of life like any other insignificant member of the family. Just as an omnipotent king is for a country, so is the master of a household for its members, supervising the destiny of their inferiors. Especially if that man is a man of qualities – his power becomes absolute."¹⁸⁸

3.3.3. The professor

According to Prof. Debabrata Sen Sharma, Dasgupta's pupils could not get close to him because he was quite aloof.¹⁸⁹ This statement contrasts sharply with the way Dasgupta treated Eliade. Apparently he was readily willing to invest time and energy as soon as he had a talented student, and the enthusiasm with which he taught and guided his Romanian pupil is an indication that able students (at least to Dasgupta's standards) did not abound. The following anecdote corroborates this impression.¹⁹⁰

Late Sudhindranath Chakravarti, formerly reader in philosophy at Viśva Bhāratī University (Shantiniketan), was too poor to buy any books when he was a student in East Bengal. When the first three volumes of Dasgupta's *History of Philosophy*

¹⁸⁷ Devi, *It Does not Die*, 45.

¹⁸⁸ Devi, *It Does not Die*, 104-105.

¹⁸⁹ Oral communication, January 18, 2003.

¹⁹⁰ Oral communication of Prof. P. K. Sen, February 5, 2003. Sudhindranath Chakravarti was a friend of his and had told him this story personally.

had come out, the library of Mymensingh University bought them and offered to lend them to him for the summer break. Chakravarti took them home and not only read them but also copied the three volumes by hand. Later he went to Calcutta to continue his studies. He was very eager to meet Dasgupta, but when he went to his first class, Dasgupta sent word that he was ill. The same thing happened one week later. The third time he came but did not teach anything – he only asked the names of the students and where they had come from, etc. The fourth lesson was also spent with smalltalk. Then Chakravarti got angry and asked Dasgupta why he did not teach them. Dasgupta became furious and asked: “Are you fit to be taught philosophy?” Chakravarti replied that, of course, he was only a student and did not know very much, but at least he had read and even copied Dasgupta’s three volumes. The professor could not believe that and wanted to see the copies. So Chakravarti went home and brought them. When Dasgupta saw that he had told the truth, he changed completely. He was very impressed by this serious interest and he told him that as a teacher he was very frustrated. Hardly any of his students listened to what he said, hardly anybody was really interested in the subject. But from that day on, he taught them, and they were all spellbound. Dasgupta taught so much that they could hardly take notes – instead they preferred to just listen to him. According to Chakravarti, not even 10% of Dasgupta’s knowledge was in his books.

Some of Dasgupta’s students became professors but none of them was important.¹⁹¹ It is likely that the abrupt and scandalous end of his own career greatly contributed to the fact that he failed to produce a follower.

3.3.4. The saint

Nearly 20 years after her husband’s death, Surama Dasgupta published *An Ever-Expanding Quest of Life and Knowledge* which contains the first chapter of a never continued autobiography by Surendranath, three quite hagiographic chapters on Dasgupta’s early and late years as well as a few of his poems. The bulk of the book however is taken up by personal letters written by the professor to his pupil and later wife, from 1932 to 1943. In this chapter I would like to concentrate on Surama’s account of how she saw Dasgupta. Given the tragedy which had befallen her husband’s personal and academic life (and in which Surama played an important part) it is understandable that she tried her utmost to restore some of the famous scholar’s damaged reputation. On the one hand she made sure that his unpublished manuscripts got published posthumously,¹⁹² and on the other

¹⁹¹ Oral communication of Prof. Debabrata Sen Sharma, January 18, 2003, and Prof. Govinda Gopal Mukhopadhyay, January 26, 2003.

¹⁹² Although the hurt Maitreyi Devi wrote about Surama that “she is continuously trying to bask in the glory of father’s scholarship – his name and fame. By some pretext or other she includes her name in each of father’s books, like one demented” (*It Does not Die*, 225), it is very obvious that Surama did a lot for Dasgupta’s work and not only after he had died (Prof. P. K. Sen insisted on this point in an oral communication on February 5, 2003). When, in 1931, Dasgupta lost the sight of one eye, Surama started reading out books and manuscripts to him and he dictated to her what he wanted to write. “The last three volumes of his *History* and several other books that he wrote after or since 1930-31 became thus a joint enterprise.” (*Dasgupta, Quest*, 38)

hand she tried to show that Dasgupta was an extraordinary man in every sense of the word. Right from the start of her *Quest* chapters, Surama leaves no doubt as to the saintliness of Dasgupta's character.

"Yet, there are persons who are different from the rest. They have, as it were, an extra-fine sensitiveness, an intellectual and also moral and spiritual insight into things, and a different set of values. They come as prophets, saints, men of extraordinary ability. Though they belong to the human species, they are beyond the ordinary, and they have their finer sense of ideals and unusual strength to follow these up.

[...] They have brought new light into the world, opened up newer horizons, and discovered new dimensions of existence. They are never bound by any one well-laid pattern of society, they belong to all ages and to humanity as such. They have enriched human history by their life and thought.

Professor Dasgupta was one such eminent man. [...]

He could [...] be called both a seer and saint."¹⁹³

Endowed with a prodigious memory¹⁹⁴ and with an "inexhaustible patience and love,"¹⁹⁵ he also seemed to have acquired the equanimous mind of a real yogi.

"But I never saw him angry, diffident or perturbed. He seemed to be riding on the waves of an angry, tempestuous sea in a calm, unruffled manner. Never did he lose control of the situation and never did he lack in optimism and courage. [...] In a sense he was unaffected by suffering or sorrow [...]."¹⁹⁶

In the eyes of his dedicated pupil and wife, Dasgupta became a guru of heroic stature.

"His faith in God and mental strength were both unshakeable. He was never depressed, never afraid. Every new situation was a challenge to him and he rose equal to the occasion. Since he was never at a loss, never afraid, we depended on him in everything and knew that there was nothing to fear."¹⁹⁷

¹⁹³ Dasgupta, *Quest*, 29-30.

¹⁹⁴ „He never prepared his speech, nor would he make any notes for his writing [...]. He carried his materials all in his head, he said. [...] he not only remembered what he was writing, but should any important letter of reference get lost and the clerk become worried, he would come out with his assurance, 'Never mind, I remember it all.' He would refer to a text read years ago with the specific mention of the page and the place." (Dasgupta, *Quest*, 40-41)

¹⁹⁵ Dasgupta, *Quest*, 39. „His kindness and love for all was limitless." (Dasgupta, *Quest*, 37)

¹⁹⁶ Dasgupta, *Quest*, 56.

¹⁹⁷ Dasgupta, *Quest*, 37.

3.4. Dasgupta's mystical experiences (*samādhi*)

In chapter 2.2.3. we have seen that Dasgupta, right from his childhood, used to fall into trance-like states. He himself publicly mentioned this fact only once – in his article on dependent emergence, where he exposed his own philosophical views.¹⁹⁸ Otherwise he kept his mystical experiences to himself, except in some personal letters to Surama. Since his second wife not only translated and published these letters but also described her observations about Dasgupta's altered states of consciousness, we get quite a detailed picture of his *samādhi*.¹⁹⁹ The external signs as noted by Surama correspond in many ways to what we know about yogis in trance: complete mental withdrawal, death-like physical condition, a blissful expression on the face.

“These occurrences also seemed to be anti-biological in this that all physiological and mental functions seemed to have been arrested. If permitted to be in such states for a long period (which he was not, because we were fearful of any harm to his physical health), his whole body seemed to have become stiff, and he seemed to be unconscious or completely oblivious of the immediate surroundings. The longer he stayed in this state the more difficult it was for us to rouse him and call him back to the present environment. That is why we were alerted whenever there were some indications of such a situation coming about. [...]

There were other kinds of situations when he would softly hum a tune to himself and pass into *samādhi*. In these cases it was a state of deep, quiet contentment and bliss. We could make out something of this from the expression on his face. It was always a very sweet and a composed expression, and some kind of ineffable peace relaxed his lips into a smile. The whole countenance irradiated peace and deep contentment.”²⁰⁰

But whereas yogis normally reach *samādhi* only after a long period of specific and rigorous physical and mental training, Dasgupta was overpowered by such states without any preparation or effort.

“[...] any stimulus in the form of nature's beauty or a devotional song or the image of Lord Krishna, which he loved very much, was enough to make his mind stop functioning and send him deep down into a sub-conscious state of awareness. This passing off into *samādhi* or a yogic state of mind was very natural and spontaneous with him. He did not have to do anything for this, rather it came on unawares to him, as it were, and caught him in its flow.

[...]

Any devotional song would start in his mind a kind of a longing or a pining for something unattainable. This longing would send him out of the present environment and rouse deeper and deeper longings associated with the pang of unfulfilment of attaining the highest end he sought for and also an indefinable sweetness associated with it. [...]

¹⁹⁸ „I also often spontaneously entered into a meditative trance condition as I gazed on the Ganges from one of the ghats (landings) or when I sat in front of the temple-deity at Kalighat. [...] The impressions of a super-conscious trance-state which I had in my childhood never left me, and as they were being continually revived in me in my maturer years, it was impossible for me to deny the existence of the mystical state of self-absorption so much referred to in the Upaniṣads.” (Dasgupta, Emergence, 251-252)

¹⁹⁹ This term is used by both Surama and Dasgupta himself when they refer to his trance states.

²⁰⁰ Dasgupta, Quest, 45.

There were also instances when by looking at waterfalls (for instance, the Narmada), the sea at Puri, or at the ocean from a ship, he would have the same experience."²⁰¹

Dasgupta even declared simplicity and naturalness to be prerequisites for entering mental states which normally lie beyond everyday experience.²⁰² The spiritual intuition which allows somebody to get a glimpse of the highest Reality manifests itself spontaneously and cannot be consciously generated. Such a statement obviously contradicts what yogic texts proclaim.

"Our passage to the Reality is only by an emergent intuition which cannot be conditioned or produced by our will or any manipulation of psychic conditions, any more than we can produce any element of nature or category of life. It emerges of itself. Its emergence is grounded in its own nature, which is inexplicable and unknowable. It is for this reason that in the religious experience of those, who, by virtue of old traditions, refer to this Reality as God, speak of him anthropomorphically as yielding this spiritual experience to man by his divine grace."²⁰³

Dasgupta was unable to put his experiences into words²⁰⁴ and had to resort to metaphor in an attempt to tell Surama about them.

"Like all other mystical states, the experience that he had during those periods was ineffable. But he tried to give some kind of description to us at our request. He used to describe them as being a deep plunge into the holy river Ganges after which all the pollutions and ties of his worldly life seemed to have been washed away."²⁰⁵

The same image recurs in the following passage where Dasgupta talks at length about his *samādhi* experiences in relation to the *Yogasūtra*.

"Time to time when I had experienced spontaneous, deep trance-states, I realised one truth and that is this: the mind goes deep within, away from the objects and interests of everyday life and then becomes completely detached from it. Just as when the body gets tired with the continual use of its muscles, so also the mind spends itself up in the continuous thought-processes and conflicts and activities involved in them. When the mind, therefore, withdraws itself from these and rests within, it realises the exhaustion that comes out of the emotions of anger, envy, intolerance, egoism and the like which it does not otherwise understand because it gets itself involved in them. Patañjali has declared attachment, hatred, egoism and the like to be 'afflictions' and those mental states which are affected by these, as 'afflicted states'. I have realised the truth of this. I have seen clearly when I came back from trance-states how much the passions and emotions of our everyday life are really useless afflictions. Therefore, on our waking up from *samādhi* (trance-states), our usual ties and interests become loose as it were and their harmfulness becomes apparent. Just as a person who has

²⁰¹ Dasgupta, Quest, 44-45.

²⁰² "There is a universal in human spirit, which transcends all limitations of time and space, yet this can be realised in an easy and spontaneous manner. This does not require any great penance, any conscious attempt. I am now realising very deeply the truth, that love of God or Godhead is natural and can never be achieved by conscious effort." (Dasgupta, Quest, 109; letter dated June 23, 1935, Paris)

²⁰³ Dasgupta, Outlook, 307.

²⁰⁴ "He could not say much about it when he came through." (Dasgupta, Quest, 44)

²⁰⁵ Dasgupta, Quest, 44-45.

taken a clean, refreshing bath in clear water, feels aversion for bath-oil if he has to soak himself again in this, so does a man feel when he wakes up from the state of deep meditation and comes to the ordinary conscious life. That is why this illustration has been used by the poets and the scriptures. A man coming back from *samādhi* realises the futility of all worldly achievements.²⁰⁶

This total detachment from worldly life as an effect of *samādhi* however, even though it helped him to remain calm and to maintain a certain mental distance in turbulent times, was not something Dasgupta was striving for.²⁰⁷ He never felt like leaving the world in order to become a recluse.²⁰⁸ Rather, his ideal was to have access to both this world and the beyond, without losing touch with either.

“These two [...] should be blended together in life [...]. One can be a dweller of both the worlds, the day-to-day life and the other beyond this, at the same time.”²⁰⁹

“I may be completely detached, yet deeply involved with all things concerning life.”²¹⁰

“Had I given myself completely to the deep states of meditation, how could I be so close to you and how could I be so deeply interested in all that happens to every one of you?”²¹¹

It is important to note that Dasgupta never speaks of his mind’s activities stopping; all he says is that his mind gets completely withdrawn from the world. In this sense his *samādhi* was not the “real thing,” it did not lead to *citta-vṛtti-nirodhaḥ*.²¹² But it is certain that he did experience altered states of consciousness which profoundly marked his personality, also because these states induced a deep feeling of bliss, of *ānanda*, in him.

„The joy, that runs through the veins and nerves, deluges, as it were, all other considerations and plunges the individual in such a stream of mystical ecstasy, that the complexity of the universe loses all its mystery, all doubts are resolved, and the whole personality of the individual is transformed into cheerfulness and blessedness.”²¹³

²⁰⁶ Dasgupta, Quest, 170 (letter dated February 13, 1943, Hazaribagh).

²⁰⁷ “He said he used to have a revaluation of values and lost interest in worldly life and its achievements. That was why he himself did not like to indulge too much in such mystical experience. His love of knowledge was very great and he found that mystical experiences might interfere with it. That was why he kept this side of his life as a guarded and sacred secret and managed to carry on the routine of outward life in a normal manner to all intents and purposes. But this was what kept him above the world and its turmoil and that was why he was never touched or affected by fear or frustration. His mind was serene and at peace with himself.” (Dasgupta, Quest, 45-46)

²⁰⁸ “I have investigated myself; it seems that the Creator has not made my heart equipped with the fitness or the attitude of a yogī who wishes to spend his life in complete loneliness away from all company. I do not have a great attraction towards a state of contentless meditation.” (Dasgupta, Quest, 169-170; letter dated February 13, 1943, Hazaribagh).

²⁰⁹ Dasgupta, Quest, 140 (letter dated June 16, 1936, London).

²¹⁰ Dasgupta, Quest, 104 (letter dated April 15, 1935).

²¹¹ Dasgupta, Quest, 103 (letter dated April 15, 1935).

²¹² In the following chapter we shall see that *nirodhaḥ* is in any case not something Dasgupta would ever have wanted to achieve.

²¹³ Dasgupta, Outlook, 288.

As a philosopher his experiences allowed him to directly verify certain claims made in the scriptures. Thus, he realised the true nature of the *kleśas* as described by Patañjali and he came to know that realms other than waking consciousness were real.

“[...] it was impossible for me to deny the existence of the mystical state of self-absorption so much referred to in the Upaniṣads.”²¹⁴

Ultimately Dasgupta’s capacity or gift to withdraw his mind from the outside world was a way to communicate with God or to feel God’s love – and there we touch on the most secret and best-hidden part of Dasgupta’s personality.

“He is the innermost friend, never turns away from me in disgust, never makes me feel ashamed. Always it is His face that is shining in my heart, which is becoming ever filled up by the touch of His feet. That is why I keep my Lord and my deep love and adoration for Him in the secret recesses of my heart. I cannot talk of it to others nor can I mix it up with the small, petty things of daily life. Today withdrawing myself from the world, from all of you, in the deepest quietness and loneliness, I experienced my closeness to Him.”²¹⁵

3.5. Dasgupta’s own philosophy

3.5.1. Critique of Indian philosophy, particularly of Vedānta

Dasgupta had a profound knowledge of both Indian and Western philosophy but he did not adhere to any given doctrine.²¹⁶ He was the leading specialist in the field of Yoga philosophy of his time but it would be wrong to think that in Sāṃkhya and Patañjali he had found a satisfactory system answering all his philosophical questions.

“My ways of thought are different from those of the ancients in our country, and also from that of the West. The more I come to know the more I think that I have to weave out my experience and my knowledge into a system which will express my attitude towards life and my achievements from different sources.”²¹⁷

Unfortunately Dasgupta was not given the time to write down his philosophy the way he had planned to;²¹⁸ his main endeavour which he concentrated all his efforts upon and which kept him busy until the last day of his life was the *History of Indian Philosophy*. As far as his own system of thought is concerned, we have his essay *Philosophy of Dependent Emergence* (1936) and his personal letters to Surama which abound in philosophical ideas (1932-1943). We also have *Religion and the*

²¹⁴ Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 252.

²¹⁵ Dasgupta, *Quest*, 149-150 (letter dated April 15, 1939, on a ship nearing Sicily).

²¹⁶ „Speaking of philosophy in general, I cannot think of any system which can give entire satisfaction. Each proceeds well for some distance and then breaks down suddenly.” (Dasgupta, *Yoga Philosophy*, 6)

²¹⁷ Dasgupta, *Quest*, 111-112 (letter dated July 6, 1935, on board of the M/N Victoria, Indian Ocean).

²¹⁸ „For a long time he had been thinking of writing his own system of philosophy. He had thought the problems over and his programme was to write it out in two volumes.” (Surama Dasgupta in her preface to Dasgupta, *Outlook*, v)

Rational Outlook, a large volume in which Dasgupta articulated “his own ideas about religion and ethics.”²¹⁹ Written during and after 1941 it was published posthumously in 1954 and represents a detailed discussion of the cultural, religious and philosophical history of the West, as well as of the modern development of physics, biology and psychology. Originally conceived as a series of lectures,²²⁰ *Religion and the Rational Outlook* mainly sums up and presents the facts and evolutions in all the above-mentioned fields, testifying Dasgupta’s tremendous knowledge and dazzling range of reading. The way in which Dasgupta elaborates on all the various subjects usually provides the reader with a first clue about his personal views about them, and in-between long passages of “mere” rendering of facts he also clearly expresses his own ideas. But an in-depth analysis of this monumental work would go far beyond the scope of this paper. I prefer to outline Dasgupta’s philosophy primarily as it arises from *Dependent Emergence* and his letters to Surama; these two sources provide the most concise view of his personal thoughts, unburdened by long scientific discussions. Wherever necessary or useful, however, I will refer to *Religion and the Rational Outlook*, too.

When Dasgupta first came to the West, as a student of Western philosophy in Cambridge, he became

“[...] more critical not only towards European philosophy but also towards Indian philosophy as a whole. I had thrown off the shackles of Hegel long before I went to England, but Einstein’s theory of relativity, the *anekānta* relativism of the Jains, and the realists with whom I came in contact in England, finally drew my mind away from all sorts of Absolutism in philosophy. I was getting sick of Absolutism for a long time but lacked the initiative to make an open revolt. My life in Cambridge invigorated me, and the main fruit that I reaped there was courage.”²²¹

Equipped with criticism and boldness, Dasgupta returned to India and reconsidered the philosophical systems of his homeland. More than a decade later, in 1936, he published what is probably his most outspoken evaluation of the strong points as well as the drawbacks of Indian philosophy. In the introductory pages to his essay on dependent emergence Dasgupta first praises the achievements of Indian thought and ascertains its value in comparison with Western philosophy.

“Indian philosophy is like a tropical forest, where almost all types of thought, that have been current in the West since the days of the Greeks, can be found. The writings of the commentators through successive generations abound in logical precision of thought and true philosophical acumen, which [sic] are almost unparalleled. The note of ethical purity, religious contentment and inwardness of mind, with which Indian philosophy rings, and the practical harmony between life and philosophy that forms the central theme of almost all systems of Indian philosophy, mark them out

²¹⁹ Surama Dasgupta in her preface to Dasgupta, *Outlook*, vi.

²²⁰ Sponsored by the Stephanos Nirmalendu lectureship which Dasgupta was offered by the Calcutta University in 1941.

²²¹ Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 252.

from systems of European philosophy, where philosophy is looked upon more as a theoretic science than as a science of practice."²²²

But – and this is Dasgupta's first criticism – Indian philosophy aimed at a liberated state in some higher realm, thus depreciating the earthly existence.

"But life here on earth was sorrowful and was only a life of probation. The real life consisted in the ushering in of a life of emancipation, which would absolutely extinguish this life. [...] Philosophy was never blended in harmony with the present life as we experience it without subordinating the latter to some other higher forms of existence. In this view, philosophy was the guide for the attainment of a permanent state of being from which there is no fall, no change."²²³

And, on a more systematic and theoretical level, Dasgupta then directs his critical mind at what is generally perceived to be the core concepts of Hinduism: Veda, liberation, karma and rebirth.

"Indian philosophy, in spite of its magnificent outlook, thoroughness of logical dialectic, its high appreciation of moral and religious values, is closed all round by four walls of unproved dogmas: (1) the dogma of the infallibility of the Vedic wisdom, (2) the dogma of emancipation and bondage, (3) the dogma of the law of Karma, (4) the dogma of rebirth."²²⁴

Whereas the first dogma (suggesting that "reason is unable to discover the truth" and thus "a creed which is almost suicidal to any philosophy in the modern sense of the term"²²⁵) can be dealt with separately, the other three are closely linked and form a cluster of interrelated beliefs. The doctrine of emancipation says that there exists an unconditional, super-conscious state, "the pure self as pure consciousness."²²⁶ There are two possible reactions to this statement: Either, everything else is regarded as illusory (Vedānta)²²⁷ or this emancipated state is not the only reality (Sāṃkhya).²²⁸ Neither answer is satisfactory.

"Thus the assumption of the unconditioned either as the only reality or as a parallel reality made it difficult either to explain change or the return from the change to the changelessness. Had it not been for the dogma of

²²² Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 252-253.

²²³ Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 253.

²²⁴ Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 253. In his presidential address at the Indian Philosophical Congress session at Delhi in 1936 Dasgupta repeated the same critique (cf. Dasgupta, *Humanity*, 63).

²²⁵ Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 253.

²²⁶ Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 254.

²²⁷ „Relation of identity, or rather the identity itself, is the only reality. The act of relating implied in identity, which is responsible for the notion of difference, is the nescience (*avidyā*) somehow subsistent in the identity. So long as the identity remains in the ineffable state, there is no relating; but as soon as it descends into the knowable, it can only do so through the extraneous association of a relating implied in its very nature. Relying on the unrelational ineffable state as the ultimate reality, the relating factor implied in it is regarded as false." (Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 254)

²²⁸ „Others, however, such as the followers of the Sāṃkhya, while admitting the existence of the unconditioned as the ineffable super-consciousness (the *puruṣas*), could not restrict the concept of reality to it alone, and were obliged to admit another order of reality as an indefinite complex (the *prakṛti*), which somehow evolved from itself, varied forms of mutual relations, and through them, qualities and their appearances." (Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 254)

emancipation, the systems would not have been fettered in this way, and a more rational explanation might have been effected."²²⁹

According to Dasgupta, the dogma of emancipation or liberation "led to the view that all our experiential states are states of bondage,"²³⁰ and bondage ultimately produces karma.

"Bondage, thus considered, has to be regarded as the natural tendency of some mental states to flow towards other mental states (which in the moral terminology is called "*tṛṣṇā*" or desire), and the actual flow of it and its resultants are called Karma."²³¹

The next problem is that emancipation (which Dasgupta calls "hypothetical") is never experienced by anybody²³² and so "the only way left was its indefinite postponement," in other words: rebirth.

"Such a postponement necessitated the postulation of a practically endless series of succeeding lives, through which the relational mental structure persisted."²³³

Rebirth, therefore, had nothing to do with (re)establishing justice but was the logical and necessary result of the fact that nobody ever reaches final liberation.

Ultimately the cause of karma and rebirth lies in the nature of the mind, and freedom is only possible once the mind is annihilated.

"The cause of this rebirth is *tṛṣṇā* or Karma, which represents the relational tendency and the actualisation of it, which is inherent in the very structure of the mind. The possibility of emancipation necessitated the postulation of the possibility of the destruction of mind and this implied the assumption of an inherent contradiction in mind, such that, while at certain stages in co-presence with the unconditioned it would produce relational groups, at other stages it would cease to produce them."²³⁴

From this strong and very heretical critique of Indian philosophy as a whole it is possible to glean the main constituents of Dasgupta's own philosophical ideas: refusal to declare this life and world as an illusion and to thus devalue them, refusal of hypothetical dogmas which lie beyond the possibility of experience (such as emancipation, karma and rebirth) and a wish to use reason freely. His definition of karma also implies that he had a particular interest in the human mind and its workings. Of all Indian philosophical systems, Vedānta was the one which represented the antipode to most of Dasgupta's convictions.

²²⁹ Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 254-255.

²³⁰ Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 255.

²³¹ Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 255.

²³² Cf. Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 255. We must assume that the mystical states Dasgupta himself experienced were regarded by him as something else than super-conscious liberation from where there is no return.

²³³ Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 255.

²³⁴ Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 255.

“A philosophy which starts from certain a priori notions and seeks to deduce or distort all phenomena according to them, or which merely occupies itself with dealing with one or a few special kinds of experience, does not deserve the name of philosophy in our sense of the word. [...] as an illustration of [this] we can take the philosophy of the Vedānta.”²³⁵

To Dasgupta, the Vedāntic denial of the reality of the world had grim consequences for India, not only as far as philosophy was concerned but also on a social and political level.

“The scriptures, particularly the Vedāntins, have declared the world to be a dream, the Buddhists have agreed to this and, in consequence, renunciation of life and the world has been given importance. This has led to the denial of the world and all that goes with it. Our prophet of love (Śrī Caitanya) spent his days in weeping for the love of God, but did not do anything for men in general. If communion with God is the only goal to be achieved, then this world loses its significance. Thus we tried to deny the world in our religion and philosophy. Hence the world also denied us and is passing us by. Those nations who accepted this world very staunchly, have come forward and defeated us.”²³⁶

Dasgupta could not deny the reality of the world and therefore Sāṃkhya and Yoga, even though they also subscribe to the above-mentioned dogmas, were more acceptable to him than Vedānta.

²³⁵ Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 262-263. Dasgupta's letters to Surama abound in passages criticising Vedānta, either directly or indirectly. For example: “Therefore, the way to fulfilment is not by negation, not by declaring that this is not, that is not, but by affirming this is that, that is that.” (Dasgupta, *Quest*, 85-86, letter dated October 6 and 7, 1932, Jaipur); “I can never accept the thought-processes of our mind as illusion or ignorance. If the scriptures wanted to suggest this for some technical reason, if they wished to consider meditational knowledge as the true metaphysical knowledge and, therefore, they called thought-processes which were different from meditation as ignorance, there might be something in that. But whatever that may be, I feel very deeply the longing of my mind for experience and its expression and I do not know if I can be any time free from them.” (Dasgupta, *Quest*, 172, letter dated February 13, 1943, Hazaribagh); “There is no duality in Brahman; therefore, we can neither experience it, nor can we believe in it. I do not know what kind of truth is that about which we cannot say anything. In the knowledge of Brahman we become one with Brahman. We say truth is that which does not change. But in the state of Brahma-knowledge we cannot know if we are changing or not, because in that state I do not have my mind, I lose my ‘ego’ or ‘I’. So the definition has to be modified. We call that truth in which we do not perceive any change. It may also be that, when we become one with Brahman, the Brahman may still be revolving like a spinning wheel, but I cannot have any power to move. Besides, I do not think that modern man has any interest in becoming merged into an all-quiet, static existence instead of trying to understand this practical life of ours which may have both truth and falsity. That is why it seems such a waste of words in trying to interpret the Vedānta. I want to experience the bigger aspect of Brahman, in our quest for knowledge, in our enquiry about the facts and truth of life.” (Dasgupta, *Quest*, 231, letter dated October 23, 1943, Agra).

²³⁶ Dasgupta, *Quest*, 230 (letter dated October 23, 1943, Agra). Also: “Such attempts to have recourse to an unknown mystery in everything ignoring the visible, tangible world has been a serious handicap in our intellectual endeavours.” (Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 98)

3.5.2. Love of life

Let us now turn away from what Dasgupta criticised to that which he was convinced about, believed in and propagated. First of all, Dasgupta deeply and intensely loved life. He loved and cherished all the possible experiences life had to offer him, be they happy or sad.

“Life is a great experience.”²³⁷

“[...] I have a positive attraction towards life and there is a strong urge to know and experience deeply the truths and meaning of life in its manifold aspects and to give expression to them. For me no experience is too small, or is to be treated very lightly. I love life which means a variety of experiences and I love to express in writing and speech the truth that I have felt. This gives me the greatest delight.”²³⁸

In nature he saw an expression of the ever-creative life force, and to him, man was an integral part of this divine, immortal energy. Both life and nature were a source of beauty and joy.

“I feel a very close relation between nature and myself so much so that even a tree seems to whisper its message to me.”²³⁹

“It is a great mistake to say that man is outside nature. [...] Does not man have a place in this great harmony? As far as man is only a living being, he reflects all the mystery and symphony of nature’s eternal music. But even in his conscious life of variety of thoughts and emotions, the resonance and reflection of nature’s music and beauty have a very great significance and contribution and lead to infinite joy. That is why man’s heart throbs in tune with the beauty of the dawn and the evenings. [...] That is why I say that when we try to collect ourselves standing before this great grandeur of nature, we are bound to perceive the silent, voiceless gift of nature which flows deep into our intellectual and emotional life and that is how its offerings will come to us as great blessings, as great fulfilment.”²⁴⁰

“That which does not die, is immortal. What is there that does not die? It is the living of life, the incessant flow of life which bathes us that does not die.”²⁴¹

Ultimately it is God who expresses Himself through nature, man and the incessant life force.

²³⁷ Dasgupta, Quest 83 (letter dated September 30, 1932, Calcutta).

²³⁸ Dasgupta, Quest, 171 (letter dated February 13, 1943, Hazaribagh).

²³⁹ Dasgupta, Quest, 155 (letter dated June 29, 1939, Oxford).

²⁴⁰ Dasgupta, Quest, 173 (letter dated February 13, 1943, Hazaribagh).

²⁴¹ Dasgupta, Quest, 221 (letter dated October 18, 1943, Agra).

"I do not wish to postulate an ultimate metaphysics. But one thing is clear to me today and that is this: that great Being who manifests Himself in water, in vegetation, in everything that we see and feel, is in me also and I am a part of His, I am also one of His manifestations."²⁴²

"I love and appreciate the experience that flows from life and nature. So I come to Him quietly and enjoy my contact with Him."²⁴³

"But I am not concerned with the problem of life and death. My interest lies in life. So whenever I look at the vibratory movement in nature and life I have discovered the eternal deity of life who has made it possible for the universe, man and his highest values to come into being."²⁴⁴

Nature also supplied Dasgupta with many images for philosophical thoughts, be it in the waves of an ocean,²⁴⁵ the leaves of a tree²⁴⁶ or a little creeper growing into a strong plant.²⁴⁷

The human body, so often depreciated in Indian philosophy, is equally part of the divine flow of life.

²⁴² Dasgupta, Quest, 166-167 (letter dated May 21, 1924, Hazaribagh).

²⁴³ Dasgupta, Quest, 150 (letter dated April 15, 1939, on a ship nearing Sicily).

²⁴⁴ Dasgupta, Quest, 226 (letter dated October 21, 1943, Agra).

²⁴⁵ "It is one thing to see one wave rising after another in the mighty ocean and it is another to discover how one wave is related to the other. All truths, moral, political or otherwise, are connected together and the mystery of their relation is worth knowing." (Dasgupta, Quest, 11; letter dated July 6, 1935, on board of the M/N Victoria, Indian Ocean).

²⁴⁶ "Leaves grow on the branches, they grow on the top, they grow directly on the body of the tree, but there is a distinct rhythm, a pattern in each one of them. Not a single leaf interfered with the growth of another, it makes way for others and yet at the same time grows delightfully in its own way. A single lotus bud contains the petals in it, but these are huddled up together. One cannot separate them, any such attempt just ruins those soft, tiny things. But slowly and steadily when these little bits start blossoming, every one of them blooms in a subtle harmony, in liveliness, in its own distinction. Yet in union with other parts, thus contributing to the charming composition of the whole, lies the unique beauty of a full-grown lotus.

The Upanishad says – 'Let Him develop us together.' This togetherness (*saha*) signifies the unity of us all together with our unity with the whole, the Lord, or master. This '*saha*' also means – He, the Lord, who is in all unities. Therefore, we see the whole universe lies in harmony with all that is in there. This unity is the rhythm of life, the symphony of all distinct and separate notes. If we transgress it, there is death, because separateness is false, it is destructive and that is the meaning of death." (Dasgupta, Quest, 139-140; letter dates June 12, 1936, London).

²⁴⁷ "The way in which life comes out of non-life and mind comes out of life, is the same which leads itself to the development of the spiritual truth in man depending on the mind and the body. An agriculturist will do harm to his crops if he obstructs light and air necessary for plant life. He plants all his seedlings in the open, where they will get adequate light and nourishment from the air necessary for their growth. So also all attempts to make the spiritual truth blossom in us must be based on the normal processes of life. There may be hardships, obstructions, but the spiritual life will grow and develop through them. A tender creeper looks almost dried up in the scorching rays of the sun, but out of this it slowly builds up its green foliage and flowers. So we may have hardships and difficulties in our ordinary life, but these can all be harmonised and made useful for the development of the spiritual level in life. Therefore, we should not neglect that which is usual and ordinary. Only our attempt should not be confined to the ordinary, but it should be directed to the development of finer experience and deeper joy of life. Life is valuable and it should be utilised for growing that which is beyond the normal and beyond the ordinary. Herein lies the real value or the truth of all existence." (Dasgupta, Quest, 116-117; letter dated October 24, 1935, Darjeeling).

“Whatever man builds up in this life depends to a great extent on the materials of the body. The ancients had the mistaken notion of looking down on the body. If God has implanted a higher thing in the body, that thing should not come into conflict with it. [...] So one need not look down upon the body. The physical energy will impart its glow to the mind and the spirit. We do not know what exists after the death of this body; any desire for a survival after death has no meaning at all. From this point of view Hindu scriptures had plunged into a whirlpool, the result of which has not been good.”²⁴⁸

3.5.3. Philosophy starts with experience

In accordance with Dasgupta’s love of life and nature, his philosophy is not based on lofty presuppositions but on experience²⁴⁹ which he defines as follows.

“The word experience covers for us all possible mental facts. [...] All sense-occurrences, feelings, desires, willing, the logical and the reflective phenomena, images or the imaginings, *a priori* faiths, all stock of ideas derived from social intercourse, all promptings of value, hopes and aspirations of men (civilised or uncivilised), psychological experiences of all descriptions, the inheritance of knowledge that we have through the works of other people, are all included within experience. Experience also includes the mystical experiences of religious men, the aesthetic experiences of the artists, the emotional experiences of the devotees and the supernormal trance experiences of the Yogins.”²⁵⁰

Dasgupta distinguishes between individual experience and human experience as a whole²⁵¹ and he states that experiences of feelings and emotions proceed mostly “from the compatibility or the incompatibility of the relations that individual mental states have with the bigger human experience from which they have bubbled up.”²⁵² Moral, aesthetic and religious experiences are also in close connection to man’s social environment, yet not necessarily or exclusively. Dasgupta envisages the possibility of emancipation from all social bounds, particularly in independent and creative minds, but at the cost of conflict and isolation. It does not take much to understand that here he is talking primarily about himself.

“Yet we are not entirely bound to the experiences of our immediate social surroundings or to the most distant human horizon of thought; for there is always a scope, in at least some minds, for the creation of new relations and new experiences as newly emergent forms with which they particularly identify their personalities. There they may be absolutely lonely and may come in such a conflict with their immediate social surroundings that they

²⁴⁸ Dasgupta, *Quest*, 221 (letter dated October 18, 1943, Agra).

²⁴⁹ “Philosophy [...] has to be founded on experience, either direct or indirect.” (Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 255); “The aim and purpose of philosophy is to give a connected and systematic explanation of all our experiences in their mutual connection and relatedness and, through them, of the phenomena which they denote.” (Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 262)

²⁵⁰ Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 256.

²⁵¹ “All that is felt, perceived or realised, forms the content of our individual experience, whereas all that is gathered or learnt from the direct experiences of other people forms the content of human experience in one.” (Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 257)

²⁵² Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 259.

may be smashed into pieces as it were, but still they maintain their confidence in their newly emergent forms of knowledge, feeling or belief. In such cases the validity of their beliefs does not depend upon a previous history of reference, but upon the new forms that have emerged out of such a reference and in their uniqueness possess special history. Their history is dominated by the creative process of their own thought."²⁵³

This passage can be interpreted as prophetic (as far as Dasgupta's own being "smashed into pieces", some years later, is concerned), on the other hand it shows Dasgupta's tremendous confidence in his own experiences as well as in the power of his mind. Experience to him is reality.²⁵⁴ He cannot deny the possibility that "there are facts, entities or relations behind the phenomena as determinants of them" and that they would be real, too, but he does not want to focus on them. Experience will eventually lead to what lies beyond.

"[...] we shall have to deal only with what is experienced; that alone has supreme importance for us. It is only through what is experienced that what is not experienced will gradually come in our view in an indirect manner."²⁵⁵

3.5.4. Philosophy and Science

Did Dasgupta's belief in the reality of this world and his love of nature, life and experience trigger off his insatiable knowledge about all the disciplines of modern science or was it the other way round? Probably an interplay was at work. Dasgupta's expertise in the natural sciences however doubtlessly determined his way of dealing with philosophy.

"The method of philosophy is that of science. It analyses experiences and the facts denoted by them, collects them, and arranges them in order, forms hypotheses and theories to explain them in relation to other experiences. It thus uses both the deductive and the inductive methods of science and attempts a systematisation of all known facts and experiences."²⁵⁶

Philosophy turns into the highest science of all, trying to grasp and understand the great laws or the general outlines which lie hidden behind the specific results of individual sciences (which Dasgupta describes as mere tributaries to the vast sea of philosophical knowledge).

"[...] philosophy takes the results of those sciences and other facts arising out of human relations and tries to bring them together in such a system of relations that it may discover a common groundplan which holds them all; or if facts in a special universe cannot be harmonised with facts of other universes, philosophy would show the extent to which explanation is possible and what are its natural limits. Thus Physics, Chemistry, Biology, History, Sociology, Anthropolgy, Aesthetics, moral experiences, psychological experiences, mystic experiences, are all the feeders of the science of philosophy. Philosophy deals with all the objective, the subjective,

²⁵³ Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 259-260.

²⁵⁴ "With me reality means all that can be experienced directly or indirectly [...]." (Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 263)

²⁵⁵ Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 264.

²⁵⁶ Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 264-265.

and the supra-subjective facts in their broad outline of relationship, leaving the study of the specific and special relationships and facts in charge of special departments of science."²⁵⁷

In his very last article, "Science, Philosophy and Religion," published shortly after his death in 1953, Dasgupta even puts philosophy (and religion, which is hardly different from philosophy)²⁵⁸ on the same level as science, stating that these three disciplines

"[...] are not in conflict with one another, but act in co-operation for the advancement of the superior elevation of man, or bringing about peace, harmony and friendship through knowledge, emotion and spiritual development."²⁵⁹

This equation is based on the fact that both religion and philosophy as well as science are systems of belief – religion believing in the "ultimate reality of thought, and the moral implication of the destiny of man in attaining higher and higher spiritual value," and science believing that

"[...] the real is the rational, [prompting] its votaries to move forward by instilling a dominant faith in the possibility of the ultimate solution of the irrational elements, that one might experience in one's way of investigation."²⁶⁰

3.5.5. No need for liberation

Dasgupta's philosophy was based on life, the various aspects of which could be studied by different branches of science. Liberation in the sense that all life processes come to an end was not a concept he cherished; life was immortal, never to stop, and therefore Dasgupta emphasised the dynamic, moving aspect of his philosophy.

"[...] my religion is not a static or a stagnant one; there is no place for liberation in my religion. I cannot hold out any hope of eternal quietude. My religion is the religion of movement, the impulse and the impetus to express myself in various forms."²⁶¹

"Those who have imagined the cessation of life to be its purpose, may have agreed to the concept of liberation, but this cannot be a goal to those who do not wish the display of life to end; to them liberation does not stand for a purpose. However much we may try to explain liberation as a state of realisation of the infinite, it will still be a limit since it will be a stop to the flow of life."²⁶²

²⁵⁷ Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 265.

²⁵⁸ „In India we do not make much difference between philosophy and religion. Every system of philosophy becomes a religion when it is surcharged with spiritual feeling and emotion." (Dasgupta, *Science, Philosophy*, 5).

²⁵⁹ Dasgupta, *Science, Philosophy*, 6.

²⁶⁰ Dasgupta, *Science, Philosophy*, 6.

²⁶¹ Dasgupta, *Quest*, 186 (letter dated February 16, 1943, Hazaribagh).

²⁶² Dasgupta, *Quest*, 93 (letter dated March 18, 1935, on board of the M/N Victoria, Aden).

Even the Self, traditionally conceived as a static entity, was declared by Dasgupta to be in motion and ever-changing.

“Our scriptures say that the Brahman, or the self, or the *puruṣa* is ever the same, beyond all changes and that matter alone is changing. But I maintain just the opposite of this. I think matter is ever the same and the self is changing.”²⁶³

God, “this ultimate and the highest truth of the beyond,”

“[...] acts as the indwelling moving force in us, which wakes up all our sense faculties, vital powers and the mind.”²⁶⁴

Thus animated by the divine life force, the human being and particularly the human mind retained much of Dasgupta’s interest.

3.5.6. Mind, life and evolution

Dasgupta was much intrigued by the theory of evolution which he critically discussed in the chapter “Biology and Religion” of *Religion and the Rational Outlook*. On the one hand he was fascinated by the concept of progress from simple to complex, from low to high, on the other hand he recognised that the evolution theory could not satisfactorily explain all the phenomena of life.

“[...] in spite of all that may be said in favour of the theory of evolution as being a plausible explanation of the nature of the world and the various forms of life, that have passed away and are still existing, the theory of evolution can but show us only a small fragment of the puzzling questions, which we are unable to solve on any of its interpretations.”²⁶⁵

In particular, the evolutionists could not account for the way in which life and mind should have emerged from matter. To Dasgupta

“[...] the concept of life is so unique that the leap from inorganic matter to organic life is beyond comprehension.”²⁶⁶

Life remains a mysterious force – after analysing the differences between inorganic and organic substances, Dasgupta concludes that

“Life, *whatever it may be*, manufactures the material stuff suited for its manifestation by itself from other organic and inorganic substances in a manner and to the extent that no laboratory chemist can ever hope to do.”²⁶⁷

²⁶³ Dasgupta, Quest, 121 (letter dated April 21, 1936, Arabian Sea).

²⁶⁴ Dasgupta, Quest, 241 (“The Concept of God and Spirituality,” Calcutta 1943). Cf. also: “The word spirituality is denoted by the term *adhyātma*, which means the fullness of the self and the self means that which is ever moving. So the word *adhyātma* can be interpreted as that which is all the time moving us. Since this is beyond the mental world, it sends its messages from beyond the mind and guides it.” Dasgupta, Quest, 240 („The Concept of God and Spirituality,” Calcutta 1943)

²⁶⁵ Dasgupta, Outlook, 196.

²⁶⁶ Dasgupta, Outlook, 196.

²⁶⁷ Dasgupta, Emergence, 281 (italics C.G.).

Similarly, the evolution theory is unable to say when and how mind came into being. Dasgupta, as everybody else, could but speculate about the exact moment of its birth in the course of evolution.

“It may well be supposed that the crude beginnings of mind-complex must have begun at least with the unicellular animals.”²⁶⁸

Fully conscious about the drawbacks of the evolution theory,²⁶⁹ Dasgupta nevertheless strongly adhered to the idea of a general, linear movement in an upward or forward direction which he described very much in Darwinian terms.²⁷⁰ To him it was clear that nature, animals and man were all part of an overall progress.

“[...] one point seems to be reasonably established, and that is this, that all through the different levels of evolution, notwithstanding their varied characters and capabilities, there has been a steady progress in evolving richer and higher form [sic] of life and mind.”²⁷¹

And these richer and higher forms of life and mind have one trait in common: they are inter-related complexes of a network-structure and as such inter-dependent. The lineal concept of evolution is only valid on a global level; as soon as we get to life and mind in more detail it has to be dropped. In animals and man the evolutionary process led to the emerging of the following interdependent complexes:

“[...] the life-process-complex and the body-complex, and though body-complex is the basis of the emergent life, the body-complex is itself also an emergent of the life-process-complex. Neither of them can be said to be prior to the other. We have here a peculiar instance of two relational complexes of a different order, mutually determining each other, just as we have in man the mind-complex, determining the life-process-complex and the body-complex. No instance of this order is available in any of the lower levels.”²⁷²

“Mind” is defined by Dasgupta as

“[...] a symbolic term for what is in reality a process of weaving experiences together in a definite and systematic order, which transforms a denotation of objective presentation into an experience, by associating it with meaning. In one sense, therefore, mind is not an entity, it is a series of relating processes, not in a lineal order but in a structural order. When anything is presented to the mind it is not introduced at a particular point (using a spatial imagery) but in interconnected waves and processes of inter-relating.”²⁷³

²⁶⁸ Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 282.

²⁶⁹ „The query as to how the first spark of life appeared, and the different stages of intelligence and consciousness evolved in their varied forms and capacities, remains unanswered; also the transition from one form of life to another specific form has remained unsolved.” (Dasgupta, *Outlook*, 204)

²⁷⁰ „As life advances from the vegetable to the animal and from the lower animals to the highest, the human, we have a gradual advance of a multifold differentiation of functions and activities which all work in a selective harmonious manner leading to the development of the body and the reproduction of similar bodies in it in endless series.” (Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 281); “[...] as the mind emerges out of the body and begins to assert itself in its spontaneous existence [...]” (Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 283)

²⁷¹ Dasgupta, *Outlook*, 204.

²⁷² Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 281-282.

²⁷³ Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 266-267.

Knowledge, one of the main functions of the mind, is exclusively based on relations.

“Our knowledge does not correspond with the object, nor is it a fact of such a nature that it means a modification of the entire state of the universe, nor is it a mystic history-less illumination or a mere product of co-operating collections, but it is such that we have one to one relation with the so-called external object and also with our mental history. It is a function of them both. The word “orange” has no similarity with the round yellow object, though it denotes it by a specified type of relationship; so our knowledge is related to the so-called objects which have no nature in themselves except in relationship with other relational complexes. [...] Knowledge is possible only in the possibility of relational structures emergent from the mind-complex.”²⁷⁴

As the mind progresses upwards, it produces what Dasgupta calls “value.”

“[The mind] begins to show itself as a true individual, the integrated history of which, having risen above the appetite functions, begins to reveal itself in accordance with a selective purpose, which is its own emergent as value.”²⁷⁵

Value is associated with “the progressive march of the higher man”²⁷⁶ and may appear as

“[...] the beautiful, the good, the realisation in knowledge, the realisation in will, the realisation in higher non-biological emotions turning towards an apex as God or in any other form.”²⁷⁷

By stating that love is the only force which can hold different minds together, Dasgupta definitely steps out of science into spirituality²⁷⁸ and clearly shows that the evolution of the whole creation culminates in the realisation of the divine.

“In the higher evolution of man we find that thought evolves into love of truth, love of man and love of God.”²⁷⁹

A mind which has risen above the biological tendencies and is guided by value touches on the “beginning of saintliness.”²⁸⁰ The mind, therefore, is the place where an encounter with the divine is possible, and just as Dasgupta did not want the life force to come to an end (through emancipation) he also never wanted to stop the mind from functioning (as Sāṃkhya and Yoga, for example, propagated).

²⁷⁴ Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 276-277.

²⁷⁵ Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 283.

²⁷⁶ Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 283.

²⁷⁷ Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 285.

²⁷⁸ “Love is thus the fundamental non-biological relationship which can cement together in a common goal of higher relationship all minds of the past, the present and the future. Such a possibility cannot happen unless and until the apperception of value as a self-emergent purpose of the mind-life is enthroned in the dominating position of a queen.” (Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 284)

²⁷⁹ Dasgupta, *Outlook*, 334.

²⁸⁰ Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 284.

“Our process, therefore, is not a process of mental annihilation but a richer process of mental growth, where mind assumes its true role of an emergent reality linked to the body as its basis but leading a life which is entirely its own.”²⁸¹

As far as a possible agent behind the various evolutionary processes is concerned, Dasgupta held that

“[t]here may not be sufficient grounds in admitting a personal God who creates the world and its denizens out of nothing, but the study of Biology naturally brings home to us the fact, that we cannot do without postulating some sort of dynamic teleology or purposiveness as controlling the chain of progress from the inorganic to the organic and from the lowest stages of the organic life to its highest development in man. The secret of life is as much hidden in mystery as are the various stages in the development of life.”²⁸²

This statement reflects Dasgupta’s personality. Captivated and fascinated by science and its progress he neither could nor wanted to ignore the spellbinding and intriguing results it was constantly yielding, and yet he knew through his own experience about other realms of existence where more mysterious forces were at work. Even though in Dasgupta’s system of thought everything was interrelated and interdependent,²⁸³ up to a point where it could not be determined what came first,²⁸⁴ this whole network of body, mind, ego, knowledge and social surroundings (etc.) was nevertheless moving into a specific direction, namely forward and upward, guided by some divine force. Dasgupta managed to maintain a scientific discourse and to integrate all his physical, chemical and biological knowledge into his philosophy,²⁸⁵ but ultimately he claimed that a

²⁸¹ Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 284.

²⁸² Dasgupta, *Outlook*, 198.

²⁸³ “It is these processes excited in a limited field which, being in themselves relational complexes, behave as an individual [sic] that is referred to as “I” in “I perceive.”” (Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 272); “Knowledge implies the knowledge of relations. [...] Knowledge is possible only in the possibility of relational structures emergent from the mind-complex” (Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 277); “A thing is nothing but a complex of relations.” (Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 277).

²⁸⁴ “The distinguishing feature of life is that here the relational modes are of a dynamic nature, such that the reality or existence of any particular mode is dependent on other modes of a different order and *vice versa*. We have here a situation in which a particular relation-mode or function does not exist *per se* but through others, and there is thus a mutual dependence of such a nature that it is impossible to start with any one of them as being prior to the other. We have here a circle of revolutions in which any point can be regarded either as the first or as the last. Yet the first is in the last and the last is in the first. If this relationship is such in life, it is still more so with regard to the flowing activity of the mind-complex, which is absolutely unrepresentable by any terms of physical notation, which behaves as an integrated growing whole and yet keeps its co-variant relations with life-processes, the body and the environment.” (Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 282-283)

²⁸⁵ For example when he explains the process of vision: “What is presented to the eye are certain reflected rays of light, which have been distorted in various manners (inter-molecular or physical) by various objects. Thus, instead of saying that the external something – the object – is presented to us, we may as well say that the external something, commonly called the rays of light, impinge on the eye in a distorted manner, yet holding a special order among them. [...] At the apex of all these processes (which are known only by scientific investigations of recent times and of which we are not directly aware) there is an emergent quality of colour-sensation, at the basis of which there are sundry physiological processes. This colour, again, in order that we may be explicitly conscious of it, must be

higher energy acted through everything, through matter and mind, tying together all the various parts in a huge network of interdependence which, as a whole, was progressing towards the realisation of that very mysterious energy.

3.5.7. Fulfilment

Dasgupta's philosophy culminates in spirituality; he enlarged Darwin's evolutionary concept by adding the spiritual dimension.

"Our biological impulses are directed towards the preservation of the body, but with the development of these biological forces there comes a stage when, over and above the body, another world comes into being, and this is known as the mental world, or the thought world. The function of this new world is to help the preservation of life and the body. But if it goes on developing further, then we find the advent of another new world which may be called spiritual."²⁸⁶

It is important to note that Dasgupta never mentions reincarnation in this context. The growth of man into a spiritual being either takes place in one life or is the result of an interrelated evolution of humankind as a whole.

On this highest level, man has the possibility to experience God directly.

"[...] the great men and the saints have expressed in their speech and conduct the truth that they have felt God and that they have perceived Him."²⁸⁷

Dasgupta never doubted such an experience; to the one who has made it, it is an undeniable truth which cannot be "subject of logical discussion."²⁸⁸ God cannot be perceived by our ordinary senses; He

"[...] can only be realised through the illumination of an enlightenment or meditation. This truth is the subtler of the subtlest. Therefore, it can be felt only by realising the finer and nobler aspects of ourselves."²⁸⁹

It takes intuitive knowledge which is

"[...] the knowledge that comes to us directly, where all ideas of analysis and contradiction vanish in the very sweeping wave of our intimate union with the object, and all the meaning and significance would be lost if we make any attempt to analyse the situation or the materials of our immediate intuition."²⁹⁰

integrated in the mental history and be subordinated to the principles of working of the mind-complex." (Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 275)

²⁸⁶ Dasgupta, *Quest*, 239 ("The Concept of God and Spirituality," Calcutta 1943).

²⁸⁷ Dasgupta, *Quest*, 236-237 ("The Concept of God and Spirituality," Calcutta 1943).

²⁸⁸ Dasgupta, *Quest*, 237 ("The Concept of God and Spirituality," Calcutta 1943).

²⁸⁹ Dasgupta, *Quest*, 241 ("The Concept of God and Spirituality," Calcutta 1943).

²⁹⁰ Dasgupta, *Outlook*, 150.

Once negative emotions like selfishness, pride, vanity and jealousy are overcome, the road to what Dasgupta called the “supra-biological truth” lies open. Getting there is, according to Dasgupta, “the dearest of all our experiences.”²⁹¹

“Those who have been great and saintly, have torn asunder this veil of ignorance and greed, have realised the highest message and have declared that there is nothing in this world which can come near the greatest of all our achievements, which is the realisation of the highest in us. This is the godliness or the realisation of God in man.”²⁹²

As we have seen above, it is the spiritual force which is responsible for man’s evolution towards higher regions.

“[...] it is God who emerges within in and through our value-sense, pulling us up in and through the emergent ideals and with whom I may feel myself to be united in the deepest bonds of love. [...] When a consuming love of this description is once generated, man is raised to Godhood and God to man.”²⁹³

²⁹¹ Dasgupta, *Quest*, 241 (“The Concept of God and Spirituality,” Calcutta 1943).

²⁹² Dasgupta, *Quest*, 242-243 (“The Concept of God and Spirituality,” Calcutta 1943).

²⁹³ Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 285; cf. also Dasgupta, *Quest*, 241 (“The Concept of God and Spirituality,” Calcutta 1943).

3.5.8. Conclusions

Dasgupta was a dweller of many worlds, and in particular he was a dweller of worlds opposing each other: East and West, science and mysticism. We have seen how much his philosophy was determined by the two great forces which he found himself subjugated to, in his heart, soul and mind: scientific interest and love of God. In *Religion and the Rational Outlook*, Dasgupta tried to define the qualities and values of both science and religion and to assess their relationship. On the one hand, science and religion deal with very diverse subjects²⁹⁴ and stand for two totally different kinds of processes or movements,²⁹⁵ on the other hand, the discrepancy between these two opposing spheres disappears as soon as a scientist is driven, so to speak, by a super-personal force, in his endeavour to discover the truth.²⁹⁶ The divinely inspired scientist (as well as the scientifically analysing mystic) thus reunites in himself what at first glance appears to be incompatible.

Endowed with a huge capacity to easily grasp, learn and remember facts from all different fields of knowledge and gifted with a natural talent for altered states of consciousness, Dasgupta travelled back and forth between this world and the beyond. Studying both Indian and Western philosophy with an open, liberal and increasingly critical mind, and abhorring absolutism in any form, Dasgupta's own philosophical ideas were a personal mixture of traditional and independent thought. This endeavour to harmonise, to blend and to bring together various spheres of life is a key to Dasgupta's way of thinking. His love of life and nature was too great and his interest in science too keen for him to declare this world as illusory; on the other hand his mystical experiences were just as real to him and thus he could not deny the existence of the spiritual world.

²⁹⁴ „Science is concerned with the general conditions which are observed to regulate physical phenomena; whereas religion is wrapped up in the contemplations of moral, spiritual and aesthetic values.“ (Dasgupta, Outlook, 159)

²⁹⁵ „The main point which I have been trying to explain in drawing this comparison between religious experience and the experience that guides the poet is, that both of them reveal a dimension of experience which is entirely different from that of science. Science deals with concepts and their analysis and logic is its handmaid. Here we split up the whole into its parts, in order to arrive at more and more definite and precise conception of the ultimate structure of things. The investigation of science takes us away from the beautiful world of colours and sounds, shapes and forms, symmetric lines and contour, to the ultimate waves which are only mathematically definable. The attempt of mathematics has been to express in the symbol of numbers certain observations, which do not present themselves to our senses. From the world of every day reality we are led to a magical world of ultimates where the entire material world of extreme diversity is despoiled of all its manifold characters and reduced to a pantheism of mere waves. In religion and poetry we follow the opposite direction, the direction of synthesis and the direction of totality; and here also we are led to a magic world, where in the diversity of the manifold world of shapes and forms, sounds and colours, pleasure and pain, the beloved and the hateful, all merge together into a solid experience which stands as the ultimate at the other extreme.“ (Dasgupta, Outlook, 294)

²⁹⁶ „I should not for a moment hesitate to say that though the vision of God does not appear to such a person as the mighty supernatural Being living in heaven, yet a supreme urge for the attainment of truth overwhelms him completely. It is here, that the difference between science and religion vanishes.“ (Dasgupta, Outlook, 326)

“One can be a dweller of both the worlds, the day-to-day life and the other beyond this, at the same time. [...] This truth of being true to both the worlds, is the quest (*sādhanā*) of the modern-day world. I do not wish to have the one-sided emphasis either of the ancients or of the modern thinkers. These two aspects of life should be harmonised together to give us a fuller view and richer content of life.”²⁹⁷

Richness and fulness imply roundness, and all around him did Dasgupta cast his net of curiosity, inquisitiveness and thirst for knowledge and experience. Traditional Hindu thought with its central beliefs in the Vedic scriptures, emancipation, karma and rebirth appeared to Dasgupta like a narrow dogma, stifling his wish and need to use his reason freely and to rely on his own experience. Neither could he subscribe to the Vedāntic doctrine of the illusory nature of this universe, nor did he envisage a liberated state somewhere beyond time and space, possible only through the annihilation of the mind.²⁹⁸ His vision was a dynamic, moving one, where an ever-changing and ever-creating life force (God, the Self) expressed itself through this whole universe. Dasgupta felt God in nature and he felt Him in his life experiences as well as in his creative mind. The human mind, being nourished and animated by this immortal flow of life, did not have to be stopped or put at rest but could (and should) grow and expand until it reached the spiritual level.

Dasgupta regretted the paralysed state of mind he found many of his compatriote intellectuals to be in.

“During the last fifteen years we have had some historians and interpreters of Indian thought but it is unfortunate that there has hardly been any attempt at the creation of new thought on the basis of the old in harmony with the new facts or relations that the present world has brought before our purview.”²⁹⁹

“The present world” to Dasgupta meant European philosophy and science:

“We in Indian are not in touch with the living philosophies of Europe and our houses are not on fire with the flames of their enlightenment.”³⁰⁰

Yet if the West provided new impulses, there was also a lot to be revived in the Eastern tradition. Dasgupta pleaded both for more Indian self-confidence (which included “a new spirit of national consciousness”³⁰¹) as well as for a global outlook in culture.

“We should accept the experiences of the past teachers of our country as well as those of the teachers of other countries of the past and the present. And with our fresh and spontaneous imagination [...] we should tackle the new problems that are facing us and give new life to philosophy not as the philosophy of India or as the philosophy of Europe but as the philosophy of humanity.”³⁰²

²⁹⁷ Dasgupta, *Quest*, 140-141 (Letter dated June 16, 1936, London).

²⁹⁸ In view of these ideas it does not come as a surprise that Dasgupta faced opposition from orthodox circles.

²⁹⁹ Dasgupta, *Humanity*, 64 (written in 1936).

³⁰⁰ Dasgupta, *Humanity*, 64.

³⁰¹ Dasgupta, *Humanity*, 64.

³⁰² Dasgupta, *Humanity*, 65.

Dasgupta had unshakeable confidence in his own experience.³⁰³ To believe in experience is something science has taught him,³⁰⁴ experience is what he built his philosophy on; experiences were real for the experiencer and as such did not have to be scientifically proven. Mystical experiences such as falling into trance states are also experiences; we have seen that Dasgupta in these states watched his mind withdraw from the outside world and refresh itself within, but never did he mention anything about his mind coming to a standstill.

Fascinated and deeply impressed (if not seduced) by natural science Dasgupta expected a philosopher to apply scientific methods and rigour to philosophy.

“Philosophers must [...] gather all possible facts in different departments of nature and also the various kinds of relevant human experiences.”³⁰⁵

He thus turned philosophy into the master science; philosophy was to gather and arrange the results of physics, chemistry, biology, psychology etc. and to detect and explain the laws hidden behind all natural phenomena. He also followed the evolutionary theory in the sense that everything progressed from simple to complex, from low to high (and thus he held that life and mind emerged out of matter, however mysteriously that should have happened); yet at the same time he stated that life, as an expression of the divine, is of such a dynamic nature that it cannot be reduced to a linear model but must be described in terms of interdependent relations between various complexes, all cooperating with each other, and where it is not possible to determine which was there first and which came later.

“According to our theory (the details of which cannot properly be elaborated and justified in this brief paper), there is no sensation, no image, no appearance, no apperception which appears as a singular unitary atomic fact. It appears in a background of a mental complex which has as its counter-part a pretty large area of physiological happenings and processes. Using physical imagery, I may say that as we grow in experience, the area that is determined by and determines an apperception also enlarges, and the relational processes involved therein also become more and more complicated. This complex area is structurally intimately connected with the entirety of the mental complex [...].”³⁰⁶

³⁰³ “In our society there have been many false religions which make man indolent and lazy. In the name of liberation these encourage idleness, in the name of meditation these induce sleep, in the name of love these bring wild delusions. The god that is formless is created in material idols. This type of practice acts as a dam on the spontaneous development of the heart. So people think that when we restrain our natural impulses, we are practising self-control. We have to break into pieces many such useless beliefs and traditions. There are many eternal truths in our *śāstras* but there is also much that is true only conditionally, much which is influenced by contemporary needs and customs. Therefore, if somebody says – ‘the whole country says this, the *śāstras* say this, such and such a great man says this, or, a great sage says this,’ his statement will make no impression on me whatsoever and I shall not give any preference to any one opinion. I shall accept the verdict of my experience only [...].” (Dasgupta, *Quest*, 187; letter dated February 16, 1943, Hazaribagh)

³⁰⁴ “[Science] has taught us to believe in rationalism from a new point of view. It has taught us to believe in our experiences and also to believe that those experiences which may appear to be irrational must be admitted, and we must look forward for a new kind of rationalism which would combine the apparently irrational and the rational.” (Dasgupta, *Outlook*, 350)

³⁰⁵ Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 262.

³⁰⁶ Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 272.

The human being grows and evolves through experiences, the ultimate aim being the realisation of God on a spiritual level. Dasgupta's idea of man is definitely a very lofty one.

"The true essence of religion and morality lies in the unfolding of the sacred and soft petals [sic] of human heart in the beauty of disinterested and purest love and sympathy, a spirit of undying faith and hope in the superior order of things, the broadest outlook on life which shows itself in harmonising the different values in a hierarchical order, so that life becomes worth living and ideals worth striving for. If we have a look into the lives and workings of great men, saints and seers, we find the same undeniable truth, that each one of them lived for one object, the transformation of all ordinary values into those of a wider and purer ones [sic]; each one of them showed the irresistible and unshakable conviction that egoism has to vanish before altruism like darkness before light, hatred and jealousy and all mean and cringy conflicts of passions and instincts have to melt away before the sweetness of love, kind and loving consideration for all fellow-beings, and all ties of worldly interest have to give way to the deeper and intuitive glimpse of a world beyond. That the ultimate end of life is realised in transcending and transmuting the stages it passes through, is the lesson we derive from biology, and this is the secret of religion as well."³⁰⁷

A spiritual man is also necessarily involved in a creative process which concerns his whole existence.³⁰⁸ Once this goal is reached, the human life is fulfilled; not in the sense that such a person will leave this world and withdraw from it but in the sense that he or she enjoys the entire field of his or her experiences and creative expressions, on all levels the human mind can reach. Dasgupta does talk of renunciation in this context, but his renunciation is a positive one.

"I do not have a negative concept of renunciation. I love the renunciation of fullness where the mind is so rich in its own achievements of a beyond that, while it moves and works in the world, it is still not fettered by these. This renunciation is not antipathy or indifference to the world because of the sorrows and transitory joys of life, but this is due to the discovery of a new spiritual world in ourselves which gives us satisfaction, joy and completeness in its perspective and enjoyment."³⁰⁹

³⁰⁷ Dasgupta, Outlook, 204-205.

³⁰⁸ „So is the man who is transcending the limits of morality and entering the portals of spirituality. He is no longer in conflict with his urge, his urge is spontaneous, dancing in cadence with the dance of the blood in his veins. A spiritual man is thus an artist, a poet; not of words, not of colours, but of emotions, thoughts and volitions. He transmutes his life into a divine element, transforming his primitive passions into elements of new value, his vulgar emotions and volitions rising into glory and spontaneously building by themselves a temple of God and humanity at which he looks, like a spectator overwhelmed with joy and emotion. He melts into the flow of love for humanity and for his ideal, which though far is near, though inscrutable is easy, though unthinkable yet is simple. This work of the artist goes on in the life of a spiritual man, in which time and temporality is forgotten, in which the horrors of the passions subside, in which immorality, evil and suffering melt away in a divine perception, which transcends all speech and thought, which breaks open the bonds of the finite and the infinite, a moment's conspresence [sic] with which is the elixir of mortal life. It is a taste of God in man, living through into the lives of all beings, and the culmination of the creative process. This is in reality the spiritual immortality that is the destiny of man to attain." (Dasgupta, Outlook, 362-363)

³⁰⁹ Dasgupta, Quest, 140-141 (letter dated June 16, 1936, London).

The discovery and conquest of the spiritual world brings joy and it also helps to remain detached in difficult situations – Dasgupta here certainly refers to his own experience, too.

“[...] the disappointments that we have to face, will not be able to frustrate us, because we are full of joy of our life within. This is like the incoming tide of joy from an ocean. So while the mind will be full of this delight, all other waves of joys and sorrows will be only like passing phases.”³¹⁰

In the deepest layer of his soul Dasgupta was a *bhakta*, filled with love for God. To Him he surrendered in any situation of his life.

“Everything is in God’s hand.”³¹¹

When he lost the sight in one eye³¹² and when he was cast out of society he found consolation in the spiritual dimension, and as much as he loved life he seemed to have been prepared to leave this world as soon as God wanted him to.

“Whatever my Lord asks me to do, I can do. I can jump into the ocean should He bid me to do so. Why should I feel grief if He, who has brought all life into this world, takes it away? If He takes, who can keep it and if He preserves it, who can take it? I see my merciful Lord very easily everywhere. I keep my hand in Him and feel benumbed.”³¹³

“I have done whatever I could. If He permits me to live, to work, I shall do so. If not, whenever He will call me back, He will find that His servant is ever ready to quit this world and life. I feel that I am always in accord with the harmony of the Universe, the divine law of the will of God. In this I am always at peace and happiness.”³¹⁴

Dasgupta expressed his own philosophical views and convictions, which we have tried to present in this chapter 3.5., mainly from the 1930-ies onward. Let us now go back in time and have a look at what Dasgupta had to say (and write) about Yoga.

³¹⁰ Dasgupta, Quest, 141 (letter dated June 16, 1936, London).

³¹¹ Dasgupta, Quest, 101 (letter dated March 29, 1935, Rome).

³¹² “I was using my eyes for His work, He who is the vision of our eyes and the mind of our minds. If now He has taken it back without letting me use it any more, I should be glad even for that. I do not think that I have lost it, I feel that I had got it so that I could give it away. If I think that I have lost it, I am bound to feel sorry; if I think that I had it, i.e. possessed it so that I could give it up, then there would be no cause for sorrow. He let me use this eye for His work, now I find that the time had come for giving it up, so it is gone. That is all.” (Dasgupta, Quest, 108, letter dated May 3rd, 1935).

³¹³ Dasgupta, Quest, 158 (letter dated July 16, 1939, Port Said).

³¹⁴ Dasgupta, Quest, 108 (letter dated Vienna, May 3rd, 1935).

4. Dasgupta's texts on Yoga

4.1. Chronological outline

Dasgupta considered Yoga and Sāṃkhya to be two practically identical systems;³¹⁵ Yoga, to him, was "Pātañjala Sāṃkhya," Patañjali's Sāṃkhya.³¹⁶ He dedicated three books and several chapters of other works to this subject. His very first text on Sāṃkhya-Yoga was written in 1914, when he was 27 years old, as the Griffith Prize essay, but it appeared in print only in 1920 as *The Study of Patanjali*. On June 2, 1921, at a meeting of the Quest Society, Dasgupta read a paper called "Yoga Psychology" which got published in 1941 in his *Philosophical Essays*.³¹⁷ One year later, in 1922, the first volume of his *History of Indian Philosophy* appeared in Cambridge with one chapter (VII) dedicated to "The Kapila and the Pātañjala Sāṃkhya (Yoga)."³¹⁸ Next came his book *Yoga as Philosophy and Religion* (1924), followed by *Yoga Philosophy in Relation to Other Systems of Indian Thought* (published 1930 but written ten years earlier as Dasgupta's doctorate thesis of the Calcutta University). His book *Hindu Mysticism* (1927), consisting of the six lectures Dasgupta delivered in America in 1926, has one chapter on "Yoga Mysticism"³¹⁹ and in *Philosophical Essays*, published in 1941, we find a chapter entitled "An Interpretation of the Yoga Theory of the Relation of Mind and Body."³²⁰ Finally, in his posthumous book *Natural Science of the Ancient Hindus*, Dasgupta also presents the Sāṃkhya-Yoga system,³²¹ but the chapter "Theories of Cosmic Changes," which contains the Sāṃkhya-Yoga passage, was originally composed as early as 1915 and revised in 1917.

³¹⁵ „[...] they may both be regarded as two different modifications of one common system of ideas.“ (Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, ix). "On almost all other fundamental points Sāṃkhya and Yoga are in complete agreement." (Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 165).

³¹⁶ Dasgupta, *Philosophy*, 221.

³¹⁷ Dasgupta, *Essays*, 179-197.

³¹⁸ Dasgupta, *Philosophy*, 208-273.

³¹⁹ Dasgupta, *Mysticism*. 61-82.

³²⁰ Dasgupta, *Essays*, 276-320. There is no indication as to when this text was written.

³²¹ Dasgupta, *Science*, 64-90. This book is yet another proof of Surama's untiring attempts to keep the memory of her husband alive; as the editor puts it: "The publication of *Natural Science of the Ancient Hindus* by the late Professor Surendranath Dasgupta has been made possible mainly because of the kindness of Dr (Mrs) Surama Dasgupta, the wife of the author of this book and who herself is a distinguished scholar. ICPR is deeply grateful to her for giving it the manuscript of the book which she has preserved with scholarly care." (General Editor's Note)

Because most of Dasgupta's texts on Yoga were published years after he had written them it is helpful to show the order of their creation in a chronological chart.

Title	Written	Published
<i>The Study of Patanjali</i>	1914	1920
"Theories of Cosmic Changes"	1915/1917	1987
<i>Yoga Philosophy in Relation to Other Systems of Indian Thought</i>	1920	1930
"Yoga Psychology"	1921	1941
"The Kapila and the Pātañjala Sāṃkhya (Yoga)"	Before 1922	1922
<i>Yoga as Philosophy and Religion</i>	Before 1924	1924
"Yoga Mysticism"	1926	1927
"An Interpretation of the Yoga Theory of the Relation of Mind and Body"	Before 1941	1941

We immediately see that Sāṃkhya-Yoga was a topic which kept Dasgupta busy for about 12 years (from 1914 to 1926). Afterwards, his mind veered more and more towards science, philosophy and religion in general and he was increasingly working on his own philosophical ideas. In all his texts written after 1926 Sāṃkhya-Yoga is hardly ever mentioned; it appears only casually here and there in various contexts but does not retain Dasgupta's interest any more. Neither is the Sāṃkhya-Yoga system of any major importance in the ideas and concepts Dasgupta is dealing with or developing from the 1930-ies onward.³²² The only exception to this rule is the chapter "An Interpretation of the Yoga Theory of the Relation of Mind and Body," published in 1941, but Dasgupta's footnote on the first page immediately reveals that he is no longer dealing with the presentation and interpretation of the original philosophical system, based on its textual tradition, but wants to integrate Yogic notions into the framework of a more general and modern philosophy.³²³

³²² In the 1930-ies, when he was the Principal of the Sanskrit College and travelled extensively, he published the second volume of his *Indian Philosophy* (1932) as well as *Indian Idealism* (in 1933, which deals with the Upaniṣads, Buddhism and Vedānta in a series of lectures held "years ago" [Dasgupta, *Idealism*, Preface, no page number] at the University of Patna). 1936 saw the publication of his article "Philosophy of Dependent Emergence" where Sāṃkhya-Yoga is hardly mentioned. The same holds true for his Stephanos Nirmalendu lectures, delivered in 1939 or 1941 at the Calcutta University (and posthumously published as *Religion and the Rational Outlook*). His brief presidential address at the Indian Philosophical Congress session at Delhi in 1936 ("The Philosophy of Humanity", published as late as 1998)³²² is equally devoid of Sāṃkhya-Yoga. In the forties Dasgupta completed volumes III and IV of his *History of Indian Philosophy* (1940 and 1949) and published the *Philosophical Essays* (in 1941). All his other philosophical books appeared posthumously ("Science, Philosophy and Religion" in 1953, *Religion and the Rational Outlook* in 1954, vol. V of the *History* in 1955, and *Natural Science of the Ancient Hindus* in 1987).

³²³ "The article cannot obviously be justified as an interpretation of the Yoga texts. It represents, however, the way in which some of the fundamental ideas of Yoga can be utilized in our present-day conceptions of philosophy and science." (Dasgupta, *Relation*, 276)

Looking at Dasgupta's works on Yoga one cannot fail to notice that the differences between them are sometimes only slight - Dasgupta expressed the same ideas more than once. The most striking example of this occurs with *The Study of Patanjali* and *Yoga as Philosophy and Religion* which are virtually identical,³²⁴ in other words: Dasgupta's analysis of the philosophy which he calls Sāṃkhya-Yoga did not undergo any substantial changes between 1914 and 1924. Why then did he republish his *Study of Patanjali* under a new name? A closer look reveals that Dasgupta, in 1924, introduced few but very significant changes in his 1914 text which call for a detailed comparison of the two books.

4.2. *Yoga as Philosophy and Religion* compared to *The Study of Patanjali*

4.2.1. Minor differences

<i>The Study of Patanjali</i> (1914) ³²⁵	<i>Yoga as Philosophy and Religion</i> (1924)
Sanskrit quotations and important Sanskrit terms are printed in Devanāgarī and are often not translated into English.	Sanskrit quotations are not printed in Devanāgarī but have been translated into English; important Sanskrit terms or sūtras are given in Roman transliteration.
The book is one long text without chapters; very brief "headlines" inserted in the margins of almost every page are the only indications of the content; there is an appendix on sphaṭa-vāda.	The text has been divided into two main books (Yoga metaphysics and Yoga ethics and practice) with 7, respectively 8 chapters. The appendix is the same; a table of contents and an index have been added. Running titles further help the reader to find his way in the book.

³²⁴ Of course, Dasgupta does not state this explicitly; he simply thanks (at the end of the preface to *Yoga as Philosophy and Religion*) "Sir Ashutosh Mookerjee [...] and the University of Calcutta, for kindly permitting me to utilize my *A Study of Patanjali*, which is a Calcutta University publication, for the present work." (Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, x)

³²⁵ I refer to the year when this book was written because Dasgupta published it in 1920 without any changes.

Clearly, Dasgupta wrote *The Study of Patanjali* for an Indian public, able to read and understand Sanskrit, whereas in *Yoga as Philosophy and Religion* he addresses a Western, English speaking audience. His endeavour to appeal to Western readers not only shows in the more scientific appearance of *Yoga as Philosophy and Religion* (rigorous structure, index, running titles), but also in the numerous attempts to improve both vocabulary and syntax.³²⁶ A few examples, chosen by chance, may suffice to illustrate this:

<i>The Study of Patanjali</i> (1914)	<i>Yoga as Philosophy and Religion</i> (1924)
"A more definite notion of Prakṛiti we shall get as we advance further into the details..." (12)	"We shall get a more definite notion of prakṛti as we advance further into the details..." (13)
"Again knowledge and the external world because they happen to be presented together can never be said to be identical." (36)	"Again, knowledge and the external world can never be said to be identical because they happen to be presented together." (35)
"The conative sense of speech is developed in accompaniment of the sense of hearing [...]." (59)	"The conative sense of speech is developed in association with the sense of hearing [...]." (58)
"Ordinarily our minds are engaged only in perception, inference etc., - all those mental states which we all naturally possess. These our ordinary mental states are full of Rajas and Tamas. When the process of our ordinary mental states is arrested, the mind flows with an abundance of sattva [Devanāgarī] in the saṁprajñāta [Devanāgarī] Samādhi; lastly when even the saṁprajñāta [Devanāgarī] state is arrested, all possible states become arrested thereby." (98)	"Ordinarily our minds are engaged only in perception, inference, etc. – those mental states which we all naturally possess. These ordinary mental states are full of rajas and tamas. When these are arrested, the mind flows with an abundance of sattva in the saṁprajñāta samādhi; lastly when even the saṁprajñāta state is arrested, all possible states become arrested." (96)
"The Yoga which after weakening the hold of the afflictions and dawning the Real truth before our mental vision..." (127)	The Yoga which, after weakening the hold of the afflictions and causing the real truth to dawn upon our mental vision..." (126)
"This means that we are to cultivate the habit of friendliness towards those who are happy; this will indeed remove all jealous feelings, and thereby cleanse the mind and make it pure." (142)	"This means that we are to cultivate the habit of friendliness towards those who are happy, which will remove all jealous feelings and purify the mind." (137)

³²⁶ In the preface, Dasgupta thanks Douglas Ainslie „for the numerous corrections and suggestions regarding the English style that he was pleased to make throughout the body of the manuscript [...]." (Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, x)

4.2.2. Major differences

The most substantial changes occur in the beginning and towards the end of the book (Dasgupta, Patanjali, 4-11 and 168-178 as against Dasgupta, Philosophy and Religion, 5-12 and 163-165), and they concern mainly comparisons of Patañjali with Western philosophers. Whereas, in 1914, Dasgupta abundantly refers to and discusses Aristotle, Plato, Hegel and Kant, he decided, in 1924, to cut out quite a few of these passages and to argue mainly along Yoga and Sāṃkhya lines. Let me first present the details and then draw some conclusions.

Dasgupta starts his presentation of Yoga with a classification of philosophical systems according to the problem of the relation between mind and matter. In both books this passage is identical.³²⁷

“An enquiry into the relations of the mental phenomena to the physical has sometimes given the first start to philosophy. The relation of mind to matter is such an important problem of philosophy that the existing philosophical systems may roughly be classified according to the relative importance that has been attached to mind or to matter. There have been chemical, mechanical and biological conceptions which have ignored mind as a separate entity and have dogmatically affirmed it to be the product of matter only [footnote: Ward: *Naturalism and agnosticism*]. There have been theories of the other extreme, which have dispensed with matter altogether and have boldly affirmed that matter as such has no reality at all, and that thought is the only thing which can be called Real in the highest sense. All matter as such is non-Being or Māyā or Avidyā. There have been Nihilists like the śūnyavādi Buddhists who have gone so far as to assert that neither matter nor mind exists. Some have asserted that matter is only thought externalised, some have regarded the principle of matter as the unknowable Thing-in-itself, some have regarded them as separate independent entities held within a higher reality called God, or as two of his attributes only, and some have regarded their difference as being only one of grades of intelligence, one merging slowly and imperceptibly into the other and held together in concord with each other by pre-established harmony.”

After this “tour d’horizon” Dasgupta presents the Yoga system as “an acute analysis of matter and thought.”³²⁸ He first describes *puruṣa*, *prakṛti* and the three *guṇas* and then quotes Vācaspati’s *Tattvavaiśārādī* on the *Vyāsabhāṣya* III,47 where it says that the *guṇas* have two aspects, one being the perceiver or the determiner and the other being the perceived or the determined. In the first aspect they form *aḥṃkāra* and the senses, in the second aspect they create the *tanmātras* and the *mahābhūtas*. In 1924, Dasgupta immediately draws the logic conclusion:

“There is no intrinsic difference in nature between the mental and the physical.”³²⁹

³²⁷ Dasgupta, Patanjali, 2; Dasgupta, Philosophy and Religion, 2.

³²⁸ Dasgupta, Patanjali, 2; Dasgupta, Philosophy and Religion, 2.

³²⁹ Dasgupta, Philosophy and Religion, 4.

In 1914 however, he attributes this insight not to Vācaspati (and thus to the Yoga system) but to Western philosophers:

“Aristotle, Leibnitz, Hegel all of them asserted in their own ways that there was no intrinsic difference between the so-called mental and the physical.”³³⁰

This sentence in *The Study of Patanjali* is the starting point for a longer discussion of similarities and differences between Aristotle and Patañjali, including a quotation from Vijnāna Bhikṣu’s *Sāṃkhyasāra* (on the theory of causation).³³¹ In 1924, Dasgupta eliminated this whole passage with the exception of Vijnāna Bhikṣu’s quotation which he turned into the major argument of a new paragraph.³³²

After that, both texts continue identical until Dasgupta, in *Yoga as Philosophy and Religion*, again cuts out a few lines on Aristotle,³³³ inserting instead a whole page on the *guṇas*.³³⁴ The next deviation occurs when Dasgupta, in conclusion to a quotation from Vācaspati’s *Tattvavaiśārādī* on YS II,19 writes: “This state is called the Prakṛiti.”³³⁵ In his first book he goes on to compare “this state” with Hegel’s pure being:

“This state is called the Prakṛiti, which may in some sense be loosely compared with the pure Being of Hegel. For it is like that, the beginning, the simple, indeterminate, unmediated and undetermined.”

In 1924 however, Dasgupta eliminates this reference to Hegel, the new text running like this:

“This state is called the prakṛti. It is the beginning, indeterminate, unmediated and undetermined.”

The same thing happens again, after yet another quotation from Vācaspati’s *Tattvavaiśārādī* on YS II,19. Again, in 1914 Dasgupta draws the parallel to Hegel.

“Thus we see that if it [*prakṛti*] is looked at from this narrow point of view of similarity, it may be compared with the pure Being of Hegel, a state of implicitude which is at the root of all determinate and concrete existence.”³³⁶

Only six lines further down, Hegel is mentioned once more.

“Had this Prakṛiti been the only one principle, it is clear that it could be compared to the absolute of Hegel or as pure Being.”³³⁷

³³⁰ Dasgupta, *Patanjali*, 4.

³³¹ Dasgupta, *Patanjali*, 4-5.

³³² Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 4.

³³³ Dasgupta, *Patanjali*, 6.

³³⁴ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 5-6.

³³⁵ Dasgupta, *Patanjali*, 8; Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 8.

³³⁶ Dasgupta, *Patanjali*, 10.

³³⁷ Dasgupta, *Patanjali*, 10.

Yet, in *Yoga as Philosophy and Religion*, Dasgupta carefully cuts out all the Hegel-sentences from his text and instead adds a new paragraph in which he insists on the fact that *prakṛti* is nothing but the *guṇas* and does not exist apart from them.³³⁸ This statement also serves as a reply to “some European scholars” who “have often asked me whether the *prakṛti* were real or whether the *guṇas* were real.”³³⁹

In 1914, Dasgupta further compares *prakṛti* to Spinoza’s *Natura Naturans* and to Plato’s “mother and receptacle of all visible things”³⁴⁰ – a paragraph which was dropped without replacement in 1924.

From page 13 onward³⁴¹ and until the very last part of the book, the two texts become more or less identical, presenting just minor, mostly linguistic deviations. It is interesting that the Western philosophers mentioned right in the beginning of this section are not eliminated in 1924. The obvious reason for this is that they all failed to explain, in a satisfactory way, the relation between mind and matter.

Authors mentioned	Quotation ³⁴²
Aristotle	“[...] even in Aristotle’s attempt to avoid the difficulty by his theory of form and matter, we are not fully satisfied, though he has shown much ingenuity and subtlety of thought in devising the ‘expedient in the single conception of development’.”
His commentators	“But all students of Aristotle know that it is very difficult to understand the true relation between form and matter, and the particular nature of their interaction with each other, and this has created a great divergence of opinion among his commentators.”
Plato	“[...] fights the difficulty of solving the unification of the idea and the non-being and offers his participation theory [...].”
Descartes / Spinoza	“It was probably to avoid this difficulty [relation between form and matter] that the dualistic appearance of the philosophy of Descartes had to be reconstructed in the pantheism of Spinoza.”
Kant	„Again we find also how Kant failed to bring about the relation between noumenon and phenomenon, and created two worlds absolutely unrelated to each other. He tried to reconcile the schism that he effected in his <i>Critique of Pure Reason</i> by his <i>Critique of Practical Reason</i> , and again supplemented it with his <i>Critique of Judgment</i> , but met only with dubious success.”

³³⁸ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 9-10.

³³⁹ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 10.

³⁴⁰ Dasgupta, *Patanjali*, 10-11.

³⁴¹ Page 13 in both books.

³⁴² From Aristotle to Spinoza: Dasgupta, *Patanjali and Philosophy and Religion*, 13; Kant: Dasgupta, *Patanjali*, 13; Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 14.

These Western explanations belong to the same category as the various theories of the Advaita Vedāntins which "[...] only show that the transcendent nature of the union of the principle of pure intelligence is very difficult to comprehend."³⁴³

At this point, Dasgupta introduces Sāṃkhya-Yoga as a powerful system providing profound and accurate answers to the question of how mind and matter are related to each other. He sets out by explaining "the relation of puruṣa with the prakṛti" and "the exact nature of [this] relation."³⁴⁴ But before accompanying him in this enterprise, let us now move to the end of the book where Dasgupta replaced ten pages of *The Study of Patanjali* by just three in *Yoga as Philosophy and Religion*.³⁴⁵

After a long paragraph on how the knowledge gained through *samādhi* is different from and superior to any other kind of knowledge,³⁴⁶ Dasgupta, in 1924, abandons the topic of *samādhi* in order to talk about a number of differences between Sāṃkhya and Yoga,³⁴⁷ reaching the following conclusion:

"On almost all other fundamental points Sāṃkhya and Yoga are in complete agreement."³⁴⁸

In 1914 however, Dasgupta did not compare Patañjali to Sāṃkhya but to a few Western philosophers, and he starts by saying that Bergson's concept of intuition is similar to *samādhi*.

"It [the mental state reached by deep concentration] is akin to the conception of intuition by Bergson, the nature of which as described by Bergson applies in a certain measure to Samādhi."³⁴⁹

Afterwards, he explains how Patañjali (who "like Kant, [...] does not bring about a schism between science and metaphysics")³⁵⁰ shows the process by which the human mind is able to finally grasp the metaphysical reality or (in Kantian terms) "the thing as it is."³⁵¹

³⁴³ Dasgupta, *Patanjali and Philosophy and Religion*, 15.

³⁴⁴ Dasgupta, *Patanjali and Philosophy and Religion*, 16.

³⁴⁵ Dasgupta, *Patanjali*, 168-178 as compared to Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 163-165.

³⁴⁶ Dasgupta, *Patanjali*, 169; Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 162-163 ("[...] it [samādhi] alone can bring objects before our mental eye with the clearest and most unerring light of comprehensibility in which the true nature of the thing is at once observed. [...] But samādhi has no such limitations and the knowledge that can be attained by it is absolutely unobstructed, true and real in the strictest sense of the terms.")

³⁴⁷ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 163-165.

³⁴⁸ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 165.

³⁴⁹ Dasgupta, *Patanjali*, 169.

³⁵⁰ Dasgupta, *Patanjali*, 170.

³⁵¹ Dasgupta, *Patanjali*, 170.

"[...] our mind must follow an inverse process of stopping its flow from concepts to concepts, but concentrated [sic] itself to one concept and that alone, and repeat it again and again to the exclusion of all other possible concepts, and thus become coincided, identified as it were with it, when the limitations of the concept at once vanish and the thing shines before the mind in its true reality."³⁵²

Next, Dasgupta opposes Patañjali to "the whole philosophy from Plato to Plotinus." Whereas Plato and the Neo-Platonists stated that "there is more in the immutable than in the moving and [that] we pass from the stable to the unstable by a mere diminution,"³⁵³ the author of the YS "had never any such bias as that."

"Prakriti, the sphere of the mutable and the unstable is not on that account less true than the Purusha – the immutable; only their realities are of two different kinds and neither of them can ever be reduced to the other. All evil is due to the want of right comprehension of their relative spheres; stable is always stable and unstable is always unstable and they must not be confused by either in any way."³⁵⁴

This clear distinction between two utterly different spheres which, nevertheless, (and this is the crucial point in Dasgupta's argument) are equally real, seems to be the great advantage of the Yoga philosophy over other systems of thought, as far as explaining the relation between the physical and the metaphysical is concerned.

Dasgupta evokes Plato whose "ideas" were the only reality, later opposed to the Aristotelian "matter" which Bergson called a "non-being," "an illusive nothing."³⁵⁵ And whereas for the Neo-Platonic school

"[the] supreme degree of cognition is the vision of the supreme, the single principle of things, in which all separation between it and the soul ceases, in which this latter in divine rapture touches the absolute itself, and feels itself filled by it and illuminated by it,"³⁵⁶

the metaphysical reality became utterly unattainable with Kant:

"There is no intuition that carries us into the non-temporal [...]."³⁵⁷

According to Dasgupta, Patañjali coincides with Aristotle

"[...] in conceiving an unmoved as the cause of all that is endlessly moving for it is into these that the former unwinds itself."³⁵⁸

³⁵² Dasgupta, Patanjali, 170-171.

³⁵³ Dasgupta, Patanjali, 171.

³⁵⁴ Dasgupta, Patanjali, 172.

³⁵⁵ Dasgupta, Patanjali, 172.

³⁵⁶ Dasgupta, Patanjali, 174.

³⁵⁷ Dasgupta, Patanjali, 175.

³⁵⁸ Dasgupta, Patanjali, 176.

But: This “first motionless mover”³⁵⁹ accounts only for all the subsequent changes in the material world; it cannot, however,

[...] explain the stable and “unmoved” which forms the background of all our conscious experiences. This “unmoved” and “unmovable” of our consciousness of pure shining effulgence, a constant factor of all conceptual mobility can never be confused with it.”³⁶⁰

This *puruṣa* (as Dasgupta calls it on p. 176) is something utterly different from the Aristotelian “unmoved” (which would correspond to *prakṛti*).

[...] they are two independent realities and none of them can be said to be derived from the other and consequently there is no diminution of reality involved in the conception of matter.”³⁶¹

Patañjali not only proves superior to Plato³⁶² and Aristotle³⁶³ (by postulating two equivalent realities) but also to Kant, because

“the comprehension of this metaphysical reality is not a dream with him [...].”³⁶⁴

Like the Neo-Platonists, Patañjali knows that

[...] there are other sources of right knowledge than those provided by the scanty scope of conceptual relativity of our thoughts.”³⁶⁵

Dasgupta ends this philosophical excursion with an exalted paragraph, praising in highly poetical language the light which Patañjali and the Neo-Platonists have brought into the world, and encouraging everybody to make an effort and to try to reach the metaphysical reality, “this land of eternal sunshine, bliss and communion.”

“The light that they have shown in the illumination of the history of world-civilisation will manifest itself to any enquiring mind as the first beams of sunshine bringing messages of hope and bliss from the region of eternal sunshine beyond the gloomy and imperfect vision of our science and will always awaken us to believe that with reality which is hidden from our view I may stand face to face only if I possess the will to do it. Many hidden mysteries are daily being discovered by men of genius by this intuitive perception *yogapratyakṣa* [in Devanāgarī] but none of us try [sic] to penetrate methodically into the depths of this land of eternal bliss and communion. The face of truth is hidden by a golden veil (*hiranmayeṇa pātireṇa satyasyāpāvṛtam mukham*) [in Devanāgarī] and let all mankind combine in their efforts to draw it away and adore the unveiled truth as it is in itself.”³⁶⁶

³⁵⁹ Dasgupta, Patanjali, 173.

³⁶⁰ Dasgupta, Patanjali, 176.

³⁶¹ Dasgupta, Patanjali, 176.

³⁶² Plato who „had to acknowledge the separate existence [of Non-Being] though he wanted to deprive it of all determinate qualities.” (Dasgupta, Patanjali, 176)

³⁶³ Aristotle who „substituted for the independent reality of the ideas only and an ideality towards which matter is striving and thus made it the immanent [sic] teleology of matter.” (Dasgupta, Patanjali, 177)

³⁶⁴ Dasgupta, Patanjali, 177.

³⁶⁵ Dasgupta, Patanjali, 177.

³⁶⁶ Dasgupta, Patanjali, 178.

4.2.3. Conclusions

When Dasgupta, in 1924, published *Yoga as Philosophy and Religion* he virtually reedited a text which he had written ten years before but published only in 1920: *The Study of Patanjali*. The differences in outward appearance (structure and language) suggest that the later book was aimed at a Western, English speaking and most probably scientifically trained audience, whereas the first one seemed to have been produced mainly for Indians. As to the content, both books are practically identical, with the exception of two longer passages. It is interesting to note that whereas Dasgupta left the main body of the book untouched, namely his elaborate exposition of the Yoga system of thought, he felt the urge, in 1924, to heavily intervene in those sections dealing with Patañjali as compared to Western philosophers, by cutting out names, sentences, whole paragraphs or even several pages, replacing the eliminated text only partially.

This change in perspective is most probably a result of the two years Dasgupta spent in Cambridge from 1920-1922. We have already seen that this stay provided Dasgupta with a more critical outlook towards both Eastern and Western philosophy and also gave him the courage to later on verbalise his criticism.³⁶⁷ Here, in the comparison of *The Study of Patanjali* with *Yoga as Philosophy and Religion*, we can appreciate how interwovenly complex Dasgupta's position was as far as East and West is concerned.

Dasgupta's starting point was the philosophical problem of the relation between matter and mind. He states that nobody, neither in the West (Greek and German philosophers) nor in the East (Buddhism, Vedānta) has managed to satisfactorily explain the nature of this relation. But, in *The Study of Patanjali*, Western philosophers are granted a certain number of insights: Aristotle, Leibnitz and Hegel knew that the mental and the physical are not basically different from each other, Hegel, Spinoza and Plato had came up with concepts that could be compared to the Indian *prakṛti*, and Bergson's intuition was akin to *samādhi*. All this disappeared in *Yoga as Philosophy and Religion*, where the similarity between the mental and the physical appears as uniquely yogic and where neither *prakṛti* nor *samādhi* seem to have had any parallel concept in the West. It is as if Dasgupta, when he addressed a Western audience in 1924, tried to stress the uniqueness (and ultimately superiority) of the yoga system without letting Western ideas disrupt his concise and straightforward exposition of Patañjali's philosophy. This would also explain why he decided to get rid of the long discussion of parallels and differences between Patañjali and Plato, the Neo-Platonists and Kant on the one hand as well as Aristotle on the other. He preferred to sacrifice the conclusion that Patañjali is superior to all of them³⁶⁸ to having to evoke their ideas in the first place. Dasgupta shifted from one standpoint to another, depending on who he was writing for: when he addressed his own people in 1914, he was anxious to display the worth and value of

³⁶⁷ Cf. *supra*, chapter 3.5.1.

³⁶⁸ To Plato because his *prakṛti* is not a non-being devoid of qualities; to Kant because through *samādhi* he showed a way how the metaphysical reality could be reached, and to Aristotle because his *puruṣa* could account for conscious experiences, which the Greek's unmoved principle could not.

Western philosophy (as well as, of course, the knowledge he had about it), whereas ten years later, with a Western audience in mind (which, in the meantime, he had become closely acquainted with), he moved “his” Sāṃkhya philosophy more to the foreground, demonstrating its undisputable qualities.

There is yet another angle to be considered. In Cambridge, Dasgupta studied mostly Western philosophy and got acquainted with the way philosophy was discussed at a Western university. After his return back to India he must have re-read his own Patañjali text with “new eyes,” so to speak, maybe feeling all of a sudden insecure about the way he had presented certain Western ideas, and maybe anticipating a kind of criticism he must have encountered in England when discussing philosophical topics with his Western colleagues. Whatever his motives may have been, the fact remains that *Yoga as Philosophy and Religion* has been purged of all those sections where Western philosophical ideas could be seen as similar to those expressed by Patañjali, or where the discussion of certain concepts called for a complex and elaborate representation of the Western treatment of the subject.³⁶⁹ But whenever the quotation of a Western thinker clearly and non-ambiguously showed that he had not found the solution to a particular problem, Dasgupta felt no need to eliminate it in 1924. We have seen this with Aristotle, Plato, Descartes, Spinoza and Kant, failing to explain the nature of the relation between matter and mind,³⁷⁰ and there are two more examples.

1. The question “what is the ground which underlies the manifold appearance of this external world which has been proved to be real?”³⁷¹ is answered by Locke, Hume and Kant by “we cannot know it.”

“Locke called this substratum substance and regarded it as unknown, but said that though it did not follow that it was a product of our own subjective thought yet it did not at the same time exist without us.”³⁷²

“Hume, however, tried to explain everything from the standpoint of association of ideas and denied all notions of substantiality.”³⁷³

³⁶⁹ There is one exception to this rule: Dasgupta compares the nature of pure contentless universal consciousness to Fichte’s egohood: “Thus we see that this pure contentless universal consciousness is the same as the ego-universal (asmitāmātra). For this contentless universal consciousness is only another name for the contentless unlimited, infinite of the ego-universal. A quotation from Fichte may here be useful as a comparison. Thus he says in the introduction to his *Science of Ethics*: ‘How an object can ever become a subject, or how a being can ever become an object of representation: this curious change will never be explained by anyone who does not find a point where the objective and subjective are not distinguished at all, but are altogether one. Now such a point is established by, and made the starting point of our system. This point is the Egohood, the Intelligence, Reason, or whatever it may be named.’” (Dasgupta, Patanjali, 50-51; Dasgupta, Philosophy and Religion, 50). In the footnote however, Dasgupta immediately withdraws from any further parallels between Yoga and Fichte: “Nothing more than a superficial comparison with Fichte is here intended. A large majority of the texts and the commentary literature would oppose the attempts of all those who would like to interpret Sāṃkhya-yoga on Fichtean lines.”

³⁷⁰ Dasgupta, Patanjali, 13; Dasgupta, Philosophy and Religion, 13-14.

³⁷¹ Dasgupta, Patanjali, 38; Dasgupta, Philosophy and Religion, 36.

³⁷² Dasgupta, Patanjali, 38; Dasgupta, Philosophy and Religion, 36-37.

³⁷³ Dasgupta, Patanjali, 38; Dasgupta, Philosophy and Religion, 36-37.

„We know that Kant, who was much influenced by Hume, agreed to the existence of some such unknown reality which he called the Thing-in-itself, the nature of which, however, was absolutely unknowable, but whose influence was a great factor in all our experiences.“³⁷⁴

2. As to the theory of evolution, Dasgupta notes that Western scientists simply describe it without giving any explanations:

“Although the pioneers of modern scientific evolution have tried to observe scientifically some of the stages of the growth of the inorganic and of the animal worlds into the man, yet they do not give any reason for it. Theirs is more an experimental assertion of facts than a metaphysical account of evolution. According to Darwin the general form of the evolutionary process is that which is accomplished by ‘very slight variations which are accumulated by the effect of natural selection.’ And according to a later theory, we see that a new species is constituted all at once by the simultaneous appearance of several new characteristics very different from the old. But why this accidental variation, this seeming departure from the causal chain, comes into being, the evolutionists cannot explain.“³⁷⁵

In both cases, Dasgupta clearly opposes these Western views to the yogic doctrine which has more to offer.

“But the Bhāshya tries to penetrate deeper into the nature of this substratum or substance and says: [...]“³⁷⁶

“But the Sāṃkhya-Pātañjala doctrine explains it from the standpoint of teleology or the final goal inherent in all matter, so that it may be serviceable to the puruṣa. To be serviceable to the puruṣa is the one moral purpose in all prakṛti and its manifestations in the whole material world, which guide the course and direction of the smallest particle of matter. From the scientific point of view, the Sāṃkhya-Pātañjala doctrine is very much in the same position as modern science, for it does not explain the cause of the accidental variation noticed in all the stages of evolutionary process from any physical point of view based on the observation of facts. But it does much credit to the Pātañjala doctrines that they explain this accidental variation, this avyapadeśyatva or unpredictability of the onward course of evolution from a moral point of view, that of teleology, the serviceability of the puruṣa.“³⁷⁷

In short: When Dasgupta reedited *The Study of Patanjali* in 1924 for Western readers, he was anxious to present a coherent Indian answer to the major philosophical problem of the relation between matter and mind. The Sāṃkhya-Yoga philosophy is shown to be able to provide new solutions where Western philosophy (as well as certain Indian systems) had failed. Writing mainly for an Indian audience in 1914, Dasgupta abundantly quoted and discussed Western philosophers in order to show where and how they coincided with or differed from Patanjali; in 1924 however, Dasgupta carefully eliminated all those references, retaining Western quotations only when they proved to be inferior to what Sāṃkhya and Yoga stated.

³⁷⁴ Dasgupta, Patanjali, 39; Dasgupta, Philosophy and Religion, 37.

³⁷⁵ Dasgupta, Patanjali, 77; Dasgupta, Philosophy and Religion, 76.

³⁷⁶ Dasgupta, Patanjali, 39; Dasgupta, Philosophy and Religion, 37; a long paragraph on the *guṇas* follows.

³⁷⁷ Dasgupta, Patanjali, 77-78; Dasgupta, Philosophy and Religion, 67-77.

It is interesting to note that already at the age of 27 (when he wrote *The Study of Patanjali*) Dasgupta had formed some of the ideas which were to play a major role in his own philosophy. First of all, Sāṃkhya-Yoga was such an outstanding system, able to successfully tackle the problem of the nature of and relationship between matter and mind, because it claimed that there were two clearly defined and separate spheres, the physical or the mutable (*prakṛti*) and the metaphysical or the immutable (*puruṣa*), and that both these spheres were real and neither could be reduced to the other. Here we recognise Dasgupta the scientist and the lover of life and nature who refused to depreciate matter in terms of inferiority to the immaterial spheres.

Secondly, the theory of evolution already occupied Dasgupta's mind, providing a further explanation of why he was attracted to Sāṃkhya-Yoga. Already in 1914 he criticised Darwin and others for not being able to explain why accidental changes and variations occur in the evolutionary process. Sāṃkhya-Yoga gives an answer to that difficult question: Evolution takes place for the sake of the *puruṣa*, the pure Spirit. Matter (*prakṛti*), with all the changes it constantly undergoes, has a purpose, it is there to serve its counterpart, the *puruṣa*. This "dynamic teleology or purposiveness"³⁷⁸ was to remain Dasgupta's argument (and conviction), even after 25 more years of scientific study.

4.3. Dasgupta's Sāṃkhya-Yoga

4.3.1. Reasons for treating Sāṃkhya-Yoga

In the prefaces to *Yoga as Philosophy and Religion* and *Yoga Philosophy in Relation to other Systems of Thought*, Dasgupta mentions his motives for dealing with Sāṃkhya-Yoga. First of all, according to him, most people establish a link between Yoga and (occult) practices without knowing anything about its philosophy.

"Yoga is often regarded as a system of practical discipline and its claims as a system of philosophical thought are often ignored."³⁷⁹

"[...] the position of Yoga as a system of philosophy has always been misunderstood. It is probably for this reason and for the stress that it laid on its disciplinary course of practices that it sometimes wandered from its true ideal and became associated with magic, medicine and occultism."³⁸⁰

"[...] it is [...] erroneous to think – as many uninformed people do – that the only interest of Yoga lies in its practical side. The philosophical, psychological, cosmological, ethical, and religious doctrines, as well as its doctrines regarding matter and change, are extremely interesting in themselves, and have a definitely assured place in the history of the progress of human thought; and, for a right understanding of the essential features of the higher thoughts of India, as well as of the practical side of Yoga, their knowledge is indispensable."³⁸¹

³⁷⁸ Dasgupta, *Outlook*, 198.

³⁷⁹ Dasgupta, *Yoga Philosophy*, vii.

³⁸⁰ Dasgupta, *Yoga Philosophy*, 2.

³⁸¹ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, viii.

His aim therefore consisted in rehabilitating the theoretical side of Yoga.

“It has been my object here to show that Yoga is not merely a system of practices but a system of philosophy as well.”³⁸²

“[...] it is necessary [...] that Yoga might stand as a system of philosophy and not as a branch of occultism, magic, or nervous exercise.”³⁸³

But Dasgupta not only intended to modify people’s preconceived ideas about Yoga, he also wished to bring the Yoga philosophy to the awareness of Western minds (among others).

“The Yoga system of thought remains altogether unrecognised in the modern world.”³⁸⁴

This is why he explicitly limits himself to a “reconstruction of the Yoga doctrines as a systematic philosophy”, without “subjecting it to criticism.”³⁸⁵ Facing the philosophical world as a whole, Dasgupta chose to play “the part of an advocate and not of a critic who sits in judgment.”³⁸⁶ Here we recognise the Indian who is proud to introduce his Western colleagues to an interesting system of thought which most of them still ignored. Contrary to Eliade who could not acquire any taste for the philosophical side of Yoga (cf. *supra*, chapter 2.2.1.), Dasgupta saw a huge potential in the Sāṃkhya-Yoga theory, both for Indian philosophy as a whole as well as for other systems of human thought (cf. also *supra*, chapter 4.2.3.).

4.3.2. The textual sources

In his *History of Indian Philosophy*, Dasgupta presents us with a complete list of the texts, commentaries and sub-commentaries he used in his analysis of Sāṃkhya and Yoga. The following table sums up those titles the way he mentions them in the *History* (without any specification of editions or manuscripts, etc. but with indication of the time of their creation, according to him.)³⁸⁷

³⁸² Dasgupta, *Yoga Philosophy*, 5.

³⁸³ Dasgupta, *Yoga Philosophy*, 3.

³⁸⁴ Dasgupta, *Yoga Philosophy*, 6.

³⁸⁵ Dasgupta, *Yoga Philosophy*, 6.

³⁸⁶ Dasgupta, *Yoga Philosophy*, 6.

³⁸⁷ Cf. Dasgupta, *History*, 212-213. – For a more modern dating of these texts, cf. Potter, Karl H. *Bibliography of Indian Philosophies*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1970.

Sāṃkhya

Author	Title	Date
Caraka	?	78 A.D.
Vācaspati Miśra	<i>Tattvokaumudī</i> (commentary on Caraka)	9 th cent. A.D.

Īśvarakṛṣṇa	<i>Sāṃkhya kārīkā</i>	About 200 A.D.
Gauḍapāda	Commentary on the SK	Before the 9 th cent.
Rājā	<i>Rājavārttika</i> (?); commentary on the SK	Before 9 th cent.; probably lost now
Narāyaṇatīrtha	<i>Candrikā</i> (commentary on Gauḍapāda)	?

Unknown	<i>Sāṃkhya sūtras</i>	After the 9 th cent.
Aniruddha	Commentary on the SS	2 nd half of the 15 th cent.
Vijñāna Bhikṣu	<i>Pravacanabhāṣya</i>	16 th cent.

Vijñāna Bhikṣu	<i>Sāṃkhyasāra</i>	16 th cent.
Unknown	<i>Tattvasamāsa</i>	14 th cent.
Sīmānanda	<i>Sāṃkhyatattvavivecana</i>	After the 16 th cent.
Bhāvagaṇeśa	<i>Sāṃkhyatattvayāthārthya-</i> <i>dīpana</i>	After the 16 th cent.

Yoga

Author	Title	Date
Patañjali	<i>Yogasūtra</i>	Not earlier than 147 B.C.
Vyāsa	<i>Bhāṣya</i> (on the YS)	400 A.D.
Bhoja	<i>Bhojavṛtti</i> (on the YS)	10 th cent.
Vācaspati Miśra	<i>Tattvavaiśāradī</i> (commentary on Vyāsa)	
Vijñāna Bhikṣu	<i>Yogavārttika</i> (comm. on Vyāsa)	16 th cent.
Nāgeśa	<i>Chāyāvyaṅkyā</i> (comm. on Vyāsa)	17 th cent.

Modern works

Dasgupta also mentions some modern works which inspired him. Apart from his own *Study of Patanjali, Yoga Philosophy in Relation to other Indian Systems of Thought* and *Natural Philosophy of the Ancient Hindus* (the two latter ones being unpublished at the time), these are two books by Brajendra Nath Seal from Calcutta: *Mechanical, Physical and Chemical Theories of the Ancient Hindus*, 1910, and *Positive Sciences of the Ancient Hindus*, 1915. The titles of Seal's books are very revealing as they indicate a third (and not explicitly stated) motive for Dasgupta's dealing with Sāṃkhya-Yoga: the analysis of matter and its relevance for (modern) science.

Not all of those texts are of equal importance: Dasgupta, in *Yoga as Philosophy and Religion*, nearly exclusively quotes Vyāsa's *Bhāṣya*, Vācaspati Miśra's *Tattvavaiśārādī* und Vijñāna Bhikṣu's *Yogavārttika*. He also refers to Patañjali and, more rarely, to Īśvarakṛṣṇa, Gauḍapāda and Nāgeśa. Seal is quite present in the first part of this book (and entirely absent from the second), but the way Dasgupta quotes from his works makes it nearly always impossible to identify the exact source. Here we touch on a problematic aspect of Dasgupta's works on Yoga and Sāṃkhya in general: The bibliographical references are of the utmost scantness, none of his books contains a bibliography, it is impossible to know which edition of a particular text he is using, and it regularly happens that Dasgupta refers to a Sanskrit source without even telling that he does so.³⁸⁸ The best annotated text is his chapter in *History of Indian Philosophy*, but even there we find specifications such as "Vijñānāmṛtabhāṣya, p. 74," without any indication of the edition used.³⁸⁹ I am convinced that this lack of academic clarity springs from the fact that Dasgupta had all the texts in his mind, that they all lay like open books in front of his inner eye and that he was able to freely jump from one to the other, quoting from them as he wished. To him everything must have appeared so crystal clear that giving a reference for each and every source seemed too tedious a task, and therefore he simply specified the strict minimum. This should not be taken as an excuse or even an absolution – the way Dasgupta failed to indicate all his sources carefully and unequivocally throughout his treatises is definitely a major drawback of his works.

³⁸⁸ For example, on p. 99 he renders YS II,5, on p. 104 YS II,13 on p. 105 YS II,14, without using quotation marks and on p. 115 he refers to YS II,25, on p. 119 to YS II,27 and on p. 156 to YS III, 9-15 without the unaware reader noticing anything. There must be many more passages where the commentaries are concerned, but those I fail to identify because the only text I have more or less in my head is the YS.

³⁸⁹ Dasgupta, *History*, 239, footnote 1.

4.3.3. The analysis of the system according to *Yoga as Philosophy and Religion*

Since the Sāṃkhya-Yoga chapter in the *History of Indian Philosophy* sums up what Dasgupta had written in *The Study of Patanjali* and in *Yoga Philosophy in Relation to other Indian Systems of Thought*,³⁹⁰ and since *Yoga as Philosophy and Religion* is practically identical with *The Study of Patanjali* but represents Dasgupta's re-edition of his former text and, at the same time, is the last book he published on this subject, we can safely concentrate on *Yoga as Philosophy and Religion* for an in-depth analysis of Dasgupta's understanding of the Sāṃkhya-Yoga system of thought.

I will present *Yoga as Philosophy and Religion* chapter by chapter, except chapters IX and XIII which, since they are dedicated to karma and samādhi, two key concepts of our project "Yoga between Switzerland and India", will be treated separately in the end.

4.3.3.1. Table of contents

In the table of contents of *Yoga as Philosophy and Religion* we immediately recognise the topics which were central to Dasgupta's philosophical interest as a whole and which were to remain dear to his heart throughout his life:

“III. The Reality of the External World
IV. The Process of Evolution
[...]
VI. Evolution and Change of Qualities
VII. Evolution and God
VIII. Mind and Moral States
[...]
XV. Matter and Mind”³⁹¹

To these are added chapters on specifically Yogic subjects, such as

“I. Prakṛti
II. Puruṣa
[...]
V. The Evolution of the Categories
[...]
IX. The Theory of Karma
X. The Ethical Problem
XI. Yoga Practice
XII. The Yogāṅgas
XIII. Stages of Samadhi
XIV. God in Yoga”³⁹²

³⁹⁰ “The system has been treated in detail in those two works.” (Dasgupta, *History*, 208, footnote 1).

³⁹¹ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, Contents.

³⁹² Cf. Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, Contents.

The table of contents is divided into two parts (called “books”); the first one, comprising chapters I to VII, is called “Yoga Metaphysics” and the second one “Yoga Ethics and Practice.” The question arises whether this dichotomy corresponds to the title of the whole book, in other words: Does “Yoga Metaphysics” stand for “Philosophy” and “Yoga Ethics and Practice” for “Religion”? In the last text he wrote in his life, Dasgupta admitted that

“[i]n India we do not make much difference between philosophy and religion. Every system of philosophy becomes a religion when it is surcharged with spiritual feeling and emotion”³⁹³,

and he himself used both terms to describe his own system of thought. Yet we have also seen how closely related Dasgupta’s concept of philosophy was to science (philosophy being the master science, so to speak, collecting, comparing and making sense of the results of all exact sciences), and therefore the first part of *Yoga as Philosophy and Religion* could be qualified as mainly philosophical, dealing primarily with the external world (*prakṛti* and its reality) and the problem of evolution. The second part then, concentrating on ethical and practical aspects of Yoga, could correspond to certain aspects of the Indian concept of *dharma* (a term which is very often translated as “religion”), telling people how to live and act according to the scriptures. But this can only be a very rough distinction which will have to be verified (and differentiated) at the end of our analysis of Dasgupta’s book. After all, the spiritual aspect is also present in the first part (with *puruṣa* in chapter I and God in chapter VII), and the second part ends with a chapter on the external world in form of matter (and mind, chapter XV).

4.3.3.2. Prakṛti (chapter I)

Dasgupta starts by a short survey of how different philosophies have tried to solve the problem of the relation of mind and matter and then defines the metaphysics of the Yoga system as

“[...] an acute analysis of matter and thought.”³⁹⁴

Based on Vācaspati’s *Tattvavaiśārādī* on *Vyāsaśāstra* III,47, Dasgupta shows that

“[t]here is no intrinsic difference in nature between the mental and the physical”³⁹⁵,

the *guṇas* having a twofold aspect, one being the determined or the perceived (i.e. the *mahābhūtas*) and the other being the determiner or perceiver (i.e. *ahaṃkāra* and the *indriyas*). The mental and the physical are both modifications of the same thing and therefore

³⁹³ Dasgupta, *Science, Philosophy*, 5.

³⁹⁴ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 2.

³⁹⁵ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 4.

“[...] one is not in any way superior to the other.”³⁹⁶

Next, Dasgupta defines the nature of the *guṇas* as “the absolute potentiality of all things, mental and physical”³⁹⁷ and comments on their capacity of being modified by mutually influencing each other. The infinite number of *guṇa* entities is divided into three classes (*sattva*, *rajas*, *tamas*). Dasgupta insists on the fact that

“*Prakṛti* is not a separate category independent of the *guṇas* [but is just] a name for the *guṇa* entities when they exist in a state of equilibrium.”³⁹⁸

In this context he mentions that he has been asked by European scholars whether the *prakṛti* or the *guṇas* were real and he points out that this question shows how confused they were about the whole concept.

“Apart from *guṇas* there is no *prakṛti*. [...] *Prakṛti* as the equilibrium of the three *guṇas* is the absolute ground of all the mental and phenomenal modifications – pure potentiality.”³⁹⁹

The purpose of the *guṇas* is to serve “the experiences and the liberation of the *purusha*, or spirit.”⁴⁰⁰ But this purpose cannot be fulfilled as long as they remain in a state of equilibrium – therefore evolution has to take place. The cause of evolution lies in the “fulfilment of the objects of the *purusha*.”⁴⁰¹

The last part of this chapter is dedicated to the question whether the Vedāntic *avidyā* (or *māyā*) can be identified with *prakṛti* (as later Indian thinkers have argued). Dasgupta opposes a quotation from Lokācārya to a (non-specified) passage from the *Vyāsaśāstra* and concludes that *avidyā* “does not mean *prakṛti* according to the Pātañjala system.”⁴⁰² Vācaspati Mīśra’s commentary on *Vyāsaśāstra* IV,13, too, proves that

“*Prakṛti* being eternal is real and thus different from *māyā*.”⁴⁰³

³⁹⁶ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 4.

³⁹⁷ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 5.

³⁹⁸ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 6.

³⁹⁹ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 10.

⁴⁰⁰ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 7.

⁴⁰¹ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 8.

⁴⁰² Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 12.

⁴⁰³ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 12.

4.3.3.3. Puruṣa (chapter II)

In this chapter Dasgupta first tackles the extremely difficult question of the nature of the relationship between puruṣa and prakṛti.

“Prakṛti is a material, non-intelligent, independent principle, and the souls or spirits are isolated, neutral, intelligent and inactive. Then how can the one come into connection with the other?”⁴⁰⁴

He briefly refers to Plato’s idea and non-being, Aristotle’s matter and form and Kant’s noumenon and phenomenon, stating that these philosophers ultimately failed to satisfactorily explain how these two spheres were associated with each other. He also evokes three different schools of Vedānta as well as *Sāṃkhya-sūtra* IV,1, concluding that

“[...] all these theories only show that the transcendent nature of the union of the principle of pure intelligence is very difficult to comprehend.”⁴⁰⁵

Finally he turns to Patañjali and Vyāsa and sets out on a long analysis of nine sūtras (II,6, II,20-23, II,25, III,55, IV,22 and III,35)⁴⁰⁶ which present the Sāṃkhya-Yoga solution to the problem. The author of the *Yogasūtra* and his commentator describe the situation as follows:⁴⁰⁷

The identity of puruṣa and prakṛti is only apparent, due to the way the puruṣa perceives what is presented to him by the mind (buddhi).⁴⁰⁸ And although puruṣa and buddhi are altogether different from each other (the one being, for example, unchanging and the other ever-changing), they are also in some aspect quite similar.

“[...] the pure nature of sattva has a great resemblance to the pure nature of puruṣa.”⁴⁰⁹

Because of this similarity in one of the three guṇas of which the mind (as part of prakṛti) is composed, puruṣa is reflected by the mind, and it is this reflection which then imparts consciousness to whatever is perceived by buddhi. But:

“The exact nature of this reflection is indeed very hard to comprehend; no physical illustrations can really serve to make it clear.”⁴¹⁰

⁴⁰⁴ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 13.

⁴⁰⁵ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 15.

⁴⁰⁶ The list on p. 16 contains two errors: number 5 is YS II,23 and number 7 is YS III,55 (instead of II,22 and III,25).

⁴⁰⁷ Cf. Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 16-23.

⁴⁰⁸ Dasgupta sometimes translates buddhi as mind, sometimes as psychosis.

⁴⁰⁹ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 22.

⁴¹⁰ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 18.

The true nature of puruṣa can only be realised once the mind is known to be in reality absolutely unconnected with it. This state of kaivalya is possible when the mind becomes all pure sattva and, being then as pure as puruṣa,

“[...] reflects him in his purity [...] and becomes gradually lost in prakṛti and cannot again serve to bind puruṣa.”⁴¹¹

Whereas puruṣa is absolutely free and unconnected with prakṛti, “existing in and for himself,”⁴¹² the mind (buddhi) is in a position of service to him. It only exists “for the enjoyment and release of puruṣa,”⁴¹³ “which are the sole causes of its movement.”⁴¹⁴

Next, Dasgupta turns to the question of the plurality of puruṣas (as opposed to the Vedāntic doctrine which proclaims only one soul). In order to expose the Sāṃkhya-Yoga position he resorts to *Sāṃkhya-Kārikā* 17 (as well as Gauḍapāda’s commentary on this stanza) which lists five reasons for the existence of puruṣa at all. Dasgupta translates it as follows:

“Because an assemblage of things is for the sake of another; because there must be an entity different from the three guṇas and the rest (their modifications); because there must be a superintending power; because there must be someone who enjoys; and because of (the existence of) active exertion for the sake of abstraction or isolation (from the contact with prakṛti) therefore the soul exists.”⁴¹⁵

In his analysis of this passage, Dasgupta also quotes (and discusses) a modern commentary by a certain Davies, but without providing any information about this book.⁴¹⁶ Paraphrasing SK 18, Dasgupta then says why puruṣa must be conceived of as being multiple:

“In other words, since with the birth of one individual, all are not born; since with the death of one, all do not die; and since each individual has separate sense organs for himself; and since all beings do not work at the same time in the same manner; and since the qualities of the different guṇas are possessed differently by different individuals, puruṣas are many.”⁴¹⁷

The last pages of this chapter are dedicated to yet another controversy against the Vedāntic doctrine which holds that all knowledge of the ego is false knowledge because it is an illusion produced by Māyā. Yet Māyā “can neither be said to exist nor to non-exist”⁴¹⁸ nor can “the nature of [her] influence over the spiritual principle [...] be determined.”⁴¹⁹ In Sāṃkhya-Yoga however, “prakṛti is as real as

⁴¹¹ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 22.

⁴¹² Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 19.

⁴¹³ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 19.

⁴¹⁴ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 23.

⁴¹⁵ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 24.

⁴¹⁶ Cf. Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 25 and 26.

⁴¹⁷ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 26.

⁴¹⁸ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 27.

⁴¹⁹ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 28.

purusha himself” and the two are linked by a beginningless connection which “is not unreal in the Vedānta sense of the term.”⁴²⁰

The Vedāntic supposition that only one puruṣa (as Brahman) exists gives rise to the following problem:

[...] if there be one spiritual principle, how should we account for the supposed plurality of the buddhis? For we should rather expect to find one buddhi and not many to serve the supposed one purusha, and this will only mean that there can be only one ego, his enjoyment and release.⁴²¹

After demonstrating the impropriety of the Vedānta doctrine Dasgupta concludes:

“So we see that from the position in which Sāṃkhya and Yoga stood, this plurality of the purushas was the most consistent thing that they could think of.”⁴²²

4.3.3.4. The Reality of the External World (chapter III)

Dasgupta wants to refute the idealistic position of the Buddhists as far as the reality of the external world is concerned. For this purpose he chooses YS IV,12 which claims that both past and future exist in the present moment.

[...] the past has not been destroyed but has rather shifted its position and hidden itself in the body of the present, and the future that has not made its appearance exists in the present only in a potential form.⁴²³

He refuses Vācaspati’s opinion that, since neither past nor future exist, there cannot be a present either.

Next he evokes the idealists’ claim that “external reality is not different from our idea of it.”⁴²⁴ But, Dasgupta objects,

[...] why then does it appear as existing apart, outside and independent of my ideas? [...] Even our ideas carry with them the notion that reality exists outside our mental experiences.⁴²⁵

He supports his point by referring to Vyāsa’s *Bhāṣya* on YS IV,14 as well as Vācaspati’s commentary on it. Ultimately,

[t]he notion of externality and grossness pervades all our ideas, and if they are held to be false, no true thing can be known by our ideas and they therefore become equally false.⁴²⁶

⁴²⁰ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 28.

⁴²¹ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 28.

⁴²² Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 29.

⁴²³ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 31-32.

⁴²⁴ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 32.

⁴²⁵ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 32.

Patañjali (in YS IV,15) offers another argument in favour of the reality of the outside world. Dasgupta interprets this sūtra as follows:

“Thus A, B, C may perceive the same identical woman and may feel pleasure, pain or hatred. We see that the same common thing generates different feelings and ideas in different persons; external reality cannot be said to owe its origin to the idea or imagination of any one man, but exists independently of any person’s imagination in and for itself.”⁴²⁷

The last problem raised in this chapter concerns the nature of the “ground which underlies the manifold appearance of this external world which has been proved to be real.”⁴²⁸ Dasgupta informs the reader that Locke called this substratum “substance,” contrary to Hume who “denied all notions of substantiality.”⁴²⁹ Kant resorted to the “Thing-in-itself,” the nature of which could never be known. According to Dasgupta, Vyāsa penetrated this problem deeper than the mentioned three philosophers. In his *Bhāṣya* on YS III,13 and IV,13, Patañjali’s commentator shows that it is the guṇas which form the universe. In the process of evolution they change their appearance (becoming more “differentiated, determinate and coherent”⁴³⁰) but at the same time remain faithful to their character as guṇas.

“So we see that they have thus got two natures, one in which they remain quite unchanged as guṇas, and another in which they collocate and combine themselves in various ways and thus appear under the veil of a multitude of qualities and states of the manifold knowable.”⁴³¹

At this point, Dasgupta is ready to demonstrate how the evolutionary process of the guṇas, the substance underlying the whole universe, takes place.

⁴²⁶ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 34-35.

⁴²⁷ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 35.

⁴²⁸ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 36.

⁴²⁹ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 37.

⁴³⁰ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 37 (quoted from B. N. Seal without any bibliographical details).

⁴³¹ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 38.

4.3.3.5. The process of evolution (chapter IV)

Sāṃkhya distinguishes two kinds of evolutionary products:

- a) Those which, once created, are capable of being productive and of releasing other products, and
- b) those which are unable to originate anything anymore and represent the end of an emanation.

The first category is called by Dasgupta “aviśeṣha” (“slightly specialised”) and the second one “viśeṣha” (“thoroughly specialised”).⁴³² Buddhi (the mind), ahaṃkāra (the ego) and the tanmātras (subtle elements) belong to the first group whereas the indriyas (senses) and the mahābhūtas (gross elements) form the second group. Both puruṣa and prakṛti (in her balanced state) are eternal whereas all the products of prakṛti are “held to be non-eternal as they are produced for the sake of the puruṣas.”⁴³³

Dasgupta defines evolution as “nothing but the manifestation of change, mutation, by the energy of rajas”⁴³⁴ and then proceeds to determine the duration of a unit of change as “the time that is taken by a paramāṇu or atom to move from its place.”⁴³⁵ In a long footnote he discusses the different definitions of atom given by Vyāsa and Vijñāna Bhikṣu, Vācaspati Miśra and the Patañjali himself. Atoms are too small and fine to be perceived by the senses and therefore they are “mere points without magnitude or dimension.”⁴³⁶ The time an atom takes to change its position is called a “kṣhaṇa,” unit of time, which now also becomes “the unit measure of change.”⁴³⁷

“The change or evolution in the external world must [...] be measured by these units of spatial motion of the atoms [...].”⁴³⁸

Evolution and the notion of time are thus intimately related, and therefore Dasgupta dedicates the rest of this chapter to a discussion of time and its reality. Referring to Vyāsa and Vācaspati Miśra (both on YS III,52), Dasgupta argues that

“[...] the conception of time as discrete moments is the real one, whereas the conception of time as successive or as continuous is unreal, being only due to the imagination of our empirical and relative consciousness. [...] A moment is real [...] and is the essential element of the notion of succession. Succession involves the notion of change of moments [...].”⁴³⁹

⁴³² Cf. Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 40.

⁴³³ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 40.

⁴³⁴ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 43.

⁴³⁵ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 43.

⁴³⁶ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 43.

⁴³⁷ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 44.

⁴³⁸ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 44.

⁴³⁹ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 44.

Because two moments cannot co-exist only the present moment is real, but

“[...] the past and future exist in the present, the former as one which has already had its manifestation and is thus conserved in the fact of the manifestation of the present. [...] in a similar way it may be said that the manifestation of the present contains within itself the seed or the unmanifested state of the future, for if this had not been the case, the future never could have happened.”⁴⁴⁰

Only a seer, “whose power of knowing is not narrowed by the senses,”⁴⁴¹ has the possibility to perceive past, present and future in one moment (cf. YS III,53).

Since our normal consciousness cannot grasp the individual kṣaṇas, it connects all the separate moments and thus imagines continuous time. Evolution or change which we notice to have happened in a thing after a certain while was in fact going on every moment. This is what Patañjali says in IV,33:

“Succession involving a course of changes is associated with the moments.”⁴⁴²

To which Vācaspati Miśra adds the following explanation:

“Even before a thing is old there can be inferred a sequence of the subtlest, subtler, subtle, grossest, grosser and gross changes.”⁴⁴³

4.3.3.6. The evolution of the categories (chapter V)

Since in Sāṃkhya-Yoga evolution (or creation) starts with the mind, Dasgupta dedicates a long part of this chapter to the nature of the mind. He first states that Yoga distinguishes clearly between the “actionless, absolutely pure and simple intelligence” (puruṣa) on the one hand and the mental states “which [become] intelligent by coming in connection with this intelligence.”⁴⁴⁴ Thoughts or ideas rise in the mind, are illuminated by the puruṣa and then disappear again. Rajas is the energy or the principle of movement which is responsible for this constant change in the mind.

Thought in itself consists of a “universal mould or form of knowledge which assumes the form of all the sensuous contents that are presented to it.”⁴⁴⁵ This substratum is sattva, resembling puruṣa in its purity (cf. *supra*, chapter 4.3.3.3.), “the one principle of intelligibility of all our conscious states.”⁴⁴⁶ If sattva is completely dominant and rajas and tamas utterly suppressed, then pure

⁴⁴⁰ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 46.

⁴⁴¹ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 47.

⁴⁴² Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 45.

⁴⁴³ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 46.

⁴⁴⁴ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 48.

⁴⁴⁵ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 49.

⁴⁴⁶ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 49.

knowledge (“in which there is neither the knower nor the known”⁴⁴⁷) is possible. This is the reason why buddhi (or the mind) is often called sattva. But buddhi has more names; it is also the ego-universal (asmitāmātra), which Dasgupta equals to mahat, “the most universal thing conceivable and the one common source from which all other things originate.”⁴⁴⁸ After this stage of pure sattva dominance, the next phase arises where rajas becomes strongest. Now asmitā or ahaṃkāra,⁴⁴⁹ “the ego or subject which knows, feels and wills,”⁴⁵⁰ is born. Commenting on YS II,6 and Vyāsa (on I,17), Dasgupta concludes:

“Thus we find that the mind is affected by its own rajas or activity and posits itself as the ego or subject as activity. By reason of this position of the “I” as active it perceives itself in the objective, in all its conative and cognitive senses in its thoughts and feelings and also in the external world of extension and co-existence.”⁴⁵¹

The ego is nothing but “another phase or modification of the buddhi,”⁴⁵² being buddhi under the predominance of rajas. And the ego or subject can turn back upon itself and make itself its own object because the guṇas have two aspects, one being the perceiver and the other the perceived (cf. *Tattvavaiśārādī* on YS III,47 and *supra*, chapter 4.3.3.2.).

Next, the ego develops into three directions. The preponderance of rajas leads to the creation of the five karmendriyas (“conative senses”), the dominance of sattva to the five jñānendriyas (“cognitive senses”), and tamas produces the five tanmātras (subtle elements) which ultimately (and still under the influence of tamas) develop the mahābhūtas (gross elements).⁴⁵³ In this process, the five cognitive senses are “[synchronised] with the evolution of the prakṛti on the tanmātric side of evolution.”⁴⁵⁴

Manas, “another specialisation of the ego,”⁴⁵⁵ takes part of both the jñānendriyas and the karmendriyas (cf. SK 27). Dasgupta therefore calls it “the co-ordinating organ.”⁴⁵⁶

This whole process of development or change of ahaṃkāra into senses and elements is only possible through the energy provided by rajas. Dasgupta quotes Lokācārya and Barabara Muni⁴⁵⁷ as well as Vācaspati Miśra (on SK 25) in this respect.

⁴⁴⁷ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 49.

⁴⁴⁸ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 51.

⁴⁴⁹ Dasgupta uses both terms synonymously.

⁴⁵⁰ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 51.

⁴⁵¹ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 51-52.

⁴⁵² Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 53.

⁴⁵³ Cf. Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 54.

⁴⁵⁴ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 54.

⁴⁵⁵ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 55.

⁴⁵⁶ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 59.

⁴⁵⁷ Further down in his book Dasgupta specifies who these are: “[...] Barabara Muni’s commentary on [Lokācārya’s] *Tattvatraya* – a treatise on the Rāmānuja Philosophy [...]” (Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 64).

Now Dasgupta tackles the topic of the relation between the sense faculties and the sense organs. Taking the example of hearing, he states that

“the faculty of hearing is seated in the ether (ākāśa) within our ear-hole. It is here that the power of hearing is located. [...] When the sounds of solids, etc., are heard, then the power of hearing located in the hollow of the ear stands in need of the resonance produced in the ākāśa of the ear.”⁴⁵⁸

Ether contains in itself the power of hearing but it also has the quality of sound because it “is born out of the soniferous tanmātra”⁴⁵⁹ (cf. *Vyāśabhāṣya* and *Tattvavaiśārādī* on YS III,41). The other senses work in the same way but based on another tanmātra.⁴⁶⁰

To end this chapter, Dasgupta discusses the seeming difference in the evolutionary process according to Sāṃkhya on the one hand and Yoga on the other. According to *Vyāśabhāṣya* on YS II,19, the tanmātras are not a product of asmitā but of buddhi/mahat. After a long and very detailed analysis of passages from the bhāṣya and other sources, Dasgupta concludes that it depends on the point of view one adopts:

“This shows that the order of evolution as found in the Sāṃkhya works (viz. mahat from prakṛti, ahaṃkāra from mahat and the eleven senses and the tanmātras from ahaṃkāra) is true only in this sense that these modifications of ahaṃkāra take place directly as differentiations of characters in the body of mahat. As these differentiations take place through ahaṃkāra as the first moment in the series of transformations it is said that the transformations take place directly from ahaṃkāra; whereas when stress is laid on the other aspect it appears that the transformations are but differentiations as integrated in the body of the mahat, and thus it is also said that from mahat the six aviśeṣas – namely, ahaṃkāra and the five tanmātras – come out.”⁴⁶¹

4.3.3.7. Evolution and change of qualities (chapter VI)

This chapter first deals with the evolution of the subtle and gross elements. As far as the derivation of the first ones is concerned, the major Sāṃkhya treatises do not say anything. Vijñāna Bhikṣu simply states that the tanmātras represent

“[...] that indeterminate state of matter in which they can never be distinguished one from the other, and they cannot be perceived to be possessed of different qualities of specialised in any way.”⁴⁶²

Dasgupta adds that the tanmātras can only be perceived by yogins.

⁴⁵⁸ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 56.

⁴⁵⁹ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 57.

⁴⁶⁰ Cf. Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 57-58.

⁴⁶¹ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 62.

⁴⁶² Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 65.

Looking at the evolution of the grosser elements from the subtle ones, Dasgupta confronts his readers with a series of partly contradictory views, derived from Vācaspati Miśra (on YS I, 44), Vijñāna Bhikṣu (on YS I, 45, III, 52 and IV, 14) and Nāgeśa (on YS I, 45?). However the exact process of transition from the tanmātras to the atoms may be described, Dasgupta concludes that

“[...] from bhūtādi [tāmasa ahaṃkāra] come the five tanmātras which can be compared to the Vaiśeṣika atoms as they have no parts and neither grossness nor visible differentiation. [...] The next one, the paramāṇu (atom), which is gross in its nature and is generated from the tanmātras [...] may be compared with the trasareṇu of the Vaiśeṣikas.”⁴⁶³

Whereas Yoga recognises the doctrine of atoms, the Sāṃkhya view is not so clear.

“The Sāṃkhya-kārikā does not mention the paramāṇus.”⁴⁶⁴

But Dasgupta strongly believes that Sāṃkhya could not have denied the idea of atoms, even if that particular word is not there, and he taxes the supposition “of some German scholars that Sāṃkhya did not admit the paramāṇus” as “not very plausible.”⁴⁶⁵

The third step is the evolution of the actual gross elements out of conglomerations of atoms. According to Dasgupta, this process is best summed up by Vijñāna Bhikṣu (on YS IV, 4).⁴⁶⁶

The bhūtas (gross elements) represent the last stage of evolution of the guṇas, but that does not mean that the course of evolution is finished. What has been described so far was the development from the aviśeṣas to the viśeṣas, which is called *tattvāntara pariṇāma* (“evolution of different categories of existence”).⁴⁶⁷ Once all the viśeṣas (the 10 senses and the 5 gross elements) have been created, we can observe

“[...] the evolution that takes place among the viśeṣas themselves, which is called *dharmapariṇāma* or evolution by change of qualities.”⁴⁶⁸

The atoms of the elements get together and form all the objects and bodies of the external world. Dasgupta insists on the fact that such an object or body has to be comprehended as an entity which is different from the atoms which compose it, since it has its own qualities and attributes. He also points out that such a process of conglomeration takes place in harmony and not confusion.

⁴⁶³ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 66.

⁴⁶⁴ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 67.

⁴⁶⁵ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 67.

⁴⁶⁶ Cf. Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 67.

⁴⁶⁷ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 41.

⁴⁶⁸ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 69.

"[...] the different guṇas do not choose different independent courses for their evolution, but join together and effectuate themselves in the evolution of a single product."⁴⁶⁹

The atoms of the elements

"[...] unite in the production of the particular substances by a common teleological purpose."⁴⁷⁰

For this statement, Dasgupta refers to *Vyāsaśāstra* on YS IV,14.

Since bodies and objects consist of atoms, a change of appearance in such an object or body always reflects a change in the position of the atoms. Or, in Vyāsa's words (on YS III,13):

"[A] dharma (quality) is merely the nature of the dharmin (substance), and it is the changes of the dharmin that are made explicit by the dharmas."⁴⁷¹

Therefore, the change in appearance is called dharma-pariṇāma. This change has two aspects:

a) lakṣaṇa-pariṇāma (the change of characteristic signs)

With this term Dasgupta refers to the change of a thing or body in the course of time.

"It considers the three stages of an appearance – the unmanifested when it exists in the future, the manifested moment of the present, and the past when it has been manifested – lost to view but preserved and retained in all the onward stages of the evolution."⁴⁷²

Once more, these minute but constant changes of the atoms at every moment cannot be perceived by anyone except the yogins.

b) avasthā-pariṇāma (the change of condition)

This change is, materially speaking, a variation or mode of lakṣaṇa-pariṇāma.

"It is on account of this that a substance is called new or old, grown or decayed."⁴⁷³

Dasgupta quotes Vyāsa and Vijñāna Bhikṣu (on YS III,13) for an illustration.

⁴⁶⁹ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 70.

⁴⁷⁰ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 70.

⁴⁷¹ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 71.

⁴⁷² Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 72.

⁴⁷³ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 73.

Next, Dasgupta defines dharmin, the substance. In particles of dust, a lump of earth and a jug, the substance which is common to all of these things is earth.

“Earth here is the common quality which remains unchanged in all these stages. [...] This earth therefore is regarded as the dharmin, characterised one, the substance; and its stages as its dharma or qualities.”⁴⁷⁴

The transformation of the lump into a jug is an instance of dharma-pariṇāma. All the atoms of the gross elements, although they in themselves do not change, constantly undergo transformations in their conglomerated appearance,

“[...] suffering dharma-pariṇāma as they are changed from the inorganic to plants and animals and back again to the inorganic.”⁴⁷⁵

Dasgupta talks of “circulation of cosmic matter”⁴⁷⁶ which is true for all things.

“[...] one substance may undergo endless changes of characteristic in order of succession; and along with the change of characteristic or dharma we have the lakṣhaṇa-pariṇāma and the avasthā-pariṇāma as old or new, which is evidently one of infinitesimal changes of growth and decay. [...] There is no intrinsic difference between one thing and another, but only changes of character of one and the same thing.”⁴⁷⁷

Turning now to modern theories of evolution, Dasgupta observes that no scientist has given any reason for the transformation of the inorganic to the animal to man. Sāṃkhya-Yoga, on the other hand,

“[...] explains it from the standpoint of teleology or the final goal inherent in all matter, so that it may be serviceable to the puruṣa.”⁴⁷⁸

This moral purpose in prakṛti is what distinguishes this Indian philosophy from Western science. The only aim of matter is “the experience and final realisation of the paruṣa [sic].”⁴⁷⁹ Otherwise, Sāṃkhya-Yoga is very similar to modern science

“[...] for it does not explain the cause of the accidental variation noticed in all the stages of evolutionary process from any physical point of view based on the observation of facts.”⁴⁸⁰

Dasgupta definitely prizes Sāṃkhya-Yoga for its moral point of view, but (and in accord with the scriptures) he keeps it limited to the explanation of why prakṛti undergoes this evolution; he does not apply it to the whole nature and function of matter. It is rajas or energy which sets and keeps all the atoms in motion, and since evolution is a result of the change of positions of atoms, Dasgupta states that

⁴⁷⁴ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 73-74.

⁴⁷⁵ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 74.

⁴⁷⁶ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 75.

⁴⁷⁷ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 75.

⁴⁷⁸ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 76.

⁴⁷⁹ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 76.

⁴⁸⁰ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 77.

“[t]here is always the transformation of energy from the inorganic to the organic and back again from the organic. Thus the differences among things are solely due to the different stages which they occupy in the scale of evolution, as different expressions of the transformation of energy [...]; the change of the collocation of atoms only changes potentiality into actuality [...].”⁴⁸¹

This reads very modern and abstract but to Dasgupta this is what Vācaspati expressed in his *Tattvavaiśārādī* on YS III,14.

Time and space do have an influence on the transformation in things; two fruits of the same kind evolve differently growing on two different trees in different places. Once again it is only a yogin, endowed with the right knowledge, who

“[...] can perceive the difference of their specific evolution in association with their points of space.”⁴⁸²

Dharma-pariṇāma designates the changes which take place in the viśeṣas;⁴⁸³ the evolution of the aviśeṣas however is called satkāryavāda, meaning that the effect is dormant in the cause.

“The grouping or collocation alone changes, and this brings out the manifestation of the latent powers of the guṇas, but without creation of anything absolutely new or non-existent.”⁴⁸⁴

Dasgupta calls this satkāryavāda “the true” one and opposes it to the Vedāntists’ explanation of cause and effect

“[...] which ought more properly to be called the satkāraṇavāda theory, for with them the cause alone is true, and all effects are illusory, being only impositions on the cause.”

With Sāṃkhya-Yoga however the effects are as true as the cause, “due to the power which the substance has of transforming itself into those various appearances and effects.”⁴⁸⁵

⁴⁸¹ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 77.

⁴⁸² Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 79.

⁴⁸³ Actually, dharma-pariṇāma also happens in citta (the mind), but this will be dealt with in the second part of the book (cf. Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 81).

⁴⁸⁴ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 81 (this is a quotation from a source which Dasgupta fails to indicate).

⁴⁸⁵ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 82.

4.3.3.8. Evolution and God (chapter VII)

Prakṛti is not only substance but also power (śakti). Therefore, “the movement by which it actualises itself is immanent within itself and not caused from without.”⁴⁸⁶ As long as the guṇas are in equilibrium, their opposing tendencies obstruct each other and this śakti cannot move the substance into evolution or manifestation.

“The example chosen to explain the nature of prakṛti and its modifications conceived as power tending towards actuality from potentiality in the *Vyāsa-bhāṣya* is that of a sheet of water enclosed by temporary walls within a field, but always tending to run out of it. As soon as the temporary wall is broken in some direction, the water rushes out of itself, and what one has to do is to break the wall at a particular place.”⁴⁸⁷

Vyāsa (in his *Bhāṣya* on YS III,14) enumerates a few conditions which are able to break such a barrier – form and constitution of a thing, place, time, but also merit (dharma) and demerit (adharma). Dasgupta concentrates on these last two, referring to Vijñāna Bhikṣu and Nāgeśa (on YS III,14?) who

“[...] agree here in saying that the modifications due to dharma and adharma are those which affect the bodies and senses. What they mean is possibly this, that it is dharma or adharma alone which guides the transformations of the bodies and senses of all living beings in general [...].”⁴⁸⁸

Dasgupta comments that a yogin therefore gets his special body as a result of his particular merit, and animals and men receive a new body after death also due to their dharma.

Here Dasgupta introduces Īśvara (God), pointing out that

“[...] all the later commentators agree in holding him responsible for the removal of all barriers in the way of prakṛtis [sic] development. So that Īśvara is the root cause of all the removal of barriers, including those that are affected by merit and demerit.”⁴⁸⁹

In their comments on YS IV,3, Vācaspati, Nāgeśa and Vijñāna Bhikṣu attribute to God the power of removing all the obstacles as prakṛti evolves. Dasgupta summarises their opinion as follows:

“He by His very presence causes the obstacles, as the barriers in the way of prakṛti’s development, to be removed, in such a way that He stands ultimately responsible for the removal of all obstacles in the way of prakṛti’s development and thus also of all obstacles in the way of men’s performance of good or bad deeds.”⁴⁹⁰

⁴⁸⁶ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 84.

⁴⁸⁷ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 84.

⁴⁸⁸ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 86.

⁴⁸⁹ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 87.

⁴⁹⁰ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 88.

Contrasting this view to Nīlakaṇṭha's explanation of *Śāntiparvan* 300/2, which says that God's will is entirely responsible for man's good or bad actions, Dasgupta objects that Nīlakaṇṭha does not leave any scope for human freedom or responsibility. He therefore interprets Īśvara's role in acquiring merit or demerit

"[...] to mean only in a general way the help that is offered by Him in removing the obstructions of the external world in such a manner that it may be possible for a man to perform practically meritorious acts in the external world."⁴⁹¹

Dasgupta finds this view confirmed by Vācaspati's comment on YS III,45 (which also adds that man's will is limited by the command of God).

Sāṃkhya differs from Yoga in the sense that it is not Īśvara but the puruṣārtha (or serviceability to the puruṣa) which is the agent to remove the obstacles of prakṛti. Dasgupta however doubts the capacity of this "essentially non-intelligent" instance to guide the evolution "so as to ensure the best possible mode of serving all the interests of the puruṣa."⁴⁹² He prefers to go along with Vācaspati Miśra who claims that God's aim is the fulfilment of the purpose of the puruṣa (in his comment on YS IV,3); this is the ultimate reason for considering God as the prime mover.

Sāṃkhya and Yoga agree that Īśvara has no influence on the connection of puruṣa and prakṛti.

The summary which concludes this chapter conveys Dasgupta's point of view as far as Īśvara's role is concerned.

"Prakṛti itself, though a substantial entity, is also essentially of the nature of conserved energy existing in the potential form but always ready to flow out and actualise itself, if only its own immanent obstructions are removed. Its teleological purpose is powerless to remove its own obstruction. God by His very presence removes the obstacles, by which, prakṛti of itself moves in the evolutionary process, and thus the purpose is realised [...]"⁴⁹³

At the very end, Dasgupta briefly addresses the issue of whether the world is eternal or not. Since the world (prakṛti) ceases to exist for a liberated puruṣa but is still there for all those puruṣas who have not reached kaivalya, the eternality of the world "is only relative and not absolute."⁴⁹⁴ He quotes Vyāsa (on YS IV,33) who says:

"[...] whether the world will have an end or not cannot be directly answered. The world-process gradually ceases for the wise and not for others, so no one-sided decision can be true."⁴⁹⁵

⁴⁹¹ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 88.

⁴⁹² Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 89.

⁴⁹³ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 91.

⁴⁹⁴ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 91.

⁴⁹⁵ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 91.

4.3.3.9. Conclusions

Chapter VII marks the end of the first part of *Yoga as Philosophy and Religion*, called “Yoga Metaphysics.” Before proceeding to the second section (“Yoga Ethics and Practice”) I would like to briefly get back to the question whether these first chapters could be understood as representing the word “Philosophy” in the main title of this book.

Here is a list of the topics dealt with in chapters I – VII (enumerated in the order in which they have been treated):

- there is no difference between the mental and the physical
- nature of prakṛti and of the guṇas
- prakṛti is different from māyā
- relation of puruṣa and prakṛti
- proof of the existence of puruṣa
- plurality of puruṣas
- reality of the external world
- nature of atoms
- nature of time
- suprasensuous perception
- nature of the mind
- nature of the ego
- nature of the co-ordinating organ
- rajas as the moving energy which enables the evolutionary process to take place
- nature of ether
- order of evolution
- creation of atoms
- teleological purpose in the conglomeration of the atoms
- changes in quality and substance
- conditions which are able to break the barriers inside of prakṛti (to set the evolution in motion)
- God as the removing force of these barriers
- God’s aim is the fulfilment of the purpose of the puruṣa
- God’s power (and its limits)
- the eternity of the world is only relative

I distinguish three main categories into which these topics can be divided:

1. the physical (atoms, time, evolution, quality, substance, external world)
2. the mental (mind, ego, the co-ordinating organ)
3. the spiritual (puruṣa and Īśvara, God)

Dasgupta however states right from the beginning that there is no difference between the mental and the physical, both realms belonging to prakṛti; therefore the three categories can (or even have to) be reduced to two: prakṛti on the one hand, evolving into both the physical and the mental universes, and puruṣa and Īśvara on the other. Here we reenounter the characteristic ingredients of

Dasgupta's own philosophy: a profound (scientific) interest in the nature of the physical and the mental reality as well as a deep love for the divine. I would argue that since the Sāṃkhya-Yoga system of thought is made up of exactly this dichotomy, giving equal importance to spirit and matter and even providing an explanation of how these two opposed spheres work together, this "Yoga Metaphysics" incorporate what Dasgupta would have termed "Philosophy."

The weakest part of the Yoga-Sāṃkhya system as presented by Dasgupta certainly is the nebulous relation between puruṣa and Īśvara – Dasgupta's own uneasiness about these two rivalling yet strangely cooperative spiritual forces can be felt clearly. Yet, a theist in his heart, he seems to like the idea of Īśvara and therefore prefers Yoga to Sāṃkhya in this respect, but the philosophical reasoning for Īśvara's role seems a bit far-fetched if not arbitrary. In *Yoga Philosophy in Relation to other Indian Systems of Thought*, Dasgupta evokes Vijñāna Bhikṣu's personal view of this delicate problem which up to a certain point might mirror Dasgupta's own feelings about it.

"Bhikshu himself had an ardent religious zeal and he could hardly think of his dear Sāṃkhya to be atheistic in spite of its clear and distinct professions on that side."⁴⁹⁶

According to Bhikṣu, the puruṣas are all part of Īśvara, the whole, who connects the puruṣas with prakṛti and who brings about the disturbance of the latter, leading to the process of evolution.

"Thus Īśvara here in the theological aspect appears as the father of us all, and He is always engaged in doing good to us in accordance with our moral conduct."⁴⁹⁷

Dasgupta adds that this idea of Bhikṣu "is an old one which appears in the diverse Purāṇas and in the Gītā in slightly modified forms."⁴⁹⁸ But then he decides to no longer dwell on this subject

"[...] as it may leave the impression that the question of determining the relation of Īśvara to souls was one of the main problems of the Yoga philosophy."⁴⁹⁹

He concludes that Īśvara in Yoga is merely of secondary importance, being only "one of the many objects of concentration," someone who "may be pleased to remove the obstacles of the Yoga and thereby make the way smoother for the Yogin."⁵⁰⁰ This rather sudden "deflation" of Īśvara culminates in a statement in Dasgupta's very last article "Science, Philosophy and Religion" (where he tried to show that Indian philosophy and religion do not necessarily need the admission

⁴⁹⁶ Dasgupta, *Yoga Philosophy*, 254.

⁴⁹⁷ Dasgupta, *Yoga Philosophy*, 257.

⁴⁹⁸ Dasgupta, *Yoga Philosophy*, 257.

⁴⁹⁹ Dasgupta, *Yoga Philosophy*, 258.

⁵⁰⁰ Dasgupta, *Yoga Philosophy*, 258.

of a personal God but work together with science in a combined effort to build a rational, moral and spiritual personality in every man):

“The Yoga system admits God not so much for religious reason, but more as a matter of courtesy.”⁵⁰¹

As in chapter 4.2.3 we can see how Dasgupta modifies his position, depending on who he is writing for, respectively which point he is trying to drive home. Comparing Sāṃkhya to the philosophies of Jainism, Buddhism and Mīmāṃsā (in *Yoga Philosophy in Relation to other Systems of Indian Thought*) he even praises the ultimate superiority of Sāṃkhya on the grounds that it successfully managed to eliminate the concept of Īśvara altogether.

“But though these different systems [Jainism, Buddhism, Mīmāṃsā] agree with Sāṃkhya in point of atheism, yet to Sāṃkhya really belongs the credit of producing a systematic philosophy competent to do away with the hypothesis of an Īśvara as the ruler of the universe.”⁵⁰²

In the first part of *Yoga as Philosophy and Religion* we could also observe how Dasgupta selected his sources according to what a particular text had to say about a particular subject. He judiciously chose those passages which best conveyed his own ideas or which came closest to them; sometimes he also reformulated the original texts in such a modern way that one had to wonder whether this was really what the Sanskrit source wanted to say. Dasgupta did not hesitate to refute the opinion of one of his ancient predecessors simply because he could not believe that what he said was true. Given the fact that his sources date from roughly the 4th to the 16th centuries his description of the Sāṃkhya-Yoga system is hardly a historical one. What we are confronted with is Dasgupta’s own system in the guise of old texts. His main objective being the presentation of a coherent philosophical and scientific Indian reply to fundamental questions insufficiently answered by Western philosophers and scientists, Sāṃkhya-Yoga had to be the way he wanted it to be. Nevertheless, his remains

“[o]ne of the most penetrating analyses of the origins and significance of the Sāṃkhya” [...], “a truly penetrating and stimulating exposition of a Sāṃkhya theory.”⁵⁰³

One last point I would like to focus on is Dasgupta’s regular mentioning of the fact that yogins are able to perceive all the subtle phenomena which remain hidden to a normal human’s consciousness. Thus, a yogin can “see” the subtle elements (tanmātras) as well as the constant change of the atoms, and he can tell the difference in evolution of two identical things (for example: two fruits of the same kind) which have come into being in two different places (for example: on different trees). Dasgupta evokes these yogic capacities as if they were natural facts – never does he seem to doubt them. As he writes elsewhere:

⁵⁰¹ Dasgupta, *Science, Philosophy*, 6.

⁵⁰² Dasgupta, *Yoga Philosophy*, 238.

⁵⁰³ Larson, *Sāṃkhya*, 36 and 40.

“If we do not believe the testimony of the Yogin, there is probably no way for us either to prove or disprove its reality.”⁵⁰⁴

4.3.3.10. Mind and moral states (chapter VIII)

The second part of *Yoga as Philosophy and Religion*, entitled “Ethics and Practice”, starts with Dasgupta emphasising the “practical tone” of Yoga. In order to expound the means for attaining liberation Yoga focusses on, it is necessary to talk about Yoga’s ethical theories. These however imply an analysis of the mind which Dasgupta here, for the first time, calls citta.

“I have translated both citta and buddhi as mind. The word buddhi is used when emphasis is laid on the intellectual and cosmical functions of the mind. The word citta is used when emphasis is laid on the conservative side of mind as the repository of all experiences, memory, etc.”⁵⁰⁵

He distinguishes between kāryacitta or “citta as effect” and kāraṇacitta or “citta as cause.”⁵⁰⁶ Whereas the kāraṇacittas are all-pervading and linked with all the puruṣas (and therefore infinite in number), the kāryacittas manifest themselves as the individual citta of a particular person in the form of his or her states of consciousness. A yogin has access to the kāraṇacitta and therefore “may have knowledge of all things at once.”⁵⁰⁷ The concept of an all-pervading citta only belongs to Yoga; Sāṃkhya holds that citta is simply as small or great as the body it occupies.

This whole reasoning is mainly based on *Chāyāvyaākhyā* IV,10 of the 17th century, and Dasgupta stays with this source when he defines citta as

“[...] the sum or unity of the eleven senses and the ego and also of the five prāṇas or biomotor forces. [...] It thus stands for all that is psychical in man: his states of consciousness including the living principle in man represented by the activity of the five prāṇas.”⁵⁰⁸

This is clearly a modern definition of citta – originally citta only encompassed buddhi, ahaṃkāra and manas.

Kāraṇacitta is modified into kāryacitta through the influence of rajas and tamas. The yogin’s task consists in overcoming this influence, in arresting the states of citta through concentration and in causing citta to turn back to its all-pervading state. Then

⁵⁰⁴ Dasgupta, *Yoga Psychology*, 197.

⁵⁰⁵ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 92, footnote.

⁵⁰⁶ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 92-93.

⁵⁰⁷ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 93.

⁵⁰⁸ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 94.

“[...] the Yogin acquires omniscience, and finally when this citta becomes as pure as the form of puruṣa itself, the puruṣa becomes conscious of himself and is liberated from the bonds of prakṛti.”⁵⁰⁹

At this point Dasgupta inserts a brief description of the content of the YS which may be summed up as follows.⁵¹⁰

Chapter	Content
I	Yoga for somebody “whose mind is inclined towards trance-cognition.”
II	The means for somebody with an ordinary mind; how such a person can reach Yoga, too.
III	“Phenomena which strengthen the faith of the Yogin on the means of attaining Yoga described in the second chapter.”
IV	Kaivalya, “the end of all the Yoga practices.”

Next, Dasgupta lists the five classes of cittas, according to the *Vyāsa-bhāṣya* (on YS I,1):⁵¹¹

1. kṣipta (wandering)
2. mūḍha (forgetful)
3. vikṣipta (occasionally steady)
4. ekāgra (one-pointed)
5. niruddha (restrained)

Describing the wandering mind, Dasgupta for the first time in this book refers to *Bhojavṛtti* (on YS I,2). Whereas the first three kinds of mind have no chance to attain “that contemplative concentration called Yoga,”⁵¹² the one-pointed mind is apt to reach the saṃprajñāta (“concentration on an object of knowledge”)⁵¹³ state of samādhi. In the restrained mind, finally, “all mental states are arrested. This leads to kaivalya.”⁵¹⁴

Next, Dasgupta explains vṛttis as “actual states of mind” as opposed to saṃskāras which are “latent states.” The former ones continuously generate the latter ones which again try to manifest themselves as vṛttis.⁵¹⁵

“There is a circulation from vṛttis to saṃskāras and from them again to vṛttis. [...] Thus it is not enough for a Yogin to arrest any particular class of mental states; he must attain such a habit of restraint that the saṃskāra thus generated is able to overcome, weaken and destroy the saṃskāra of those actual states which he has arrested by his contemplation.”⁵¹⁶

⁵⁰⁹ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 95.

⁵¹⁰ Cf. Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 95.

⁵¹¹ Cf. Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 95 (the exact reference to the *Vyāsa-bhāṣya* is not given by Dasgupta, this passage probably being too famous for him to need specification).

⁵¹² Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 96.

⁵¹³ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 96.

⁵¹⁴ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 96.

⁵¹⁵ The five vṛttis of YS I,5 ff. are only discussed in the very last chapter of Dasgupta’s book (cf. *infra*, chapter 4.3.3.15, „matter and mind”).

⁵¹⁶ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 97.

Implicitly referring to YS II,5, Dasgupta introduces the concept of avidyā or nescience which is the ultimate root of all pain. Both pleasure and pain cause saṃskāras and

“[...] these again [...] naturally create their memory and thence comes attachment or aversion, then again action, and again pleasure and pain and hence impressions, memory, attachment or aversion, and again action and so forth.”⁵¹⁷

Caught in this vicious circle, and understanding that every state of phenomenal existence is ultimately painful (cf. YS II,15), the yogin will do everything to avoid both pleasure and pain, and he

“[...] turns for refuge to right knowledge, cause of the destruction of all pains.”⁵¹⁸

Referring to YS II,3 (again without giving the reference), Dasgupta describes the four modifications which avidyā undergoes. In opposition to Patañjali, who says that asmitā (ego), rāga (inclination towards pleasure), dveṣa (repulsion from pain) and abhiniveśa (love of life) spring from nescience, Dasgupta claims that the last three are products of the ego, all four together being avidyā’s four heads. A little further down however he is again in line with Patañjali, stating that

“[...] these five afflictions [kleśas] are only different aspects of avidyā and cannot be conceived separately from avidyā.”⁵¹⁹

Rāga, dveṣa and abhiniveśa are present in “most of our states of consciousness, which are therefore called the *kliṣṭa vṛtti* or afflicted states.”⁵²⁰ Opposed to these are the unafflicted, *akliṣṭa* states, namely abhyāsa (habit of steadiness) and vairāgya (non-attachment). As with the kleśas, the *akliṣṭa vṛttis* seem to stand for a whole range of mental states.

“[They] represent such thoughts as tend towards emancipation and are produced from our attempts to conceive rationally our final state of emancipation, or to adopt suitable means for this.”⁵²¹

Dasgupta clearly distinguishes them from puṇyakarma (virtuous action), because

“[...] both puṇya and pāpa karma are said to have sprung from the kleśas.”⁵²²

⁵¹⁷ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 98.

⁵¹⁸ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 99.

⁵¹⁹ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 100.

⁵²⁰ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 100.

⁵²¹ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 100.

⁵²² Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 100.

The klišṭa and aklišṭa vṛttis rise and disappear without following any fixed rule, and the two categories do not get intermingled. They are of five “modifications” (quoting YS I,2):

“pramāṇa (real cognition), viparyyaya (unreal cognition), vikalpa (logical abstraction and imagination), nidrā (sleep), smṛti (memory).”⁵²³

At this point, Dasgupta does not say more about these vṛttis. He will get back to them in the last chapter of this book, “Matter and Mind.” For the time being he simply adds that the vṛttis, both klišṭa and aklišṭa, must not be confused with the six kinds of mental activity mentioned in *Vyāsaśāstra* II,18.

This whole vṛtti-passage is not very convincing, and even after repeated reading a feeling of uneasiness and confusion prevails. Whereas in the *Yogasūtra*, abhyāsa and vairāgya are not called vṛttis but are the means to suppress and ultimately eliminate the five groups of klišṭa and aklišṭa vṛttis, Dasgupta equals abhyāsa and vairāgya to the unafflicted states and implicitly turns all the vṛttis into afflicted ones. Also, the *Yogasutra* does not establish any link between the kleśas and the vṛttis, but since Dasgupta is extremely elliptic as to his sources in this passage, it is impossible to identify the textual basis of his analysis. At the very end of this chapter, Dasgupta summarises the whole subject in a way which explicitly states the simplification which before was only implicit.

“We have seen that from avidyā spring all the kleśas or afflictions, which are therefore seen to be the source of the klišṭa vṛttis as well. Abhyāsa and vairāgya – the aklišṭa vṛttis, which spring from precepts, etc., lead to right knowledge, and as such are antagonistic to the modification of the guṇas on the avidyā side.”⁵²⁴

The meaning or significance of the five vṛttis which he dutifully (and for the sake of completeness) listed (real cognition, unreal cognition, etc.) remains rather shadowy and the uninitiated reader will most probably forget about them. What remains is a clear dichotomy of afflicted and unafflicted states, the first kind resulting from the kleśas, the second kind standing for practice in steadiness and non-attachment. Dasgupta concludes:

“We know also that both these sets of vṛttis – the klišṭa and the aklišṭa – produce their own kinds of saṃskāras, the klišṭa saṃskāra and the aklišṭa or prajñā saṃskāra.”⁵²⁵

⁵²³ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 101.

⁵²⁴ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 101.

⁵²⁵ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 101.

4.3.3.11. The ethical problem (chapter X)

Since the karma theory (chapter IX) will be treated separately (cf. *infra*, chapter 4.4.) I continue with chapter X. Dasgupta first explains what happens to the mind during a pralaya (“involution of the cosmical world-process”). The kleśas (which Dasgupta now also calls the “avidyās”) remain in the prakṛti as vāsanās (“residual potency”),⁵²⁶ and

“prakṛti being under the influence of these avidyās as vāsanās creates as modifications of itself the corresponding minds for the individual purushas, connected with them before the last pralaya dissolution.”⁵²⁷

Avidyā therefore never gets lost and every person starts again at the same point where he or she was before the dissolution. In this context of creation, avidyā is defined by Dasgupta as “the end or purpose of the prakṛti” – the kleśas “hold within themselves the serviceability of the purushas, and are the cause of the connection of the purusha and the prakṛti.”⁵²⁸ Dasgupta here refers to YS II,24, without mentioning it, and he paraphrases YS II,25 by saying that

“[...] when these avidyās are rooted out it is said that the purushārthatā or serviceability of the purusha is at an end and the purusha becomes liberated from the bonds of prakṛti [...].”⁵²⁹

The aim of Yoga consists in uprooting avidyā and its vāsanās through true knowledge (prajñā) of the nature of the puruṣa – then liberation, kaivalya, happens. Once the mind, after constant practice, remains stable in its “natural, passive, and objectless stream of flowing prajñā,”⁵³⁰ it has reached dharmamegha-samādhi. In this state, one can distinguish prakṛti from puruṣa (cf. YS IV,29). Such a puruṣa is called jīvanmukta, an “emancipated being.” Dasgupta quotes *Chāyāvyaṅkyā* IV,31 which talks about the “infinite nature of consciousness,” the removed impurities and the omniscience which characterise this state.⁵³¹ Immediately afterwards, absolute freedom sets in; “puruṣa remains as he is in himself, and never again has any connection with the buddhi.”⁵³² This state is eternal, contrary to the interlude after a pralaya.

Dasgupta next talks about the seven phases of the prajñā stage (referring, without explicitly mentioning it, to YS II,27). The first four steps are results of a conscious effort on the part of the yogin, stages five to seven however represent the process of release of the puruṣa from prakṛti which takes place all by itself. Dasgupta’s source for a detailed description of these seven phases is *Vyāsabhāṣya* on YS II,15.⁵³³

⁵²⁶ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 99.

⁵²⁷ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 114.

⁵²⁸ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 115.

⁵²⁹ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 115.

⁵³⁰ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 117.

⁵³¹ Cf. Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 117-118.

⁵³² Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 118.

⁵³³ Cf. Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 119-121.

In conclusion to this chapter, Dasgupta evokes Vyāsa's statement about the four divisions of medicine (disease, the cause of disease, recovery and the medicines) and the way how he applied them to Yoga (saṃsāra or evolution of prakṛti, the cause of saṃsāra, release and the means of release).⁵³⁴ Having described the first three divisions in detail, Dasgupta now wants to turn his attention to the fourth step. But before tackling the chapter on Yoga practice, he reminds the reader that

“[i]t is in the inherent purpose of prakṛti that man should undergo pains which include all phenomenal experiences of pleasures as well [...]. The motive therefore which prompts a person towards this ethico-metaphysical goal is the avoidance of pain.”⁵³⁵

Since pain is also inherent in pleasure, a yogin “is determined to avoid all experiences, painful or so-called pleasurable.”⁵³⁶ Dasgupta's conclusion about the aim of Yoga could not be more poignant and clear:

“[...] the complete extinguishing of all pains is identical with the extinguishing of all experiences, the states of vṛttis of consciousness, and this again is identical with the rise of prajñā or true discriminative knowledge of the difference in nature of prakṛti and its effects from the puruṣa – the unchangeable. These three sides are only the three aspects of the same state which immediately precede kaivalya. [...] This suppression of mental states which has been described as the means of attaining final release, the ultimate ethical goal of life, is called Yoga.”⁵³⁷

I quoted this passage at length because many modern interpreters of the *Yogasūtra* flinch from showing this radical side of Yoga and prefer to present a system which is designed for helping people to live better lives. But the ultimate consequence of the Yoga philosophy has to be what Dasgupta described – a way leading to liberation, leaving life and all its experiences behind. Any other interpretation has to ignore or distort the sources and must therefore be called a modern, personal view.

⁵³⁴ Cf. Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 121.

⁵³⁵ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 121.

⁵³⁶ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 121.

⁵³⁷ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 122.

4.3.3.12. Yoga practice (chapter XI)

This chapter mainly deals with two important means to achieve the aim of Yoga, namely *abhyāsa* (firmness of mind) and *vairāgya* (detachment). Dasgupta starts off by explaining the difference between the *saṃprajñāta* (cognitive) and the *asaṃprajñāta* (ultra-cognitive) (or *nirbija*, seedless) state of Yoga, both of which “gradually [lead] us towards the attainment of our final goal.”⁵³⁸ In the first of these states, the mind remains fixed on some object, first external, then internal; as the internal object gradually becomes finer and finer, it ultimately “loses all its determinate character and he [the Yogin] is said to be in a state of suppression in himself.”⁵³⁹ All the *saṃprajñāta* states are positive states of the mind “and not a mere state of vacuity of objects or negativity.”⁵⁴⁰ In *asaṃprajñāta samādhi*

“[...] the ordinary consciousness has been altogether surpassed and the mind is in its own true infinite aspect, and the potencies of the stages in which the mind was full of finite knowledge are also burnt, so that with the return of the *citta* to its primal cause, final emancipation is effected.”⁵⁴¹

For this whole passage Dasgupta does not indicate his textual source(s), but he must be referring to YS I,17 (and maybe also to YS I,51). The following enumeration of the nine obstructions for the mind on its way to one-pointedness is based on YS I,30, but again Dasgupta omits the reference. Concentration is the means to overcome these obstacles – concentration on either *Īśvara* (cf. *Tattvavaiśārādī*) or on any object (cf. *Yogavārttika* and *Bhojavṛtti*). The steadiness of mind necessary for this concentration is called *abhyāsa* (cf. YS I,13). Concentration on one object is not easy; one prerequisite which makes the task easier is faith (*śraddhā*) – “the firm conviction of the Yogin in the course that he adopts.”⁵⁴² This kind of faith produces *vairāgya* (desirelessness), “aversion or dislike towards the objects of sensual pleasure and worldly desires”⁵⁴³ (cf. *Yogavārttika* on YS I,20). Desirelessness and faith both stand for the same process, one showing it from the negative, the other from the positive side.

Vairāgya is of two kinds, *apara* and *para* (cf. YS I,16 and probably some commentary). In the first state, “the mind is indifferent to all kinds of pleasures and pains,”⁵⁴⁴ it has four stages, the last of which leading to *para vairāgya* (the highest detachment), giving rise to *prajñā* and “leading to absolute independence.”⁵⁴⁵

Faith produces *vīrya*, “energy, or power of concentration (*dhāraṇā*),” *vīrya* leads to *smṛti*, “continuity of one object of thought,” and from *smṛti* springs *samādhi*,

⁵³⁸ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 124.

⁵³⁹ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 124.

⁵⁴⁰ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 124.

⁵⁴¹ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 125.

⁵⁴² Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 127.

⁵⁴³ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 127.

⁵⁴⁴ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 127.

⁵⁴⁵ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 128.

“trance;” then comes prajñā and, last of all, final release.⁵⁴⁶ Dasgupta here implicitly quotes YS I,20.

“Thus by the inclusion of śraddhā within vairāgya, its effect, and the other products of śraddhā with abhyāsa, we see that the abhyāsa and vairāgya are the two internal means for achieving the final goal of the Yogin, the supreme suppression and extinction of all states of consciousness [...].”⁵⁴⁷

Dasgupta distinguishes three kinds of Yogins:

“(1) Those who have the best mental equipment. (2) Those who are mediocres. (3) Those who have low mental equipment.”⁵⁴⁸

The purely mental practice of abhyāsa and vairāgya, as explained in this chapter, is meant for “a man [who] is well developed” – such a person goes directly to what Dasgupta calls jñānayoga, comprising dhāraṇā (concentration), dhyāna (meditation), and samādhi (trance).⁵⁴⁹ Other people first have to purify their minds before entering the path of this yoga of knowledge; they have to practise kriyāyoga or the yogāṅgas, the “accessories of Yoga,” which destroy avidyā (which here is equalled to impurity) (cf. *Vyāsabhāṣya* on YS II,28).

It is interesting to note that Dasgupta in this chapter presents abhyāsa and vairāgya (with śraddhā and its products) as sufficient means for reaching the goal. All it takes is a well-equipped, concentrated mind. No other exercises seem necessary. Steadiness of mind and detachment alone can lead to samādhi.

4.3.3.13. The yogāṅgas (chapter XII)

According to the logic expounded in the above chapter, the yogāṅgas are meant only for people whose mind is of mediocre or even low capacity. The practice of the eight limbs of Yoga removes all the obstructions which hinder citta from evolving into the state of attainment of prajñā, true knowledge; it removes the impurities from the mind like an axe is splitting a piece of wood.⁵⁵⁰

After enumerating these accessories of Yoga, Dasgupta rather surprisingly states that abhyāsa and vairāgya (including śraddhā, vīrya, smṛti, samādhi and prajñā) are included in the yogāṅgas and should not be considered to be different from them. Thus, śraddhā etc. is part of tapas (ascetism),⁵⁵¹ svādhyāya (study of the scriptures) and īśvarapraṇidhāna (devotion to God), and vairāgya is included in saṁtoṣa (contentment). Unfortunately, Dasgupta does not indicate the source of this classification. He briefly defines each of the eight limbs, adding that “some

⁵⁴⁶ Cf. Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 128.

⁵⁴⁷ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 128.

⁵⁴⁸ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 130.

⁵⁴⁹ Cf. Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 130.

⁵⁵⁰ Cf. Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 132.

⁵⁵¹ A little bit further down, Dasgupta translates tapaḥ also as „purificatory action“ (cf. Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 136).

have the mental side more predominant, while others are mostly to be actualised in exterior action."⁵⁵² Limbs four and five (prāṇāyāma and pratyāhāra) are qualified as "accessories" to the last three steps (dhāraṇā, dhyāna and samādhi); they "serve to cleanse the mind of impurities and make it steady."⁵⁵³ Dasgupta associates them with the actions mentioned in YS I,34-39, the so-called parikarmas, which also help to calm down the mind, and, for completion's sake, he adds

"[...] the remaining aids for cleansing the mind as mentioned in Yoga-sūtra I, viz. the cultivation of the habits of friendliness, compassion, complacency and indifference towards happiness, misery, virtue and vice."⁵⁵⁴

Maitrī, karuṇā, muditā and upekṣā are listed in YS I,33. They purify the mind of jealousy, of the desire to harm others, of envy and anger.

"Our minds become steady in proportion as their impurities are cleansed."⁵⁵⁵

Yet these mental parikarmas are too lofty for normal people; those whose mind is very impure have to start at a lower level, in other words: with the yamas, the restraints, "by which the gross impurities of ordinary minds are removed."⁵⁵⁶ Dasgupta stresses the particular role of ahiṃsā, non-injury, which he calls "the root of the other yamas;"⁵⁵⁷ in fact, the above-mentioned parikarmas as well as the other four yamas and the five niyamas all "only serve to make non-injury more and more perfect."⁵⁵⁸ According to him, ahiṃsā "should be the greatest ethical motive for all our conduct," because

"[i]t is by ahiṃsā alone that we can make ourselves fit for the higher type of samādhi."⁵⁵⁹

In fact he argues that by practising śuklakarma, pure works, which he defines as "mental works of good thoughts in which perfection of ahiṃsā is attained,"⁵⁶⁰ kaivalya can be reached directly. Unfortunately, Dasgupta does not indicate the textual bases for this particular importance of non-injury.

Dasgupta dedicates only little space to the other four yamas (veracity, abstinence from stealing, restraint of the generative organ and non-appropriation of things not one's own),⁵⁶¹ and then proceeds to explain YS II,33 which says that sinful ideas should be removed "by habituating himself to those which are contrary to them."⁵⁶² He quotes Vyāsa's *Bhāṣya* without saying so. Dasgupta translates

⁵⁵² Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 137.

⁵⁵³ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 137.

⁵⁵⁴ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 137.

⁵⁵⁵ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 138.

⁵⁵⁶ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 139.

⁵⁵⁷ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 139.

⁵⁵⁸ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 139.

⁵⁵⁹ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 140.

⁵⁶⁰ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 140.

⁵⁶¹ Cf. Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 140-141.

⁵⁶² Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 141.

“vitarka” (bad or disturbing thoughts) as “sins” and follows YS II,34 in their classification according to whether they are actually done, caused to be done or permitted to be done.

According to Dasgupta, the yamas (restraints) and the niyamas (observances) together form the so-called kriyāyoga,

“[...] by the performance of which men become fit to rise gradually to the state of jñānayoga by samādhi and to attain kaivalya.”⁵⁶³

Again, the reader does not know which text(s) inspired Dasgupta for this classification, kriyāyoga in the *Yogasutra* being the term which designates the first three niyamas only. Dasgupta, of course, is aware of this, and he somewhat clumsily reintroduces kriyāyoga a little bit further down as the practice by which those who are advanced enough may enter the Yoga path directly, without having to begin with the yamas. Kriyāyoga then means tapaḥ (ascetism), svādhyāya (the study of philosophy and repetition of the syllable Om) and īśvarapraṇidhāna (devotion to God).⁵⁶⁴ It is interesting that Dasgupta here distinguishes devotion to God from īśvarapraṇidhāna in YS I,23. In the first instance it meant

“[...] love, homage and adoration of God, by virtue of which God by His grace makes samādhi easy for the Yogin.”⁵⁶⁵

Now, in the context of the niyamas, devotion to God is interpreted by Dasgupta as

“[...] the bestowal of all our actions upon the Great Teacher, God, i.e. to work, not for one’s own self but for God, so that a man desists from all desires for fruit therefrom.”⁵⁶⁶

In other words, īśvarapraṇidhāna has become a synonym for karmayoga as defined in the *Bhagavad-Gītā*. This interpretation is due to the encompassing term “kriyāyoga,” yoga of action.

Implicitly quoting YS II,2, Dasgupta then states that kriyāyoga reduces the power of the kleśas and leads to samādhi (here called “trance”). He thus equates the kriyāyoga passage YS II,1 ff. and the first three niyamas, despite the difference in the interpretation of īśvarapraṇidhāna.

Whoever is naturally endowed with the qualities mentioned under the yamas can immediately take up the practice of the niyamas, and those who are further advanced can even skip those,

⁵⁶³ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 142.

⁵⁶⁴ Cf. Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 142.

⁵⁶⁵ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 143.

⁵⁶⁶ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 143.

[...] as their afflictions [kleśas] are already in an attenuated state and their minds in a fit condition to adapt themselves to samādhi; they can therefore begin at once with jñānayoga.⁵⁶⁷

Referring to *Yogavārttika* II,2, Dasgupta once more reminds his readers that in such a case the practice of abhyāsa and vairāgya is sufficient.

The remaining two niyamas, śauca (cleanliness) and saṁtoṣa (contentment), are only briefly mentioned by Dasgupta, before he proceeds to listing all the results one attains by practising the yamas and the niyamas. In this enumeration he closely renders YS II,35-45, once more without saying so.⁵⁶⁸ Given the fact that some of these results are quite surprising (insofar as they promise “control of the senses and fitness for the knowledge of self” [for śauca] or even samādhi straight away [for īśvarapraṇidhāna]),⁵⁶⁹ Dasgupta feels the necessity to quote Vācaspati who insisted that “it should not [...] be said [...] that the remaining seven yogāṅgas are useless.”⁵⁷⁰ Vijñāna Bhikṣu specifies this point in the following way:

[...] meditation on Īśvara only removes ignorance. The other accessories bring about samādhi by their own specific modes of operation. Moreover, it is by help of meditation on Īśvara that one succeeds in bringing about samādhi, through the performance of all the accessories of Yoga; so the accessories of Yoga cannot be regarded as unnecessary; [...] devotion to God brings in His grace and through it the yogāṅgas can be duly performed.⁵⁷¹

Moving on to the third aṅga, āsana (posture), Dasgupta succinctly paraphrases YS II,46-48. This is the only passage in the whole book where Dasgupta says anything about this practice at all. From another text we learn that he had no other postures in mind but sitting:

[The yogin] must be able to control his bodily movements. He must therefore habituate himself to sitting in one posture for a long time, not only for hours and days but often for months and years together.⁵⁷²

In order to explain the following step, prāṇāyāma (regulation of breath) Dasgupta reverts to Vyāsa’s *Bhaṣya* on YS II,49-51,⁵⁷³ once more without indicating his source. In the end he establishes a link with YS I,34 where cessation of breath is mentioned as one of the means for making the mind steady (cf. *supra*, the parikarmas). Since prāṇāyāma (like āsana) will not be discussed again in this book, we can consult “Yoga Mysticism” once more to get a clear idea of how Dasgupta understood this technique and its consequences.

“At first the breath that is taken in is kept perhaps for a minute and then slowly exhaled. The practice is continued for days and months, the period of the retention of the breath taken in being gradually increased. With the

⁵⁶⁷ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 143.

⁵⁶⁸ Cf. Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 144.

⁵⁶⁹ Cf. Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 144.

⁵⁷⁰ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 144.

⁵⁷¹ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 145.

⁵⁷² Dasgupta, *Mysticism*. 74.

⁵⁷³ Cf. Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 145-147.

growth of breath-control, one may keep his breath suspended, without exhalation or inhalation, for hours, days, months and even years together. With the suspension of the respiratory process the body remains in a state of suspended animation, without any external signs of life. The heart ceases to beat, there is neither taking in of food nor evacuation of any sort, there is no movement of the body.⁵⁷⁴

For all those who could not imagine such a state to be possible for any human being, Dasgupta adds a rare instance of personal testimony:

“I have myself seen a case where the yogin stayed in this condition for nine days.”⁵⁷⁵

In this chapter, Dasgupta deals with *pratyāhāra* (abstraction), *dhāraṇā* (concentration), *dhyāna* (meditation) and *samādhi* (trance contemplation) rather briefly. In *pratyāhāra*, the mind is “altogether identified with the object of inner concentration or contemplation” and “the senses, which have already ceased coming into contact with other objects and become submerged in the *citta*, also cease along with it.”⁵⁷⁶

“*Dhāraṇā* is the concentration of *citta* on a particular place. [...] *Dhyāna* is the continuance or changing flow of the mental effort in the object of *dhāraṇā* unmediated by any other break of conscious states. *Samādhi*, or trance-contemplation, results when by deep concentration mind becomes transformed into the shape of the object of contemplation.”⁵⁷⁷

This whole passage renders, implicitly, YS II,54-III,3. Dasgupta insists on the fact that without *āsana* and *prāṇāyāma* the higher stages of Yoga cannot be reached. If, however, someone is naturally (or by the grace of God) so far advanced that he can easily concentrate his mind, he might start directly with *dhāraṇā*, the stage where the process of *samādhi* begins. The last three steps are called *saṃyama* (cf. YS III,4), “which directly leads to and is immediately followed by the *saṃprajñāta* state.”⁵⁷⁸ According to Dasgupta, *saṃyama* is

“[...] not essential for the *asaṃprajñāta* state, for a person who is very far advanced, or one who is the special object of God’s grace, may pass at once by intense *vairāgya* and *abhyāsa* into the *nirodha* state or state of suppression.”⁵⁷⁹

The repeated statement that the *yogāṅgas* are not really necessary for someone who is gifted or blessed enough is one of the characteristics of this chapter. In *Patañjali* we find no such assertion, and since Dasgupta fails to indicate any

⁵⁷⁴ Dasgupta, *Mysticism*, 75.

⁵⁷⁵ Dasgupta, *Mysticism*, 75. I remind the reader that “*Yoga Mysticism*” was a lecture held in America. Talking to Westerners, Dasgupta obviously felt encouraged to describe the Yoga steps far more vividly than in his theoretical treatise *Yoga as Philosophy and Religion*.

⁵⁷⁶ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 147.

⁵⁷⁷ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 147-148.

⁵⁷⁸ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 149.

⁵⁷⁹ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 149.

textual basis for this thought it might reflect his own idea (or even personal experience).

4.3.3.14. God in Yoga (chapter XIV)

Leaving out chapter XIII, dedicated entirely to samādhi which will be treated separately (cf. *infra*, chapter 4.5.), we come back to a topic which was already raised in the first part of this book, namely the role of Īśvara or God in the Yoga system of thought (cf. *supra*, chapters 4.3.3.8. and 4.3.3.9.). In his chapter “Evolution and God” Dasgupta described Īśvara as the agent who removed all the barriers within prakṛti so that the evolution could take place. The exact nature of the relationship between Īśvara and the other purely spiritual entity, puruṣa, thereby remaining rather hazy, we compared passages from other writings of Dasgupta on this subject and discovered that, discussing God in a more scientifically philosophical context, he went as far as calling Īśvara a mere “matter of courtesy.” Many indications however point to the fact that his heart and personal conviction did not leave Dasgupta any scope for speculation – God *had* to play a role in the process of liberation, and chapter XIV, “God in Yoga,” is unequivocal in this respect. Īśvara is defined as that puruṣa who is

“[...] untouched by the afflictions or the fruits of karma, [...] always free and ever the Lord. He is omniscient in the highest degree, for in him is the furthest limit of omniscience, beyond which there is nothing. This Īśvara is all-merciful, [...] but he does not release all persons, because he helps only so far as each deserves; he does not nullify the law of karma, just as a king, though quite free to act in any way he likes, punishes or rewards people as they deserve.”⁵⁸⁰

Of course, the other puruṣas are also in reality free and untouched by the kleśas,

“[...] but they, seemingly at least, have to undergo the afflictions and consequently birth and rebirth, etc. until they are again finally released; but Īśvara, though he is a puruṣa, yet does not suffer in any way any sort of bondage.”⁵⁸¹

Īśvara clearly stands out as a kind of superior puruṣa, the absolutely free, omniscient and omnipotent Lord. Feeling the necessity to justify this point of view on textual grounds, Dasgupta resorts to a strangely non-philosophical or non-rational way of argumentation.

“This nature of Īśvara has been affirmed in the scriptures and is therefore taken as true on their authority. The authority of the scriptures is again acknowledged only because they have proceeded from God or Īśvara. The objection that this is an argument in a circle has no place here, since the connection of the scriptures with Īśvara is beginningless.”⁵⁸²

⁵⁸⁰ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 159-160.

⁵⁸¹ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 159-160.

⁵⁸² Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 159.

In short: the nature of God is beyond any logical debate, it was and always will be the way the sources describe it. Here we find Dasgupta arguing in a similar way as the Vedāntins who defend the infallibility of the Vedic wisdom - an attitude he elsewhere harshly criticised (cf. *supra*, chapter 3.5.1). Īśvara even

“[...] dictates the Vedas at each evolution of the world after dissolution,”⁵⁸³

a task traditionally fulfilled by the great Hindu Gods. Dasgupta’s Īśvara therefore is the unquestionable absolute which thrones above everything. Devotion to this God makes the Yogin’s path easy.

“After describing the nature of karmayoga, and the way in which it leads to jñānayoga, we must now describe the third and easiest means of attaining salvation, the bhaktiyoga [...]”⁵⁸⁴

This classification of three kinds of Yoga comes a bit as a surprise because the only such “label” Dasgupta used so far was jñānayoga (designating the last three aṅgas of the 8-fold path; cf. *supra*, chapter 4.3.3.12). Karmayoga is a term he either avoided or understood as being synonymous to kriyāyoga, mentioned a few times but not very clearly defined. Kriyāyoga first meant the purificatory actions and as such were equalled to the yogāṅgas in general,⁵⁸⁵ then it only comprised the yamas and the niyamas,⁵⁸⁶ and finally it was the term for the first three niyamas (tapah, svādhyāya and Īśvarapraṇidhāna).⁵⁸⁷ The third of these niyamas however has to be interpreted in two different ways, “according to the commentators.”⁵⁸⁸

“In the first book [of the YS] it means love or devotion to God as the one centre of meditation, in the second it is used to mean the abnegation of all desires of the fruits of action to Īśvara [...]”⁵⁸⁹

In other words: Īśvarapraṇidhāna stands for both bhaktiyoga as well as for karmayoga. It ensues that two terms are clearly delimited (jñānayoga: last three aṅgas and bhaktiyoga: third niyama) whereas the third one (karmayoga) remains somewhat vague (generally understood as practices leading to jñānayoga). Dasgupta obviously did not ascribe too much importance to these denominations and therefore felt no necessity to eliminate the lack of clarity as to the definition of karmayoga.

Through devotion (bhakti) Īśvara is stimulated to bestow His grace on his follower, removing all the obstacles mentioned in YS I,30-31.

“So for a person who can love and adore Īśvara, this is the easiest course of attaining samādhi.”⁵⁹⁰

⁵⁸³ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 160.

⁵⁸⁴ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 159.

⁵⁸⁵ Cf. Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 130; cf. *supra*, chapter 4.3.3.12.

⁵⁸⁶ Cf. Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 142; cf. *supra*, chapter 4.3.3.13.

⁵⁸⁷ Cf. Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 142; cf. *supra*, chapter 4.3.3.13.

⁵⁸⁸ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 161.

⁵⁸⁹ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 161 (cf. also *supra*, chapter 4.3.3.13).

Bhaktiyoga, according to Dasgupta, is the method

[...] by which the tedious complexity of the Yoga process may be avoided and salvation speedily acquired [...].⁵⁹¹

The next part of this chapter is dedicated to a discussion of the differences between the concept of Īśvara in Yoga and other philosophical systems. According to Rāmānuja, Īśvara is not a special puruṣa as in Yoga but is composed of both prakṛti (acit) and puruṣa (cit), and with Śaṅkara, apart from Īśvara nothing truly exists. Finally, Īśvara is the most important point of distinction between Yoga and Sāṅkhya. Whereas the latter “relied largely on philosophical thinking,” not feeling any “practical need for the admission of Īśvara,”⁵⁹² the former called for a “protector of the Yogins proceeding in their arduous course of complete self-control and absorptive concentration.”⁵⁹³ According to Dasgupta, Īśvara had a very practical role to fulfil in Yoga, instilling hope and confidence in those who were engaged on the difficult yogic path.

“The metaphysical functions which are ascribed to Īśvara seem to be later additions for the sake of rendering his position more in harmony with the system.”⁵⁹⁴

Dasgupta ends this chapter by listing a few other differences between Yoga and Sāṅkhya, such as the standard distinction which considers Yoga to be practical and Sāṅkhya more theoretical.⁵⁹⁵ He concludes:

“On almost all other fundamental points Sāṅkhya and Yoga are in complete agreement.”⁵⁹⁶

4.3.3.15. Matter and mind (chapter XV)

In the last chapter of his book Dasgupta returns to one of his favourite subjects, namely “theories of the physical world”⁵⁹⁷ and the workings of the mind. “Matter and mind” takes up some of the topics dealt with in the early chapters of *Yoga as Philosophy and Religion*; it is of purely theoretical nature and does not continue the practical aspects of Yoga discussed in the immediately preceding chapters. As such it stands out as a slightly erratic text, badly linked to the rest of the book. The variety of subjects raised leaves the impression that Dasgupta did not want to end his treatise on Yoga and Sāṅkhya without speaking his final word on certain topics; on the other hand it is not quite understandable why he did not include these additions when he was discussing the respective subjects in the earlier parts of the book.

⁵⁹⁰ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 161.

⁵⁹¹ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 162.

⁵⁹² Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 164.

⁵⁹³ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 163.

⁵⁹⁴ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 163-164.

⁵⁹⁵ Cf. Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 164.

⁵⁹⁶ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 165.

⁵⁹⁷ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 166.

He sets out by contradicting “some modern investigators [who] have tried to understand the five bhūtas, viz. ākāśa, marut, tejas, ap and kshiti as ether, gaseous heat and light, liquids and solids.”⁵⁹⁸ According to Dasgupta, matter has to be classified according to human sensation or perception of it -

“[this division] has a firm root in our nature as cognising beings and has therefore a better rational footing than the modern chemical division into elements and compounds [...]”⁵⁹⁹

He describes the five elements under five aspects: sthūla (gross matter), svarūpa (substantive, meaning the way in which the elements appeal to the senses), sūkṣma (subtle), anvaya (conjunction, meaning the guṇa aspect) and arthavattva (purpose of use, meaning the fact that they are all serviceable to puruṣa).⁶⁰⁰ Next he explains the two kinds of “aggregation with regard to the structure of matter,”⁶⁰¹ the first one being union or fusion of the different parts of something (like any vegetable or animal body), the second one describing a state where the parts can be distinguished from one another (like trees in a forest).

Dasgupta concludes the presentation of the elements by talking in detail about ākāśa and the sense of hearing (cf. also *supra*, chapter 4.3.3.6), referring to Vijñāna Bhikṣu and Nāgeśa (without any indication of the exact passage), as well as to the *Sāṃkhyasūtra* II,12, very briefly evoking the topic of time and space by basically repeating what he had said in chapter IV (cf. *supra*, chapter 4.3.3.5).⁶⁰²

After dealing with matter Dasgupta turns towards the mind by stating that citta has two degrees. In the first one the mind has states or functions (vṛttis) and in the second one all the states are suppressed (nirodha).

“Between the stage of complete outgoing activity of ordinary experience (*vyutthāna*) and complete suppression of all states, there are thousands of states of infinite variety, through which a man’s experiences have to pass, from the vyutthāna state to the nirodha.”⁶⁰³

The vṛttis were briefly mentioned in chapter VIII (cf. *supra*, chapter 4.3.3.10), in connection with the saṃskāras. Now Dasgupta describes them in detail.

(1) pramāṇa (real cognition), including perception, inference and competent evidence of the Vedas, (cf. YS I,7) creates a certain kind of knowledge. This knowledge however has to be distinguished from real knowledge or intuition, called prajñā, which is

“[...] superior to all other means of knowledge [...] in this, that it is altogether unerring, unrestricted and unlimited in its scope.”⁶⁰⁴

⁵⁹⁸ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 166.

⁵⁹⁹ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 166.

⁶⁰⁰ Cf. Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 166-167.

⁶⁰¹ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 168.

⁶⁰² Cf. Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 168-170.

⁶⁰³ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 170.

⁶⁰⁴ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 170.

Perception etc. originates with the mind coming in touch with the external world through the senses, but prajñā dawns through concentration and is only fully developed in the samādhi state. In the preceding chapter Dasgupta already briefly wrote on prajñā (as opposed to perception, inference and scriptural evidence), saying that prajñā alone

“[...] can bring objects before our mental eye with the clearest and most unerring light of comprehensibility in which the true nature of the thing is at once observed.”⁶⁰⁵

Explaining perception, Dasgupta quotes *Yogavārttika* IV,17 which explains that the mind is drawn out towards an object like iron which is attracted by a magnet.

“Perception [...] is distinguished from inference, etc., in this, that here the knowledge arrived at is predominantly of the specific and special characters (*viśeṣha*) of the thing and not of its generic qualities as in inference, etc.”⁶⁰⁶

The evidence from the Veda is valid because God or Īśvara dictated these scriptures.⁶⁰⁷

(2) Viparyaya (unreal cognition) is

“[...] a knowledge which possesses a form that does not tally with the real nature of the thing either as doubt or as false knowledge.”⁶⁰⁸

This definition is a close rendering of YS I,8 but Dasgupta once more gives no hint that he is quoting from a text (the same holds true for the presentation of the next three vṛttis). Viparyaya is exemplified in the kleśas.

(3) Vikalpa (imagination) is also unreal knowledge, “but it is only the learned who can demonstrate by arguments the illusoriness of [...] imagination.”⁶⁰⁹

(4) Nidrā (sleep) is a mental state because when we wake up we remember having slept well or badly. A yogin has to overcome all desire of sleep.

(5) Smṛti (memory) “is the retaining in the mind of objects perceived”⁶¹⁰ and is a result of the activities of all the five vṛttis.

The feelings of sukha (pleasure), duḥkha (pain) and moha (ignorance) are inseparably part of all states of mind.

“Knowledge and feeling are but two different aspects of the modifications [vṛttis] of citta derived from prakṛti [...]”⁶¹¹

⁶⁰⁵ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 162.

⁶⁰⁶ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 171.

⁶⁰⁷ Cf. Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 172.

⁶⁰⁸ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 172.

⁶⁰⁹ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 173.

⁶¹⁰ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 174.

⁶¹¹ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 175.

After presenting the five aspects of the senses Dasgupta tries to define “the relation of manas with the senses and the citta,”⁶¹² manas sometimes being identified with citta, sometimes being described as a sense organ, sometimes said to be the coordinating organ of the senses. He reaches the conclusion that

“[...] manas is possibly the directive side of the ego by which it guides the cognitive and conative senses in the external world and is the cause of their harmonious activity for the experience of purusha.”⁶¹³

He then mentions a few other aspects of manas, partially referring to *Yogavārttika* II,18.

The outgoing activity of the mind is a result of the kleśas, here called “emotional elements.”⁶¹⁴ Implicitly quoting YS II,4 Dasgupta talks about the different states the kleśas can be in – from germinal to fully developed. Man can go along with them or he may “gradually remove those emotions [...], thus narrowing their sphere and proceeding towards final release.”⁶¹⁵

Returning to the mental states (vṛttis) Dasgupta adds (by partly rendering YS I,5) that they are either afflicted or unafflicted,

“[...] according as they are moved towards outgoing activity or are actuated by the higher motive of emancipation by narrowing the field of experiences gradually to a smaller and smaller sphere and afterwards to suppress them altogether.”⁶¹⁶

In the end of this somewhat miscellaneous chapter Dasgupta raises the topic of karma and freedom of will. Somebody entering the yogic way of life will inevitably face the subconscious impressions (saṃskāras) of pleasurable and painful actions which, out of habit, he may have performed during many lives. But, according to Dasgupta,

“[t]he free will is not curbed in any way, for it follows directly from the teleological purpose of prakṛti, which moves for the experience and liberation of purusha. So this motive of liberation, which is the basis of all good conduct, can never be subordinated to the other impulse, which goads man towards outgoing experiences.”⁶¹⁷

Thus *Yoga as Philosophy and Religion* ends on a very optimistic note which is reinforced by the following statement:

“[...] if by the grace of God false knowledge (avidyā) is removed, true knowledge at once dawns upon the mind and all the afflictions lose their power.”⁶¹⁸

⁶¹² Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 175.

⁶¹³ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 175.

⁶¹⁴ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 176.

⁶¹⁵ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 176.

⁶¹⁶ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 176.

⁶¹⁷ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 177.

⁶¹⁸ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 178.

4.3.3.16. Conclusions

Looking back on “Ethics and Practice”, the second part of *Yoga as Philosophy and Religion*, a list of the topics treated immediately shows that Yoga for Dasgupta is nearly exclusively a mental affair – almost all the topics raised revolve around the mind, its different qualities, states and afflictions, the obstacles it encounters and how these can be overcome. The practical aspect of Yoga focusses entirely on the means by which a Yogin can purify, concentrate and ultimately eliminate the mind and its experiences of pleasure and pain in order to reach a kind of knowledge which is beyond normal consciousness. The body is only very briefly mentioned when it comes to sitting postures and breathing exercises – all the other Yogic practices take place in the mind.

- citta (the mind), as effect (kāryacitta) or as cause (kāraṇacitta)
- the five classes of citta (from wandering to restrained)
- vṛttis (actual states of mind) and saṃskāras (latent states)
- for a yogin even pleasure is pain and therefore he has to avoid both
- the kleśas (afflictions), presented as the kliṣṭa vṛttis (afflicted states)
- abhyāsa (habit of steadiness) and vairāgya (non-attachment) as akliṣṭa vṛttis (non afflicted states)
- * Chapter on karma (cf. *infra*, chapter 4.4.)
- avidyā (nescience) remains, even after a pralaya, and, since it is the ultimate cause of the relation between puruṣa and prakṛti, it has to be uprooted by the Yogin
- as soon as avidyā disappears, prajñā (true knowledge) sets in, followed by kaivalya (liberation)
- the seven stages of prajñā
- the aim of Yoga consists in the complete eradication of all pains, which is the same as the complete extinction of all experiences and states of mind – only then the true discriminative knowledge (prajñā) can rise which is necessary for kaivalya
- the nine obstructions on the Yoga path
- the purely mental practice of abhyāsa and vairāgya is sufficient for reaching the aim, but only for somebody whose mind is already well concentrated
- all the others have to first purify their minds (purification automatically leading to steadiness) through the practice of the eight limbs of Yoga
- abhyāsa and vairāgya are part of these eight limbs
- friendliness (maitrī), compassion (karuṇā), complacency (muditā) and indifference towards happiness, misery, virtue and vice (upekṣā) also help to purify the mind
- the importance of ahimsā
- description of each of the eight limbs
- * Chapter on samādhi (cf. *infra*, chapter 4.5.)
- devotion to the absolute God (Īśvara) is the easiest way, because it stimulates God to remove the obstacles through His grace
- the five elements of matter and how the human being perceives them through his senses

- the two degrees of citta: functioning (through the vṛttis) or suppressed (nirodha)
- detailed description of the vṛttis (mental states)
- feelings cannot be separated from the mental states
- manas (the coordinating organ) and citta
- the kleśas (afflictions or emotional elements) are responsible for the outgoing activity of the mind
- karma and free will

This list also helps to see how succinctly and smoothly Dasgupta's argumentation runs, one topic logically leading to the following one – until the last chapter where he somewhat hurriedly picked up a few loose strings of subjects treated earlier on.

Comparing the textual sources Dasgupta used in this part of the book to those he referred to in the first chapters it is striking that he quotes or paraphrases Patañjali far more frequently in "Ethics and Practice" than in "Yoga Metaphysics." Yoga philosophy was expounded mainly from the points of view of the commentators, whereas for the ethical and practical aspects of Yoga Patañjali alone often seemed sufficient. It has to be added however that many passages in the second part of *Yoga as Philosophy and Religion* are entirely devoid of any textual indications, and since the majority of the sūtras Dasgupta chose to cite can only be identified by a well-versed reader in the subject it cannot be excluded that sundry references to commentators are woven into Dasgupta's text in "Ethics and Practice" as well.

Looking at the sūtras Dasgupta based his description of Yoga "Ethics and Practice" on we see that most of them are from books I and II of the *Yogasūtra*. The following (rough) clusters can be identified:

YS I,1-16	Definition of Yoga and discussion of the vṛttis
YS I,30-39	Obstacles on the way and means to make the mind steady
YS II,1-11	Kleśa passage
YS II,15-27	All experiences are painful; avidyā, the ultimate root cause of pain, has to be eradicated
YS II,28-III,4	The eight limbs of Yoga

Plus three slightly isolated sūtras:

I,17 and IV,29	Different kinds of samādhi
IV,17	Perception

If we follow our hypothesis that the two parts of *Yoga as Philosophy and Religion* each represent one of the terms in this title ("Yoga Metaphysics" standing for "philosophy" and "Ethics and Practice" for "religion"), then what has been said in the beginning of this chapter "conclusions" is valid not only for Yoga but for Dasgupta's understanding (or definition) of religion as a whole. It would mean that religion predominantly focusses on the mind. A human being on his or her

way towards liberation from earthly suffering faces a mind which is highly imperfect, the main drawback being fundamental ignorance (*avidyā*) which gives rise to all kinds of other mental dirt or stains (*kleśas*). The exclusive aim of a series of mostly mental exercises consists in purifying this polluted, unstable mind and to make it clean (clean being used by Dasgupta throughout as a synonym for concentrated). Only a concentrated mind has the possibility to uproot *avidyā* and to reach the level of true knowledge (*prajñā*) which alone is able to differentiate between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*. The aim of religion (and Yoga) therefore is this knowledge which shines forth only in deep trance (*samādhi*) – it automatically and immediately leads to *kaivalya* (emancipation, liberation). This whole enterprise is radical; it ultimately signifies that every experience, be it (so-called) happy or painful, has to be extinguished from the mind, a process which also implies a complete withdrawal from this world full of pain. Luckily, the Yogin is not left alone in this gigantic task – he has the possibility to call on *Īśvara*, the highest, absolute God, who will not fail to send his grace down on a devoted disciple. *Īśvara*'s grace consists in removing obstacles and thus cleansing the mind. At the end of the road, the liberated Yogin steps through the door of *prajñā* and enters another dimension altogether, beyond the ordinary mental realm and beyond verbal description.

Religion (or Yoga) therefore is a mental science, in the sense that it analyses the mind from all points of view and shows how one can master it, the ultimate goal being the annihilation of the mind itself in order to reach the absolute. Dasgupta's definitions of Yoga sum this up nicely.

“The word *yoga* is used to denote [...] the arresting of the mental processes and states and all physical, mental and moral accessories connected with them. The word *yoga* is also used to denote mental energy by which the mind is disciplined and the goal of yoga attained. Patañjali defined *yoga* as the partial and complete or temporary and permanent arrest or cessation of mental states.”⁶¹⁹

And Dasgupta would not be Dasgupta if he did not at the same time proudly stress the uniqueness of such an endeavour:

“The theory that mental states can be arrested by our efforts is an extremely original one, and up till now we know of no country other than India where such a possibility was ever conceived. In an interview that I had with the famous psychologist Dr. Sigmund Freud, he expressed great surprise, in the course of a long discussion, that such a thing should be conceived possible, but he admitted that this experiment had always been made and that therefore it would be hazardous to deny its possibility.”⁶²⁰

In this statement we also see how Yoga and psychology differ. A psychologist's interest focuses exclusively on the mind for mind's sake – he would never dream of trying to eradicate the object of his investigation. A Yogin however wants to know the mind only in order to be able to use its mechanism for dominating and ultimately overcoming it – his true aim lies far beyond the mental world. The

⁶¹⁹ Dasgupta, *Relation*, 276.

⁶²⁰ Dasgupta, *Relation*, 276.

mind as mind is his enemy and source of unending pain and therefore he tries to remain with it for as short a while as possible. Mind is simply the way or medium through which he advances beyond it. This spiritual dimension (alluded to by Dasgupta also in the concept of prakṛti's serviceability to the puruṣa) turns Yoga into religion.

4.4. Karma (chapter IX)

Karma and samādhi being two key concepts of the project "Yoga between Switzerland and India" I kept the two corresponding chapters of *Yoga as Philosophy and Religion* (IX: the theory of karma and XIII: stages of samādhi) for a separate discussion.

4.4.1. Dasgupta's personal opinion

Before we look at the way Dasgupta presents karma and rebirth in the context of his treatise on Yoga I would like to cite a few passages of other texts where the famous philosopher expressed his philosophical thoughts and personal views about this subject. We have already seen (cf. *supra*, chapter 3.5.1) that, from a philosophical point of view, he considered the theory of karma to be one of the four unproved dogmas of Indian philosophy.⁶²¹ Rebirth is another such dogma, a concept which became necessary as soon as the possibility of final liberation was established – a liberation which, according to Dasgupta, nobody ever reaches.⁶²² Such dogmas are nothing but

"[...] extraneous assumptions [...] which do not directly explain experience, but which are brought in from outside [...] and hamper the progress of philosophical speculations and blur the philosophical outlook."⁶²³

In a letter to Surama, Dasgupta provides another explanation of why the belief in karma and rebirth came into being. According to this idea (which is still philosophically critical) the karma theory is closely linked to punishment, fear and subsequent obedience to the scriptures.

"Man has made some laws for supporting and establishing the society and the state. There is provision for punishment for transgressing any such laws. Man knows that there are cases of transgressions where such punishments are not available, but there is no way to deal with them. Therefore, he believes that the truth of the order of social and individual life is so pervasive, that even if man fails to punish, nature will inflict punishment. The external world is also amenable to man-made moral laws or beliefs. The theory of *karma* originates from such a belief.

[...]

The ancient belief was that the instructions of the scriptures were right and these gave us support. From this stemmed the concept of virtue and vice,

⁶²¹ Cf. Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 253.

⁶²² Cf. Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 255.

⁶²³ Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 255.

reward and punishment, so that out of fear (in biological sense) man would follow scriptural injunctions. [...] So since the scriptures stood for God's command these became authoritative. Thus the devotee made a reconciliation of their faith in God and the scriptures, and since the latter spoke about *karma* and its results, the *karma* theory had its full play."⁶²⁴

Karma and rebirth as an unproved dogma or a man-made instrument for justice and social stability – it does not take much to gather that Dasgupta was personally far from being convinced about such a theory. Talking to Surama about the fact that as a boy he could show many yogic postures without having been taught any āsanās, he added that

"[...] this was no reason to postulate the theory that [I] must have acquired these practices in a previous birth."⁶²⁵

Surama diplomatically described Dasgupta's attitude as follows:

"He had an open mind towards the assumptions of Indian philosophy, about the theory of rebirth and *karma*."⁶²⁶

This critical openness made it impossible for Dasgupta to find solace in the promise of a next life, even if this meant facing the full blow of grief.

"We have heard much of the theory of rebirth. The writers of scriptures say that death is not true, because our soul is immortal, imperishable. Poets have said that we reach deathlessness through death just as the spring follows winter. But the leaf that we see die in winter, never comes back in spring. The person we lost in death has never been seen by us in another form or birth. A new day comes every day, but that particular day that has gone by cannot be brought back even by the Master of all destinies. We do not know what is the nature of this everlasting immortal soul, and even if we come to know it somehow; we have no interest in it or any desire for such an immortality. We love the person who was with us in flesh and blood, whom we could serve, take care of, whose affection we felt, with whom we talked. After leaving such a dear one in the cremation ground, we have never met him again; yet our heart longs for, pines after that person, that living form of his, in which we are interested. The suffering and grief that is brought by death has no remedy. Only we can think of the fact that this is the truth of all life, herein lies the dignity of life, that it disappears in death."⁶²⁷

Dasgupta admitted that death is a mystery beyond man's comprehension.

"We do not know what exists after the death of this body; any desire for a survival after death has no meaning at all. From this point of view Hindu scriptures had plunged into a whirlpool, the result of which has not been good."⁶²⁸

⁶²⁴ Dasgupta, Quest, 132-133 (letter dated May 13, 1936, Vienna).

⁶²⁵ Dasgupta, Quest, 47.

⁶²⁶ Dasgupta, Quest, 47.

⁶²⁷ Dasgupta, Quest, 144 (letter dated July 6, 1936, London).

⁶²⁸ Dasgupta, Quest, 221 (letter dated October 18, 1943, Agra).

Possibly it was his tremendous love for and confidence in life which liberated him from the need to find an answer to the riddle of death and to adhere to any dogma in this respect.

“That which does not die, is immortal. What is there that does not die? It is the living of life, the incessant flow of life which bathes us that does not die.”⁶²⁹

Life is full of variety and therefore also full of dissimilarity and inequality. According to Dasgupta it is futile to try to define the exact cause for the nature of everybody and everything and to construct a world of sameness.

“The theory of rebirth in our country tried to give an explanation of each and every individual being and event; that is why it became involved in endless complications. It can be easily seen that it is not possible to explain every event in a man’s life or every trait of his character with reference to his good or bad deeds in a previous existence. [...] the world-system that we are discussing does not follow the democratic principle of equality. We cannot ask why all the trees are not mango-trees, why all gases are not hydrogen.”⁶³⁰

Summing up we can say that, starting from the assumption that human beings cannot know the nature of their soul nor what will happen after death, Dasgupta accepted things as he experienced them: People die never to come back, and the variety of life inevitably includes inequalities. The theory of karma and rebirth ultimately gets tangled up in its attempts to straighten out seeming injustice by reference to previous lives and to provide consolation for loss through the prospect of future existences. Dasgupta could not acquire a taste for what to him remained an unproved dogma, created by men for various historical and philosophical reasons which are inherent to the system of Hinduism.

4.4.2. Karma in Yoga

When Dasgupta describes the theory of karma in chapter IX of *Yoga as Philosophy and Religion* no trace of his personal opinion remains. He presents the whole system faithful to the textual sources and in accordance with the traditional views on karma and rebirth. He sets out by implicitly referring to YS IV,7 and its comments, introducing the division of actions (both mental as well as external) into four categories:

1. kṛṣṇa (black)
2. śukla (white)
3. śuklakṛṣṇa (white and black)
4. aśuklākṛṣṇa (neither white nor black)⁶³¹

⁶²⁹ Dasgupta, Quest, 221 (letter dated October 18, 1943, Agra).

⁶³⁰ Dasgupta, Quest, 200-201 (letter dated April 5, 1943, Calcutta).

⁶³¹ Cf. Dasgupta, Philosophy and Religion, 102.

Whereas *kr̥ṣṇa karma* is “wicked actions called also *adharmā* (demerit),” the *śukla karma* comprehends “virtuous or meritorious deeds” which belong “to those who resort to study and meditation.”⁶³² The latter actions are purely mental, in opposition to the third category which exclusively concerns the motor senses. *Śuklakr̥ṣṇa karma* “are the actions achieved in the external world by the motor or active senses.” They are always tainted by wickedness “since all external actions entail some harm to other living beings.”⁶³³ The good (white) side of the *śuklakr̥ṣṇa karma* (for example helping others and doing good) is called *dharma* because it creates pleasure and happiness for the one who does them; the opposite side is *adharmā* since it causes suffering and pain.

“In all our ordinary states of existence we are always under the influence of *dharma* and *adharmā*, which are therefore called vehicles of actions.”⁶³⁴

The last category, finally, “is of those who have renounced everything, whose afflictions have been destroyed and whose present body is the last one they will have.”⁶³⁵ Dasgupta calls them “*karma-sannyāsis*”, by which denomination he means those who “dedicate to *Īśvara* the fruits of all vehicles of action, brought about by the practice of *Yoga*.”⁶³⁶

Karmāśaya (accumulation of *karma*, called by Dasgupta, like *dharma* and *adharmā*, “vehicle of actions”),⁶³⁷ is the result of the four passions *kāma* (desire), *lobha* (avarice), *moha* (ignorance) and *krodha* (anger), which again stem from the afflictions (*kleśas*). As long as this root exists, the accumulation of *karma* “ripens into life-state, life-experience and life-time”⁶³⁸ (implicit quotation from *YS II,13*). It is therefore vital to destroy the *kleśas*.

There are two kinds of *karmāśaya*. They either designate the seeds of actions which ripen in this or else in another life (implicit quotation from *YS II,12*), and both categories

“[...] are conducive to pleasure or pain, according as they are products of *puṇyakarmāśaya* (virtue) or *pāpā karmāśaya* (vice or demerit).”⁶³⁹ [Implicit quotation from *YS II,14*].

The accumulated *karma* is experienced in a determined order, “the principal ones being manifested earlier in life.”⁶⁴⁰

⁶³² Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 102.

⁶³³ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 102.

⁶³⁴ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 103.

⁶³⁵ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 103.

⁶³⁶ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 103.

⁶³⁷ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 104.

⁶³⁸ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 104.

⁶³⁹ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 105.

⁶⁴⁰ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 106.

Next, Dasgupta opposes karmāśaya to the vāsanās (residual potency caused by the kleśas, mainly avidyā), by introducing the distinction between ekabhavika and anekabhavika. Ekabhavika means “accumulated in one life” and applies to the karmāśaya which is generally considered to be the product of one life. The vāsanās however are called anekabhavika because they have been

“accumulated from thousands of previous lives since eternity, the mind being pervaded all over with them, as a fishing-net is covered all over with knots.”⁶⁴¹

Whereas the first ones are responsible for the production of one life after the other (according to their ripening), the latter ones are

[...] the cause of the instinctive tendencies, or habits of deriving pleasures and pains peculiar to different animal lives.”⁶⁴²

Dasgupta mentions the example of the karmāśaya of a dog-life ripening in a person.

[H]is corresponding vāsanās of a previous dog-life are at once revived and he begins to take interest in his dog-life in the manner of a dog; the same principle applies to the virtue of individuals as men or as gods (IV.8).”⁶⁴³

Quoting Nāgeśa’s *Chāyāvyaākhyā* on YS IV,8 Dasgupta insists that if the vāsanās were not activated according to the ripening of their corresponding karma they would be present all the time and “a man would take interest in eating grass and derive pleasure from it.”⁶⁴⁴

In the following passage Dasgupta elucidates YS IV,9 which states that memory (smṛiti) and impressions (saṃskāras) are of the same nature. In the process he equates vāsanā with saṃskāra, saying that “vāsanās are of the nature of saṃskāras or impressions [...]”⁶⁴⁵ Experiences remain as impressions in the mind and can be revived from one moment to the next (if the right cause is there). Then they pass from the latent state (saṃskāra or vāsanā) to the manifested state (smṛiti), even if the first and the second life (as a dog, for example) are separated by thousands of years and many different lives (as human beings as well as other animals).

The fact that vāsanās are beginningless can be proved by the inborn fear manifest in a baby which is thrown up into the air and starts to cry.

[...] this baby has never learnt in this life from experience that a fall on the ground will cause pain, for it has never fallen on the ground and suffered pain therefrom; so the cause of this fear cannot be sought in the experiences of this life, but in the memory of past experiences of fall and pain arising

⁶⁴¹ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 106.

⁶⁴² Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 107.

⁶⁴³ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 107.

⁶⁴⁴ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 107.

⁶⁴⁵ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 108.

therefrom, which is innate in this life as *vāsanā* and causes this instinctive fear.”⁶⁴⁶

And since in that life where the baby experienced falling on the ground the fear of falling was already present, as a memory of yet an earlier life, and so on, *vāsanās* are without beginning.⁶⁴⁷

In the last section of this chapter Dasgupta discusses a controversy between *Vācaspati* on the one hand and *Vijñāna Bhikṣu* and *Nāgeśa* on the other, in their comments on *YS II,13*, concerning *ekabhavikatva* (accumulation in one life) of the *karmāśaya*.⁶⁴⁸ He sums up their different positions as follows:

“*Ekabhavika* means that which is produced from the accumulation of *karmas* in one life in the life which succeeds it. *Vācaspati*, however, takes it also to mean that action which attains fruition in the same life in which it is performed, whereas what *Vijñāna Bhikṣu* understands by *ekabhavika* is that action alone which is produced in the life immediately succeeding the life in which it was accumulated.”⁶⁴⁹

The chapter ends with a classification in form of a table of the whole karma-theory according to *Vācaspati*.⁶⁵⁰

4.4.3. Conclusions

Given Dasgupta’s scepticism about the theory of karma and rebirth and given the fact that only six *sūtras* deal with this topic at all (*YS II,12-14* and *IV,7-9*), the question may be asked why Dasgupta felt the necessity to dedicate a whole chapter to karma. The answer can only be that karma is a central part of Yoga without which the system would be incomplete. One can only speculate about how he felt writing about the ripening of karma in one life or over several existences, and the *vāsanās* of animal lives lurking somewhere in the subconscious mind of everybody, ready to revive any time. This can hardly be the chapter he would have liked to discuss with Western colleagues – and yet he had to include it in his presentation of Yoga because *karmāśaya*, the accumulation of karma, is so intimately linked to the *kleśas* the uprooting or destruction of which is the main task of a *Yogin*. It is the *kleśas* which produce *vāsanās* (residual potency) and *saṃskāras* (impressions or latent mental states) which again give rise to the *vṛttis* (actual mental states) which then create more *saṃskāras* etc.⁶⁵¹ – and the *kleśas* also produce the four passions of desire, avarice, ignorance and anger (hardly any different from the *kleśas* themselves) which are directly responsible for the accumulation of karma. It is not an exaggeration to say that the *kleśas* are at the very centre of Yoga thought and practice, the eight-fold path

⁶⁴⁶ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 109.

⁶⁴⁷ Cf. Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 109.

⁶⁴⁸ Cf. Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 109-112.

⁶⁴⁹ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 112.

⁶⁵⁰ Cf. Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 112.

⁶⁵¹ Cf. *supra*, chapter 4.3.3.10.

and other mental practices (such as *abhyāsa*, *vairāgya*, *maitrī*, *karuṇā*, *muditā* and *upekṣā*) being described essentially as cleansing processes for the impure (read: unsteady) mind. The *kleśas* and their products represent the mental dirt a Yogin has to get rid of in order to reach concentration, *samādhi* and ultimately the liberating knowledge (*prajñā*). As long as he does not succeed in this task he will be reborn again and again, due to the ripening of his *karmāśaya*, according to the nature of his *kleśas*. The best way out of this endless circle, according to Dasgupta, seems to be *īśvarapraṇidhāna*, devotion to *Īśvara*, the absolute God. On the one hand, He will show His grace by removing some (or even much) dirt from the mind; on the other hand, by dedicating to Him all the fruits of any action, a Yogin accumulates the best kind of karma, the one which is neither white nor black. The real “karma-*saṃnyāsins*” (or karma-yogins) however are those “whose afflictions [*kleśas*] have been destroyed and whose present body is the last one they will have,”⁶⁵² in other words: yogins at a very advanced state just prior to perfection. Let us now have a look at these very last stages of the Yoga path, the various phases of trance (*samādhi*) a Yogin goes through before reaching final liberation.

4.5. *Samādhi* (chapter XIII)

Similarly to the chapter on karma, “Stages of *samādhi*” is also devoid of any personal statement. Dasgupta limits himself to faithfully present what the scriptures had to say about the subject. He sets off by describing the relation between a thing (*artha*), its concept (*jñāna*) and its name (*śabda*), three aspects which are all different from each other.

“But still, by force of association, the word or name stands both for the thing and its concept; the function of mind, by virtue of which despite this unreality or want of their having any real identity of connection they seem to be so much associated that the name cannot be differentiated from the thing or its idea, is called *vikalpa*.”⁶⁵³

Then he introduces the four categories of *saṃprajñāta samādhi* (“absorptive concentration [on] an object”),⁶⁵⁴ called *savitarka*, *nirvitarka*, *savicāra* and *nirvicāra*. In *savitarka samādhi*

“[...] the mind seems to become one with the thing, together with its name and concept [...]; it is the lowest stage, because here the gross object does not appear to the mind in its true reality, but only in the false illusory way in which it appears associated with the concept and the name in ordinary life.”⁶⁵⁵

⁶⁵² Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 103 (cf. also *supra*, chapter 4.4.2).

⁶⁵³ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 150.

⁶⁵⁴ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 150.

⁶⁵⁵ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 150.

In this stage the mind is not yet steady and has not gone beyond ordinary consciousness.

Nirvitarka arises when a steady mind

“[...] can become one with its object, divested of all other associations of name and concept, so that it is in direct touch with the reality of the thing, uncontaminated by associations.”⁶⁵⁶

Whereas in nirvitarka samādhi the mind concentrates on and becomes one with gross material objects as well as the senses, in the following stage, savicāra samādhi, it reaches the level of the subtle elements (tanmātras). The mind “sinks deeper and deeper into [the object’s] finer constituents.”⁶⁵⁷

“This is a state of feelingless representation of one uniform tanmātric state, when the object appears as a conglomeration of tanmātras of rūpa, rasa or gandha, as the case might be.”⁶⁵⁸

Apart from the subtle elements, ego, buddhi and prakṛti are further objects of concentration in savicāra samādhi. The notions of time, space and causality, which remain associated with this state, will vanish altogether in the fourth kind of samādhi, the nirvicāra state.

So far Dasgupta’s exposition was based on YS I,42-44 (and probably the corresponding comments). He (implicitly) moves on to YS I,17 when he next introduces a further differentiation in the various samādhi states. Savicāra and nirvicāra, both characterised by concentration on and communion with subtle objects (tanmātras etc.), are also called vicārānugata.

“But when the object of communion is the senses, the samādhi is called ānandānugata, and when the object of communion is the subtle cause the ego (asmitā), the samādhi is known as asmitānugata.”⁶⁵⁹

Vācaspati Mitra and Vijñāna Bhikṣu disagree as far as the objects of concentration of the last two categories of samādhi (ānandānugata and asmitānugata) are concerned, and their opinion also differs regarding the number of varieties or stages of samādhi.⁶⁶⁰ Whereas Vācaspati holds that there are two forms each of ānandānugata and asmitānugata samādhi (adding up to a total of eight varieties), Bhikṣu accepts only one kind of each stage (and ends up with six varieties). Dasgupta presents Bhikṣu’s system in a table.⁶⁶¹

⁶⁵⁶ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 151.

⁶⁵⁷ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 151.

⁶⁵⁸ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 152.

⁶⁵⁹ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 153.

⁶⁶⁰ Cf. Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 153.

⁶⁶¹ Cf. Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 154.

In nirvicāra samādhi the mind will be purified and prajñā, true knowledge (which Dasgupta described elsewhere)⁶⁶² arises.

“When, however, this prajñā is also suppressed, we have what is called the state of nirbīja samādhi, at the end of which comes final prajñā leading to the dissolution of the citta and the absolute freedom of the puruṣa.”⁶⁶³

In chapter XI, Dasgupta equated nirbīja with asaṃprajñāta, a term which is entirely absent from his chapter on samādhi. Nirbīja also means nirodha, the suppression or dissolution of the mind and all its saṃskāras (cf. YS I,51).

Finally, Dasgupta gives a definition of samādhi:

“Samādhi we have seen is the mind’s becoming one with an object by a process of acute concentration upon it and a continuous repetition of it with the exclusion of all other thoughts of all kinds.”⁶⁶⁴

Referring to YS III,9-15 Dasgupta then describes the continuous transformations of the mind (pariṇāma) from the ordinary state to nirodha.⁶⁶⁵

“Here also, therefore, we see that the same dharma, lakṣaṇa, avasthāpariṇāma which we have already described at some length with regard to sensible objects apply also to the mental states.”⁶⁶⁶

In other words: Matter and mind, both being composed of the same constituents (guṇas), are subjugated to the same processes.

The chapter ends with a list in table form of the vibhūti, the miraculous powers a yogin achieves through saṃyama (the practice of the last three steps of the eight-fold path).⁶⁶⁷ This list is (once more implicitly) based on YS III,16-36. These powers are said to “strengthen the faith or belief of the Yogin in the processes of Yoga as the path of salvation.”⁶⁶⁸ They help him to keep on striving for his aim. “Divested from the ideal, they have no value.”⁶⁶⁹

There is one instance in this chapter which could be interpreted as a personal statement of Dasgupta. He writes that samādhi cannot be adequately described but has to be personally experienced,⁶⁷⁰ adding that

“[...] no teacher can tell him [the yogin] whether a certain stage which follows is higher or lower, for Yoga itself is its own teacher.”⁶⁷¹

⁶⁶² Cf. *supra*, chapters 4.3.3.11 and 15 (among others).

⁶⁶³ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 154.

⁶⁶⁴ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 155.

⁶⁶⁵ Cf. Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 155-156.

⁶⁶⁶ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 155-156 (cf. also *supra*, chapter 4.3.3.7).

⁶⁶⁷ Cf. Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 156-158.

⁶⁶⁸ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 156.

⁶⁶⁹ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 158.

⁶⁷⁰ Cf. Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 155.

⁶⁷¹ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 155.

This might be a hint to the fact that Dasgupta was, after all, a yogi – without a guru but following his own inner instructions. In chapter 3.4 above we have seen that Dasgupta spontaneously experienced trance-like states of mind which both he as well as Surama called *samādhi*. During such states his mind would detach itself completely from the outside world, take a rest and refresh itself. It is reasonable to suppose that Dasgupta never went beyond any of the *samprajñāta* categories since he was vehemently opposed to having his active and creative mental force stop; never did he mention that his mind came to a total standstill or even reached dissolution of itself (as required for the *nirodha* state). But his mind must have had by nature a tremendous capacity for concentration, and because Dasgupta also entirely relied on God and His grace he might have personally experienced that *Īśvara* removed the obstacles from his mental path.

4.6. Conclusions

4.6.1. Table of the *sūtras* referred to

Since Dasgupta’s treatise on Yoga is based to about 90% or even 95% on the YS and its commentaries,⁶⁷² and since I intend to compare Eliade’s and Dasgupta’s exposition of Yoga according to Patañjali, I restrict myself to a presentation of these sources. The following table lists the *sūtras* from the YS Dasgupta quoted, paraphrased or referred to in *Yoga as Philosophy and Religion*, either explicitly or implicitly. It shows that he commented nearly the entire YS. In fact, since it is very probable that I failed to identify every single quotation Dasgupta wove unmarked into his text I am inclined to say that Patañjali’s treatise is fully present, either in the form of original *sūtras* or as chosen parts of the commentary on them. For the following table however I could only register those sources which Dasgupta clearly indicated or which I recognised.

Sūtras referred to	Patañjali or (sub)commentary	Topic (as discussed by Dasgupta)	Chapter (of <i>Yoga as Phil. and Rel.</i>)
I,1	<i>Vyāsabhaṣya</i>	Five classes of <i>citta</i> , definition of <i>vṛttis</i> (states)	VIII
I,2	Patañjali and <i>Bhojavṛtti</i>	Five classes of <i>citta</i> , definition of <i>vṛttis</i> (states)	VIII
I,5	Patañjali (and maybe some commentary)	Mental states (<i>vṛttis</i>) are either afflicted or unafflicted	XV
I,7-11	Patañjali	The five <i>vṛttis</i> (mental states)	XV
I,13	Patañjali and <i>Yogavārttika</i>	Abhyāsa (steadiness of the mind)	XI

⁶⁷² Some of the exceptions are the references to *Sāṃkhyakārikā* 17 and 18 in chapter II, to SK 27 in chapter V, the *Sāṃkhyasūtra* II,12 in chapter XV and *Tattvatraya*, Barabara’s *Bhāṣya* on *Tattvatraya* and *Tattvakaumudī* on SK 25 in chapter V, apart from some quotations from Seal in the first part of the book.

I,16	Patañjali (and probably some commentary)	Stages of vairāgya	XI
I,17	<i>Vyāsabhāṣya</i>	Nature of ahaṁkāra (ego)	V
I,17	Patañjali (and probably some commentary)	Samprajñāta and asaṁprajñāta samādhi	XI
I,17	Patañjali, <i>Tattvavaiśārādī</i> and <i>Yogavārttika</i>	Further differentiation of the four samādhi states	XIII
I,20	Patañjali and <i>Yogavārttika</i>	Products of śraddhā (faith)	XI
I,30	Patañjali, <i>Tattvavaiśārādī</i> , <i>Yogavārttika</i> and <i>Bhojavṛtti</i>	The nine obstructions of the mind	XI
I,30-31	Patañjali	Devotion to Īśvara removes the obstacles mentioned in I,30-31	XIV
I,33	Patañjali (and probably commentaries)	Maitrī (friendliness), karuṇā (compassion), muditā (complacency) and upekṣā (indifference towards happiness, misery, virtue and vice)	XII
I,34-39	Patañjali	The parikarmas (actions which calm down the mind)	XII
I,36	<i>Vyāsabhāṣya</i>	Nature of buddhi (mind)	V
I,40	Patañjali	Nature of paramāṇu (atom) and time	IV
I,42-44	Patañjali, <i>Tattvavaiśārādī</i> and <i>Yogavārttika</i>	Four kinds of samādhi (savitarka, nirvitarka, savicāra, nirvicāra)	XIII
I,44	<i>Tattvavaiśārādī</i>	Creation of atoms	VI
I,45	<i>Yogavārttika</i> , <i>Chāyāvyaṅkhyā</i>	Nature of paramāṇu (atom) and time	IV
I,45	<i>Vyāsabhāṣya</i>	Order of evolution	V
I,45	<i>Yogavārttika</i> , <i>Chāyāvyaṅkhyā</i>	Creation of atoms	VI
I,51	Patañjali	Nirbīja samādhi (seedless trance)	XIII
II,1	Patañjali	The niyamas (observances) and kriyāyoga	XII
II,2	Patañjali	The results of kriyāyoga	XII
II,2	<i>Yogavārttika</i>	For advanced minds the practice of abhyāsa and vairāgya is sufficient	XII
II,3	Patañjali	Avidyā (nescience) and its modifications	VIII
II,4	Patañjali	The kleśas (afflictions)	XV
II,5	Patañjali	Avidyā (nescience) and its modifications	VIII
II,6	Patañjali and <i>Vyāsabhāṣya</i>	Relation of puruṣa and prakṛti	II

II,6	Patañjali	Nature of ahaṁkāra (ego)	V
II,12	Patañjali	Two kinds of karmāśaya (accumulation of karma) and their results	IX
II,13	Patañjali	The kleśas (afflictions) are the root of the karmāśaya	IX
II,13	<i>Vyāśabhāṣya, Yogavārttika, Chāyāvyaḅhyā</i>	Controversy about the accumulation of karma in one life	IX
II,14	Patañjali	Two kinds of karmāśaya and their results	IX
II,15	Patañjali	Everything is painful	VIII
II,15	<i>Vyāśabhāṣya</i>	The seven stages of prajñā	X
II,18	<i>Vyāśabhāṣya, Tattvavaiśārādī, Yogavārttika</i>	Nature of prakṛti and of the guṇas	I
II,18	<i>Vyāśabhāṣya</i>	Nature of buddhi (mind)	V
II,18	<i>Yogavārttika</i>	Modes of manas (mind)	XV
II,19	<i>Vyāśabhāṣya, Yogavārttika</i>	Nature of prakṛti and of the guṇas	I
II,19	<i>Vyāśabhāṣya</i>	Nature of buddhi (mind)	V
II,19	<i>Vyāśabhāṣya, Yogavārttika, Chāyāvyaḅhyā</i>	Order of evolution	V
II,20-23	Patañjali and <i>Vyāśabhāṣya</i>	Relation of puruṣa and prakṛti	II
II,24-25	Patañjali	Avidyā (nescience) is the cause of the connection of the puruṣa and the prakṛti, therefore it has to be uprooted	X
II,25	Patañjali and <i>Vyāśabhāṣya</i>	Relation of puruṣa and prakṛti	II
II,27	Patañjali	The seven stages of prajñā	X
II,28	<i>Vyāśabhāṣya</i>	The yogāṅgas as means of purification	XI
II,28-III,3	Patañjali and commentaries	The yogāṅgas	XII
II,32	Patañjali	The niyamas (observances) and kriyāyoga	XII
II,33	Patañjali and <i>Vyāśabhāṣya</i>	Removing sinful ideas by concentrating on their opposites	XII
II,34	Patañjali	Classification of vitarka (sins)	XII
II,35-45	Patañjali, <i>Tattvavaiśārādī, Yogavārttika</i>	Results obtained by the practice of the yamas and niyamas	XII
II,46-48	Patañjali	āśana	XII
II,49-53	Patañjali, <i>Vyāśabhāṣya</i>	Prāṇāyāma	XII

II,54-III,3	Patañjali and <i>Vyāśabhāṣya</i> (for dhāraṇā)	Pratyāhāra, dhāraṇā, dhyāna, samādhi	XII
III,4	Patañjali	Samyama	XII
III,9-15	Patañjali	The transformations (pariṇāma) of the mind from ordinary to nirodha	XIII
III,13	<i>Vyāśabhāṣya</i> and <i>Yogavārttika</i>	Changes in dharma (quality) and dharmin (substance)	VI
III,14	<i>Tattvavaiśārādī</i>	Changes in dharma (quality) and dharmin (substance)	VI
III,14	<i>Vyāśabhāṣya</i> , <i>Yogavārttika</i> and <i>Chāyāvyaḅhyā</i>	Conditions which are able to break the barriers inside of prakṛti (to set the evolution in motion)	VII
III,15	<i>Tattvavaiśārādī</i>	Changes in dharma (quality) and dharmin (substance)	VI
III,16-36	Patañjali	Siddhis (miraculous powers)	XIII
III,35	Patañjali and <i>Vyāśabhāṣya</i>	Relation of puruṣa and prakṛti	II
III,45	<i>Tattvavaiśārādī</i>	Īśvara's power	VII
III,47	<i>Tattvavaiśārādī</i>	No difference between the mental and the physical	I
III,47	<i>Tattvavaiśārādī</i>	Nature of ahaṁkāra (ego)	V
III,52	<i>Vyāśabhāṣya</i> , <i>Yogavārttika</i> , <i>Tattvavaiśārādī</i>	Nature of paramāṇu (atom) and time	IV
III,52	<i>Yogavārttika</i>	Creation of atoms	VI
III,53	Patañjali	Suprasensuous perception	IV
III,53	<i>Vyāśabhāṣya</i>	Changes in dharma (quality) and dharmin (substance)	VI
III,55	Patañjali and <i>Vyāśabhāṣya</i>	Relation of puruṣa and prakṛti	II
IV,3	<i>Tattvavaiśārādī</i> , <i>Yogavārttika</i> and <i>Chāyāvyaḅhyā</i>	Īśvara as removing force of the barriers; His aim is the fulfilment of the purpose of the puruṣa	VII
IV,7	Patañjali and <i>Vyāśabhāṣya</i> (and maybe other comments, too)	Four categories of karma (action)	IX

IV,8	Patañjali and <i>Chāyāvyaḥkhyā</i>	According to the ripening of karma, certain vāsanās (impressions) are activated	IX
IV,9	Patañjali and <i>Vyāsaḥḥṣya</i>	Samskāras (impressions) and smṛti (memory) are of the same nature	IX
IV,10	<i>Chāyāvyaḥkhyā</i>	kāryacitta, kāraṇacitta, definition of citta (mind)	VIII
IV,12	Patañjali and <i>Vyāsaḥḥṣya</i>	The reality of the external world	III
IV,13 and 16	<i>Vyāsaḥḥṣya</i>	The reality of the external world	III
IV,13	<i>Vyāsaḥḥṣya,</i> <i>Tattvavaiśārādī,</i> <i>Yogavārttika</i>	Prakṛti different from māyā	I
IV,14	<i>Vyāsaḥḥṣya</i> and <i>Tattvavaiśārādī</i>	The reality of the external world	III
IV,14	<i>Yogavārttika</i>	Creation of atoms	VI
IV,14	<i>Vyāsaḥḥṣya</i>	Teleological purpose in the conglomeration of the atoms	VI
IV,15	Patañjali	The reality of the external world	III
IV,17	<i>Yogavārttika</i>	Perception	XV
IV,22	Patañjali and <i>Vyāsaḥḥṣya</i>	Relation of puruṣa and prakṛti	II
IV,29	Patañjali	True knowledge in dharmamegha-samādhi	X
IV,33	Patañjali, <i>Tattvavaiśārādī</i>	Nature of paramāṇu (atom) and time	IV
IV,33	<i>Vyāsaḥḥṣya</i>	Eternity of the world is only relative	VII

4.6.2. Some general results

Dasgupta wrote *Yoga as Philosophy and Religion* as well as his other texts on Yoga in order to rehabilitate the theoretical part of Yoga and in order to make this system of thought known to the modern world (cf. *supra*, chapter 4.3.1). Having reached the end of his exposition of the subject (and without wanting to repeat all the conclusions drawn in chapters 4.3.3.9, 4.3.3.16 and 4.4.3) we can point out a few major characteristics of this enterprise.

1. “Yoga as philosophy” mainly means the metaphysical backdrop of Sāṃkhya against which Patañjali dressed up his system of practice. In this first part of his book, Dasgupta quotes far more from commentators on the *Yogasūtra* than from Patañjali’s text itself. He raises topics of general philosophical and scientific interest which he uses to demonstrate the superiority of Sāṃkhya-Yoga both over Western as well as certain Indian philosophies (mostly Vedānta and Buddhism).
2. “Yoga as religion” primarily designates the various techniques which allow the Yogin to purify and concentrate his mind and to ultimately reach the liberating knowledge (prajñā). For this part of his book Dasgupta seems to rely more on Patañjali than on the commentators. He focuses on a few famous passages (thus YS I,1-16, YS II,1-11, YS II,15-27 and YS II,28-III,4) which he interrelates freely with one another, the vṛttis (YS I,1-11) being a result of the kleśas (YS II,1-11) and the main affliction (avidyā) representing the metaphysical nescience about the eternal separation of puruṣa and prakṛti, thus leading to fundamental suffering (YS II,15-27) and an accumulation of karma (karmāśaya). All these mental pollutions, the real obstacles on the path of the Yogin (cf. also YS I,30-31), can be eradicated through the practice of the eight limbs (YS II,28-III,4) and, in case of an already advanced mind, through abhyāsa and vairāgya (YS I,12-16) and some other virtuous mental attitudes (YS I,33).
3. The aim of Yoga is prajñā, the true knowledge which liberates the puruṣa from prakṛti and sets him free in kaivalya. This knowledge dawns during the various states of samprajñāta samādhi and attains its full force in the last phase, called asamprajñāta or nirodha. Therefore

“[...] it is clear that the main stress of the Yoga philosophy is on the method of samādhi.”⁶⁷³

In this respect I would like to point out that, since “the cessation of all mental states is yoga”⁶⁷⁴ (cf. YS I,2), it cannot surprise that yoga has been equalled to samādhi (cf. *Vyāsabhāṣya* on YS I,1).

⁶⁷³ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 162.

⁶⁷⁴ Dasgupta, *Mysticism*, 70.

4. Dasgupta's use of the Sanskrit sources is entirely non-historical – he quotes both the original texts (*Yogasūtra* and *Sāṃkhyakārikā*) as well as the Sanskrit commentaries, from the second to the 17th century A.D., side by side. He is not interested in presenting the historical evolution of the Sāṃkhya-Yoga system but seems to consider the various sources as one single text which he can freely dive in and choose those passages which are most apt to support his argument in exposing a certain topic. This is more apparent in the first part of the book than in the second. Also, when two commentators (mostly Vācaspati and Bhikṣu) do not agree upon an important issue, Dasgupta shows and comments their discrepancy and often expresses his preference for one or the other.

5. The ambiguity of Dasgupta's position between East and West, which we detected in the way he reedited his book between 1914 and 1924 (cf. *supra*, chapter 4.2), could be observed again in his presentation of the role of Īśvara (cf. *supra*, chapter 4.3.3.9). Dasgupta adjusts his discourse depending on who he is addressing. An expert in Western science and philosophy, he is, at the same time, a proud representative of certain Indian traditions which he is eager to show to his Western colleagues in the best possible light. Suffering from the intellectual apathy and blind faith of his countrymen in certain beliefs he nevertheless did not become an unconditional follower of everything Western but kept a critical mind towards both East and West. He accepted the theory of evolution but enriched it by the Sāṃkhya-Yoga explanation that the cause of evolution had to be seen in the serviceability of prakṛti to puruṣa and its aim in the liberation of the latter; he could not think of creation without a supervising God (Īśvara), thus distancing himself from Sāṃkhya which he otherwise fervently defended; he turned against Vedānta and its concept of māyā and he refused to believe in karma and reincarnation. On the one hand he relied on (scientific) reason, on the other hand his mystical side prevented him from being overrational. Thus he had to find his own position in nearly every matter, drawing from his knowledge about and experience with both India and the West, a position which he sometimes openly declared (for example in his letters to Surama) and sometimes preferred to keep hidden (for example when he presents the karma theory in his Yoga book).

6. Dasgupta had no doubts about the supranatural powers of the Yogins; again and again he points out that they can see, hear and know things which lie beyond normal people's perception. On the one hand he personally witnessed certain Yogic feats, on the other hand he himself was endowed with a natural talent for trance-like states. In terms of Patañjali's classification of samādhi stages it is very difficult to determine how far Dasgupta's own experiences went, but the fact that he emphasises first-hand knowledge in this respect and at the same time was completely against any mind ever stopping its activities, it can be safely assumed that he never reached (nor tried to reach) the nirodha state but remained on one of the samprajñāta levels.

5. Eliade's presentation of Patañjali's *Yogasūtra* in *Yoga. Immortality and Freedom* in comparison with Dasgupta's *Yoga as Philosophy and Religion*

Let us now turn to Dasgupta's famous Romanian pupil who wrote one of the most authoritative books on Yoga. As we have seen in chapter 1.1, *Yoga. Immortality and Freedom* is the third version of a book which evolved over more than two decades (1932, 1936, 1954). It would be highly interesting to study the transformations which Eliade's work underwent in the course of those years, but unfortunately such an analysis would by far exceed the time and space at our disposal. I will therefore concentrate on the final version of 1954 which, after all, is the one which achieved international renown – the 1932 Romanian text was never translated into another language and the 1936 French version suffered, according to Eliade himself, from various imperfections (cf. *supra*, chapter 1.1). By 1954 Eliade had entirely rewritten his book "in order to adapt it as much as possible to our present views."⁶⁷⁵

Since this paper focuses on the relationship and the intellectual exchange between Eliade and his teacher Dasgupta I will limit my analysis of Eliade's concept of Yoga to the first section of his book, dedicated to the presentation of Patañjali's *Yogasūtra*. As we proceed through Eliade's text we will continuously compare his statements to what his teacher Dasgupta wrote on the subject and thus discover step by step how Eliade absorbed, accepted, adapted, changed and transformed this material, according to the specific topic or matter he is dealing with. The main text of reference will be *Yoga as Philosophy and Religion* which has been discussed in detail in chapter 4.

5.1. Why Yoga? (foreword)

Eliade sets out with a brief historical survey of the various, mostly inadequate attempts of the West to discover and interpret India, attempts which were guided and determined by the spirit and problems of the time in which they were made. Writing in 1954, Eliade states that

"[e]verything leads to the belief that, at the present moment, a more accurate knowledge of Indian thought has become possible."⁶⁷⁶

As far as philosophy is concerned, Eliade declares that modern Western ideas have reached a stage where they can learn from ancient Indian wisdom.

"It is the human condition, and above all the temporality of the human being, that constitutes the object of the most recent Western philosophy. [...] Now, this problem of the "conditioning" of man (and its corollary, rather neglected in the West: his "deconditioning") constitutes the central problem of Indian thought. [...] The West, therefore, might well learn: (1) what India

⁶⁷⁵ Eliade, *Yoga*, xxi.

⁶⁷⁶ Eliade, *Yoga*, xv.

thinks of the multiple “conditionings” of the human being; (2) how it has approached the problem of the temporality and historicity of man; (3) what solution it has found for the anxiety and despair that inevitably follow upon consciousness of temporality, the matrix of all “conditionings.”⁶⁷⁷

According to Eliade, Indian sages have explored the unconscious long before the West discovered depth psychology. He calls *saṃskāras* and *vāsanās* (“impregnations, residues, latencies”)⁶⁷⁸ “contents and structures of the unconscious,”⁶⁷⁹ and claims that Yoga shows a way how to burn them, in other words: how to decondition the unconscious. Interpreting *māyā* as “not only cosmic illusion but also, and above all, historicity, [...] existence in time and history,”⁶⁸⁰ Eliade equates what Western philosophy calls “being situated, being constituted by temporality and historicity” with “existence in *māyā*.”⁶⁸¹ Therefore, whatever India says about *māyā* is also relevant for the West of the 1950-ies. Eliade’s concern however is not that the West should simply accept solutions offered by India – his aim is a more fundamental one.

“[I]t is essential that we know and understand a thought that has held a place of the first importance in the history of universal spirituality. And it is essential that we know it *now*. For, on the one hand, it is from *now* on that, any cultural provincialism having been outstripped by the very course of history, we are forced – Westerners and non-Westerners alike – to think in terms of universal history and to forge universal spiritual values. And, on the other hand, it is *now* that the problem of man’s situation in the world dominates the philosophical consciousness of Europe – and, to repeat, this problem is at the very center of Indian thought.”⁶⁸²

Addressing Western philosophers, psychologists and seekers alike, Eliade cautions them against a possible disappointment at their reading his book. They may “find the jargon of Indian philosophy outmoded, lacking in precision, unserviceable.”⁶⁸³ Yet he remains convinced that nevertheless “the great discoveries of Indian thought will in the end be recognized,”⁶⁸⁴ such as, for example,

“[...] that of consciousness as witness, of consciousness freed from its psychophysiological structures and their temporal conditioning, the consciousness of the “liberated” man, of him, that is, who has succeeded in emancipating himself from temporality and thereafter knows the true, inexpressible freedom.”⁶⁸⁵

⁶⁷⁷ Eliade, *Yoga*, xvi.

⁶⁷⁸ Eliade, *Yoga*, xvii.

⁶⁷⁹ Eliade, *Yoga*, xvii.

⁶⁸⁰ Eliade, *Yoga*, xviii. Eliade justifies this translation on the following grounds: “[...] *māyā* is illusion because it does not participate in Being, because it is “becoming,” “temporality” – cosmic becoming, to be sure, but also historical becoming.” (Eliade, *Yoga*, xviii)

⁶⁸¹ Eliade, *Yoga*, xviii.

⁶⁸² Eliade, *Yoga*, xix—xx.

⁶⁸³ Eliade, *Yoga*, xx.

⁶⁸⁴ Eliade, *Yoga*, xx.

⁶⁸⁵ Eliade, *Yoga*, xx.

According to Eliade, all Indian philosophies and mystical techniques aim at this absolute freedom, and Yoga, “through one of [its] many forms,”⁶⁸⁶ is the best way to reach there.

We see that Dasgupta’s and Eliade’s motivation for writing on Yoga is both similar and different. Dasgupta’s wish to throw light on the neglected or even completely ignored philosophical side of Yoga, too one-sidedly understood as a magical or occult practice, corresponds to Eliade’s endeavour to bring one aspect of the philosophical wisdom of India to the attention of the West. Both authors saw in Yoga a precious and valuable knowledge worth to be reestablished and presented to an interested public. Both felt that the right moment for such an enterprise had come. But whereas Dasgupta wrote both for a Western as well as an Indian audience, Eliade exclusively addressed the West, and if for Dasgupta the term Yoga designated only Sāṃkhya-Yoga according to Īśvarakṛṣṇa, Patañjali and their commentators, Eliade included all other aspects of Yoga, too, such as Tantrism, Buddhism, alchemy, etc.

5.2. Eliade’s acknowledgment of Dasgupta

On the remaining pages of his foreword to *Yoga. Immortality and Freedom*, Eliade mentions Dasgupta several times, acknowledging the influence the latter had on his work. Writing nearly 25 years after their tragic rupture, Eliade still remembers his “guru” (who had died only two years before the publication of the French version of his book).

We already pointed out that, as far as the time he spent with Dasgupta is concerned, Eliade considerably modified the truth. Instead of the “three years of study at the University of Calcutta (1928-31) under the direction of Professor Surendranath Dasgupta”⁶⁸⁷ he worked no longer than 21 months with the Indian erudite (cf. *supra*, chapter 2.2.4). Eliade also tries to make his stay in India sound longer than it actually was, by adding “a residence of six months (1931) in the *āśram* of Rishikesh, Himālaya”⁶⁸⁸ to the alleged three years with Dasgupta. In reality, these months were part of his overall three years in India. It is obvious that Eliade was anxious to enhance the authenticity of his book by claiming a maximum amount of first-hand expertise, gained in the land of Yoga itself.

⁶⁸⁶ Eliade, *Yoga*, xx.

⁶⁸⁷ Eliade, *Yoga*, xx. Towards the end of his foreword, Eliade mentions the three years a second time: “[...] for three years he [Dasgupta] was our professor of Sanskrit, our master, and our *guru*.” (Eliade, *Yoga*, xxii).

⁶⁸⁸ Eliade, *Yoga*, xx.

Eliade mentions Dasgupta as his “professor of Sanskrit, [...] master and [...] *guru*” and as the one who “lead [him] into the very center of Indian thought.”⁶⁸⁹ As far as Yoga is concerned, however, a careful reading of the foreword reveals that Dasgupta only counts as expert for Patañjali (or the yoga-darśana), a topic which Eliade had no wish to spend much time (or energy) on.

“If in translating the *Yogasūtras* and their commentaries we sometimes deviate from current interpretations, we do so in view of the oral teaching of our Hindu masters, especially of Professor Surendranath Dasgupta, with whom we translated and discussed all the important texts of the yoga-darśana.

[...] Excellent books are available on the system of Patañjali – notably those by Dasgupta; hence we have not considered it necessary to discuss this subject at length.”⁶⁹⁰

In chapter 2.2.1 we already noted Eliade’s reluctance to treat the Yoga philosophy – on the one hand it appeared to him as “commonplace”⁶⁹¹ when compared to Vedānta or Mahāyāna, on the other hand he felt that Dasgupta had treated the matter extensively. He therefore readily refers the reader to the works of his famous master, not claiming any originality in his own presentation of the yoga-darśana (to which he dedicated roughly a fourth of his book, i.e. the first two of eight chapters or 98 of 358 pages). It will be our task to investigate whether Eliade rendered Dasgupta as faithfully as he pretends, respectively to point out the differences between the Indian model and Eliade’s adaptation.

We already know that the young Romanian’s whole interest was directed at more popular and practical expressions of Yoga (cf. chapter 2.2.1)

“Instead [of Patañjali], we have emphasized less known or inadequately studied aspects: the ideas, the symbolism, and the methods of Yoga, as they are expressed in tantrism, in alchemy, in folklore, in the aboriginal devotion of India.”⁶⁹²

For these however he fails to mention any Indian authority (parallel to Dasgupta for the *Yogasūtra*) and it is legitimate to assume that chapters three to eight of his book represent Eliade’s original contribution to the history of Yoga. Since this research is concentrating on how exactly Eliade digested and used what he had learned from Dasgupta, in other words, on how much of Dasgupta’s teaching ever reached the West through Eliade, I will focus on the subject matter which was treated by both: Patañjali.

⁶⁸⁹ Eliade, *Yoga*, xxii. It is highly interesting to note that in the dedication to the 1936 version of his book, Eliade did not refer to Dasgupta as his guru but simply as his “maître,” and he did not mention him once in the whole introduction.

⁶⁹⁰ Eliade, *Yoga*, xxi.

⁶⁹¹ Eliade, *Autobiography*, 176.

⁶⁹² Eliade, *Yoga*, xxii.

5.3. Structure

Looking at Eliade's presentation of Patañjali and his commentators it is striking to observe that the Romanian religionist chose to divide his material into two sections, entitled "The Doctrines of Yoga" and "Techniques of Autonomy," respectively. We immediately feel reminded of Dasgupta's dichotomy "Yoga Metaphysics" and "Yoga Ethics and Practice." The titles of the subchapters confirm this impression:

The doctrines of Yoga (chapter I)

1. Point of Departure
2. The Equation Pain-Existence
3. The "Self"
4. Substance
5. The Relation Spirit-Nature
6. How is Liberation possible?
7. The Structure of Psychic Experience
8. The Subconscious

Techniques of autonomy (chapter II)

1. Concentration "on a Single Point"
2. Yogic Postures (āsana) and Respiratory Discipline (prāṇāyāma)
3. Excursus: Prāṇāyāma in Extra-Indian Asceticism
4. Yogic Concentration and Meditation
5. The Role of Īśvara
6. Enstasis and Hypnosis
7. Samādhi "with Support"
8. The Siddhis or "Miraculous Powers"
9. Samādhi "without Support" and Final Liberation
10. Reintegration and Freedom

The first section is clearly rather theoretical in nature whereas the second one deals with more practical aspects. Seven titles can be directly related to five chapters in Dasgupta, all being situated in the same parts of their respective books.

Eliade	Section of book	Dasgupta	Section of book
The "Self"	I	Puruṣa	I
Substance	I	Prakṛti	I
Yogic postures (āsana) and respiratory discipline (prāṇāyāma)	II	The yogāṅgas	II
Yogic concentration and meditation	II	The yogāṅgas	II
The Role of Īśvara	II	God in Yoga	II

Samādhi “with Support”	II	Stages of Samadhi	II
Samādhi “without Support” and Final Liberation	II	Stages of Samadhi	II

The tables of content reveal that certain subjects have been assessed differently by the two authors. Thus Eliade dedicates a whole chapter to the miraculous powers (siddhis) whereas Dasgupta integrated them in “Stages of Samadhi;” on the other hand we miss a separate treatment of karma in Eliade (as a counterpart to Dasgupta’s “Theory of Karma”). And evolution, one of Dasgupta’s favourite topics dealt with in no less than four chapters of his book, is only briefly mentioned by Eliade (as evolution of the Sāṃkhya factors in his chapter on substance). Very generally speaking one could say that Dasgupta’s interest in natural science (“The Reality of the External World,” the four chapters on evolution and “Matter and mind”) has been replaced in Eliade by chapters on psychology, parapsychology and liberation (“The Structure of Psychic Experience,” “The Subconscious,” “Enstasis and Hypnosis,” “How is Liberation possible” and “Samādhi without Support and Final Liberation”). Eliade’s “Excursus: Prāṇāyāma in Extra-Indian Asceticism” further points to one of the most fundamental differences between Dasgupta and his Romanian pupil: Eliade is most interested in “universal spiritual values,”⁶⁹³ and he therefore time and again includes non-Indian material or perspectives in his book, his vision encompassing religious doctrines and creeds from cultures around the globe. Dasgupta on the other hand strictly concentrated on Sāṃkhya and Yoga, the only non-Indian references being to European philosophers.

5.4. The Doctrines of Yoga (chapter I)

5.4.1. Point of Departure (subchapter I,1)

Eliade starts with what he calls

“four basic and interdependent concepts [which] bring us directly to the core of Indian spirituality. They are *karma*, *māyā*, *nirvāṇa*, and *yoga*.”⁶⁹⁴

Since on the page immediately preceding this statement, the last one of the foreword, Eliade had written that Dasgupta “lead [him] into the very center of Indian thought,”⁶⁹⁵ the nearly identical wording of these two sentences creates an implicit link, suggesting that the four concepts are derived from the Calcuttan philosopher. We know that Dasgupta indeed did mention four very similar basic ideas of Indian philosophy, but whereas to him these were “four walls of

⁶⁹³ Eliade, *Yoga*, xix.

⁶⁹⁴ Eliade, *Yoga*, 3.

⁶⁹⁵ Eliade, *Yoga*, xxii.

unproved dogmas⁶⁹⁶ which ultimately represent an important restriction of the philosophical expression of his country, Eliade shows no sign of criticism or even scepticism but depicts them as THE unquestioned truths of what he calls “Indian spirituality.”⁶⁹⁷ A closer comparison reveals that three concepts coincide and the fourth one has been very significantly replaced by Eliade:

Eliade: „four basic [...] concepts [which] bring us directly to the core of Indian spirituality”	Dasgupta: „four walls of unproved dogmas“
Karma (“The law of universal causality, which connects man with the cosmos and condemns him to transmigrate indefinitely.”) ⁶⁹⁸	Dogma of the law of Karma (“[...] the assumption of the unconditioned as emancipation led to the view that all our experiential states are states of bondage. Bondage [...] has to be regarded as the natural tendency of some mental states to flow toward other mental states (which in the moral terminology is called ‘ <i>tr̥ṣṇā</i> ’ or desire), and the actual flow of it and its resultants are called Karma.”) ⁶⁹⁹
Māyā (“The mysterious process that engenders and maintains the cosmos and, in so doing, makes possible the ‘eternal return’ of existences.”) ⁷⁰⁰	Dogma of rebirth Since emancipation is never reached (cf. <i>infra</i>), “the only way left was its indefinite postponement [which] necessitated the postulation of a practically endless series of succeeding lives [...]. The cause of this rebirth is <i>tr̥ṣṇā</i> or Karma [...].” ⁷⁰¹
Nirvāṇa (“Absolute reality, [...] pure Being, the Absolute, [...] the Self (<i>ātman</i>), <i>brahman</i> , the unconditioned, the transcendent, the immortal, the indestructible, <i>nirvāṇa</i> , etc.”) ⁷⁰²	Dogma of emancipation and bondage (“An ineffable super-conscious state [...], an unchangeable condition or state from which there is no fall. [...] the pure self as pure consciousness.”) ⁷⁰³ Emancipation is “hypothetical” and “is never experienced by any one of us [...].” ⁷⁰⁴

⁶⁹⁶ “[...] (1) the dogma of the infallibility of the Vedic wisdom, (2) the dogma of emancipation and bondage, (3) the dogma of the law of Karma, (4) the dogma of rebirth.” (Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 253; cf. *supra*, chapter 3.5.1.).

⁶⁹⁷ Dasgupta never used this term – he only spoke of philosophy, thought or religion.

⁶⁹⁸ Eliade, *Yoga*, 3.

⁶⁹⁹ Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 255.

⁷⁰⁰ Eliade, *Yoga*, 3.

⁷⁰¹ Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 255.

⁷⁰² Eliade, *Yoga*, 3.

⁷⁰³ Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 254.

⁷⁰⁴ Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 255.

Yoga ("The means of attaining to Being, the effectual techniques for gaining liberation. This corpus of means constitutes Yoga properly speaking.") ⁷⁰⁵	Dogma of the infallibility of the Vedic wisdom ("A creed which is almost suicidal to any philosophy in the modern sense of the term.") ⁷⁰⁶
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Whereas in Dasgupta's list only the first three dogmas are closely connected with each other and the fourth one stands apart, Eliade chose to drop that fourth, very Hindu one, and instead introduced Yoga which he could directly link to the first three concepts. In opposition to Dasgupta, who ruled out the possibility (and even the need)⁷⁰⁷ for anybody to gain the postulated liberation, freedom is what Eliade focussed his attention upon,⁷⁰⁸ Yoga encompassing the means by which this emancipation could be reached.

"The word *yoga* serves, in general, to designate any *ascetic technique* and any *method of meditation*."⁷⁰⁹

This definition of Yoga is close to Dasgupta's "Yoga Ethics and Practice," in the sense that it emphasises the practical aspect of it, but on the other hand it is far wider and more universal than just the techniques offered by Patañjali. Eliade's understanding of Yoga as one of the basic concepts of "Indian spirituality" allows him to extend the scope and to call Yoga "any ascetic technique and any method of meditation." Yoga thus turns into something not only pan-Indian but also (potentially at least) universal. With Dasgupta, however, Yoga remained a clearly defined set of mental practices within a philosophical system which he defended against other Indian doctrines (Vedānta, Buddhism); it was therefore neither universal nor even generally Indian.

Eliade next emphasizes Yoga's initiatory structure, in relation with which he introduces his famous notion of the profane (as opposed to the sacred). All these concepts are absent from Dasgupta's works on Yoga.

"[...] 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 behaviour patterns and values proper to the human condition. [...] 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' [...]. The initiatory rebirth is defined, by all forms of Yoga, as access to a nonprofane

⁷⁰⁵ Eliade, *Yoga*, 3.

⁷⁰⁶ Dasgupta, *Emergence*, 253.

⁷⁰⁷ Cf. *supra*, chapter 3.5.5.

⁷⁰⁸ Already on the second page of his book, Eliade defines the Indian concept of freedom: "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." (Eliade, *Yoga*, 4)

⁷⁰⁹ Eliade, *Yoga*, 4.

and hardly describable mode of being, to which the Indian schools give various names: *mokṣa*, *nirvāṇa*, *asaṃskṛta*, etc.”⁷¹⁰

Eliade mentions three reasons for starting his treatise with the classic Yoga according to Patañjali and his commentators, which is “the best known in the West.”⁷¹¹

“[F]irst, 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 [...]; 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.”⁷¹²

This statement reads like an elaboration on Dasgupta’s evaluation of the *Yogasūtra*:

“Patañjali’s work is [...] the earliest systematic compilation on the subject that is known to us.”⁷¹³

Introducing the fact that Patañjali “rehandles the Sāṃkhya philosophy in its broad outlines,”⁷¹⁴ Eliade proceeds to a presentation of the textual tradition of both Sāṃkhya as well as the *Yogasūtra*. Here is a list of the sources he mentions.⁷¹⁵

Sāṃkhya

Author	Title	Date
Īśvarakṛṣṇa	<i>Sāṃkhyakārikā</i>	Not later than the fifth century A.D.
Vācaspati Miśra	<i>Tattvakaumudī</i> (commentary on the SK)	9th cent. A.D.
Vijñāna Bhikṣu	<i>Sāṃkhya-Pravacana-Bhāṣya</i>	Probably 14 th cent. A.D.
Aniruddha	Commentary on the <i>Sāṃkhyasūtra</i>	15 th cent.

⁷¹⁰ Eliade, Yoga, 5-6.

⁷¹¹ Eliade, Yoga, 6.

⁷¹² Eliade, Yoga, 6-7.

⁷¹³ Dasgupta, Philosophy and Religion, vii.

⁷¹⁴ Eliade, Yoga, 7.

⁷¹⁵ Cf. Eliade, Yoga, 8-9.

Yoga

Author	Title	Date
Patañjali	<i>Yogasūtra</i>	Controversial, but ultimately “of little relevance, for the techniques of <i>ascesis</i> and meditation set forth by Patañjali are certainly of considerable antiquity.” ⁷¹⁶
Vyāsa	<i>Yogabhāṣya</i>	7 th – 8 th cent. A.D.
Vācaspati Miśra	<i>Tattvavaiśāradī</i>	9 th cent. A.D.
Bhoja	<i>Rājamārtanḍa</i>	Beginning of the 11 th cent. A.D.
Rāmānanda Sarasvati	<i>Mañiprabhā</i>	16 th cent. A.D.
Vijñāna Bhikṣu	<i>Yogavārttika</i> (on Vyāsa’s <i>Yogabhāṣya</i>)	Probably 14 th cent. A.D.

This list is much shorter than the one given by Dasgupta (cf. chapter 4.3.2), and the dating of certain texts has been actualised, according to the latest research. Vācaspati Miśra’s *Tattvakaumudī*, which for Dasgupta was a commentary on Caraka, has turned into a comment on the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* with Eliade. And whereas Dasgupta hardly quoted any of the Sāṃkhya titles he enumerated (at least not explicitly), Eliade used all the texts he mentions. In fact, he even repeatedly refers to one more, absent from his list: The *Sāṃkhyasūtra*. Generally speaking Eliade’s treatment of the Sanskrit sources is much more transparent than Dasgupta’s. He not only included them in his vast bibliography, specifying the exact edition or translation he used, but he also clearly indicates the passages he is quoting from. Nevertheless, there are certain instances where he just mentions Patañjali without further details (particularly in the sub-chapter “The Subconscious”).

It is also worth noticing that Eliade’s approach to the Yoga darśana is as non-historical as Dasgupta’s – Eliade too quotes from the different comments as if they were all part of one and the same book.

After these preliminaries (the four basic concepts, Yoga as initiation, textual sources) Eliade introduces the “fundamental affirmation (more or less explicitly formulated) that the cosmos exists and endures because of man’s lack of knowledge,”⁷¹⁷ taken from the Sāṃkhya and Yoga philosophy but immediately applied to India in general:

⁷¹⁶ Eliade, Yoga, 9.

⁷¹⁷ Eliade, Yoga, 9.

“[Here] we find the reason for the Indian depreciation of life and the cosmos – a depreciation that none of the great constructions of post-Vedic Indian thought attempted to hide. [...] 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.”⁷¹⁸

The addition in parenthesis “more or less explicitly formulated” and the careful phrasing “it could almost be said” are subtle indications that Eliade is aware of the fact that he is straining his sources to the utmost in his attempt to reformulate them in new terms, terms such as “cosmos,” “sacred” and “profane.” Thus, man is suffering because of his

“solidarity with the cosmos, [...] his participation, active and passive, direct or indirect, in nature. Let us translate: solidarity with a *desacralized* world, participation in a *profane* nature.”⁷¹⁹

Eliade is actually translating the Sanskrit sources into a new terminology. He opposes sacred Being to non-sacred, profane non-being and states that

“the road toward freedom necessarily leads to a desolidarization from the cosmos and profane life.”⁷²⁰

He also points out the ambivalent function of the cosmos and life, tying man to suffering and reincarnation and at the same time increasing in him the wish for liberation.

“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.”⁷²¹

This last quotation shows how Eliade mixes Vedānta and Sāṃkhya: “illusions” and “magic” clearly refer to the Vedāntic māyā, whereas the “indefatigable becoming” and the idea of the serviceability of nature apply to prakṛti.⁷²² Eliade, in opposition to Dasgupta, had apparently no wish to distinguish between different systems of Indian thought but, on the contrary, to fuse them into one big Indian spirituality which would help the modern world “to forge universal spiritual values.”⁷²³

⁷¹⁸ Eliade, Yoga, 9-10.

⁷¹⁹ Eliade, Yoga, 10.

⁷²⁰ Eliade, Yoga, 10.

⁷²¹ Eliade, Yoga, 11.

⁷²² The last point is underlined by a quotation from the *Sāṃkhyasūtra* III,47.

⁷²³ Eliade, Yoga, xix. Cf. *supra*, chapter 5.1.

5.4.2. The Equation Pain-Existence (subchapter I,2)

Beginning with Patañjali's famous sūtra II,15 "all is suffering for the sage," Eliade declares that this "universal suffering [...] is a leitmotiv of all post-Upaniṣadic Indian speculation."⁷²⁴ Once more, Yoga serves as starting point for a more general statement about Indian thought. Eliade quotes Buddha, Aniruddha's comment on the *Sāṃkhyasūtra* II,1 and *Sāṃkhyakārikā* 1, all emphasising suffering, and then concludes that nevertheless, "no Indian philosophy or gnosis falls into despair."⁷²⁵ Eliade discusses suffering and the possibility to overcome it in completely general terms, pointing out that the certainty that there is a way to put an end to it is "shared by all Indian philosophies and mysticisms."⁷²⁶ Shortly afterwards he repeats:

"To 'emancipate' oneself from suffering – such is the goal of all Indian philosophies and all Indian mysticisms."⁷²⁷

Vedānta and Sāṃkhya try to attain this aim through knowledge (which Eliade also calls "gnosis"),⁷²⁸ Yoga and Buddhism by means of techniques.⁷²⁹ Quotations from the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* I,12, Bhoja (comment on YS IV,22) and Vācaspati Miśra, all underlining the fact that Indian philosophy values only that kind of knowledge which leads to liberation, are followed by the next general statement about India as a whole:

"In India metaphysical knowledge always has a soteriological purpose."⁷³⁰

Eliade explains that even logic (Nyāya) has a such a foundation, and that liberating knowledge is so highly valued because human suffering springs from a fundamental ignorance about one's Self.

After these general remarks Eliade adds a last paragraph dedicated entirely to Yoga and Sāṃkhya and some differences between these two darśanas. In Sāṃkhya and Yoga suffering is defined as the confusion between the Self and what Eliade calls the "psychomental experience."⁷³¹ Sāṃkhya therefore propagates the thorough knowledge of the "essence and the forms of nature (*prakṛti*) and the laws that govern its evolution;"⁷³² Yoga however "finds value only in the practice of contemplation, which is alone capable of revealing the autonomy and omnipotence of Spirit experimentally."⁷³³ Since Yoga is based on Sāṃkhya, Eliade wants to first expound how this darśana conceives "Substance and Spirit, together with the cause of their false solidarity."⁷³⁴

⁷²⁴ Eliade, Yoga, 11.

⁷²⁵ Eliade, Yoga, 12.

⁷²⁶ Eliade, Yoga, 12.

⁷²⁷ Eliade, Yoga, 12.

⁷²⁸ For example on p. 15.

⁷²⁹ Cf. Eliade, Yoga, 12.

⁷³⁰ Eliade, Yoga, 13.

⁷³¹ Eliade, Yoga, 15.

⁷³² Eliade, Yoga, 15.

⁷³³ Eliade, Yoga, 15.

⁷³⁴ Eliade, Yoga, 15.

5.4.3. The “Self” (subchapter I,3)

Unlike Dasgupta, who first wrote on Prakṛti and then on Puruṣa, Eliade chooses to start with the Self which he first describes in the context of various Indian philosophies (Buddhism, materialism, Nyāya, Vedānta, and finally Sāṃkhya and Yoga). As to the definition of Puruṣa he quotes *Sāṃkhyasūtra* III,75, I,146-147, I,162 and *Sāṃkhyakārikā* 19, and he briefly mentions the mysterious relation between Spirit and substance by referring to Vyāsa (on YS I,4 and II,23) and Vācaspati Miśra (on YS I,4 and *Tattvakaumudī* 31). Eliade dedicates more than one page to the fact that the origin of this strange association between Puruṣa and prakṛti is never formally discussed in Sāṃkhya-Yoga but is simply accepted on the grounds that the solution to this problem exceeds the possibilities of human comprehension.

“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 [...].”⁷³⁵

Avidyā, nescience, is the cause of bondage (and therefore of human suffering), which Eliade defines by quoting YS II,5 as well as Vyāsa’s and Bhoja’s commentary on YS II,18 and II,20, respectively.

Comparing this chapter to what Dasgupta wrote on the same subject we note that the Indian philosopher emphasised other aspects than his Romanian disciple when introducing puruṣa. He evokes Western as well as other Indian attempts to explain the relationship between the spiritual and the material realms, he explains the similarity between puruṣa and prakṛti on the basis of sattva, he illustrates the process of perception and he discusses the plurality of puruṣas. Eliade, however, never refers to Western philosophers, and when he mentions other Indian systems of thought (for example Vedānta) it is usually with an aim of showing the similarities with Sāṃkhya instead of the differences. Also, he obviously felt no necessity to dive so deeply into Sāṃkhya as to tackle sattva guṇa in relation to puruṣa and prakṛti – the statement that the connection between these two entities has no beginning, is due to the teleological function of prakṛti and cannot be understood by a normal human being fully served his purpose. When evoking the problem of the relation between puruṣa and prakṛti he does so only in a footnote, saying that

“[t]his ‘correlation’ [...] constitutes one of the greatest difficulties of Indian speculation in general [and is] explained by Sāṃkhya and Yoga through the teleological instinct of nature (*prakṛti*), which, without knowing it, ‘works’ for the deliverance of Spirit.”⁷³⁶

The other two topics however, perception and the plurality of puruṣas, will be dealt with later by Eliade (in subchapters I,5 and I,6, respectively).

⁷³⁵ Eliade, Yoga, 18.

⁷³⁶ Eliade, Yoga, 17, footnote 19.

5.4.4. Substance (subchapter I,4)

Eliade states that Patañjali (in YS IV, 2-3 and I,16, II,15, 19 and IV, 13, 32 and 34) refers to prakṛti and the guṇas “only in passing [...] and only to define their relationships with psychomental life and the techniques of liberation.”⁷³⁷ Patañjali obviously assumed that his students were familiar with the Sāṃkhya analysis of matter, which is the reason why Eliade feels the necessity to set out on a longer exposition of this theory for his Western audience. He first defines prakṛti and then the guṇas, following Dasgupta in saying that “these guṇas must not be regarded as different from prakṛti [...],”⁷³⁸ and that they have a

“twofold 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.”⁷³⁹

In this quotation we can observe how Eliade replaced the technical Sāṃkhya vocabulary by more modern or more easily understandable terms. Dasgupta also spoke of the “twofold aspect” of the guṇas but he described them as follows:

“In the aspect of the determined or the perceived, the guṇas evolve themselves as the five infra-atomic potentials, the five gross elements and their compounds. In the aspect of perceiver or determiner, they form the modifications of the ego together with the senses.”⁷⁴⁰

Next, Eliade turns to the evolution of the 25 tattvas, a subject which he deals with for just a little more than three pages, as opposed to Dasgupta who dedicated several chapters to it. Eliade quite considerably simplified the demonstration of the evolutionary process by renouncing to mention the distinction between the aviśeṣa and the viśeṣa tattvas, the atoms, the problem of time (in Dasgupta related to the atoms), the exact evolution of the atoms from the tanmātras,⁷⁴¹ as well as the different categories of pariṇāma (dharma-pariṇāma as lakṣaṇa-pariṇāma and avasthā-pariṇāma), the influence of time and space on the transformation of things, and by touching only very briefly, in a footnote, on the relation between the sense faculties and the sense organs. He also does not mention conflicting ideas about certain aspects of the evolutionary process among various commentators of Sāṃkhya.⁷⁴² With Eliade, prakṛti quite straightforwardly evolves into mahat and ahaṃkāra and from there into two opposite directions,

⁷³⁷ Eliade, *Yoga*, 19.

⁷³⁸ Eliade, *Yoga*, 19. Cf. “Prakṛti is not a separate category independent of the guṇas [...]” (Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 6)

⁷³⁹ Eliade, *Yoga*, 19-20.

⁷⁴⁰ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 3.

⁷⁴¹ Whereas Dasgupta discusses a series of contradictory views on this problem without reaching a final conclusion as to how exactly the subtle elements evolve into the grosser ones, Eliade deals with this problem in three lines, giving a very general description: “By a process of condensation that tends to produce structures increasingly gross, these tanmātras give rise to atoms (paramāṇu) [...]” (Eliade, *Yoga*, 21)

⁷⁴² For all these topics, cf. *supra*, chapters 4.3.3.5. – 4.3.3.7.

“one of which leads to the world of objective phenomena and the other to that of subjective phenomena (sensible and psychomental).”⁷⁴³

This distinction between an objective and a subjective universe was alluded to by Dasgupta in his article “Yoga Psychology,”⁷⁴⁴ but in *Yoga as Philosophy and Religion* Dasgupta only talks of a development into three directions (karmendriyas, jñānendriyas and the tanmātras), according to the dominance of one of the three guṇas. Eliade, of course, also mentions the guṇas in this context, but the tripartition remains subject to the main dichotomy. Manas, which Dasgupta calls “the co-ordinating organ,”⁷⁴⁵ turns into “the inner sense” with Eliade,⁷⁴⁶ and whereas Dasgupta does not specify which guṇa is responsible for its creation, Eliade says that manas appears together with the jñānendriyas under the influence of sattva. As far as the coordinating function of manas is concerned, Dasgupta refers to SK 27 and Eliade to Aniruddha in his comment on *Sāṃkhyasūtra* II,40 and 42.

The conclusion which has to be drawn from this evolution of prakṛti into 23 tattvas, namely that matter and mind are ultimately the same,⁷⁴⁷ is stressed by both Dasgupta and Eliade, but in a completely different way. Dasgupta, the philosopher, saw in Sāṃkhya and Yoga “[...] an acute analysis of matter and thought”⁷⁴⁸ which proved superior to Western as well as certain Indian attempts to define the relationship between these two entities. Eliade, however, describes the fact that senses and material elements are all produced by ahaṃkāra in purely psychological terms, defining ahaṃkāra quite daringly as “self-knowledge” (referring to SK 24)⁷⁴⁹ and stating that “the genesis of the world is a psychic act.”⁷⁵⁰

“[I]t 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 [the] 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*).”⁷⁵¹

This is a completely different language from Dasgupta’s who would never have spoken of self-knowledge or even of the (clearly Jungian) “*principle of individuation*

⁷⁴³ Eliade, *Yoga*, 20.

⁷⁴⁴ “[...] the combination of these three different types of reals [...] is said to produce both mind and senses on the one hand and the objective world of matter on the other.” (Dasgupta, *Yoga Psychology*, 181)

⁷⁴⁵ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 59.

⁷⁴⁶ Eliade, *Yoga*, 20.

⁷⁴⁷ In Eliade’s words: “Thus man’s body, as well as his “states of consciousness” and even his “intelligence,” are all creations of one and the same substance.” (Eliade, *Yoga*, 21)

⁷⁴⁸ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 2.

⁷⁴⁹ Eliade, *Yoga*, 23. The term which Eliade translates as “self-knowledge” is *abhimāna*, explained by Monier-Williams as “high opinion of one’s self, self-conceit, pride, haughtiness” and translated by Larsen als “self-conceit” (Larsen, *Sāṃkhya*, 263).

⁷⁵⁰ Eliade, *Yoga*, 23.

⁷⁵¹ Eliade, *Yoga*, 23.

through 'consciousness of self'⁷⁵² in this context. Eliade obviously saw in the evolution theory according to Sāṃkhya an interesting psychological system which depicts the relationship between man and the cosmos (one of Eliade's favourite terms) in a way he must have thought attractive for a Western audience:

"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 [...]. In fact, the difference between the cosmos and man is only a difference of degree, not of essence."⁷⁵³

Furthermore, it is decisive to note that Eliade attributes "the capital importance [of the above mentioned] *principle of individuation*" not only to Sāṃkhya but to "almost all Indian systems"⁷⁵⁴ (without giving any examples however), yet again presenting to the West a nearly uniform Indian idea.

Briefly defining pariṇāma, the notion of evolution in Sāṃkhya, as "the realization of the potentialities that exist in *prakṛti*,"⁷⁵⁵ Eliade indirectly criticises Dasgupta by adding that a comparison between this kind of evolution 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."⁷⁵⁶

Dasgupta however did not focus on this aspect of evolution, on how something could have come out of nothing, but on the way things developed from simple to complex (which can be observed whether a new thing is created or whether something already existent transforms into something else) and then on the reason why evolution existed at all. This last point led him to praise the teleological function of *prakṛti* which, according to him, provided a satisfactory (and, in comparison to the West, superior) answer to this question. Eliade on his part presents the fact that "every compound exists in view of another" as something which "common sense"⁷⁵⁷ tells us. Quoting SK 17 plus commentaries, Vācaspati Miśra's *Tattvakaumudī* 120 as well as *Sāṃkhyasūtra* I,140-144, with the comments of Aniruddha and Vijñāna Bhikṣu, he is quite emphatic on the Sāṃkhya opinion that "if the mission of creation were not to serve Spirit, it would be absurd, meaningless."⁷⁵⁸ As with any Sāṃkhya or Yoga idea Eliade personally (or for the sake of what he is trying to convey) subscribes to, the concept of a "superintendent,"

"[...] an entity that transcends the categories of Substance (*guṇa*) and that exists in view of itself,"⁷⁵⁹

⁷⁵² Eliade, Yoga, 23.

⁷⁵³ Eliade, Yoga, 24.

⁷⁵⁴ Eliade, Yoga, 23.

⁷⁵⁵ Eliade, Yoga, 22.

⁷⁵⁶ Eliade, Yoga, 22.

⁷⁵⁷ Eliade, Yoga, 24.

⁷⁵⁸ Eliade, Yoga, 25.

⁷⁵⁹ Eliade, Yoga, 25.

which in itself is a proof for the existence of what Eliade calls “spirit,” is immediately presented as something generally Indian, “an axiom abundantly repeated in Indian literature and adopted by Yoga.”⁷⁶⁰ Quoting *Tattvakaumudī* 121, Eliade ends this chapter with a definition of the Self which, even though it clearly describes the *puruṣa*, has this pan-Indian touch about it.

“Spirit, the Self, is a simple and irreducible principle, autonomous, static, non-productive, not implicated in mental or sensory activity, etc.”⁷⁶¹

5.4.5. The Relation Spirit-Nature (subchapter I,5)

To begin with, Eliade dwells on how *buddhi* (translated by Eliade as “intelligence,” by Dasgupta as “mind”), in its purest state as translucent *sattva*, is able to reflect *puruṣa*.

“Comprehension of the external world is possible only by virtue of this reflection of *puruṣa* in intelligence.”⁷⁶²

YS II,20 illustrates the fact that the *puruṣa* remains absolutely untouched by what he thus perceives. Eliade also quotes YS I,41 which uses the image of a crystal and a flower reflected in it in order to visualise the relation between Spirit (*puruṣa*) and intelligence (*buddhi*). He then adds that

“[f]rom all eternity, Spirit has found itself drawn into this illusory relation with psychomental life (that is, with “matter”). This is owing to ignorance (*avidyā*), and as long as *avidyā* persists, existence is present (by virtue of *karma*), and with it suffering.”⁷⁶³

Quoting *Sāṃkhyasūtra* III,41, Eliade defines *avidyā* as “confusing the motionless and eternal *puruṣa* with the flux of psychomental life”⁷⁶⁴ and derives from it “the law of existence” which says that as long as I equate “I want” to “Spirit wants” I continue to live in illusion and therefore suffering. This law, according to Eliade, is universally valid, and there is only one way out of it, namely “adequate knowledge of Spirit.”⁷⁶⁵ Once more, Eliade thus manages to reach a level of universal spirituality which was his proclaimed aim (cf. foreword), and he immediately undermines this by stating that “Sāṃkhya only prolongs the tradition of the Upaniṣads,” quoting *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* VII,1,3 (“He who knows the *ātman* crosses over [the ocean of suffering].)”⁷⁶⁶ This “ocean of suffering” now can be eliminated in a way which, “in our opinion, has not been sufficiently

⁷⁶⁰ Eliade, *Yoga*, 25. Eliade refers to *Sāṃkhyasūtra* I,66, Vācaspati Miśra 122, YS IV,24, and, as the only non-Sāṃkhya or Yoga source, to the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* II,4,5.

⁷⁶¹ Eliade, *Yoga*, 26.

⁷⁶² Eliade, *Yoga*, 26.

⁷⁶³ Eliade, *Yoga*, 27.

⁷⁶⁴ Eliade, *Yoga*, 27.

⁷⁶⁵ Eliade, *Yoga*, 28.

⁷⁶⁶ Eliade, *Yoga*, 28.

emphasized.⁷⁶⁷ Eliade points out that, in order to be liberated from suffering, Sāṃkhya and Yoga

“deny suffering as such, thus doing away with all relation between suffering and the Self.”⁷⁶⁸

As soon as man understands that the Self is (and always has been) free, everything belonging to the mental and emotional sphere no longer affects him. Henceforth it is man’s own decision whether he wants to continue to be subject to suffering (which is “a cosmic fact”⁷⁶⁹) or not.

The last section of this chapter is dedicated to liberation through awakening and revelation.

“Knowledge is a simple ‘awakening’ that unveils the essence of the Self, of Spirit.”⁷⁷⁰

Eliade quotes several passages from the *Sāṃkhyasūtra*, all expounding that neither hope nor religious rites are of any value (hope prolonging man’s misery and rites creating new karma); all that counts in Sāṃkhya is metaphysical knowledge (cf. *Sāṃkhyasūtra* IV,11, III,23, III,26 and I,84 ff.). As to how it is possible that buddhi, a part of matter, is able to realise the cognitive process necessary for liberation, Eliade refers to prakṛti’s teleological instinct, acting for the disentanglement of puruṣa (also described in YS II,18). Once intelligence (buddhi) has led man to the threshold of awakening, “liberation is obtained almost automatically.”⁷⁷¹ This process of “mukti” is illustrated by SK 59, 61 and *Sāṃkhyasūtra* III,69, and the situation of a “jīvan-mukta” (one who is liberated in this life) by SK 67-68 and *Sāṃkhyasūtra* III,82.

The topics raised by Eliade in “The Relation Spirit-Nature” are part of Dasgupta’s chapters “Prakṛti” and “Puruṣa” (except, of course, Eliade’s universal “law of suffering” and his interpretation of man’s eliminating this “cosmic fact” through a denial of suffering as such).

5.4.6. How is Liberation possible? (subchapter I,6)

Having paved the way in the previous chapters, Eliade finally reaches his favourite subject, liberation, but since he already mentioned quite a few aspects of this topic he cannot avoid repeating himself every now and then. He starts off by (once more) underlining a Sāṃkhya-Yoga statement with a Vedāntic quotation:

“Sāṃkhya-Yoga has, then, understood that ‘Spirit [puruṣa] can be neither born nor destroyed, is neither bound nor active [actively seeking

⁷⁶⁷ Eliade, Yoga, 28.

⁷⁶⁸ Eliade, Yoga, 28.

⁷⁶⁹ Eliade, Yoga, 28.

⁷⁷⁰ Eliade, Yoga, 29.

⁷⁷¹ Eliade, Yoga, 30.

deliverance], neither thirsts for freedom nor is liberated.' [Gauḍapāda, Māṇḍūkya-kārikā II,32]"⁷⁷²

This eternally free Spirit however lets itself be entangled (at least in an illusory manner) with matter, and Eliade asks the logical questions:

"[...] 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?"⁷⁷³

Such logic, however, is futile with "Indian philosophy" – "Reality must be accepted as it is."⁷⁷⁴

The next paragraph is one of the rare instances where Eliade points out contradictory ideas among Indian systems of thought. He explains that Sāṃkhya has been attacked by both Buddhism and Vedānta because it maintained the reality of both Spirit and matter, assigning to the puruṣa a contradictory position, both completely isolated and yet strangely related to prakṛti and therefore vital for creation. This paradox was avoided by Buddhism and Vedānta alike, one eliminating Spirit, the other matter.

Vedānta also criticised Sāṃkhya for its doctrine of the plurality of puruṣas, which Eliade classifies as

"[...] a tragic and paradoxical conception of Spirit, which is thus cut off not only from the world of phenomena but also from other liberated 'selves.'"⁷⁷⁵

Yet Sāṃkhya and Yoga had to postulate this multiplicity, for all the reasons Dasgupta already mentioned in his book, referring to SK17 (which Eliade omits, quoting SK 18 instead).⁷⁷⁶ Nevertheless, Eliade does not hide his disapproval of this doctrine⁷⁷⁷ and therefore prefers not to linger on it but move on to a closer examination of liberation. Once more, he incorporates the Sāṃkhya and Yoga notion of mokṣa into Indian thought in general.

"As it is for most Indian schools of philosophy – except, of course, those influenced by mystical devotion (*bhakti*) – so here, too, liberation is in fact a liberation from the *idea of evil and pain*."

He evokes the life of a liberated man who will still act but without being involved in his actions. Such a person will not create any "new karmic nucleuses"⁷⁷⁸ and, in

⁷⁷² Eliade, Yoga, 31.

⁷⁷³ Eliade, Yoga, 32.

⁷⁷⁴ Eliade, Yoga, 32.

⁷⁷⁵ Eliade, Yoga, 33.

⁷⁷⁶ Cf. Dasgupta, Philosophy and Religion, 26 (chapter "Puruṣa").

⁷⁷⁷ „The paradox is obvious: this doctrine reduces the infinite variety of phenomena to a single principle, matter (*prakṛti*); it sees the physical universe, life, and consciousness as derived from a single matrix – and yet it postulates the plurality of spirits, although by their nature these are essentially identical. Thus it unites what would appear to be so different – the physical, the biotic, and the mental – and isolates what, especially in India, seems so unique and universal – Spirit." (Eliade, Yoga, 33)

⁷⁷⁸ Eliade, Yoga, 34.

a way, he will not even experience his own liberation, being already beyond the psychophysical processes. Eliade emphasises the fact that the liberated “Indian” leads a “transpersonal existence” in a “situation of mere witness,”⁷⁷⁹ and he protests against the (probably current Western) idea that “India has sought liberation only negatively.”⁷⁸⁰ None of these thoughts have been expressed in this way by Dasgupta. The same holds true for Eliade’s analysis of how Sāṃkhya ignores or denies human suffering (a thought he takes up from the previous chapter). Such a denial of suffering

“[...] can be realized only through the destruction of the human personality. The Yoga practices proposed by Patañjali have the same goal.”⁷⁸¹

Eliade clearly addresses Western psychologists when he evokes something as radical as the sacrifice of the human condition and personality, and he hastens to point out that such an attitude is only seemingly pessimistic. Giving up personality (“the vehicle of suffering and drama”)⁷⁸² for eternal freedom means giving up the lesser for the higher.

“[...] this sacrifice is lavishly compensated for by the conquest of absolute freedom, which it makes possible.”⁷⁸³

And, once more, this is a pan-Indian truth:

“[...] for India, what matters most is not so much the salvation of the *personality* as obtaining *absolute freedom*.”⁷⁸⁴

Eliade immediately forestalls a “probable objection of the Westerner”⁷⁸⁵ who might think his personality to be too great a sacrifice. To this, Sāṃkhya and Yoga simply answer that as long as man has not risen above the psychomental level he cannot know anything about the transcendental states which are of a completely different category altogether.

With subchapter 6, Eliade’s discussion of Sāṃkhya ends; from now on he will concentrate on Yoga and its techniques. Let us therefore briefly sum up the topics he raised so far.

⁷⁷⁹ Eliade, Yoga, 34.

⁷⁸⁰ Eliade, Yoga, 34.

⁷⁸¹ Eliade, Yoga, 35.

⁷⁸² Eliade, Yoga, 35.

⁷⁸³ Eliade, Yoga, 35.

⁷⁸⁴ Eliade, Yoga, 35.

⁷⁸⁵ Eliade, Yoga, 35.

Subchapters 1-6, topics discussed by Eliade

- the four basic and independent concepts of Indian spirituality
- the initiatory structure of Yoga
- list of sources used
- the cosmos exists because of man's lack of knowledge
- man suffers because of his solidarity with the cosmos
- freedom comes when man desolidarises himself from the cosmos and profane life
- to overcome suffering is the goal of all Indian philosophies and all Indian mysticisms
- Sāṃkhya tries to reach the aim through knowledge, Yoga through practice
- the Self and its paradoxical relation with prakṛti
- avidyā is the cause of bondage and human suffering
- definition of prakṛti and the guṇas
- evolution of the tattvas
- ahaṃkāra is self-knowledge
- matter and mind are the same, the genesis of the world is a psychic act
- man is not essentially different from the cosmos
- the teleological function of prakṛti
- the sattva aspect of buddhi and its capacity to reflect the puruṣa
- avidyā as cause of all suffering
- Sāṃkhya and Yoga deny suffering as such in order to overcome it
- the process of mukti happens nearly automatically, once buddhi has lead man to the threshold of awakening
- if Spirit is eternally free, why does it let itself be entangled with matter?
No answer – it simply is like this
- the paradoxical function of puruṣa, Sāṃkhya criticised for it by Buddhism and Vedānta
- the plurality of puruṣas
- a denial of suffering is only possible through the destruction of the human personality
- the sacrifice of one's personality is necessary for reaching the transcendental sphere and, ultimately, absolute liberation

As far as Sāṃkhya is concerned, Eliade certainly presented the central, basic topics (puruṣa and its function, plurality of puruṣas, prakṛti and its teleological function, the guṇas, the evolution of the tattvas and the process of perception in buddhi). Compared to Dasgupta, however, he left out quite a few related subjects, mainly concerning matter (nature and the creation of atoms, changes in quality and substance, nature of the five elements and how the human being perceives them through the senses, the reality and relative eternity of the external world) and evolution (function of rajas, order of evolution, conditions which are able to break the barriers inside of prakṛti etc.). Instead he focussed on suffering and liberation which he described in both psychological as well as universal terms.

If we look at the Sanskrit texts which Eliade used in subchapters 1 to 6, we notice that out of 48 references to original sources only 16 (or exactly one third) concern Patañjali and his tradition – all the other quotations allude to Sāṃkhya and Vedānta texts. This stands out in great contrast to Dasgupta who drew nearly exclusively on the YS and its comments, also in the purely Sāṃkhistic chapters of his book. But also in his use of the *Yogasūtra* Eliade proves to be quite independent of Dasgupta; far from simply quoting the same sūtras or the same passages from the various bhāṣyas he refers to different passages in different contexts. Only YS II,5, II,15 and II,23 seem to have been used in the same way by both Eliade and Dasgupta; for all the other sūtras which are quoted in both texts, either the exact source or the topic varies from master to disciple.

List of the sūtras from the *Yogasūtra* referred to by Eliade in subchapters 1 to 6⁷⁸⁶

Sūtras referred to	Patañjali or (sub)commentary	Topic (as discussed by Eliade)	Sub-chapter (of Yoga, Imm. and Freedom)
I,4	<i>Vyāśabhāṣya</i> , <i>Tattvavaiśārādī</i>	Relation between puruṣa and prakṛti	I,3
I,16	Patañjali	The guṇas	I,4
I,41	Patañjali	Purity of puruṣa remains, even if he perceives what is presented to him by buddhi	I,5
II,5	Patañjali	Definition of avidyā (nescience)	I,3
II,15	Patañjali	Everything is suffering	I,2
II,15 and 19	Patañjali	The guṇas	I,4
II,18	<i>Vyāśabhāṣya</i>	Definition of avidyā (nescience)	I,3
II,18	Patañjali, <i>Vyāśabhāṣya</i>	The teleological function of prakṛti	I,5
II,20	<i>Bhojavṛtti</i>	Definition of avidyā (nescience)	I,3
II,20	Patañjali, <i>Vyāśabhāṣya</i>	Purity of puruṣa remains, even if he perceives what is presented to him by buddhi	I,5
II,23	<i>Vyāśabhāṣya</i>	Relation between puruṣa and prakṛti	I,3
IV,2-3	Patañjali	Prakṛti	I,4
IV,13	Patañjali	The guṇas	I,4
IV,22	<i>Bhojavṛtti</i>	Only knowledge leading to liberation is of value	I,2
IV,24	Patañjali	Creation exists in view of another, therefore spirit (puruṣa) exists, too	I,4
IV,32 and 34	Patañjali	The guṇas	I,4

⁷⁸⁶ To be compared with Dasgupta's list in chapter 4.6.1.

List of the other sources referred to by Eliade in subchapters 1 to 6 (arranged in the order of the texts given by Eliade in his presentation of the sources, cf. chapter 5.4.1. plus the *Sāṃkhyasūtra* which he forgot to mention).

a) Sāṃkhya texts

Other sources referred to	Author	Topic (as discussed by Eliade)	Sub-chapter (of Yoga, Imm. and Freedom)
<i>Sāṃkhyakārikā</i> 1	Īśvarakṛṣṇa	Everything is suffering	I,2
<i>Sāṃkhyakārikā</i> 14	Īśvarakṛṣṇa	Direct link between cause and effect (theory of causation)	I,4
<i>Sāṃkhyakārikā</i> 17 ⁷⁸⁷	Īśvarakṛṣṇa	Every compound exists in view of another	I,4
<i>Sāṃkhyakārikā</i> 18	Īśvarakṛṣṇa	Reasons for the plurality of puruṣas	I,6
<i>Sāṃkhyakārikā</i> 19	Īśvarakṛṣṇa	Definition of puruṣa	I,3
<i>Sāṃkhyakārikā</i> 24	Īśvarakṛṣṇa	Ahaṃkāra (as “self-knowledge”)	I,4
<i>Sāṃkhyakārikā</i> 59 and 61	Īśvarakṛṣṇa	Process of liberation	I,5
<i>Sāṃkhyakārikā</i> 67-68	Īśvarakṛṣṇa	The jīvan-mukta	I,5
<i>Tattvakaumudī</i> 1	Vācaspati Mīśra	Only knowledge leading to liberation is of value	I,2
<i>Tattvakaumudī</i> 31	Vācaspati Mīśra	Relation between Puruṣa and prakṛti	I,3
<i>Tattvakaumudī</i> 62 and 64	Vācaspati Mīśra	Necessity that something has to exist before the creation can start	I,4
<i>Tattvakaumudī</i> 120	Vācaspati Mīśra	Every compound exists in view of another	I,4
<i>Tattvakaumudī</i> 121-123	Vācaspati Mīśra	Creation exists in view of another, therefore spirit (puruṣa) exists, too	I,4
<i>Sāṃkhya-pravacana-bhāṣya</i> I,120	Vijñāna Bhikṣu	Direct link between cause and effect (theory of causation)	I,4

⁷⁸⁷ Dasgupta also quotes SK 17 and 18 in order to prove the existence and the necessity for the plurality of puruṣas (in chapter II of *Yoga as Philosophy and Religion*).

<i>Sāṃkhya-pravacana-bhāṣya</i> I,140-144	Vijñāna Bhikṣu	Every compound exists in view of another	I,4
<i>Sāṃkhyasūtra</i> I,66	Unknown	Creation exists in view of another, therefore spirit (puruṣa) exists, too	I,4
<i>Sāṃkhyasūtra</i> I,84 ff., III,23, III,26 and IV,11	Unknown	Religious rites are useless, all that counts is metaphysical knowledge	I,5
<i>Sāṃkhyasūtra</i> I,118 and 155	Unknown	Necessity that something has to exist before the creation can start	I,4
<i>Sāṃkhyasūtra</i> I,140-144	Unknown	Every compound exists in view of another	I,4
<i>Sāṃkhyasūtra</i> I,146-147, I,162, III,75	Unknown	Definition of puruṣa	I,2
<i>Sāṃkhyasūtra</i> III,41	Unknown	Definition of avidyā	I,5
<i>Sāṃkhyasūtra</i> III,47	Unknown	Creation (sṛṣṭi) serves the soul	I,1
<i>Sāṃkhyasūtra</i> III,69	Unknown	Process of liberation	I,5
<i>Sāṃkhyasūtra</i> III,82	Unknown	The jīvan-mukta	I,5
Comment on <i>Sāṃkhyasūtra</i> I,41	Aniruddha	Necessity that something has to exist before the creation can start	I,4
Comment on <i>Sāṃkhyasūtra</i> I,140-144	Aniruddha	Every compound exists in view of another	I,4
Comment on <i>Sāṃkhyasūtra</i> II,1	Aniruddha	Everything is suffering	I,2
Comment on <i>Sāṃkhyasūtra</i> II,40 and 42	Aniruddha	Manas (coordinating function and receptacle of all impressions)	I,4

b) Vedānta texts

<i>Śvetāsvatara Upaniṣad</i> I,12	Unknown	Only knowledge leading to liberation is of value	I,2
<i>Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad</i> II,4,5	Unknown	Creation exists in view of another, therefore spirit (puruṣa) exists, too	I,4
<i>Chāndogya Upaniṣad</i> VII,1,3	Unknown	To know ātman means to overcome suffering	I,5
<i>Vedānta-sūtra-bhāṣya</i>	Vācaspati Mīśra	Only knowledge leading to liberation is of value	I,2

5.4.7. The Structure of Psychic Experience (subchapter I,7)

In this chapter Eliade leaves Sāṃkhya behind and starts his interpretation of Yoga. As a general remark I would like to state that the vacillation between Sāṃkhya and Yoga on the one hand and Indian spirituality on the other, which Eliade dexterously stage-managed in subchapters 1 to 6, by mixing one with the other in a way which created the impression that whatever was true for Sāṃkhya-Yoga was also valid for India as a whole and vice-versa, continues in this chapter with Patañjali and Tantra Yoga. Eliade sets out by announcing classic Yoga according to Patañjali⁷⁸⁸ and he quotes the YS and Vyāsa (among others), but time and again he adds thoughts and elements from Tantric texts or interprets Patañjali in a slightly hazy way, blurring the distinctions between the two. To put it a bit bluntly, Patañjali appears to be an early Tantric where personal experiences of life as well as of various mental states are vital. But let us take it step by step and observe Eliade's procedure in detail.

Whereas Sāṃkhya provides the "gnosis,"⁷⁸⁹ Yoga deals with the means of how to reach final liberation. Eliade speaks of "an ascetic technique and a method of contemplation,"⁷⁹⁰ which together constitute the yoga-darśana. A few lines further down however, he equals darśana to gnosis and adds that Yoga also needs a practice (*abhyāsa*) in the form of "an *ascesis* (*tapas*) – in short, a physiological technique [...]."⁷⁹¹ This slightly confusing passage leads to a still more puzzling one. Eliade, after quoting Patañjali's definition of Yoga as "the suppression of states of consciousness"⁷⁹² (according to YS I,2), concludes that

"[...] yogic technique presupposes an experimental knowledge of all the 'states' that 'agitate' a normal, secular, unilluminated 'consciousness.'"⁷⁹³

He adds that these states of consciousness, though limitless in number, "fall into three categories, respectively corresponding to three possibilities of experience."⁷⁹⁴

"(1) errors and illusions (dreams, hallucinations; errors in perception, confusions, etc.); (2) the sum total of normal psychological experiences (everything felt, perceived, or thought by the nonadept, by him who does not practice Yoga); (3) the parapsychological experiences brought on by the yogic technique and, of course, accessible only to adepts."⁷⁹⁵

For none of these categories Eliade refers to any Sanskrit source or term and in fact there is no such classification in Patañjali. The first category partly covers the five *vṛttis* (errors in perception and dreams corresponding to *viparyaya* and

⁷⁸⁸ "Classic Yoga begins where Sāṃkhya leaves off. Patañjali takes over the Sāṃkhya dialectic almost in its entirety..." (Eliade, Yoga, 36)

⁷⁸⁹ Eliade, Yoga, 36.

⁷⁹⁰ Eliade, Yoga, 36.

⁷⁹¹ Eliade, Yoga, 36.

⁷⁹² Eliade, Yoga, 36.

⁷⁹³ Eliade, Yoga, 36.

⁷⁹⁴ Eliade, Yoga, 36.

⁷⁹⁵ Eliade, Yoga, 36.

nidrā, and illusions maybe referring to Patañjali's vikalpa), and the third category could stand for all the supranormal powers (siddhis) a Yogin acquires through his practice, but for the second category the Indian sources do not provide any parallels (unless Eliade had the kleśas in mind, interpreting them in a very modern way). There is, maybe, a faint allusion to the three states of consciousness as defined in the Upaniṣads – in this case the second category could roughly correspond to the waking consciousness (vaiśvānara) whereas the first one would cover part of the second state, the dreaming consciousness (taijasa), and the third one could be a reflection of suṣupti, the dreamless state where the consciousness is said to be close to ātman. But none of these parallels work satisfactorily because Eliade's categories are his own – partly inspired by Indian sources but heavily influenced by modern psychology and esoterics (cf., for example, the term "adept"). Yet Eliade explicitly attributes this categorisation to Patañjali,⁷⁹⁶ and he even adds that this Indian sage designated three sciences or groups of sciences corresponding to the three categories:

"The theory of knowledge, for example, together with logic, has the duty of preventing errors of the senses and conceptual confusions. 'Psychology,' law, ethics, have as their object the sum total of the normal man's states of consciousness, which, at the same time, they evaluate and classify. [...] metaphysics recognizes as valid only a third category of 'states,' principally those which precede enstasis (*samādhi*) and prepare deliverance."⁷⁹⁷

Logic, psychology and metaphysics as apt methods for dealing with errors and illusions, normal psychological as well as parapsychological experiences... Since Eliade does not mention any sources for these "sciences" we can again but speculate what terms from Patañjali he could have had in mind. "The theory of knowledge" could correspond to pramāṇa, "right knowledge," consisting of pratyakṣa (direct perception), anumāna (inference) and āgamāḥ (knowledge handed down by tradition) (cf. YS I,7), but how could pramāṇa, one of the five vṛttis, be a means to tackle other vṛttis (such as error and sleep)? "Logic" is the science expounded by another Indian darśana, nyāya, and is certainly part of Patañjali's argumentation as a whole, but it is not mentioned explicitly in the YS. "Psychology" is equalled by Eliade to law and ethics, which could be rendered in Sanskrit as dharma and/or yama and niyama. Patañjali says a lot about these last two terms and nothing about the first one, but all of them carry such specific cultural meanings that they only very partially qualify for parallels to (Western) psychology.⁷⁹⁸ "Metaphysics" finally can only refer to prajñā, the liberating knowledge which dawns during the various phases of samādhi, yet again the analogy is fragmentary. But it is doubtful whether Eliade was actually thinking about specific Indian terms or categories at all when he wrote this passage – his perspective is entirely Western, only vaguely shrouded in an Eastern gown. Yet Eliade insists on Patañjali being the author of these categories and sciences:

⁷⁹⁶ Cf. Eliade, Yoga, 36.

⁷⁹⁷ Eliade, Yoga, 36-37.

⁷⁹⁸ They are ahimsā (harmlessness), satya (veracity), asteya (abstinence from stealing), brahmacārya (continence, chastity), aparigraha (renouncing of possessions), śauca (purity), samtoṣa (contentedness), tapas (austerity), svādhyāya (recitation of the Vedas or any other sacred text) and īśvarapraṇidhāna (devotion to the Lord).

“The purpose of Patañjali’s Yoga, then, is to abolish the first two categories of experiences (respectively produced by logical and metaphysical error) and to replace them by an “experience” that is enstatic, suprasensory, and extrarational. By virtue of *samādhi*, the yogin finally passes permanently beyond the human condition – which is dramatic, produced by suffering and consummated in suffering – and at last obtains the total freedom to which the Indian soul so ardently aspires.”⁷⁹⁹

Eliade thus depicts Patañjali to his Western audience as the perfect representative of the “Indian soul” and its innermost longings. To support his argument he immediately adds Vyāsa’s “modalities of consciousness”⁸⁰⁰ (Dasgupta’s “five classes of citta;” cf. *supra*, chapter 4.3.3.10), *kṣipta*, *mūḍha*, *vikṣipta*, *ekāgra* and *niruddha* (*Bhāṣya* on YS I,1), stating that

“[o]nly the last two [...] are yogic “states” – i.e., brought on by *ascesis* and meditation.”⁸⁰¹

And he establishes an indirect and very subtle link to his three “categories of experiences” by referring to Vyāsa’s comment on YS I,2 which says that human consciousness manifests itself in three different ways, “according to which of the three *guṇas* is predominant in it,”⁸⁰² concluding that

“[...] the immemorial Indian tradition according to which man (the microcosm) is homologous with the macrocosm is preserved intact by Patañjali’s Yoga; it alters the tradition only by transposing the homology into the vocabulary of its own “physics,” according to which the three *guṇas* are equally present in nature and life on the one hand and in states of consciousness on the other.”⁸⁰³

Again, Patañjali serves as an example for the “immemorial Indian tradition” of the correspondence between microcosm and macrocosm (or man and cosmos).

Let us stop here for a moment and recapitulate Eliade’s procedure in this very crucial passage of his book. First, he introduces three categories or possibilities of experiences and three corresponding sciences which are all much closer to Western psychology than to Indian philosophy. Nevertheless Eliade repeatedly attributes them to Patañjali but without giving a single source reference. Then he describes the five *citta bhūmis* (mental planes) and the three ways in which the human consciousness can express itself (according to the *guṇas*), clearly indicating the Sanskrit texts (Vyāsa on YS I,1 and I,2). Without explicitly establishing a link between these three passages (respectively between the various states of consciousness listed in each of them), the mere juxtaposition of three different categorisations is likely to produce, in the mind of a reader who is unacquainted with Patañjali, the impression that they all describe roughly the same. And that two of them are based on an Indian source easily eclipses the fact

⁷⁹⁹ Eliade, *Yoga*, 37.

⁸⁰⁰ Eliade, *Yoga*, 37.

⁸⁰¹ Eliade, *Yoga*, 37.

⁸⁰² Eliade, *Yoga*, 38.

⁸⁰³ Eliade, *Yoga*, 38.

that the third one is not. In this manner Eliade very subtly equates Western psychology with Patañjali (whom he also manages to depict as a perfect example of the Indian soul and immemorial Indian tradition, thus lifting him up to the universal level he wants Yoga to be on) and paves the way for his main argument (exposed on the last pages of this chapter) which says that unless one first experiences all those states of consciousness one cannot eliminate them.

Eliade's tendency to blur terminology is confirmed by the next paragraph where, in a generous, all-including gesture, he blends or intermingles the categories he has listed above into what he calls "different groups, species, and varieties of 'states of consciousness.'"⁸⁰⁴ Interestingly he now calls them *cittavṛtti*, a term he has not used so far but which has a very specific meaning in Patañjali's philosophy (cf. YS I,5 ff). Eliade chooses not to elaborate upon it at this point but emphasises that Yoga aims at destroying all those *cittavṛtti*, and that

"[...] this destruction cannot be accomplished unless one begins by having, as it were, 'experimental knowledge' of the structure, origin, and intensity of that which is to be destroyed."⁸⁰⁵

Experimental knowledge means "method, technique, practice" – in other words "acting (*kriyā*) and [...] practicing asceticism (*tapas*)."⁸⁰⁶ In this context Eliade mentions books II and III of the YS which

"[...] are more particularly devoted to this yogic activity (purifications, bodily attitudes, breathing techniques, etc.)."⁸⁰⁷

At best, this statement is a huge exaggeration; Patañjali dedicates exactly one sūtra (II,40) to "purification" (*śauca*, *purity*, the first of the *niyamas*), three sūtras (II,46-48) to "bodily attitudes" (*āsana*, most probably referring exclusively to sitting in the YS) and five (II,49-53) to "breathing techniques" (*prāṇāyāma*). And even if we consider all the eight limbs of Yoga to be purificatory exercises (as can be deduced from YS II,28), still large parts of books II and III would be dedicated to other topics than Yoga practice. But Eliade puts practice to the fore because it leads to "faith (*śraddhā*) in the efficacy of the method"⁸⁰⁸ and because it provides an experience, more exactly: a yogic experience.

"Denial of the reality of the yogic experience, or criticism of certain of its aspects, is inadmissible from a man who has no direct knowledge of its practice, for yogic states go beyond the condition that circumscribes us when we criticize them."⁸⁰⁹

⁸⁰⁴ Eliade, *Yoga*, 38.

⁸⁰⁵ Eliade, *Yoga*, 38.

⁸⁰⁶ Eliade, *Yoga*, 39.

⁸⁰⁷ Eliade, *Yoga*, 39.

⁸⁰⁸ Eliade, *Yoga*, 39. Eliade refers to *Vyāsabhāṣya* I,34 for this.

⁸⁰⁹ Eliade, *Yoga*, 39.

Eliade thus forestalls all potential criticism by devaluating it beforehand, and to undermine his point he quotes *Tantratattva* I,125 (a much later text) which says that

“[i]t is always the mark of a weak, feminine nature to endeavour to establish one’s superiority on the issue of a verbal quarrel, whereas it is the sign of a man to desire to conquer the world by the strength of one’s own arms.”⁸¹⁰

This manly demeanour of relying on one’s own experience instead of mere arguments “expresses a characteristic attitude of the yogic and tantric schools.”⁸¹¹ At this moment of his book, Eliade imperceptibly introduces Tantra as an equivalent of Yoga and he immediately switches over to purely Tantric sources for the rest of this chapter. First he mentions *abhyāsa*, but not as “habit of steadiness” or “firmness of mind” which, as *akliṣṭa vṛtti* (together with *vairāgya*), is antagonistic to *avidyā* and therefore an important mental means for reaching the yogic aim of extinguishing all states of consciousness (as with Dasgupta, cf. *supra*, chapters 4.3.3.10 and 4.3.3.12), but as “practice,” “exercise,” “application,” referring only to “Haṭha-yogic treatises.”⁸¹² He quotes a passage from the *Śiva Saṃhitā* (IV, 9-11) where *abhyāsa* is rendered throughout as “practice,” but he omits giving this text’s definition of what this practice comprises. Instead, he paraphrases it himself, in a string of three terms which appear to be synonymous:

“[A]ll [those tantric texts] emphasize the necessity for direct experience, for realization, for practice.”⁸¹³

If *abhyāsa* is interpreted as equivalent to experience, and since Eliade defined “experimental knowledge” as “method, technique, practice” (or *kriyā* [acting] and *tapas* [asceticism]) (cf. *supra*), then the distinction between all these terms vanishes and practising Yoga becomes the same as experiencing all states of consciousness and, in a next step (which Eliade does not hesitate to take), experiencing all states of life.

“Patañjali, and after him countless yogic and tantric masters, know that the *cittavṛttis*, the “eddies of consciousness,” cannot be controlled and, finally, done away with, unless they are first known “experimentally.” In other words, one cannot free oneself from existence (*saṃsāra*) if one does not know life concretely.”⁸¹⁴

In this quotation we can observe how Patañjali turns into a proto-yogin and also a proto-tantric. Eliade strives to link haṭha yoga and tantra directly to Patañjali, by way of shifts both concerning the language as well as the content (avoiding clear terminology by associating notions until their meanings get blurred), and by unprecise information (like stating that books II and III of the YS are devoted to purificatory, postural and breathing techniques). His assertion that the yogin first has to know life in all its aspects is only an assumption or a conjecture – nothing

⁸¹⁰ Eliade, *Yoga*, 39-40.

⁸¹¹ Eliade, *Yoga*, 40.

⁸¹² Eliade, *Yoga*, 40.

⁸¹³ Eliade, *Yoga*, 40.

⁸¹⁴ Eliade, *Yoga*, 40.

in the YS supports this statement. Of course one can argue that Patañjali's path to liberation starts at a point where the yogin is sufficiently disgusted with or disillusioned about life and is therefore eager to get rid of all experiences altogether, and from this point of view one can presuppose that he has passed through a phase of experimental knowledge about the world. But Patañjali does not emphasise this state which in his eyes would have to be called pre-yogic – he is only interested in how a yogin can step out of the world's ensnarement. Let us briefly recall what Dasgupta wrote about experience and Yoga:

“A Yogin [...] feels pain in pleasure as well, and therefore is determined to avoid all experiences, painful or so-called pleasurable.”⁸¹⁵

“[...] the complete extinguishing of all pains is identical with the extinguishing of all experiences [...]”⁸¹⁶

Worldly experience is equated by Dasgupta with the *vṛttis* which a yogin strives to overcome:

“All the psychic states described above, viz. *pramāṇa*, *viparyyaya*, etc. [i.e. the five *vṛttis*] are either afflicted or unafflicted according as they are moved towards outgoing activity or are actuated by the higher motive of emancipation by narrowing the field of experiences gradually to a smaller and smaller sphere and afterwards to suppress them altogether.”⁸¹⁷

What a contrast to Eliade's following assertion:

“Indeed, it is only through experiences that freedom is gained. [...] we can already recognize in Yoga a tendency that is specifically its own, and one that, therefore, we have not encountered in the Sāṃkhya *darśana*. It is a tendency toward the concrete, toward the act, toward experimental verification.”⁸¹⁸

Given the fact that Dasgupta personally loved life and its multifarious experiences (cf. *supra*, chapters 3.5.2. – 3.5.7) one can presume that he would have gladly emphasised such an aspect in Patañjali and his commentators if, according to him, it had been there. For obvious reasons Eliade also finds it hard to detect a suitable passage in the Patañjali tradition (he does not quote a single such source in this context) and therefore turns towards later texts. Yet again, he does not miss the chance to link these other forms of yoga to Patañjali:

“Even Patañjali's “classic” Yoga (and still more the other kinds of Yogas) accords the greatest importance to experience – that is, to knowledge of the different states of consciousness. [...] This tendency toward concrete, experimental knowledge, in view of finally mastering that of which one has, so to speak, taken possession through knowing it, will be carried to its extreme by tantrism.”⁸¹⁹

⁸¹⁵ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 121.

⁸¹⁶ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 122.

⁸¹⁷ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 176.

⁸¹⁸ Eliade, *Yoga*, 40-41.

⁸¹⁹ Eliade, *Yoga*, 41.

This quotation marks the end of subchapter 7 which provided us with substantial insights as to Eliade's remolding of yogic material.

5.4.8. The Subconscious (subchapter I,8)

The most striking feature about this chapter is that Eliade hardly quotes any sources. He presents the kleśas, the vāsanās and the vṛttis in a relatively free order and compares them to psychological findings and theories.

He sets out by stating that Patañjali, analysing the "psychic individuality," discovered five "'matrices' producing psychomental states (*cittavṛtti*)."⁸²⁰ Surprisingly these five *cittavṛtti* are here rendered as the five kleśas – Eliade enumerates avidyā, asmitā, rāga, dveśa and abhiniveśa (i.e. the kleśas) instead of pramāṇa, viparyaya, vikalpa, nidrā and smṛti (i.e. the vṛttis). He provides some kind of indirect justification of this quite drastic encroachment upon Patañjali's text by calling the vṛttis "'painful' (kleśa);"⁸²¹ but this is an incorrect translation, painful being an adjective (*kliṣṭa*, cf. YS I,5) and kleśa a noun. Obviously, kleśa is derived from *kliṣṭa*, but in Patañjali it figures as a terminus technicus for what Dasgupta called "mental states" or "emotional elements" (cf. *supra*, chapters 4.3.3.10 and 4.3.3.15) and which, according to him, are at the root of the five vṛttis (Patañjali does not establish an explicit link between vṛttis and kleśas). By calling the vṛttis kleśas Eliade provides yet another example for the terminological haziness which is part of his way of dealing with the Yogic sources. This is particularly grave since Eliade, with his knowledge of Sanskrit and use of Sanskrit terms, eludes every criticism on this level, shrouding himself in an aura of absolute expertise (not to mention his alleged three years with Dasgupta!).

These vṛttis (or rather kleśas) "constitute the psychomental stream" and have to be worked with and manipulated by the yogin.⁸²² According to Eliade it is not enough to eliminate avidyā, the fundamental ignorance which is the "ontological cause"⁸²³ of the vṛttis (kleśas), because the vāsanās, "reserves of latencies in the subconscious,"⁸²⁴ are lurking behind them, ready to immediately replace any abolished mental state. From this we have to conclude that the last source of the psychomental stream (to speak in Eliade's terms) is constituted by the vāsanās and not by avidyā. Such a statement contradicts Dasgupta's presentation according to which it is avidyā which produces the kleśas (or afflictions) which then give rise to the vāsanās (residual potency) and the saṃskāras (impressions or latent mental states), which again create the vṛttis (actual mental states). The uprooting of avidyā is presented throughout Dasgupta's account as THE ultimate condition for liberation to take place (cf. also YS II,15-25). For Eliade however,

⁸²⁰ Eliade, Yoga, 41.

⁸²¹ Eliade, Yoga, 41.

⁸²² Cf. Eliade, Yoga, 41.

⁸²³ Eliade, Yoga, 41.

⁸²⁴ Eliade, Yoga, 42.

“the concept of *vāsanā* [...] is of primary importance in Yoga psychology; in Patañjali’s text, the term has the meaning ‘specific subconscious sensations.’”⁸²⁵

Unfortunately, Eliade once more deprives his reader of an indication as to where exactly Patañjali says this (and it would indeed be hard to find a *sūtra* of such a content...).

The *vāsanās* not only “constantly feed the psychomental stream, the infinite series of *cittavṛttis*,” but they are also “in the highest degree elusive, difficult to control and master.”⁸²⁶

“In psychological terms, human existence is a continuous actualization of the subconscious through experiences. The *vāsanās* condition the specific character of each individual; and this conditioning is in accordance both with his heredity and with his karmic situation. Indeed, everything that defines the intransmissible specificity of the individual, as well as the structure of human instincts, is produced by the *vāsanās*, by the subconscious.”⁸²⁷

By the end of this quotation, the *vāsanās* have become synonymous with the subconscious, and, in conformity with what he already wrote in his foreword,⁸²⁸ Eliade again claims that

“[i]t is only through Yoga that they [the *vāsanās*] can be known, controlled, ‘burned.’”⁸²⁹

This deconditioning of the subconscious seems to be the aspect of Yoga which fascinated Eliade most and which he was keenest on informing the West about (cf. also *supra*, chapter 5.1). He repeats it once more a bit further down:

“[...] for yogic psychology and technique the role of the subconscious (*vāsanā*) is considerable, because it conditions not only a man’s actual experience but also his native predispositions, as well as his future voluntary decisions. Hence it is useless to try to change states of consciousness (*cittavṛtti*) as long as the psychomental latencies (*vāsanā*) have not also been controlled and mastered. If the ‘destruction’ of the *cittavṛttis* is to succeed, it is indispensable that the circuit ‘subconscious-consciousness’ be broken. This is what Yoga attempts to attain by the application of a series of techniques, all of which, broadly speaking, aim at annihilating the psychomental flux, undertake to ‘arrest’ it.”⁸³⁰

⁸²⁵ Eliade, *Yoga*, 42.

⁸²⁶ Eliade, *Yoga*, 42.

⁸²⁷ Eliade, *Yoga*, 42.

⁸²⁸ “[...] the great obstacles to the ascetic and contemplative life arose from the activity of the unconscious, from the *saṃskāras* and the *vāsanās* – “impregnations,” “residues,” “latencies” – that constitute what depth psychology calls the contents and structures of the unconscious. [...] for India, knowledge of the systems of “conditioning” could not be an end in itself; it was not knowing them that mattered, but mastering them; if the contents of the unconscious were worked upon, it was in order to “burn” them. We shall see by what methods Yoga conceives that it arrives at these surprising results.” (Eliade, *Yoga*, xvii)

⁸²⁹ Eliade, *Yoga*, 43.

⁸³⁰ Eliade, *Yoga*, 44-45.

He next describes “the continuous circuit established between the different biomental levels,” characteristic for human consciousness “as well as the entire cosmos.”⁸³¹ Vāsanās (subliminal latencies) create vṛttis (psychomental states) and these produce karma (acts) which again lead to new vāsanās...⁸³² This cycle (which two pages further down is called “subconscious-consciousness,” as a result of yet another one of Eliade’s shift of terminology)⁸³³ is somewhat simpler than Dasgupta’s chain of mental states,⁸³⁴ mainly because Eliade does not distinguish between kleśas and vṛttis and leaves out avidyā. To eliminate (or “burn”) the vāsanās “means that the Self (puruṣa) detaches itself from the flux of psychic life,”⁸³⁵ an event which simultaneously liberates a fragment of matter (through a process which is not easy to comprehend – Eliade talks of the mental energy, “determined by the karmic law and projected by ignorance,” which emerges from asmitā [“personality”] and returns to prakṛti).⁸³⁶ Yogic technique is the means to step out of this otherwise endless circuit and, according to Eliade,

“the yogin contributes, directly and personally, to the repose of matter, to abolishing at least a fragment of the cosmos.”⁸³⁷

Obviously, it is prakṛti’s exit from stage (cf. SK 59) which in Eliade’s language is rendered as “the repose of matter” or “abolishing a fragment of the cosmos” – a terminology Dasgupta would never have used.

Next Eliade claims that

[...] according to Patañjali, a consciousness filled with “painful” (*klišṭa*, “impure”) states cannot also contain states that are “pure” (*aklišṭa*).⁸³⁸

This contradicts Dasgupta who wrote that

“[t]here is no hard and fast rule with regard to the appearance of these klišṭa and aklišṭa states, so that in the stream of the klišṭa states or in the intervals thereof, aklišṭa states may also appear [...].”⁸³⁹

In any case, Eliade provides no textual source for his statement but focuses on suffering, which is due to the above mentioned predominance of painful states.

⁸³¹ Eliade, *Yoga*, 43.

⁸³² Cf. Eliade, *Yoga*, 43.

⁸³³ Cf. Eliade, *Yoga*, 44-45.

⁸³⁴ Which says that avidyā creates the kleśas which are doubly active: On the one hand they produce the vāsanās and the saṃskāras which then create the vṛttis which again produce more saṃskāras; on the other hand the kleśas are also the cause of the four passions which are responsible for the accumulation of karma.

⁸³⁵ Eliade, *Yoga*, 43.

⁸³⁶ Cf. Eliade, *Yoga*, 43-44.

⁸³⁷ Eliade, *Yoga*, 44.

⁸³⁸ Eliade, *Yoga*, 44.

⁸³⁹ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 100-101.

“Pain is a universal datum, but few are they who have the courage for renunciation and the strength to travel the road of deliverance to the end, for as long as life is dominated by *kliṣṭas*, every virtue that goes beyond them is immediately blocked, doomed to be abortive.”⁸⁴⁰

Suffering however triggers off the longing for pure (akliṣṭa) states, a longing which in turn gives rise to the desire for knowledge.

“[...] it is through knowledge that the nature of experience is revealed and that *kliṣṭas* can be cast aside as the result of higher cognitive process (*viveka*, ‘metaphysical discrimination’).”⁸⁴¹

Eliade ends this chapter with an evaluation of

“[...] the profundity of the psychological analyses that we owe to Patañjali and his commentators. Long before psychoanalysis, Yoga showed the importance of the role played by the subconscious.”⁸⁴²

He adds that on the one hand the *vāsanās* want to actualise themselves, but on the other hand there is also “the thirst for extinction, for ‘repose,’ that occurs at all levels of the cosmos.”⁸⁴³ Eliade interprets the fact that every *vāsanā* which has manifested itself and perishes immediately afterwards as the expression of a “thirst to cease to be what one is.”⁸⁴⁴ This allows him to draw the following conclusion:

“[...] every ‘form,’ every ‘appearance,’ and every ‘state’ – of whatever kind – that inhabits the universe is driven by the same instinct for liberation by which man is driven. The whole cosmos has the same tendency as man to return to the primordial Unity.”⁸⁴⁵

5.4.9. Dasgupta’s article “Yoga Psychology”

After so much psychology from Eliade it is time to examine Dasgupta’s article “Yoga Psychology,” read at a meeting of the Quest Society on June 2nd, 1921 in England.⁸⁴⁶ Composed in a comparatively non-technical language, for a spiritually interested but not India-specialised Western audience, it presents what Dasgupta alternatively calls “Yoga-psychology” and “Yoga system” in far more general terms than his *Yoga as Philosophy and Religion*. In this short article Dasgupta speaks of the subconscious far more often than in his Yoga book (where this word appears exactly once in the index) and in fact we find sentences which are very similar to some of Eliade’s assertions. For example:

⁸⁴⁰ Eliade, *Yoga*, 44.

⁸⁴¹ Eliade, *Yoga*, 44.

⁸⁴² Eliade, *Yoga*, 45.

⁸⁴³ Eliade, *Yoga*, 45.

⁸⁴⁴ Eliade, *Yoga*, 45.

⁸⁴⁵ Eliade, *Yoga*, 45-46.

⁸⁴⁶ This Society was founded by G. R. S. Mead, who was formerly an important member of the Theosophical Society of Blavatsky.

“The existence of the mental states in potential forms in the sub-conscious is the root-idea of Yoga-psychology.”⁸⁴⁷

Or, as far as the conditioning of the human being is concerned:

“These semi-effaced mental states often determine the mode and nature of our choice. In most cases, when we think that we are acting freely, we are in reality being determined by these hidden experiences of the past operating unseen. These semi-effaced mental states which reveal themselves as unaccountable tendencies of the mind, are technically called *vāsanā*.”⁸⁴⁸

And, as to the aim of Yoga:

“The significance of the Yoga theory of psychology with regard to ethical conduct is that it is possible to control not only our external conduct but also our inner thought.

[...]

A Yogin seeks deliverance from every bondage, even from the bondage of his mind.”⁸⁴⁹

So there is, undoubtedly, a major concordance between Dasgupta and Eliade in these fundamental statements (among which we also find Eliade’s favourite conception that Yoga is able to control the subconscious). Dasgupta, like Eliade, wanted to present his English audience with something they could not only relate to but something which also went beyond what they might so far have heard about Western psychology. Yet many differences between the two remain, apart from the discrepancies already discussed in the preceding chapters. Thus, Dasgupta insists on the fact that consciousness is conferred by the self (*puruṣa*):

“[...] our conscious experiences are made conscious by some entity other than themselves [...].”⁸⁵⁰

In other words: Yoga psychology provides a proof for the existence of the self,⁸⁵¹ an evidence which Eliade did not consider necessary to supply. For him, the existence of the Absolute or the Transcendent was self-evident, being one of his four “basic [...] concepts [which] bring us directly to the core of Indian spirituality” (cf. *supra*, chapter 5.4.1) and “an axiom abundantly repeated in Indian literature and adopted by Yoga.”⁸⁵²

Dasgupta also writes a lot more about the *guṇas* (which he calls “feeling-substances”)⁸⁵³ and their teleological function than Eliade for whom the fact that

⁸⁴⁷ Dasgupta, *Yoga Psychology*, 186.

⁸⁴⁸ Dasgupta, *Yoga Psychology*, 190.

⁸⁴⁹ Dasgupta, *Yoga Psychology*, 194.

⁸⁵⁰ Dasgupta, *Yoga Psychology*, 185-186; cf. also 183.

⁸⁵¹ Cf. Also the following passage: „The only psychological ground on which the self can be inferred is the necessity of accounting for the peculiar trait of consciousness, viz., of its illuminating, which cannot be said to belong to the mental states themselves.” (Dasgupta, *Yoga Psychology*, 186)

⁸⁵² Eliade, *Yoga*, 25.

⁸⁵³ Cf. Dasgupta, *Yoga Psychology*, 186-188.

“every compound exists in view of another” is something which “common sense” tells us.⁸⁵⁴

Instead of interpreting the manifestation of *vāsanās* as an expression of their wish to become liberated (because at the moment of manifestation they are destroyed and therefore return to some “primordial unity”) Dasgupta focuses on the fact that every perception and every experience passes away into the subconscious “and may be revived partially or completely later on.”⁸⁵⁵ According to him,

“[t]here is nothing which comes into being from nothing, and there is nothing which is absolutely destroyed.”⁸⁵⁶

Nowhere in his writings Dasgupta mentions anything like the “return to primordial unity.”

In “Yoga Psychology” Dasgupta describes the “ordinary mental processes” which with him are the five *vṛttis*⁸⁵⁷ (and not the *kleśas*). He stresses the importance of will power and concentration to “attain final emancipation from the bonds of all worldly experience”⁸⁵⁸ and talks at some length about the “law of contrary mental states (*pratipakṣa-bhāvanā*).”⁸⁵⁹ This law is based on YS II,33 and says that evil or bad thoughts can be uprooted by the opposite positive or good thought. Dasgupta admits that in such a case

“[...] any sub-conscious mental state or tendency can be ultimately destroyed by generating opposite mental states.”⁸⁶⁰

He talks of different levels or layers in the subconscious and how a good thought has to grow stronger and stronger in order to go deeper and deeper into the subconscious until it destroys the roots of the opposite evil.⁸⁶¹ This process (which involves another law according to which “the repetition of any mental state will strengthen the corresponding impression of it in the sub-conscious”)⁸⁶² is the only way to overcome negative subconscious impressions. Eliade will mention *pratipakṣa-bhāvanā* in his next chapter but in a very different light (cf. *infra*, chapter 5.5.1).

As to the practical aspect of Yoga, Dasgupta mentions only *yama* and *niyama* (for the “attainment of perfect morality and self-control”)⁸⁶³ and then *dhāraṇā* (attempt to “restrain [the] mind from the many different objects of thought”) and *dhyāna* (“to hold one object only continually to [one’s] attention”).⁸⁶⁴ Not one word about the intermediate stages *āsana*, *prāṇāyāma* and *pratyāhāra*, and

⁸⁵⁴ Cf. Eliade, *Yoga*, 24.

⁸⁵⁵ Dasgupta, *Yoga Psychology*, 189.

⁸⁵⁶ Dasgupta, *Yoga Psychology*, 189.

⁸⁵⁷ Cf. Dasgupta, *Yoga Psychology*, 191-192.

⁸⁵⁸ Dasgupta, *Yoga Psychology*, 192.

⁸⁵⁹ Dasgupta, *Yoga Psychology*, 192.

⁸⁶⁰ Dasgupta, *Yoga Psychology*, 193.

⁸⁶¹ Cf. Dasgupta, *Yoga Psychology*, 193-194.

⁸⁶² Dasgupta, *Yoga Psychology*, 193.

⁸⁶³ Dasgupta, *Yoga Psychology*, 194.

⁸⁶⁴ Dasgupta, *Yoga Psychology*, 195.

certainly no emphasis whatsoever on physiological techniques (as with Eliade, cf. *supra*, chapter 5.4.7). Once the mind has become absolutely still it has reached *samādhi* which gives rise to *prajñā*.

“It is this knowledge alone which the Yogin considers to be supremely real.”⁸⁶⁵

Eliade hardly ever mentions *prajñā* – his understanding of liberation is more in terms of unity than in terms of knowledge. The two following quotations should suffice to show the fundamental difference between Eliade’s esoterico-religious language and Dasgupta’s orthodox and close-to-the sources vocabulary.

“Through *samādhi*, the yogin transcends opposites and, in a unique experience, unites emptiness and superabundance, life and death, Being and nonbeing. Nor is this all. Like all paradoxical states, *samādhi* is equivalent to a reintegration of the different modalities of the real in a single modality – the undifferentiated completeness of precreation, the primordial Unity.”⁸⁶⁶

“In this part of the Yoga theory there seem to be three things which may appear to us as assumptions, but which the Yogins affirm to be undeniable facts of experience. These are: firstly, that the changeful processes of the mind can at a certain state be brought to a standstill; secondly, that such a state can give us a new grade or dimension of knowledge; and thirdly, that, as a culmination and highest advancement of this knowledge, the pure individual self as pure intelligence can be known.”⁸⁶⁷

To conclude: The comparison of Dasgupta’s talk on Yoga psychology in 1921 (in which he addressed a Western audience and therefore had to present his topic in a somewhat simpler form than in his *Yoga as Philosophy and Religion*) with what we have read by Eliade so far, shows that already Dasgupta interpreted Yoga in terms of Western psychology, describing *vāsanās* and *saṃskāras* as subconscious impressions and the passage from *vṛttis* to *vāsanās* as a passage from the conscious to the subconscious level (etc.). Nevertheless, the discrepancies between Eliade’s and Dasgupta’s account of the Yoga system by far outnumber the points in which they coincide, corroborating the results obtained by the analysis of Eliade’s first chapter of his book (“The Doctrines of Yoga”).

⁸⁶⁵ Dasgupta, *Yoga Psychology*, 196.

⁸⁶⁶ Eliade, *Yoga*, 98.

⁸⁶⁷ Dasgupta, *Yoga Psychology*, 196.

5.4.10. Conclusions

Let us first look at the Sanskrit sources Eliade referred to in subchapters 7 and 8, in order to compare them to the passages referred to in subchapter 1 to 6 (cf. *supra*, chapter 5.4.6) and to Dasgupta's list (cf. *supra*, chapter 4.6.1).

List of the sūtras from the Yogasūtra referred to by Eliade in subchapters 7 and 8

Sūtras referred to	Patañjali or (sub)commentary	Topic (as discussed by Eliade)	Sub-chapter (of Yoga, Imm. and Freedom)
I,1	<i>Vyāśabhāṣya</i>	The modalities of consciousness (citta bhūmi)	I,7
I,2	Patañjali	Definition of Yoga as “the suppression of states of consciousness”	I,7
I,2	<i>Vyāśabhāṣya</i>	The influence of the guṇas on human consciousness	I,7
I,8	Patañjali	Ignorance (avidyā)	I,8
I,34	<i>Vyāśabhāṣya</i>	Practice leads to belief (śraddhā)	I,7
II,1	<i>Tattvavaiśāradī</i>	On kriyā (action)	I,7
II,3	Patañjali, <i>Vyāśabhāṣya</i>	The kleśas	I,8
III,6	<i>Vyāśabhāṣya</i>	One can only pass on to the next step in Yoga once the preceding level is mastered	I,7
IV,9	<i>Vyāśabhāṣya</i>	The vāsanās originate from memory	I,8

List of the other sources referred to by Eliade in subchapters 7 and 8

Other sources referred to	Author	Topic (as discussed by Eliade)	Sub-chapter (of Yoga, Imm. and Freedom)
<i>Tantratattva</i> I,125	Śrīyukta Śiva Candra Vidyārṇava	Women rely on texts, men on their own experience	I,7
<i>Śiva Saṃhitā</i> IV, 9-11	Unknown	Practice (abhyāsa)	I,7

These lists show once more that Eliade used the sources quite independently from his master: the coincidences with Dasgupta are only slight (YS I,1, I,8, II,3 and IV,9). As opposed to the subchapters 1 to 6, the majority of the passages quoted are derived from the *Yogasūtra*; Sāṃkhya as well as Vedāntic texts have been dropped completely. Generally speaking Eliade, in these two very psychological

chapters, refers to Indian sources far less than in subchapters 1-6: 11 quotations on the 11 pages taken up by chapters 7 and 8 (one quotation per page), as against 48 quotations on the 33 pages of the first 6 chapters (1,45 quotations per page), corresponds roughly to a drop of 30%.

In order to complete the analysis of Eliade's first chapter of *Yoga. Immortality and Freedom*, let us briefly recapitulate the subjects he dwelled upon in subchapters 7 and 8 (for subchapters 1 – 6, cf. *supra*, chapter 5.4.6).

Subchapters 7 and 8, topics discussed by Eliade

- the Yoga darśana consists of an ascetic technique and a method of contemplation
- the Yoga darśana is a gnosis and needs a practice (abhyāsa) in the form of an ascesis (tapas) – in short, a physiological technique
- there are three categories of states of consciousness and three groups of corresponding sciences (all attributed to Patañjali but without any indication of the source)
- Vyāsa's five modalities of consciousness
- Patañjali is the perfect representative of the "Indian soul" and the "immemorial Indian tradition" of the correspondence between microcosm and macrocosm
- Yoga's aim to destroy the cittavṛtti can only be reached if one has experimental knowledge of those mental states
- experimental knowledge means method, technique, practice or: acting and practising asceticism
- abhyāsa is practice and experience
- a yogin has to experience all states of life; experience leads to freedom
- the five cittavṛttis are explained as being the kleśas which constitute the psychomental stream
- this psychomental stream is constantly fed by the vāsanās, the specific subconscious sensations
- the Yogin has to control and master his subconscious (the vāsanās)
- the normal mind is filled with painful states which accounts for the fact that pain is universal. Other states hardly stand a chance to manifest themselves.
- pain triggers off the desire for knowledge
- every vāsanā which manifests itself perishes at the same time – this is a proof for the fact that everything in the universe has a tendency to return to the primordial unity.

Only a minute part of these themes can be traced back to or find a parallel in Dasgupta,⁸⁶⁸ the overwhelming part of them represent Eliade's own interpretation.

⁸⁶⁸ Dasgupta also lists Vyāsa's five modalities of consciousness; he would agree to Yoga's aim being to destroy the cittavṛtti and he also showed that the vāsanās have an urge to manifest themselves as vṛttis which means that the Yogin has to control them.

As far as Dasgupta is concerned it is interesting to note that in his speech “Yoga Psychology,” directed at a British audience in 1921, he freely interpreted Patañjali in terms of conscious – subconscious. In *Yoga as Philosophy and Religion* however, he refrained from using this terminology; the *vāsanās* are no longer “mental states in potential forms in the sub-conscious”⁸⁶⁹ but simply a “residual potency”⁸⁷⁰ and *saṃskāras* are only “latent [mental] states,”⁸⁷¹ not “subconscious” ones. Very striking is the fact that Dasgupta, in *Yoga as Philosophy and Religion*, does not once mention what he called the “law of contrary mental states (*pratipakṣa-bhāvanā*),”⁸⁷² described by Patañjali in YS II,33 and which, according to Dasgupta in 1921, was the only way to overcome negative subconscious impressions. It is as if Dasgupta, after his two years in Cambridge and after revising his first version of the Yoga system in 1924, decided to present Patañjali’s philosophy in a way which lent itself less to immediate identifications with Western psychological concepts. Eliade, 30 years later, annihilates this careful distance of his (undoubtedly proud Indian) master and, taking a Western point of view, incorporates Yoga into psychology, certainly exceeding the limits of what Patañjali and his commentators might have agreed to be legitimate parallels with Jung or Freud.

5.5. Techniques of Autonomy (chapter II)

5.5.1. Concentration “on a Single Point” (subchapter II,1)

After “The Doctrines of Yoga,” with its six subchapters using mainly Sāṃkhya sources and two subchapters drawing more on Patañjali, and all of them heavily tainted by Eliade’s own interest in psychology and esoterics, let us now turn to “Techniques of Autonomy” which promises less theory and more practice.

Eliade sets out by talking about *ekāgratā*, the “determined and continuous concentration,”⁸⁷³ which he equals to *yogaḥ cittavṛttinirodhaḥ* (YS I,2). *Ekāgratā* is a vital technique since the normal mind (“profane consciousness”)⁸⁷⁴ is at the mercy of the senses and the subconscious and therefore not master of itself. According to Eliade, Yoga practice begins with *ekāgratā*, but it soon becomes clear that the “ability to intervene, at will and directly, in the functioning of these two sources of mental ‘whirlwinds’ (*cittavṛtti*)”⁸⁷⁵ (namely sense activity and the activity of the subconscious [here surprisingly called “*saṃskāra*” and not *vāsanā*]) presupposes a series of exercises and techniques, in short: the eight *aṅgas*. Eliade’s definition of these members of Yoga is quite orthodox and without surprises. In this subchapter he deals with the *yamas* and the *niyamas*, relying mostly on Vyāsa’s commentary (on YS II,30 and II,32) and pointing out twice that

⁸⁶⁹ Dasgupta, *Yoga Philosophy*, 186.

⁸⁷⁰ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 99.

⁸⁷¹ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 97.

⁸⁷² Dasgupta, *Yoga Psychology*, 192.

⁸⁷³ Eliade, *Yoga*, 47.

⁸⁷⁴ Eliade, *Yoga*, 47.

⁸⁷⁵ Eliade, *Yoga*, 48.

these ethical preliminaries have “nothing specifically yogic” about them,⁸⁷⁶ meaning that they are universal.⁸⁷⁷

The only passage which asks for a comment is the one on pratipakṣa-bhāvana. Eliade refuses the standard translation of vitarka as “bad or guilty thoughts” but chooses the (lexically also correct) translation of this word as “doubt, uncertainty.”⁸⁷⁸

[...] Patañjali is evidently referring to the “temptation by doubt” that all ascetic treatises recognize and combat.⁸⁷⁹

Patañjali’s explanation of vitarka however (in YS II,34 which Eliade even mentions in a footnote) hardly allows the interpretation as “doubt” – he clearly refers to the opposite states of the yamas and niyamas (“hiṃsā etc.”), making it evident that he is talking about what happens when the yogin is attacked by thoughts contradicting the ten ideals represented by the first two aṅgas. For such a case he recommends the practice of bringing to mind the positive opposite thought, in other words the practice of the concentration on the yamas and niyamas (what Dasgupta called “the law of contrary mental states,” cf. *supra*, chapter 5.4.9). Once more, Patañjali’s “evidence” is not what Eliade pretends it to be; and once more the Romanian religionist manages to arrange things in a deluding way: First, he does not quote his source (YS II,34) but just globally indicates it, then he somewhat devitalises his “doubt”-argumentation by suddenly equalling “doubts” (now in the plural!) to (the more correct) “vices,”⁸⁸⁰ and finally he refers to a note in the back of his book where he describes the obstacles a yogi is facing, implying that they are what Patañjali explains in YS II,34 (whereas, in reality, these nine obstacles are listed in YS I,30 and have nothing to do with the yamas and niyamas). All of this happens so smoothly and fast in only one sentence (“In the following sūtra [note: Yoga-sūtras, II,34], Patañjali explains the nature of these “doubts” or “vices.” [note: see note II,1, on the obstacles to yogic concentration]”)⁸⁸¹ that an unprepared reader would never notice the shifts and would be convinced that Eliade is faithfully rendering Patañjali’s text.

The “doubts” or “vices” of YS II,34 having become the “obstacles” of YS I,30, Eliade points out that

“the yogin’s struggle against any of these ‘obstacles’ is magical in character.”⁸⁸²

⁸⁷⁶ Eliade, *Yoga*, 49 (and 51: these exercises “in general, have no yogic structure”).

⁸⁷⁷ “The first two groups, *yama* and *niyama*, obviously constitute the necessary preliminaries for any type of asceticism [...]” (Eliade, *Yoga*, 49)

⁸⁷⁸ Cf. Eliade, *Yoga*, 51.

⁸⁷⁹ Eliade, *Yoga*, 51-52.

⁸⁸⁰ Cf. Eliade, *Yoga*, 52.

⁸⁸¹ Eliade, *Yoga*, 52. These obstacles are sickness, languor, indecision, insensibility, softness (inertia of mind and body), sensuality, false knowledge, inability to see the reality and instability (cf. Eliade, *Yoga*, 381).

⁸⁸² Eliade, *Yoga*, 52.

The yogin, by conquering temptations, gains magical powers or “siddhis” – but what Eliade describes as such in this context are simply the results of practising the yamas and the niyamas and refer exclusively to YS II,37-43. Thus, someone who practises asteya (who refuses to steal) “sees all jewels come to him,” and śauca leads to “disgust with one’s own body, and cessation of contact with other bodies,” as well as to “ekāgratā – that is, authority over the senses and ability to know the soul.”⁸⁸³ Eliade further quotes the outcome of practising samtoṣa, contentment and tapas, asceticism – the first gives an “inexpressible happiness” and the second “removes impurities and establishes a new power over the senses – that is, the possibility of passing beyond their limits (clairvoyance, clairaudience, mind reading, etc.) or of suppressing them at will.”⁸⁸⁴ None of these are called “siddhis” by Patañjali in the second chapter, and only the results of tapas can qualify as such as explained by Patañjali in chapter III (cf. YS III,16 and III,19).

With this chapter ends Eliade’s discussion of the first two steps of the Yoga path (yama and niyama). Once more we encountered Eliade’s fondness for everything universal – yama and niyama have, “in general, [...] no yogic structure,”⁸⁸⁵ and trouble arising from doubt is something which “all ascetic treatises recognize and combat.”⁸⁸⁶ The more universal Yoga can be the better – even if the scriptural evidence has to be modified (and partly falsified) to reach this aim (cf. vitarka).

What interested Eliade most in the yamas and niyamas, apart from their universality, were the (at least partly) magical powers gained by their practice.

“The concept of this almost physical equilibrium between renunciation and the magical fruits of renunciation is remarkable.”⁸⁸⁷

We could also see that Eliade’s handling of terminology in this chapter was again rather shady or imprecise; whenever he moves on slightly precarious grounds (which he was certainly aware of) he has a tendency to string together a series of terms producing the impression that they are all more or less synonymous (in this case “doubts,” “vices,” “obstacles,” “temptation”). This allows him to interpret Patañjali in the way he wants him to be for his Western audience. A very complex example of Eliade’s modification of his Indian sources can be found in footnote 5 of this chapter, inserted after the word “Īśvara” in the text.⁸⁸⁸ In it, Eliade refers to a passage in *Yoga as Philosophy and Religion* where Dasgupta remarks that

“the late commentators [...] believe that Īśvara removes the barriers created by *prakṛti*, barriers that are powerful obstacles on the yogin’s path.”⁸⁸⁹

⁸⁸³ Eliade, *Yoga*, 52.

⁸⁸⁴ Eliade, *Yoga*, 52.

⁸⁸⁵ Eliade, *Yoga*, 51.

⁸⁸⁶ Eliade, *Yoga*, 51-52.

⁸⁸⁷ Eliade, *Yoga*, 52.

⁸⁸⁸ Cf. Eliade, *Yoga*, 50.

⁸⁸⁹ Eliade, *Yoga*, 50.

This statement is true and false at the same time. It is true in the sense that Īśvara IS said to remove barriers in prakṛti, but the barriers Dasgupta is speaking of are those inherent in prakṛti, retaining her energy in potential form; as soon as these barriers are removed, the evolutionary process can start.⁸⁹⁰ Without this (admittedly rather complicated) Sāṃkhya background a reader of Eliade's book might be lead to think that Īśvara is removing the obstacles Eliade alludes to a little bit later on (and which get mixed up with vitarka – doubt or the temptations represented by the opposites of the yamas and niyamas). Of course, such a conclusion would again not be wrong because Īśvara does help the devoted yogin and does remove the obstacles from his path (cf. *supra*, chapter 4.3.3.14; Dasgupta even explicitly mentions the obstacles listed in YS I,30-31), but this cannot be deduced from the above passage. Eliade cannot be said to forcefully distort Patañjali but he certainly simplifies the theoretical background, takes shortcuts and leaves out whatever would be too technical. He retains exactly those terms and passages which serve his purpose, which is to depict Yoga as a perfect example for THE Indian spirituality which is universal in the sense that it shows how the profane man yearns and aspires to be liberated in the sacred Primordial Unity. Yoga is also initiatory and magical and anticipates the Western discovery of the subconscious by many hundred (if not thousand) years.

5.5.2. Yogic Postures (āśana) and Respiratory Discipline (prāṇāyāma) (subchapter II,2)

The third aṅga (āśana) marks the beginning of the “yogic technique, properly speaking.”⁸⁹¹ It is interesting to observe how Eliade maintains a perfect ambiguity as to the exact nature of āśana. On the one hand he mentions the lists of āśanas given in the haṭha yoga texts (without specifying any of the non-sitting postures though!), on the other hand he speaks of “the well-known yogic posture,” “position of meditation”⁸⁹² or “meditational positions.”⁸⁹³ Never does he explicitly talk of “sitting postures” but the only āśana he describes in detail is padmāsana, “one of the easiest and most common of the meditational positions.”⁸⁹⁴ And in his note II,2 Eliade writes of “the yogic posture” and about the fact that “a number of the seals found at Mohenjo-daro represent divinities in the āśana position,”⁸⁹⁵ both statements undoubtedly referring to sitting āśanas.

According to Eliade, Patañjali only very briefly talks about āśana (three sūtras altogether) because “āśana is learned from a guru and not from descriptions.”⁸⁹⁶ This explanation however is not very convincing since it does not apply to the

⁸⁹⁰ Cf. *supra*, chapter 4.3.3.8.

⁸⁹¹ Eliade, Yoga, 53.

⁸⁹² Eliade, Yoga, 53.

⁸⁹³ Eliade, Yoga, 54.

⁸⁹⁴ Eliade, Yoga, 54. Padmāsana might be one of the most common postures but it is certainly not the easiest one; and the variation Eliade describes (quoting *Gheraṇḍa Saṃhitā* II,8) is clearly baddha padmāsana, an even more difficult exercise.

⁸⁹⁵ Eliade, Yoga, 382.

⁸⁹⁶ Eliade, Yoga, 53.

haṭha yoga texts where postures are amply described.⁸⁹⁷ In any case Eliade treats the *Yogasūtra* and the haṭha yoga tradition as one and the same, quoting mostly from Patañjali but repeatedly alluding to tantric works and thus implying that Patañjali practised identical exercises as his haṭha yogic followers. This mixture of traditions cannot be traced back to Dasgupta who made it clear that āsana with Patañjali exclusively meant sitting postures (cf. *supra*, chapter 4.3.3.13).

Eliade also points out that “āsana is one of the characteristic techniques of Indian asceticism”⁸⁹⁸ which can already be found in the Upaniṣads, in Vedic literature, in the Mahābhārata and in the Purāṇas. In note II,2 he lists a few passages from such texts, never making it clear however what exactly the term āsana means, vacillating between “the yogic posture” and “the postures” (in plural, when talking about haṭha yoga sources). As with the yamas and niyamas he insists on the “very marked magical value”⁸⁹⁹ of āsanas in the haṭha yoga tradition, “magical” here referring to the healing and other effects ascribed to the postures.

“Āsana gives the body a stable rigidity, at the same time reducing physical effort to a minimum”⁹⁰⁰ (cf. YS II,46) and it is perfected “when the mind is transformed into infinity”⁹⁰¹ (cf. YS II,47). Whereas with Dasgupta, āsana is simply necessary for the higher yogic stages but does not otherwise retain his attention in any way, Eliade sees in āsana “the first concrete step taken for the purpose of abolishing the modalities of human existence”⁹⁰² in the sense that āsana is an ekāgratā on the physical level, a concentration of the body in a single position.

“Just as ekāgratā puts an end to the fluctuation and dispersion of the states of consciousness, so āsana puts an end to the mobility and disposability of the body, by reducing the infinity of possible positions to a single archetypal, iconographic posture. We shall soon see that the tendency toward ‘unification’ and ‘totalization’ is a feature of all yogic techniques.”⁹⁰³

A (Jungian!) archetypal posture standing for a unification process – this definition of āsana is very Eliadian and quite remote from Dasgupta.

Āsana, the “refusal to move,” is followed by “a long series of refusals of every kind,” the most important one being prāṇāyāma, the fourth member of the path and defined by Eliade as “the disciplining of respiration” or “the “refusal” to breathe like the majority of mankind, that is, nonrhythmically.”⁹⁰⁴ As with āsana before, Patañjali dedicates only very few sūtras to prāṇāyāma, but this time not because these techniques have to be learnt from a guru but because Patañjali “is primarily concerned with the theoretical bases of ascetic practices.”⁹⁰⁵

⁸⁹⁷ “Lists and descriptions of *āsanas* are to be found in most of the tantric and Haṭha-yogic treatises.” (Eliade, Yoga, 54)

⁸⁹⁸ Eliade, Yoga, 53.

⁸⁹⁹ Eliade, Yoga, 382.

⁹⁰⁰ Eliade, Yoga, 53.

⁹⁰¹ Eliade, Yoga, 53.

⁹⁰² Eliade, Yoga, 54.

⁹⁰³ Eliade, Yoga, 55.

⁹⁰⁴ All quotations in this sentence: Eliade, Yoga, 55.

⁹⁰⁵ Eliade, Yoga, 55.

Bhoja's commentary on YS I,34 contains a remark which fascinates Eliade more than anything else in connection with breathing:

"[T]here [is] always a connection between respiration and consciousness [...]."⁹⁰⁶

This relation serves as an instrument for what Eliade calls "unifying consciousness,"⁹⁰⁷ which means that a yogi who breathes rhythmically and slowly can

"penetrate – that is, he can experience, in perfect lucidity – certain states of consciousness that are inaccessible in a waking condition, particularly the states of consciousness that are peculiar to sleep."⁹⁰⁸

Prāṇāyāma, according to Eliade, is the means to reach the four (Vedāntic) modalities of consciousness,

"diurnal consciousness, consciousness in sleep with dreams, consciousness in sleep without dreams, and 'cataleptic consciousness.'"⁹⁰⁹

For this statement Eliade does not refer to any Yoga text but quite obviously to his own observations in Rishikesh where

"numerous *sannyāsis* admitted to us that the goal of prāṇāyāma was to make the practitioner enter the state called *turīya*, the "cataleptic" state."⁹¹⁰

And he seems to be remembering his own practical efforts at Svārgaśram when he says that

"experience of the four modalities of consciousness (to which a particular respiratory rhythm naturally corresponds), together with *unification* of consciousness (resulting from the yogin's getting rid of the discontinuity between these four modalities), can only be realised after long practice."⁹¹¹

Since this aim is so hard to reach, the immediate goal of prāṇāyāma is to make breathing rhythmical, irregular breathing producing "a dangerous psychic fluidity with consequent instability and diffusion of attention."⁹¹² A yogin has to harmonize his inhalation, exhalation and the retention of the inhaled air.

"These three moments must each fill an equal space of time."⁹¹³

With practice, the duration of these three phases can be increasingly extended, slowing down the respiration until it can be suspended at will.

⁹⁰⁶ Eliade, Yoga, 55.

⁹⁰⁷ Eliade, Yoga, 56.

⁹⁰⁸ Eliade, Yoga, 56.

⁹⁰⁹ Eliade, Yoga, 56.

⁹¹⁰ Eliade, Yoga, 57, note 24.

⁹¹¹ Eliade, Yoga, 57.

⁹¹² Eliade, Yoga, 57.

⁹¹³ Eliade, Yoga, 58.

Eliade ends this chapter with a discussion of *mātrāprāmāṇa*, “the unit of measurement for the duration of respiration.”⁹¹⁴ He quotes two later texts (the *Skanda Purāṇa* and the *Yogacintāmaṇi*) but again refers to the “practice of *prāṇāyāma*”⁹¹⁵ which, maybe, was his own during his stay in Rishikesh.

Eliade’s fascination with breathing (or rather with the connection of breathing with consciousness) is clearly noticeable in this chapter. Many passages recall the exercises practised by Dr. Zerlendi in Eliade’s short novel *The Secret of Dr. Honigberger* (cf. *supra*, chapter 2.3). Even though Eliade avoids talking directly about his own efforts, certain sentences do read like a personal statement.⁹¹⁶

Dasgupta had treated *āsana* and *prāṇāyāma* very briefly and nearly casually; on *āsana* he said practically nothing, and although he called *prāṇāyāma* “accessory” to the last three *aṅgas* of yoga (together with *pratyāhāra*) he did not show much interest in its practice. On the theoretical or philosophical level, Dasgupta saw *prāṇāyāma* as a means to “cleanse the mind of impurities and make it steady”⁹¹⁷ (cf. *supra*, chapter 4.3.3.13), in other words: to help the mind concentrate better. Eliade’s focus and vocabulary is quite different; he never talks of impurities, and instead of concentration he uses the term “unification.” A unified consciousness (concentrated mind?) can penetrate the four Vedāntic stages of consciousness (which Dasgupta of course never mentions, not mingling other philosophical systems with Yoga and Sāṃkhya), and this unification is achieved through rhythmic and slow breathing. Eliade was undoubtedly influenced by his encounter with Vedāntic ascetics in Rishikesh and we can safely assume that he had some experience with breathing rhythmically. Furthermore, his professed interest in yogic practice in general accounts for the fact that with him both *āsana* and *prāṇāyāma* acquire more weight and significance than with Dasgupta. Eliade’s predilection for this subject is also underlined by the next chapter, an excursus on breathing in other cultures than India.

⁹¹⁴ Eliade, *Yoga*, 58.

⁹¹⁵ Eliade, *Yoga*, 59.

⁹¹⁶ For example: “In the first days of practice, concentration on the vital function of respiration produces an inexpressible sensation of harmony, a rhythmic and melodic plenitude, a leveling of all physiological unevennesses. Later it brings an obscure feeling of presence in one’s own body, a calm consciousness of one’s own greatness. Obviously, these are simple data, accessible to everyone, experienced by all who attempt this preliminary discipline of respiration.” (Eliade, *Yoga*, 58)

⁹¹⁷ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 137.

5.5.3. Excursus: Prāṇāyāma in Extra-Indian Asceticism (subchapter II,3)

Eliade presents breathing techniques of Taoism, Islamic mysticism and Hesychasm, referring to numerous studies on these respective subjects. In all three domains he postulates an Indian influence, even though such an impact has only been proved for parts of Islam.⁹¹⁸ In the case of Taoism, it can only be maintained with important restrictions⁹¹⁹ and, as far as Hesychasm is concerned, the Indian influence is nothing more but a hypothesis.⁹²⁰ The crucial point to remember here is the fact that Eliade does not consider the possibility of spontaneous similar developments in different cultures but favours a vision where India is the origin of certain techniques which spread out to other countries. This corresponds to his endeavour to depict Yoga as a model practice and philosophy, ideally representing Indian spirituality as a whole. Eliade seems to be more interested in similarities than in differences, with a marked tendency to “overlook” or even suppress discrepancies.

5.5.4. Yogic Concentration and Meditation (subchapter II,4)

Eliade now turns towards the next steps in Yoga (i.e. pratyāhāra, dhāraṇā and dhyāna), but only after a discussion of what the Yogin has achieved so far.

“Motionless, breathing rhythmically, eyes and attention fixed on a single point, the yogin experiences a passing beyond the secular modality of existence. [...] the psychomental stream is no longer either invaded or directed by distractions, automatisms, and memory: it is ‘concentrated,’ ‘unified.’”⁹²¹

Concentrated in this way, “the yogin’s sensation of his body is wholly different from that of the noninitiate;”⁹²² according to Eliade he now feels similar to a plant. And although such a “return to the vegetable modality of life”⁹²³ does not at all correspond to the goals of Yoga, Eliade nevertheless establishes a link between the vegetable correspondences of yogic posture, respiration and concentration and “the archaic symbolism of ‘rebirth.’”⁹²⁴ Referring to embryonic respiration of Taoism, to the embryonic position in which many peoples bury their dead as well as to the fact that certain ceremonies of initiation are performed in a closed space, symbolising the womb, Eliade interprets “the yogin’s bodily position and ‘embryonic respiration’ [...] as embryonic, vegetative ontological modalities.”⁹²⁵

⁹¹⁸ “[...] there is no doubt that certain Moslem mystics of India borrowed and practiced yogic exercises.” (Eliade, Yoga, 62)

⁹¹⁹ “It is probable that, at least in its neo-Taoistic form, this discipline of the breaths was influenced by tantric Yoga [...]” (Eliade, Yoga, 61)

⁹²⁰ „But it is none the less true that the two techniques are phenomenologically similar enough to raise the question of a possible influence of Indian mystical physiology on Hesychasm. We shall not enter upon this comparative study here.” (Eliade, Yoga, 65)

⁹²¹ Eliade, Yoga, 66.

⁹²² Eliade, Yoga, 66.

⁹²³ Eliade, Yoga, 67.

⁹²⁴ Eliade, Yoga, 67.

⁹²⁵ Eliade, Yoga, 68.

Whereas the analogies to a plant-like life are still more or less comprehensible (motionless body, very slow breathing), the analogy with embryos and rebirth seems very farfetched indeed. Apart from “garbhāsana” (womb posture) there is no yogic position whatsoever evoking the image of an embryo, and no prāṇāyāma is called embryonic. Eliade cannot quote a single Yogic text for these speculations but has to rely on a circular argument: In the previous chapter he likened Taoistic breathing techniques (called “embryonic”) to certain aspects of prāṇāyāma (but also pointing out the fundamental differences between the two practices), and now prāṇāyāma has become embryonic, full stop. Of course the yogin IS engaged in a practice leading him out of normal life and consciousness into a different reality altogether, and this process can indeed be compared to death and rebirth, but the embryo imagery is utterly alien to the Yoga tradition and references to (non-Indian) burial rituals and initiation ceremonies in closed spaces seem superfluous in this connection.

Eliade continues by stating that “*āsana* and *ekāgratā* imitate a divine archetype.”⁹²⁶ Yoga practice means to renounce the human condition and this “has a religious value in the sense that the yogin imitates Īśvara’s mode of being: immobility, concentration on self.”⁹²⁷

It goes without saying that in Dasgupta there are no such ideas, neither for the plant and embryo analogies nor for the archetype image. Yet Eliade is again very close to the sources when he writes that prāṇāyāma leads to concentration (dhāraṇā, the sixth member of Yoga) of the mind (cf. YS II,52-53). He goes on:

“The yogin can test the quality of his concentration by *pratyāhāra* (a term usually translated ‘withdrawal of the senses’ or ‘abstraction,’ which we prefer to translate ‘ability to free sense activity from the domination of external objects.’)⁹²⁸

This again is a somewhat novel idea – to corroborate the achievements of a certain level with the help of the preceding stage (*pratyāhāra* being the fifth member of Yoga). Eliade’s interpretation of *pratyāhāra* is far more elaborate than what Dasgupta wrote about this member of Yoga. In fact, Dasgupta treated *pratyāhāra* as briefly as *āsana*, simply stating that in *pratyāhāra* the the mind is “altogether identified with the object of inner concentration or contemplation” and “the senses, which have already ceased coming into contact with other objects and become submerged in the *citta*, also cease along with it.”⁹²⁹ In “Yoga Psychology” he left out members three to five altogether. Eliade however ventures out on a slightly unorthodox definition, suggesting that *pratyāhāra*

“could be understood as the faculty through which the intellect (*citta*) possesses sensations *as if* the contact were real,”⁹³⁰

⁹²⁶ Eliade, *Yoga*, 68.

⁹²⁷ Eliade, *Yoga*, 68.

⁹²⁸ Eliade, *Yoga*, 68.

⁹²⁹ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 147.

⁹³⁰ Eliade, *Yoga*, 68.

in other words: *citta* keeps its capacity to represent sensory impressions, even though the senses are no longer active.

“Instead of knowing through forms (*rūpa*) and mental states (*cittavṛtti*), as formerly, the yogin now contemplates the essence (*tattva*) of all objects directly.”⁹³¹

According to Eliade, *cittavṛtti nirodhaḥ* is already achieved at the *pratyāhāra* level⁹³² – how then, if the senses, the sensory activity, memory and even “the dynamism of the subconscious”⁹³³ have been mastered, does the yogin wish to even contemplate any objects any more, directly or indirectly? With Dasgupta (and Patañjali), the *nirodha* state is the very last one, and then absolutely everything ceases – if this phase is advanced to member five of the path, then the last three *āṅgas* become somewhat superfluous. But to Eliade *pratyāhāra* simply marks the end of “psychophysiological *ascesis*”;⁹³⁴ now the yogin is ready for the mental exercises called *saṃyama*, consisting of the last three steps of the path, i.e. “concentration (*dhāraṇā*), meditation properly speaking (*dhyāna*), and stasis (*samādhi*).”⁹³⁵ These become possible only

“when the yogin has succeeded in attaining perfect mastery over his body, his subconscious, and his psychomental flux.”⁹³⁶

Eliade translates “*antarāṅga*” (the inner members, standing for *saṃyama*) as “subtle,” and explains this denomination as “the fact that they imply no new physiological technique.”⁹³⁷ Yet the problem remains – what is left to be achieved in these last steps if the subconscious (*vāsanā*) and the psychomental flux (*cittavṛtti*) have already been mastered? And what is the difference between psychophysiological and mental? According to Dasgupta, both *prāṇāyāma* and *pratyāhāra* were predominantly mental exercises, in the sense that they had a cleansing or concentrating effect on the mind.

Eliade’s elaboration on steps six and seven of Yoga (from p. 70 onward) is more confusing than clarifying. First of all, he has to distinguish *dhāraṇā* (the sixth *āṅga*, which Dasgupta defined as “the concentration of *citta* on a particular place,”⁹³⁸ following YS III,1), from *ekāgratā*, because *ekāgratā* (“whose sole purpose is to arrest the psychomental flux and ‘fix it on a single point,’”⁹³⁹) according to him, has already been achieved in the preceding step. The *dhāraṇā ekāgratā* (so to speak) then serves “the purpose of *comprehension*.”⁹⁴⁰ Unfortunately such an interpretation cannot be deduced from the sources – Eliade

⁹³¹ Eliade, Yoga, 69.

⁹³² “By realizing *cittavṛtti nirodhaḥ* (i.e., the suppression of psychomental states), the *citta* abides in itself (*svarūpamātre*).” (Eliade, Yoga, 69)

⁹³³ Eliade, Yoga, 69.

⁹³⁴ Eliade, Yoga, 69.

⁹³⁵ Eliade, Yoga, 69-70.

⁹³⁶ Eliade, Yoga, 69.

⁹³⁷ Eliade, Yoga, 70.

⁹³⁸ Dasgupta, Philosophy and Religion, 147.

⁹³⁹ Eliade, Yoga, 70.

⁹⁴⁰ Eliade, Yoga, 70.

simply quotes YS III,1 and then Vyāsa's comment which specifies some of the places on which concentration is fixed (such as the lotus of the heart, the light within the head, the tip of the nose, or on any external object). As to the comprehension aspect of dhāraṇā Eliade mentions his note II,3, "On Yogic Concentration,"⁹⁴¹ but this note is nothing but an accumulation of references to sundry secondary literature and does not elucidate what the yogin will comprehend through the practice of dhāraṇā. The only hint we finally get is Eliade's elaboration on Vyāsa's comment on YS I,36 which states that "concentration on the 'lotus of the heart'" leads to an "experience of pure light."⁹⁴² Eliade gladly catches hold of this detail and tells his readers that such an experience is already described in the Upaniṣads and "in all the post-Upaniṣadic mystical methods of India,"⁹⁴³ in other words: He digresses from the main topic (which is that of comprehension achieved in dhāraṇā as opposed to ekāgratā) by evoking an item from a passage where the term dhāraṇā does not occur a single time (YS I,36 is part of a series of sūtras dealing with various methods to calm down the mind) but which can be used as an example for the pan-Indianness of Yoga. And since Vācaspati Miśra (in his comment on Vyāsa's statement on YS I,36) adds a long description of the lotus of the heart, all Eliade needs to do is to quote Vācaspati in order to reach a tantric topic:

"It [Vācaspati's text] introduces us to a 'mystical' or 'subtle physiology,' concerned with 'organs' that reveal their existence only in the course of yogic exercises in concentration and meditation."⁹⁴⁴

This allows him to draw the following conclusion:

"[...] it is important even now to point out that the tradition of classic Yoga, represented by Patañjali, knew and employed the schemata of 'mystical physiology,' which were later to play a considerable role in the history of Indian spirituality."⁹⁴⁵

According to Eliade's logic the practice of dhāraṇā would therefore allow the yogin to experience (and thus comprehend) his subtle or mystical physiology – this would be the gain in knowledge as opposed to simple ekāgratā, concentration on one point. I would like to add that Patañjali in I,36 simply speaks of "perception which is free from sorrow and is radiant,"⁹⁴⁶ that the "lotus of the heart" was introduced by Vyāsa and that all the tantric physiological details were added only by Vācaspati Miśra. Nowhere in Patañjali's text do we find anything resembling a description of cakras or nāḍīs or the like. Let us also remember that this whole digression was due to Eliade's interpretation of dhāraṇā as an ekāgratā "for the purpose of comprehension," an interpretation which lacks textual evidence and for which there is also no parallel in Dasgupta.

⁹⁴¹ Cf. Eliade, *Yoga*, 388.

⁹⁴² Eliade, *Yoga*, 70.

⁹⁴³ Eliade, *Yoga*, 70.

⁹⁴⁴ Eliade, *Yoga*, 71.

⁹⁴⁵ Eliade, *Yoga*, 71.

⁹⁴⁶ Quoted from Hariharānanda Āraṇya's translation in *Yoga Philosophy of Patañjali with Bhāsvatī*. Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 2000, 82.

Next, Eliade establishes a link between *prāṇāyāma*, *dhāraṇā* and *dhyāna* by referring to Vijñāna Bhikṣu's quotation of the *Īśvara Gītā*.

"The time necessary for concentration of the mind on an object [*dhāraṇā*] is equal to the time taken by twelve *prāṇāyāmas*' (i.e., by twelve controlled, equal, and retarded respirations). By prolonging this concentration on an object twelve times, one obtains 'yogic meditation,' *dhyāna*."⁹⁴⁷

For Dasgupta, *dhyāna* was an uninterrupted flow of concentration on one object,⁹⁴⁸ following Patañjali's definition of YS III,2; Eliade takes up this idea by rendering the same *sūtra* as "a current of unified thought"⁹⁴⁹ and by adding Vyāsa's comment as well as Vijñāna Bhikṣu's gloss, which both highlight the uninterruptedness of concentration on one object achieved by *dhāraṇā*. Yet for Eliade *dhyāna* is more:

"[...] *dhyāna* makes it possible to 'penetrate' objects, to 'assimilate' them magically."⁹⁵⁰

He gives an example for this magic assimilation or penetration: "the yogic meditation on the subject of 'fire,' as it is taught today."⁹⁵¹ Is Eliade referring to exercises he himself practised in Rishikesh some 25 years before the publication of *Yoga. Immortality and Freedom*? In any case it is curious to notice that Zerlendi (in *The Secret of Dr. Honigberger*, cf. *supra*, chapter 2.3) is also meditating on fire while practising *prāṇāyāma*. Whatever Eliade's sources may be, he makes it very clear that what he writes about the meditation on fire "is no more than a rough approximation" and that "its most specific exercises are, in any case, indescribable."⁹⁵² Nevertheless, Eliade mentions eight stages of meditation through which a yogin passes when concentrating on some glowing coals placed in front of him.⁹⁵³ But the act of penetration into the essence of fire is what he cannot explain – he simply distinguishes it from any "poetic imagination" or from "an intuition of the Bergsonian type" which he qualifies as "two irrational 'flights.'"⁹⁵⁴ Yogic meditation is different – it is always lucid because the yogin keeps constant control over the "mental continuum." Such a meditation is,

"finally, an instrument for taking possession of, for 'assimilating,' the real."⁹⁵⁵

⁹⁴⁷ Eliade, *Yoga*, 71.

⁹⁴⁸ "Dhyāna is the continuance or changing flow of the mental effort in the object of *dhāraṇā* unmediated by any other break of conscious states." (Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 148; cf. *supra*, chapter 4.3.3.13)

⁹⁴⁹ Eliade, *Yoga*, 72.

⁹⁵⁰ Eliade, *Yoga*, 72.

⁹⁵¹ Eliade, *Yoga*, 72.

⁹⁵² Eliade, *Yoga*, 73.

⁹⁵³ The yogin understands combustion and its deeper meaning, he understands the analogy between combustion in the coal and combustion in the human body; he obtains a vision of existence as "fire;" he penetrates the astral plane (sun), the physiological plane (body) and the plane of infinitesimals ("the seed of fire"); he sees *prakṛti* as "fire;" he masters the inner fire by *prāṇāyāma*, the suspension of respiration, and he manages to master the glowing coals before him because he has obtained complete mastery over fire (cf. Eliade, *Yoga*, 72-73).

⁹⁵⁴ Eliade, *Yoga*, 73.

⁹⁵⁵ Eliade, *Yoga*, 73.

This sentence marks the end of this subchapter in which Eliade undertook the meritorious effort of rendering *pratyāhāra*, *dhāraṇā* and *dhyāna* somewhat more concrete and palpable for his Western audience. Patañjali wrote no more than four *sūtras* on these stages of Yoga, Vyāsa added only a few explanatory sentences and Dasgupta treated these phases equally briefly. It is however debatable whether Eliade succeeded in his endeavour because his explanations not only disarrange the order of Patañjali's path (*ekāgratā* [which Eliade himself equalled to *cittavṛtti nirodhaḥ*, cf. chapter 5.5.1.] being already achieved on stage five [*pratyāhāra*], turning *dhāraṇā* and *dhyāna* into somewhat superfluous exercises) but also serve primarily Eliade's own vision of Yoga (Yoga as a pan-Indian ascetic and magical discipline). The insight or comprehension gained by the yogin through *dhāraṇā* and *dhyāna*, qualified as mental practices (as opposed to the preceding steps which were psychophysiological), concerns the mystical physiology of the human body and the magical penetration and possession of reality ("mystical" and "magical" being favourite Eliade terms, utterly absent from Dasgupta's books on Yoga). The question arises why a yogin, after having conquered his mind and subconscious in the *nirodha* state, still wanted to continue practising mental concentration (*dhāraṇā* etc.) and whether he felt any interest or need to comprehend his *cakras* and *nāḍīs* or to penetrate reality and its elements. The answer according to Patañjali can only be "no" – once the *cittavṛtti* have come to a standstill, the whole of *prakṛti* vanishes and all that is left is the *puruṣa*, entirely isolated from his material counterpart. The whole aim of Yogic meditation is to become free from body and mind – insight into the functioning of subtle things and mastery over the elements are described in Patañjali as side-effects of *saṃyama* (cf. the *siddhis* in YS III) but never as something a yogin is striving for or as something necessary for achieving *saṃādhi*. One has to assume that it was Eliade's own fascination with everything mystical and magical which made him interpret the higher steps of Yoga in such a light.

5.5.5. The Role of Īśvara (subchapter II,5)

Before proceeding to the last step, *saṃādhi*, Eliade tackles the subject of *Īśvara*, Dasgupta's "God in Yoga" (cf. *supra*, chapter 4.3.3.14). Like the Indian professor, Eliade explains that *Īśvara* is "a *puruṣa* that has been free since all eternity, never touched by the *kleśas*"⁹⁵⁶ (cf. YS I,24), and he emphasises the help *Īśvara* can extend to a yogin for "a more speedy arrival at *saṃādhi*."⁹⁵⁷ But whereas, according to Dasgupta, God's grace is stimulated by love and devotion,⁹⁵⁸ Eliade holds that *Īśvara*

"does not submit to being summoned by rituals, or devotion, or faith in his 'mercy;' but his essence instinctively 'collaborates,' as it were, with the Self that seeks emancipation through Yoga."⁹⁵⁹

⁹⁵⁶ Eliade, *Yoga*, 74.

⁹⁵⁷ Eliade, *Yoga*, 73.

⁹⁵⁸ Cf. Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 161.

⁹⁵⁹ Eliade, *Yoga*, 74.

He claims that Patañjali in YS II,45 talks of

“a ‘metaphysical sympathy’ between Īśvara and the *puruṣa*, a sympathy explained by their structural correspondence.”⁹⁶⁰

YS II,45 however simply says “From devotion to the Lord, perfection in samādhi,” and it takes all of Eliade’s power of interpretation to read a metaphysical sympathy and a structural correspondence into this sentence and to claim that, still according to this same sūtra (which, Eliade, by the way avoids quoting),

“this divine aid is not the effect of a ‘desire’ or a ‘feeling’ – for God can have neither desires nor emotions [...].”⁹⁶¹

In chapters 4.3.3.8 and 4.3.3.14 we have shown Dasgupta’s ambiguous attitude towards the concept of Īśvara in Yoga: in a more scientific or purely philosophical context he admitted that Īśvara was a mere “matter of courtesy” in the Yoga system of thought; personally however he saw in this yogic God an absolute entity throning above everything, being equal to the Highest God. With Eliade things are different – he prefers Īśvara’s limited role in Patañjali to the God-like image which some of the comments turn Īśvara into.

He starts off by stating that for Sāṃkhya “the role of God in man’s acquisition of freedom is of no importance”⁹⁶² (due to prakṛti’s teleological function), and that Patañjali only felt the need to introduce Īśvara because some yogins who have practised devotion to this God have been helped in their quest of samādhi.

“In other words: alongside the tradition of a purely magical Yoga – one that called upon nothing but the will and personal powers of the ascetic – there was another, a ‘mystical’ tradition, in which the last stages of Yoga practice were at least made easier by devotion – even though an extremely rarefied, extremely ‘intellectual’ devotion – to a God.”⁹⁶³

In this passage we finally get a clear definition of what Eliade calls “magical” and “mystical.” Ascetic yogic practices are magical (because they also yield magical results, cf. *supra*) as well as atheistic, and mystical means devotion to some God through emotion. But because Īśvara (according to Eliade) does not react to feelings his adoration has to be more intellectual. This leads Eliade to the following conclusion:

“All in all, Īśvara is only an archetype of the yogin – a macroyogin; very probably a patron of certain yogic sects.”⁹⁶⁴

More than once he insists on the minor importance Patañjali accorded to this Īśvara in his magical, classic Yoga, and he seems to regret the rise of mysticism

⁹⁶⁰ Eliade, Yoga, 74.

⁹⁶¹ Eliade, Yoga, 73.

⁹⁶² Eliade, Yoga, 74.

⁹⁶³ Eliade, Yoga, 75.

⁹⁶⁴ Eliade, Yoga, 75.

over the centuries, reflected in later commentators like Vācaspati Miśra and Vijñāna Bhikṣu who gave Īśvara an increasingly active role.⁹⁶⁵ Eliade's fascination and interest clearly lied with magic, a term Dasgupta only used in combination with "occultism," both words standing for an erroneous understanding of Yoga.⁹⁶⁶ The polarity "magic vs. mysticism" is exclusively an Eliadian concept which has no antecedent in Dasgupta.

5.5.6. Enstasis and Hypnosis (subchapter II,6)

The yogin engaged in the last three steps of Yoga (saṃyama) "does not require the application of any new technique"⁹⁶⁷ as he moves from dhāraṇā to dhyāna and on to samādhi (which Eliade translates as "stasis," "enstasis" or "conjunction").⁹⁶⁸ He first emphasises the fact that samādhi is very difficult to understand, because

"[...] *samādhi* expresses an experience that is completely indescribable [and] its modalities are very numerous."⁹⁶⁹

He first defines the word in a "gnosiological sense:"

"[...] *samādhi* is the state of contemplation in which thought grasps the form of the object directly, without the help of categories and the imagination (*kalpanā*); the state in which the object is revealed 'in itself' (*svarūpa*), in its essentials, and as if 'empty of itself' (*arthamātranirbhāsaṃ svarūpa-śūnyamiva*)."⁹⁷⁰

This definition more or less corresponds to Dasgupta's:

"Samādhi, or trance-contemplation, results when by deep concentration mind becomes transformed into the shape of the object of contemplation."⁹⁷¹

Eliade quotes Vācaspati Miśra commenting on YS III,3 (by quoting *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* VI, 7, 90), saying that

"[t]here is a real coincidence between *knowledge* of the object and the *object of knowledge*; [...] illusion and imagination (*kalpanā*) are thus wholly done away with by *samādhi*."⁹⁷²

⁹⁶⁵ Cf. Eliade, Yoga, 76.

⁹⁶⁶ "[...] the position of Yoga as a system of philosophy has always been misunderstood. It is probably for this reason and for the stress that it laid on its disciplinary course of practices that it sometimes wandered from its true ideal and became associated with magic, medicine and occultism." (Dasgupta, Yoga Philosophy, 2), and: "[...] it is necessary [...] that Yoga might stand as a system of philosophy and not as a branch of occultism, magic, or nervous exercise." (Dasgupta, Yoga Philosophy, 3) Cf. *supra*, chapter 4.3.1.

⁹⁶⁷ Eliade, Yoga, 77.

⁹⁶⁸ Cf. Eliade, Yoga, 76 and 77, also footnote 79.

⁹⁶⁹ Eliade, Yoga, 77.

⁹⁷⁰ Eliade, Yoga, 77; reference to YS III,3.

⁹⁷¹ Dasgupta, Philosophy and Religion, 148 (cf. *supra*, chapter 4.3.3.13).

⁹⁷² Eliade, Yoga, 77.

The second part of this chapter is taken up by a discussion of the difference between samādhi and hypnotic trance. Eliade already raised this topic in *The Secret of Dr. Honigberger – Zerlendi*, while meditating on fire, is aware of the fact that he is wide awake and not subject to any kind of hypnosis (cf. *supra*, chapter 2.3). Eliade classifies hypnosis as

“an automatic damming of the ‘stream of consciousness’ and not a yogic *ekāgratā*,”⁹⁷³

illustrating an Indian example of hypnotic trance with a passage from the *Mahābhārata*. Referring to Dasgupta’s *Yoga Philosophy in Relation to Other Systems of Indian Thought* he states that hypnosis belongs

“to a merely occasional and provisional state of concentration (*vikṣipta*). [...] The state of *vikṣipta* is only a paralysis (emotional or volitional in origin) of the mental flux; this stoppage must not be confused with *samādhi*, which is obtained only through *ekāgratā* [...]”⁹⁷⁴

Dasgupta, in the corresponding passage, is equally anxious to distinguish yogic samādhi (which “presupposes a very high degree of moral perfection”) from European trance experiences (which “do not show any real spiritual development”).⁹⁷⁵ He therewith possibly tried to counteract earlier (and in his eyes erroneous) Indian assertions according to which yogic trance is nothing else but self-hypnosis and therefore on a par with European methods.⁹⁷⁶ Hypnosis (or Mesmerism) therefore proves to be a topic reflecting the situation of encounter between India and Europe in a nutshell: At the end of the 19th century, Indian authors were eager to show that their indigenous mental methods could do the same (and even more)⁹⁷⁷ as Western ones, insisting that what Europe had invented India had known for a long time; later on such statements were revised in the sense that the fundamental difference between hypnosis and yogic trance was emphasised, the Indian achievement now being not only of a totally different but also clearly superior category. Eliade, in this point, loyally takes up Dasgupta’s position.

⁹⁷³ Eliade, *Yoga*, 78.

⁹⁷⁴ Eliade, *Yoga*, 78-79.

⁹⁷⁵ Both quotations are from Dasgupta, *Yoga Philosophy*, 355.

⁹⁷⁶ Cf. for example: “No yoga is possible without laya [dissolution]. What is laya? Whose laya? It is citta’s laya. As soon as citta attains laya, in an indefinable manner, its condition can be called laya. This laya yoga, if to be defined in brief for the English readers, [would be called] Self mesmerism, and to explain it to the unlettered Bengali readers it would be sufficient to say that it is to lose the external senses by effort or to voluntarily dissolve the mind.” (Vedāntavāgīśa, *Pātañjala Darśana*, 3-4. (I thank Arup Sen Gupta for the English translation).

⁹⁷⁷ “And the second point to be mentioned is that there is no good result apart from the taking away of the consciousness of the subjugated, innovated by the English. But there are many many good results to our laya yoga, innovated by our yogis.” (Same source as in the previous footnote, p. 4).

5.5.7. The Siddhis or “Miraculous Powers” (subchapter II,8)

Parallel to the way Dasgupta’s account of the Yoga system was presented, I would like to treat the topics of karma and samādhi separately, at the end of the Eliade section. This means that subchapters II,7 and II,9 will be discussed later and that we proceed now to the siddhis, dealt with in subchapter II,8.

There is a huge discrepancy between Dasgupta and Eliade in the treatment of the miraculous powers (vibhūti or siddhi) which a Yogin acquires through the practice of the last three limbs of the eightfold path (sam̄yama). Dasgupta merely dedicated two pages of *Yoga as Philosophy and Religion* to this subject, emphasising the fact that they

“gradually deepen the faith *śraddhā* of the Yogin in the performance of his deeds and thus help towards his main goal or ideal by always pushing or drawing him forward towards it by the greater and greater strengthening of his faith.”⁹⁷⁸

He lists the 19 powers in a simple table, not giving any details about them except that “they are said to happen as a result of mental union with different objects”⁹⁷⁹ and that “divested from the ideal they have no value.”⁹⁸⁰ Eliade however, with his pronounced interest in magical practices, dwells on this aspect of Yoga for a whole chapter. He interprets the siddhis as a

“taking possession of zones of consciousness and sectors of reality that had previously been, so to speak, invulnerable,”⁹⁸¹

the act of taking possession being the magical penetration or assimilation typical for Yogic meditation (as already described in subchapter II,4). The first siddhi Eliade comments on is the knowledge of previous lives, emerging from sam̄yama on the saṃskāras (YS III,17). He states that

“‘emerging from time’ constitutes one of the major themes of Indian asceticism. One succeeds in emerging from time *by traveling back through it* (‘against the fur,’ *pratiloman*) – that is, by reintegrating the primordial instant that had launched the first existence, the existence that is at the base of the entire cycle of transmigrations, the ‘seed-existence.’”⁹⁸²

Thus Yoga presents us with yet another typical example for “Indian asceticism” in general. And Patañjali also

“mentions all the legendary ‘powers’ that obsess Indian mythology, folklore, and metaphysics with equal intensity.”⁹⁸³

⁹⁷⁸ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 158 (cf. *supra*, chapter 4.5).

⁹⁷⁹ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 157.

⁹⁸⁰ Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 158.

⁹⁸¹ Eliade, *Yoga*, 85.

⁹⁸² Eliade, *Yoga*, 86.

⁹⁸³ Eliade, *Yoga*, 86.

Eliade quotes the power of making one's body invisible, "a miracle mentioned by countless Indian religious, alchemical, and folklore texts."⁹⁸⁴ Since Patañjali says very little about it (cf. YS III,20), Eliade adds Vācaspati Miśra's comment which reveals a typical aspect of Yoga:

"Indeed, the general tendency of the more important yogic texts is to explain any parapsychological and occult phenomenon in terms of the 'powers' acquired by the practitioner and to exclude any supernatural intervention."⁹⁸⁵

After a brief enumeration of further vibhūtis (YS II,21, 23, 24, 26, 28, 29, 30 and 33), Eliade once more repeats his main statement about Yogic meditation:

"The 'knowledge' obtained through the techniques of *saṁnyama* is in fact a possession, an assimilation of the realities on which the yogin meditates. Whatever is meditated is – through the magical virtue of meditation – assimilated, possessed."⁹⁸⁶

The rest of the chapter could be interpreted as a detailed illustration of Dasgupta's statement "divested from the ideal they [the vibhūtis] have no value." Eliade quotes YS III,51 and Vyāsa's commentary which both warn the yogin to give in to heavenly temptation. Magic is something the yogin has to resist.

"Only a new renunciation and a victorious struggle against the temptation of magic bring the ascetic a new spiritual enrichment. [...] For it is *samādhi*, not the 'occult powers,' which represents true 'mastery.'"⁹⁸⁷

And yet –

"nostalgia for the 'divine condition' conquered by force, magically, has never ceased to obsess ascetics and yogins"⁹⁸⁸ –

and to retain Eliade's interest, we could add. "Magic" is a key term in Eliade's book on Yoga, particularly in the haṭha yoga parts (cf. for example the chapter "Shamanistic Magic and the Quest for Immortality"),⁹⁸⁹ and it was his fascination with magical yogic practices and powers which directed him towards Tantrism.⁹⁹⁰ Here we touch again on one of the fundamental differences between Eliade and Das Gupta – the latter, with his devotional character, saw in the vibhūtis nothing more than an element which helps to strengthen the yogin's faith, whereas his famous pupil never focussed on devotion but wanted to find out how exactly the siddhis work.

⁹⁸⁴ Eliade, Yoga, 87.

⁹⁸⁵ Eliade, Yoga, 87.

⁹⁸⁶ Eliade, Yoga, 88.

⁹⁸⁷ Eliade, Yoga, 89-90.

⁹⁸⁸ Eliade, Yoga, 90.

⁹⁸⁹ Eliade, Yoga, 311-334.

⁹⁹⁰ Cf. also *supra*, chapter 2.3.

5.5.8. Reintegration and Freedom (subchapter II,10)

In this last chapter of the Patañjali section of *Yoga. Immortality and Freedom* all the scattered hints and allusions to Eliade's world picture finally come together; what had been interspersed here and there on the first hundred pages of the book breaks through at last and clearly manifests itself. Eliade no longer makes an effort to speak in Patañjali's or even Indian terms but very freely and openly uses his own vocabulary which is miles apart from anything Dasgupta would ever have said or written. The "sacred" and the "profane," "cosmicization" and "unification," "superconsciousness" and "reintegration," "primordial Unity" and "the coincidence of opposites" – this is Eliade's terminology which (according to him) not only describes what India as a whole has to offer to the West but also what Yoga in particular stands for. "Reintegration and Freedom" is devoid of any quotation from Indian sources, since it sums up the preceding chapters in a new language and a new light.

Eliade first paraphrases Patañjali's aim as follows:

"[T]o emancipate man from his human condition, to conquer absolute freedom, to realize the unconditioned."⁹⁹¹

The various techniques leading to this aim are all "antisocial, or, indeed, antihuman"⁹⁹² in the sense that the yogin counteracts the never-ending movements of life with a static, firm attitude on all levels of his being, in posture (immobile), breath (suppressed) and mind (fixed on one spot).

"This complete opposition to life is not new, either in India or elsewhere; the archaic and universal polarity between the sacred and the profane is clearly to be seen in it."⁹⁹³

The Indian yogin imitates or re-enacts the "archaic and universal" role of a man who

"thirsts for the unconditioned, for freedom, for 'power' – in a word, for one of the countless modalities of the sacred."⁹⁹⁴

During the process of dissociating himself from life, the yogin mainly proceeds through "unification." He unifies his respiration by making it rhythmical as in deep sleep (a practice which Eliade derived from his stay in Rishikesh and not from Patañjali or one of the commentators; cf. *supra*, chapter 5.5.2), he unifies thought through ekāgratā which ends in "an unbroken psychic continuum,"⁹⁹⁵ and āsana fixes the body in a single archetypal posture (cf. *supra*, chapter 5.5.2). "Unification" in all these statements is used in the sense of "limitation" – the multiple possibilities of breathing, thinking and holding one's body are all

⁹⁹¹ Eliade, *Yoga*, 95.

⁹⁹² Eliade, *Yoga*, 95.

⁹⁹³ Eliade, *Yoga*, 96.

⁹⁹⁴ Eliade, *Yoga*, 96.

⁹⁹⁵ Eliade, *Yoga*, 97.

reduced to just one modality. But Eliade stretches the meaning of this term (through a series of nearly synonymous words) until it gains a new significance, one of mending and healing:

[A]ll these exercises pursue the same goal, which is to abolish multiplicity and fragmentation, to reintegrate, to unify, to make whole."⁹⁹⁶

Thus, āsana now allows the yogin to feel his body as a "totality," a "unity,"⁹⁹⁷ and the yogin discovers a new life, one "that is deeper and truer (because "in rhythm") – the very life of the cosmos."⁹⁹⁸ This "cosmicization" of man is a process Eliade "divines [...] in all the psychophysiological techniques of Yoga, from āsana to ekāgratā."⁹⁹⁹

"Final liberation cannot be obtained without experience of a preliminary stage of 'cosmicization'; one cannot pass directly from chaos to freedom. The intermediate phase is the 'cosmos' – that is, realization of rhythm on all the planes of biomental life."¹⁰⁰⁰

To sum up: In the first part of his interpretation of Patañjali in this chapter, Eliade emphasized the static, immobile attitude of the yogin (dissociation from life through fixity opposing the flowing stream of life); he explicitly mentioned the "static posture, the immobility of āsana," the possibility "of holding [the] breath indefinitely," and the fixation of "thought on a single point."¹⁰⁰¹ This explanation by all means corresponds to the Indian texts, even though the vocabulary is partly completely different (cf. "antisocial," "antihuman," "the unconditioned," "sacred and profane" being purely Eliadian terms). Dasgupta, very possibly, might not have objected to such an explanation, seeing it as an illustration of nirodha (extinguishing, suppression).¹⁰⁰²

In the paragraph where Eliade talks about unification though, he unnoticeably departs from the Patañjali tradition as he slides towards a vision of rhythm ending with the notion of cosmos (opposed to chaos because it is well-regulated through rhythm). He primarily does this by interpreting prāṇāyāma no longer as suppressing breath but as slow, deep, rhythmical breathing, like in deep sleep (it is significant that he starts the examples of unification with breath, adding the step which in Patañjali precedes this practice [āsana] only at the end). Ekāgratā then is "an unbroken psychic continuum" which implies a flow and, as such, might have an element of rhythm in it, and āsana provides the yogin with a feeling of unity on the physical level which prepares what Eliade in the next

⁹⁹⁶ Eliade, *Yoga*, 97.

⁹⁹⁷ Eliade, *Yoga*, 97.

⁹⁹⁸ Eliade, *Yoga*, 97.

⁹⁹⁹ Eliade, *Yoga*, 97.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Eliade, *Yoga*, 97.

¹⁰⁰¹ Eliade, *Yoga*, 95-96.

¹⁰⁰² Cf. Dasgupta's definition of the aim of Yoga: "[...] the complete extinguishing of all pains is identical with the extinguishing of all experiences, the states of vṛttis of consciousness, and this again is identical with the rise of prajñā or true discriminative knowledge of the difference in nature of prakṛti and its effects from the puruṣa – the unchangeable. [...] This suppression of mental states which has been described as the means of attaining final release, the ultimate ethical goal of life, is called Yoga." Dasgupta, *Philosophy and Religion*, 122.

paragraph explains as “realization of rhythm on all the planes of biomental life.”¹⁰⁰³ He stresses the importance of the moon, acting as unifying factor in the universe by his virtue of measuring time and of making “an infinity of heterogeneous realities integral parts of the same complex”¹⁰⁰⁴ (a somewhat obscure statement) and then adds:

“A considerable proportion of Indian mystical physiology is based upon the identification of ‘suns’ and ‘moons’ in the human body.”¹⁰⁰⁵

Thus we have moved from rhythm to cosmos and from the moon back to the human body. None of all this can be found in Patañjali or his tradition, but Eliade needs the cosmos in his world picture and therefore incorporates it from other sources.

“To be sure, this ‘cosmicization’ is only an intermediate phase, which Patañjali scarcely indicates; but it is exceptionally important in other Indian mystical schools.”¹⁰⁰⁶

After unification and cosmicization man is recasted “in new, gigantic dimensions” of “macranthropic experiences”¹⁰⁰⁷ which represent yet another temporary stage. The ultimate goal is only reached once the yogin manages to dissociate himself completely from the cosmos, “thus becoming impervious to experiences, unconditioned, and autonomous.”¹⁰⁰⁸

According to Eliade, *samādhi* is “by its very nature a paradoxical state, for it is empty and at the same time fills being and thought to repletion.”¹⁰⁰⁹ This idea of paradox has certainly not been expressed in the Yoga tradition and Eliade has to explain it further. He does this by giving a sundry list of paradoxes from Indian religion (Vedic sacrifice, where the brick of the altar coincides with Prajāpati, *prāṇāyāma*, where life is present in holding the breath, the “fundamental tantric experience” of holding back the semen, where life coincides with death).¹⁰¹⁰

“Regarded from this point of view (that of the phenomenology of paradox), *samādhi* is seen to be situated on a line well known in the history of religions and mysticisms – that of the coincidence of opposites.”¹⁰¹¹

Here we observe how Eliade, in order to arrive at the concept of the coincidence of opposites, imposes the idea of paradox on all kinds of examples until also *samādhi* somehow fits into it. He can do this only by adopting a mystic-religionist perspective. Once his argument has reached this point, he is free to take the

¹⁰⁰³ Eliade, *Yoga*, 97.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Eliade, *Yoga*, 97.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Eliade, *Yoga*, 97.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Eliade, *Yoga*, 97-98.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Eliade, *Yoga*, 98.

¹⁰⁰⁸ Eliade, *Yoga*, 98.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Eliade, *Yoga*, 98.

¹⁰¹⁰ Cf. Eliade, *Yoga*, 98.

¹⁰¹¹ Eliade, *Yoga*, 98.

reader one step further towards another of his favourite concepts, the primordial Unity:

“Through *samādhi*, the yogin transcends opposites and, in a unique experience, unites emptiness and superabundance, life and death, Being and nonbeing. [...] Like all paradoxical states, *samādhi* is equivalent to a reintegration of the different modalities of the real in a single modality – the undifferentiated completeness of precreation, the primordial Unity.”¹⁰¹²

What a difference in terminology from Dasgupta who spoke of *samādhi* simply as trance experience which gives rise to *prajñā*, the discriminative knowledge, distinguishing between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* and thus leading to the ultimate liberation of the *puruṣa*. The question has to be asked whether *kaivalya*, the isolation of the *puruṣa* from *prakṛti*, can really be equalled to “the recovery [...] of the initial nonduality.”¹⁰¹³ Strictly speaking, in *Sāṃkhya* the duality always remains, *prakṛti* being as eternal as *puruṣa*, and thus this system does not know any primordial Unity where the two opposing principles would ever have been melted together. But Eliade, with his pronounced wish to present Yoga-*Sāṃkhya* as a continuation of the Upaniṣadic tradition and as a part of Indian spirituality as a whole readily sacrifices the inherent duality of this system in favour of (Vedāntic) monism.

The remaining two pages of this chapter are dedicated to a defense of Yogic *samādhi* as true liberation, as opposed to “countless varieties of spiritual escape”¹⁰¹⁴ such as drug-induced trances and ecstasies. The Yogin reaches the cataleptic state “with the utmost lucidity;” he attains what Eliade calls “transconsciousness” or “superconsciousness.”¹⁰¹⁵ Transconsciousness is equalled to “knowledge-possession of the Self, the *puruṣa*,”¹⁰¹⁶ superconsciousness remains unexplained (and is maybe the same). The Yogin returns to the primordial Unity, the original completeness or the beginning, “enriched by the dimensions of freedom and *transconsciousness*.”¹⁰¹⁷ By reaching the paradoxical mode of being “which exists only in the Supreme Being, *Īśvara*,”¹⁰¹⁸ the Yogin shows that Yoga is initiatory – he dies and is reborn.

“[...] the candidate does not return to the profane world to which he has just died during his initiation; he finds a sacred world corresponding to a new mode of being that is *inaccessible to the ‘natural’ (profane) level of existence*.”¹⁰¹⁹

And once more, Yoga is not an isolated phenomenon:

“[...] Yoga, like many other mysticisms, issues on the plane of paradox and not on a commonplace and easy extinction of consciousness.”¹⁰²⁰

¹⁰¹² Eliade, *Yoga*, 98.

¹⁰¹³ Eliade, *Yoga*, 99.

¹⁰¹⁴ Eliade, *Yoga*, 99.

¹⁰¹⁵ Eliade, *Yoga*, 99.

¹⁰¹⁶ Eliade, *Yoga*, 99.

¹⁰¹⁷ Eliade, *Yoga*, 99.

¹⁰¹⁸ This is the only instance where Eliade interprets *Īśvara* as the Supreme Being (God) – before he had reached the conclusion that “All in all, *Īśvara* is only an archetype of the yogin – a macroyogin; very probably a patron of certain yogic sects.” (Eliade, *Yoga*, 75)

¹⁰¹⁹ Eliade, *Yoga*, 100.

5.6. Samādhi

After this quotation-free chapter where Eliade gave free rein to his interpretation and terminology, it is rather strange to return to the two chapters which immediately precede “Reintegration and Freedom,” discussing samādhi (subchapters II,7 and II,9). Both chapters abound in quotations from the *Yogasūtra* and its commentaries, and Eliade discusses all the modalities of samādhi, not refraining from using the whole technical vocabulary. The contrast between Eliade’s presentation of samādhi and his ultimate interpretation of it in subchapter II,10 could not be more striking.

5.6.1. Samādhi “with Support” (subchapter II,7)

At first sight this chapter looks like it could be very close to what Dasgupta said about the aim of Yoga (cf. *supra*, chapter 4.3.3.12 and 4.5). In order to corroborate or refute this impression, let us compare how the two authors define and describe the various stages of samādhi.¹⁰²¹ I highlight the passages which correspond most closely to each other with bold letters.

Category of samādhi	Dasgupta	Eliade
saṃprajñāta	“cognitive;” all the saṃprajñāta states are positive states of the mind “and not a mere state of vacuity of objects or negativity.” ¹⁰²² The mind remains fixed on some object, first external, then internal. ¹⁰²³ “[...] absorptive concentration [on] an object.” ¹⁰²⁴	“enstasis with support” or “differentiated enstasis” ¹⁰²⁵
asaṃprajñāta	“ultra-cognitive” or nirbija (seedless) state of Yoga, ¹⁰²⁶ also called nirodha (state of suppression). ¹⁰²⁷ As the internal object gradually becomes finer and finer, it ultimately “loses all	“undifferentiated stasis” “[...] all “consciousness” vanishes , the entire series of mental functions are blocked.” ¹⁰³¹ “[...] <i>asamprajñāta samādhi</i>

¹⁰²⁰ Eliade, Yoga, 99.

¹⁰²¹ I briefly recall the basic structure of the various samādhi stages: There is the fundamental dichotomy between saṃprajñāta and asaṃprajñāta samādhi, the first category consisting of six sub-groups (savitarka, nirvitarka, savicāra, nirvicāra, ānandānugata and asmitānugata); this is the classification according to Vijñāna Bhikṣu, Vācaspati suggests eight sub-groups (cf. Dasgupta, Philosophy and Religion, 153).

¹⁰²² Dasgupta, Philosophy and Religion, 124.

¹⁰²³ Cf. Dasgupta, Philosophy and Religion, 124.

¹⁰²⁴ Dasgupta, Philosophy and Religion, 150.

¹⁰²⁵ Eliade, Yoga, 79.

¹⁰²⁶ Cf. Dasgupta, Philosophy and Religion, 124.

¹⁰²⁷ Cf. Dasgupta, Philosophy and Religion, 155.

	<p>its determinate character and he [the Yogin] is said to be in a state of suppression in himself."¹⁰²⁸</p> <p>"[...] the ordinary consciousness has been altogether surpassed and the mind is in its own true infinite aspect, and the potencies of the stages in which the mind was full of finite knowledge are also burnt, so that with the return of the citta to its primal cause, final emancipation is effected."¹⁰²⁹</p> <p>"Purusha attains absolute freedom."¹⁰³⁰</p>	<p>destroys the "impressions [saṃskāra] of all antecedent mental functions" and even succeeds in arresting the karmic forces already set in motion by the yogin's past activity."¹⁰³²</p>
savitarka	<p>"the mind seems to become one with the thing, together with its name and concept [...]; it is the lowest stage, because here the gross object does not appear to the mind in its true reality, but only in the false illusory way in which it appears associated with the concept and the name in ordinary life."¹⁰³³</p>	<p>"argumentative" [reference to YS I,42], "because it presupposes a preliminary analysis; thought identifies with the object of meditation in 'its essential wholeness;' for an object is composed of a <i>thing</i>, a <i>notion</i>, and a <i>word</i>, and, during meditation, these three 'aspects' of its reality are in perfect coincidence with the yogin's thought (<i>citta</i>). <i>Savitarka samādhi</i> is obtained through objects considered under their substantial (<i>sthūla</i>, 'coarse') aspect; it is a 'direct perception' of objects, but one that extends to both their past and their future."¹⁰³⁴</p>

¹⁰²⁸ Dasgupta, Philosophy and Religion, 124.

¹⁰²⁹ Dasgupta, Philosophy and Religion, 125.

¹⁰³⁰ Dasgupta, Philosophy and Religion, 125.

¹⁰³¹ Eliade, Yoga, 80.

¹⁰³² Eliade, Yoga, 80.

¹⁰³³ Dasgupta, Philosophy and Religion, 150.

¹⁰³⁴ Eliade, Yoga, 79. Eliade adds a commentary by Vijñāna Bhikṣu who applied savitarka samādhi on the visualisation of Viṣṇu. – As to "thing, notion and word," Eliade is referring to artha, jñāna and śabda which Dasgupta discusses in the opening paragraph of his chapter on samādhi (cf. *supra*, chapter 4.5).

nirvitarka	The mind “ can become one with its object , divested of all other associations of name and concept, so that it is in direct touch with the reality of the thing, uncontaminated by associations. ” ¹⁰³⁵	“nonargumentative” “In this meditation, thought is freed from the presence of the ‘I,’ for the cognitive act (‘I know this object,’ or ‘This object is mind’) is no longer produced; it is thought that is (becomes) the given object. [reference to YS I,43] The object is no longer known through associations [...], it is grasped directly, in its existential nakedness, as a concrete and irreducible datum.” ¹⁰³⁶
savicāra	The mind reaches the level of the subtle elements , it “sinks deeper and deeper into [the object’s] finer constituents. [...] This is a state of feelingless representation of one uniform tanmātric state, when the object appears as a conglomeration of tanmātras of rūpa, rasa or gandha, as the case might be.” ¹⁰³⁷ Ego, buddhi and prakṛti are also objects of concentration at this stage; time, space and causality remain associated with it.	“reflective” “thought no longer stops at the exterior aspect of material objects [...]; on the contrary, it directly knows those infinitesimal nucleuses of energy which the Sāṃkhya and Yoga treatises call tanmātras . The yogin meditates on the “ subtle ” (sūkṣma) aspect of matter ; he penetrates, Vijñānabhikṣu tells us, to <i>ahaṅkāra</i> and <i>prakṛti</i> , but this meditation is still accompanied by consciousness of time and space [...].” ¹⁰³⁸
nirvicāra	The notions of time, space and causality vanish. ¹⁰³⁹	“superreflective” ¹⁰⁴⁰ “[...] (when the yogin ‘assimilates them [the tanmātras] in an ideal fashion,’ without any resultant feeling of suffering, or pleasure, or violence, or inertia, etc., and without consciousness of time and space), the yogin obtains the state of <i>nirvicāra</i> . Thought then becomes one with these infinitesimal nucleuses of

¹⁰³⁵ Dasgupta, Philosophy and Religion, 151.

¹⁰³⁶ Eliade, Yoga, 81-82. Eliade also adds a description by Vyāsa (on YS I,43).

¹⁰³⁷ Dasgupta, Philosophy and Religion, 151-152.

¹⁰³⁸ Eliade, Yoga, 82-83.

¹⁰³⁹ Cf. Dasgupta, Philosophy and Religion, 152.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Eliade, Yoga, 80.

		energy which constitute the true foundation of the physical universe. It is a real descent into the very essence of the physical world, and not only into qualified and individual phenomena." ¹⁰⁴¹
ānandānugata	"[...] when the object of communion is the senses, the samādhi is called ānandānugata [...]." ¹⁰⁴²	"[...] when, abandoning all perception, even that of 'subtle' realities, one experiences the happiness of the eternal luminosity and consciousness of Self that belong to <i>sattva</i> [...]." ¹⁰⁴³
asmitānugata	"[...] when the object of communion is the subtle cause the ego (asmitā), the samādhi is known as asmitānugata." ¹⁰⁴⁴	"[...] which one reaches at the moment that the intellect, <i>buddhi</i> , completely isolated from the external world, reflects only the Self." ¹⁰⁴⁵

Generally speaking, the concordance between Dasgupta and Eliade is much greater in this chapter than in others. Of course, the terminology is different in places but certain key statements are absolutely identical. Eliade remains close to the Sanskrit sources and profusely quotes from the comments (mostly Vijñāna Bhikṣu) in order to make each modality of samādhi as clearly understandable as possible. Dasgupta also faithfully rendered the texts but (as always) he failed to mention the majority of the passages he was quoting or alluding to. This is a chapter where Dasgupta's sources could (at least partly) be reconstructed on the basis of Eliade's references.

Dasgupta and Eliade are closest in their definition of savicāra and nirvicāra samādhi, but when it comes to the last two modalities, ānandānugata and asmitānugata, their statements have nothing in common. The reason for this divergence can be found in Dasgupta's account where the difference in opinion between Vācaspati Mīśra on the one hand and Vijñāna Bhikṣu on the other is expounded.¹⁰⁴⁶ As it happens Dasgupta followed Vācaspati's definition of ānandānugata and asmitānugata whereas Eliade preferred Bhikṣu's explanation of these states.

Another difference can be detected in Eliade's avoiding the term "nirodha" (cf. Dasgupta's definition of asaṃprajñāta samādhi). "Suppression" (which is

¹⁰⁴¹ Eliade, Yoga, 83. Eliade refers to Vyāsa's and Vācaspati Mīśra's commentaries on YS I,44-45 (for both savicāra and nirvicāra).

¹⁰⁴² Dasgupta, Philosophy and Religion, 153.

¹⁰⁴³ Eliade, Yoga, 84.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Dasgupta, Philosophy and Religion, 153.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Eliade, Yoga, 84.

¹⁰⁴⁶ Cf. Dasgupta, Philosophy and Religion, 153.

Dasgupta's translation of this word) probably sounded too radical or drastic to Eliade's psychologically trained mind; in his whole presentation of the Patañjali system he only mentions "nirodha" thrice, and only once he calls it "suppression."¹⁰⁴⁷ The first time he does not translate this term at all¹⁰⁴⁸ and later on he renders it as "final arrest of all psychomental experience."¹⁰⁴⁹ To "arrest," "vanish" or "block" are the terms Eliade definitely preferred to "suppress" (cf. *supra*, his definition of *asamprajñāta samādhi*).

If we look at other parts of this chapter, not summed up in the above table, we find that Eliade distinguishes *saṃprajñāta* from *asamprajñāta samādhi* by calling the latter a "raptus," an "unprovoked enstasis."¹⁰⁵⁰ Whereas the first kind of *samādhi* is obtained through *dhāraṇā* and *dhyāna*, the second one "comes without being summoned, without being provoked, without special preparation for it."¹⁰⁵¹ The contradiction inherent in this statement becomes evident when Eliade has to admit that also *asamprajñāta samādhi* "is always owing to prolonged efforts on the yogin's part" and that "it is the crown of the innumerable 'concentrations' and 'meditations' that have preceded it."¹⁰⁵²

Other than Dasgupta (who only writes of supreme knowledge [*prajñā*], fully gained in *asamprajñāta samādhi* and immediately leading to final liberation), Eliade sees in the various stages of *saṃprajñāta samādhi* an interplay of state and knowledge.

"Contemplation makes enstasis possible; enstasis, in turn, permits a deeper penetration into reality, by provoking (or facilitating) a new contemplation, a new yogic 'state.' This passing from 'knowledge' to 'state' must be constantly borne in mind, for, in our opinion, it is the characteristic feature of *samādhi* (as it is, indeed, of all Indian 'meditation')."¹⁰⁵³

Whatever other forms of Indian meditation Eliade might have had in mind, Yoga once more stands out as a prototype for a central aspect of Indian spirituality. Eliade continues along these lines by adding that

"[t]he 'rupture of plane' that India seeks to realize, which is the paradoxical passage from *being* to *knowing*, takes place in *samādhi*."¹⁰⁵⁴

He ends this chapter by referring to *Vijñāna Bhikṣu*, a representative of the mystical yogins, that in *asamprajñāta samādhi* not only *puruṣa* is perceived but also God (*Īśvara*), as the twenty-sixth principle of *Sāṃkhya*.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Eliade, *Yoga*, 69: „*cittavṛtti nirodhaḥ* (i.e., the suppression of psychomental states).”

¹⁰⁴⁸ Cf. Eliade, *Yoga*, 47.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Eliade, *Yoga*, 93.

¹⁰⁵⁰ Eliade, *Yoga*, 80.

¹⁰⁵¹ Eliade, *Yoga*, 80.

¹⁰⁵² Eliade, *Yoga*, 80.

¹⁰⁵³ Eliade, *Yoga*, 82.

¹⁰⁵⁴ Eliade, *Yoga*, 82.

5.6.2. Samādhi “without Support” and Final Liberation (subchapter II,9)

This chapter is nearly entirely dedicated to a faithful presentation of what various commentators wrote about *saṃprajñāta samādhi*, and then it suddenly takes an unexpected but highly interesting turn towards Eliade’s own interpretation.

Eliade first describes the transition from *saṃprajñāta samādhi* to the highest state which takes place as soon as the difference between the yogin’s consciousness on the one hand and the *puruṣa* on the other disappears (cf. Vyāsa on YS I,2 and I,18 and YS I,51).

“[...] now every *vṛtti* is eliminated, ‘burned;’ nothing remains but the unconscious impressions (*saṃskāra*), and at a certain moment even these imperceptible *saṃskāras* are consumed, whereupon true stasis ‘without seed’ (*nirbīja samādhi*) ensues.”¹⁰⁵⁵

Based on (the quite obscure and most variously translated) YS I,19 and Vyāsa’s comment on it Eliade distinguishes a “natural way” (*bhava*) and a “way of technique” (*upāya*) which lead to *samādhi*. The second path (followed by the yogins) is superior to the first one (which belongs to the gods) because it is durable. According to Vijñāna Bhikṣu *upāya* means to practise *saṃyama* on Īśvara and *bhava* to achieve final liberation spontaneously, just by desiring it.

“[...] it is no longer a conquest achieved by technical means, it is a spontaneous operation; it is called *bhava*, ‘natural.’”¹⁰⁵⁶

Going back to the transition from *saṃprajñāta* to *asaṃprajñāta samādhi*, Eliade next quotes Vyāsa (on YS III,55) and then Vācaspati Mīśra (on YS I,21), who describe this process and its final state in purely Sāṃkhyan terms.

“[...] the yogin realizes ‘absolute isolation’ (*kaivalya*) – that is, liberation of *puruṣa* from the dominance of *prakṛti*. [...] the ‘fruit’ of *saṃprajñāta samādhi* is *asaṃprajñāta samādhi*, and the ‘fruit’ of the latter is *kaivalya*, liberation.”¹⁰⁵⁷

Eliade too is perfectly able to express the state of Yogic freedom in a language which remains very close to Yogic sources:

“Intellect (*buddhi*), having accomplished its mission, withdraws, detaching itself from the *puruṣa* and returning into *prakṛti*. The Self remains free, autonomous; it contemplates itself. ‘Human’ consciousness is suppressed; that is, it no longer functions, its constituent elements being reabsorbed into the primordial substance. The yogin attains deliverance; like a dead man, he has no more relation with life; he is ‘dead in life.’ He is the *jīvan-mukta*, the ‘liberated in life.’ He no longer lives in time and under the domination of time, but in an eternal present, in the *nunc stans* by which Boethius defined eternity.”¹⁰⁵⁸

¹⁰⁵⁵ Eliade, Yoga, 91.

¹⁰⁵⁶ Eliade, Yoga, 92.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Eliade, Yoga, 93.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Eliade, Yoga, 93-94.

But then he suddenly and explicitly branches off, leaving traditional Sāṃkhya behind.

“Such would be the situation of the yogin in *asamprajñāta samādhi*, as long as it was viewed from outside and judged from the point of view of the dialectic of liberation and of the relations between the Self and Substance, as elaborated by Sāṃkhya. In reality, if we take into account the ‘experience’ of the various *samādhis*, the yogin’s situation is more paradoxical and infinitely more grandiose.”¹⁰⁵⁹

This must be considered as the key passage not only of this chapter but maybe of the entire first hundred pages of Eliade’s book (dedicated to the discussion of Patañjali). Eliade obviously considers Sāṃkhya to be somewhat limited in its possibilities to adequately render the full dimensions of the state of liberation. “In reality” things are far more complex, meaningful and marvellous than what Sāṃkhya was able to express, and it is Eliade’s wish and desire to find words for these additional dimensions. The terms which are apt to describe the Yogin’s freedom are “appropriation,” “paradox,” “complete absorption of the known by the knower” and “being.”

Eliade sets out by giving his own interpretation of what is meant by “reflection of the *puruṣa*.”¹⁰⁶⁰ For him, the knowledge or direct revelation of the *puruṣa* is equivalent to an “appropriation,” “an ontological modality inaccessible to the noninitiate.”¹⁰⁶¹ And this, to him, is a paradox because it is impossible to say whether this state is a “contemplation of the Self or [...] an ontological transformation of the human being.”¹⁰⁶²

“[...] the modalities of the real are abolished, being (*puruṣa*) coincides with nonbeing (‘man,’ properly speaking), knowledge is transformed into magical ‘mastery,’ in virtue of the complete absorption of the known by the knower. [...] The self-revelation of the *puruṣa* is equivalent to a taking possession of being in all its completeness. In *asamprajñāta samādhi*, the yogin is actually all Being.”

The yogin, mortal yet immortal, with a body yet liberated, thus fulfils what “Indian spirituality has tended from its beginnings.”

“What else are the ‘men-gods’ of whom we spoke earlier, if not the ‘geometric point’ where the divine and the human coincide, as do being and nonbeing, eternity and death, the whole and the part? And, more perhaps than any other civilization, India has always lived under the sign of ‘men-gods.’”¹⁰⁶³

This is the last sentence of this second chapter on *samādhi* which paves the way for subchapter II,10, “Reintegration and Freedom” (cf. *supra*, chapter 5.5.8).

¹⁰⁵⁹ Eliade, *Yoga*, 94.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Eliade, *Yoga*, 94.

¹⁰⁶¹ Eliade, *Yoga*, 94.

¹⁰⁶² Eliade, *Yoga*, 94.

¹⁰⁶³ Eliade, *Yoga*, 95.

5.6.3. Conclusions

Eliade's presentation of samādhi is a strangely mixed affair – a particularly faithful rendering of the Indian sources is followed by a very free interpretation of the highest Yogic state in completely non-Indian terms, culminating in the following chapter, "Reintegration and Freedom." Apparently Eliade saw no contradiction in this but felt that he simply rephrased in his own words what Patañjali, "in reality," wanted to say. But the discrepancy between the Sāṃkhya-Yoga language and Eliade's terminology could not be bigger and the question must be asked whether both really mean the same. Is the uprooting of avidyā and its vāsanās through true discriminate knowledge (prajñā) of the distinction between puruṣa and prakṛti, is the extinguishing of all mental activities and of all experiences, is kaivalya, the eternal isolation of puruṣa from prakṛti, really identical to magical mastery, to taking possession of being in all its completeness, to a paradoxical state of mortal and immortal, empty and full, to the coincidence of opposites or the primordial Unity?

5.7. Karma

Whereas Dasgupta dedicated a whole chapter to the theory of karma (IX), Eliade does not treat this subject anywhere in detail. He neither mentions Patañjali's sūtras discussing this topic (YS II,12-14 and IV,7-8) nor does he refer to any theoretical Indian background about the accumulation of results of action and consequent rebirth. Nevertheless, karma is present in his book, but rather in a way which makes it clear that Eliade supposes his readership to be familiar with it. Karma is presented as a concept which is part and parcel of the spiritual and esoteric world picture Eliade tries to impart to his Western audience. In the Patañjali section (chapters I and II), karma is mentioned nine times; eight times in chapter I (dedicated to the doctrines of Yoga) and only once in the more practical chapter II.

1. We find karma already on the first page of Eliade's book – it is the first of the "four basic and interdependent concepts [...] which bring us directly to the core of Indian spirituality; [...] the law of universal causality, which connects man with the cosmos and condemns him to transmigrate indefinitely."¹⁰⁶⁴ Such a fundamental law does not seem to need any further explanation at this point. It appears as an unquestionable pillar of India's spiritual tradition.
2. In the following chapter we read that life and the cosmos "fling man into suffering and, by virtue of *karma*, enmesh him in the infinite cycle of transmigrations."¹⁰⁶⁵ This sums up the classical understanding of the mechanism between action and rebirth.

¹⁰⁶⁴ Eliade, Yoga, 3.

¹⁰⁶⁵ Eliade, Yoga, 11.

3. One page further down, Eliade states that the human condition is “determined by *karma*,” and this time he adds an explanatory footnote, “recalling” the meaning of this term to his reader (“work, action; destiny (ineluctable consequence of acts performed in a previous existence); product, effect, etc.”¹⁰⁶⁶). Since this is the first instance where karma is defined in this book, the phrase “let us recall” must refer to a knowledge Eliade believes his audience to have acquired from other sources. At the same time he evokes the possibility that the infinite cycle can be interrupted: “each [individual] can annul the karmic forces by which it is governed.”¹⁰⁶⁷
4. In subchapter I,5, Eliade explains that ignorance (*avidyā*) leads to existence, “by virtue of *karma*,” and, therefore to suffering. “All our acts and intentions [...] are conditioned and governed by *karma*.”¹⁰⁶⁸
5. Talking of the liberated man who has overcome *avidyā*, Eliade shows how the karmic determination is abolished: “Since the force of ignorance no longer acts, new karmic nucleuses are no longer created.”¹⁰⁶⁹
6. In his chapter about the subconscious (I,8) Eliade evokes the relationship between *vāsanās* (subconscious impressions) and *karma*, saying that “the *vāsanās* condition the specific character of each individual; and this conditioning is in accordance both with his heredity and with his karmic situation. [...] The subconscious is transmitted either ‘impersonally,’ from generation to generation (through language, mores, civilization – ethnic and historical transmission), or directly (through karmic transmigration [...]).”¹⁰⁷⁰
7. Shortly afterwards he establishes a link between *cittavṛtti*, *karma* and *vāsanā*: “Man’s acts (*karma*), instigated by psychomental states (*cittavṛtti*), in their turn instigate other *cittavṛttis*. But these states of consciousness themselves result from the actualization of subliminal latencies, *vāsanās*. Hence the circuit latency-consciousness-acts-latencies, etc. (*vāsanā-vṛtti-karma-vāsanā*, etc.) offers no point at which there is a solution of continuity.”¹⁰⁷¹
8. Still in the same chapter Eliade recalls the fact that everything returns into the subconscious “because of karmic ‘sowings.’”¹⁰⁷²
9. Describing *samādhi* without support Eliade points out that this state “even succeeds in arresting the karmic forces already set in motion by the yogin’s past activity.”¹⁰⁷³

¹⁰⁶⁶ Eliade, *Yoga*, 12.

¹⁰⁶⁷ Eliade, *Yoga*, 12.

¹⁰⁶⁸ Eliade, *Yoga*, 27.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Eliade, *Yoga*, 34.

¹⁰⁷⁰ Eliade, *Yoga*, 42.

¹⁰⁷¹ Eliade, *Yoga*, 43.

¹⁰⁷² Eliade, *Yoga*, 46.

¹⁰⁷³ Eliade, *Yoga*, 80.

Eliade's reader learns three things about karma:

1. The human existence is determined by karma; rebirth is a result of fundamental ignorance and leads to suffering. This is a universal law. (cf. points 1-4)
2. The endless circle of transmigration can be abolished if man manages to overcome this ignorance – for example through Yoga. (cf. points 5 and 9)
3. Karma can be “seen” or “studied” in the subconscious; acts leave an impression in the subconscious mind which in turn instigate new impulses which lead to new actions. (cf. points 6-8).

Compared to Dasgupta's presentation of karma and rebirth, Eliade's view must be called heavily simplified in the sense that it is stripped from the whole technical and theoretical framework of the Indian texts. The Romanian religionist conceals the fact that Patañjali and his commentators speak of various categories of karma (white, black, black and white, neither black nor white, accomplished mentally or through the senses, karma ripening in one or in several lives, accumulated in one or over many existences, including animal ones), and his circuit “latency-consciousness-acts-latencies, etc. (*vāsanā-vṛtti-karma-vāsanā*, etc.)” merely renders the basic mechanism of the far more complex structure *kleśas-vāsanās/saṃskāras-vṛttis-saṃskāras* on the one hand, and *kleśas*-four passions (desire, avarice, ignorance and anger)-*karmāśaya* (accumulation of karma) on the other hand, as explained by Dasgupta (cf. chapter 4.4.3). In other words: Eliade presents a straightforward, neutral, de-Indianised concept of karma to his Western audience which avoids any reference to possible inconsistencies and controversies within the Yogic discussions about this topic (not to mention other Indian systems of thought!¹⁰⁷⁴). Dasgupta never had this urge to unify at all cost but always freely pointed to contradictory views within the Patañjali tradition (for example: Vācaspati's and Vijñāna Bhikṣu's as well as Nāgeśa's differing opinions on YS II,13, concerning one category of *karmāśaya*; cf. *supra*, chapter 4.4.2). Had Eliade delved deeper into this complicated subject, the Indianness (and therefore partly alien character) of the karma concept would have clearly appeared, jeopardising Eliade's sustained effort to present Yoga as something universal. He therefore had no choice but to drop any in-depth discussion of Patañjali's sūtras on karma.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Cf. for example Wilhelm Halbfass. *Karma und Wiedergeburt im indischen Denken*. München: Hugendubel, 2000 (Diederichs Gelbe Reihe 161).

5.8. Conclusions

In the second chapter of his book (“Techniques for Autonomy”), Eliade profusely quoted from the *Yogasūtra* and its commentaries, hardly using any other sources any more (just the *Skanda-Purāṇa*, *Yogacintāmaṇi* and the *MBh* once each). Let us first have a look at the list of these sūtras.

Sūtras referred to	Patañjali or (sub)commentary	Topic (as discussed by Eliade)	Sub-chapter (of Yoga, Imm. and Freedom)
I,2	Patañjali	Definition of Yoga	II,1; II,4
I,2	<i>Vyāśabhāṣya</i>	Nirbīja samādhi; difference between citta and puruṣa	II,7; II,9
I,9	Patañjali, <i>Vyāśabhāṣya</i> , <i>Tattvavaiśārādī</i> and <i>Yogasārasaṃgraha</i> ¹⁰⁷⁵	Two ways to samādhi	II,9
I,17	Patañjali, <i>Yogasārasaṃgraha</i> and <i>Bhojavṛtti</i>	Four kinds of samādhi	II,7
I,18	Patañjali, <i>Vyāśabhāṣya</i>	asaṃprajñāta or nirbīja samādhi	II,9
I,21	<i>Tattvavaiśārādī</i>	Transition from saṃprajñāta to asaṃprajñāta samādhi	II,9
I,24	Patañjali and <i>Vyāśabhāṣya</i>	Definition of Īśvara	II,5
I,26	Patañjali	Īśvara is not bound by time	II,5
I,30	Patañjali	Nine obstacles on the path	II,1
I,34	<i>Bhojavṛtti</i>	Connection between prāṇāyāma and mental states	II,2
I,36	<i>Vyāśabhāṣya</i> and <i>Tattvavaiśārādī</i>	Lotos of the heart	II,4
I,41	Patañjali, <i>Vyāśabhāṣya</i> and <i>Tattvavaiśārādī</i>	samāpatti	II,7
I,42-45	Patañjali, <i>Vyāśabhāṣya</i> , <i>Tattvavaiśārādī</i> and <i>Yogasārasaṃgraha</i>	Four kinds of samādhi	II,7
I,48	Patañjali, <i>Yogasārasaṃgraha</i>	Absolute knowledge	II,7
I,51	Patañjali	asaṃprajñāta or nirbīja samādhi	II,9
II,29	Patañjali	The eight aṅgas of the Yoga path	II,1
II,30 and 32	Patañjali, <i>Vyāśabhāṣya</i>	The yamas and niyamas	II,1
II,33-34	Patañjali	Bad thoughts (vitarka) and how to deal with them	II,1

¹⁰⁷⁵ From chapter II,4 onwards, Eliade frequently quotes from this work (by Vijñāna Bhikṣu) which he omitted from the list of his sources (cf. *supra*, chapter 5.4.1).

II,37-43	Patañjali	Results of some yamas and niyamas	II,1
II,45	Patañjali	Result of īśvarapraṇidhāna	II,5
II,46-48	Patañjali	āsana	II,2
II,49-50	Patañjali	prāṇāyāma	II,2
II,52-53	Patañjali	Results of prāṇāyāma	II,4
II,54	<i>Vyāsabhāṣya</i>	prajñā knows all things as they are	II,4
III,1	Patañjali and <i>Tattvavaiśārādī</i>	Definition of dhāraṇā (concentration)	II,4
III,2	Patañjali, <i>Vyāsabhāṣya</i> and <i>Yogasārasaṃgraha</i>	Definition of dhyāna (meditation)	II,4
III,3	Patañjali, <i>Tattvavaiśārādī</i> and <i>Yogasārasaṃgraha</i>	Definition of samādhi	II,6
III,11	Patañjali	ekāgratā	II,1; II,6
III,16-21, 23-24, 26, 28-29, 30, 33, 37, 44	Patañjali, <i>Vyāsabhāṣya</i> (III,19 and 26), <i>Tattvavaiśārādī</i> (III,20 and 30), <i>Bhojavṛtti</i> (III,44)	The vibhūti	II,8
III,51	Patañjali, <i>Vyāsabhāṣya</i>	Warning of heavenly temptation	II,8
III,55	<i>Vyāsabhāṣya</i>	Transition from saṃprajñāta to asaṃprajñāta samādhi	II,9
IV,29	Patañjali, <i>Yogasārasaṃgraha</i>	dharma-megha-samādhi	II,7

Looking back to the quotations of subchapters I,1-6 and I,7-8 (cf. *supra*, chapters 5.4.6 and 5.4.10) we have seen that in his presentation of the Sāṃkhya theory Eliade referred to the *Sāṃkhyasūtra*, the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* and the *Tattvakaumudī* far more often than to Patañjali. The *Yogasūtra* was mostly used for a discussion of avidyā (II,5 and 15-20), prakṛti and the guṇas (I,4 and 16, and IV, 2-3, 13, 32-34) as well as puruṣa (I,4 and 41 and IV,24). In the following two chapters (I,7-8), very psychological in content, Eliade dropped nearly all other Indian sources and focussed on a few Patañjali sūtras which talk about consciousness (I,1-2 and IV,9), including the kleśas (II,3) and avidyā (I,8). These sūtras however only served as a minimal background illustration of Eliade's own psychological view of Yoga. In the ten subchapters of the second part (on Yoga technique or practice), Patañjali (and the commentators) are again widely present, at the cost of other Indian texts (exception: subchapters 3 and 10 which are entirely free from any references to Indian sources). The sūtras on samādhi are quoted (I,2, 9, 17-18, 21, 41-45 and 51; III,3 and 55; IV,29), Īśvara is discussed (I,24 and 26) and the eight limbs described in detail (II,29-III,3). Eliade also evokes the supranatural powers (III,16-44).

Comparing the list of the sūtras quoted by Eliade with the list of sūtras used by Dasgupta we can identify six groups of sūtras (and thus six topics) which Eliade omitted from his presentation of the Patañjali Yoga system:

1. YS I,5-11: the vṛttis.

Eliade does mention this term (for example on p.38) but when he actually presents the vṛttis in detail he lists the kleśas (on p.41).

2. YS I,13-16: abhyāsa and vairāgya.

Eliade interprets abhyāsa as ascesis or experience, without ever mentioning Patañjali's definition of this term. Vairāgya is completely absent. This stands out in great contrast to Dasgupta to whom abhyāsa and vairāgya were of the utmost importance. He presented them as akliṣṭa vṛttis (unafflicted states; cf. *supra*, chapter 4.3.3.10) and as two efficient means to reach the aim of Yoga for those whose mind is naturally (or through the grace of God) pure enough (cf. *supra*, chapter 4.3.3.12). With Eliade, this alternative road to samādhi is closed, the only way he talks about is the eightfold path.

3. YS I,33: maitrī, karuṇā, muditā and upekṣā.

These mental attitudes which played an important part in Dasgupta are left out by Eliade.

4. YS II,12-14 and IV,7-8: karma.

As we have seen above (cf. *supra*, chapter 5.7) Eliade mentions karma in general terms but avoids ever quoting a passage from Patañjali concerning this subject.

5. YS I,40, 44-45, III,52, IV,14 and 33: nature and creation of atoms, and: IV,12-16 and 33: the reality and relative eternity of the external world. These more scientific topics fascinated Dasgupta but were left out by Eliade. Some of these sūtras are present in Eliade but with a different focus (for example I,42-44: four kinds of samādhi).

6. III,9-15: Transformation (pariṇāma); changes in quality (dharma) and substance (dharmin).

Yet another very technical subject which Eliade chose not to evoke.

All in all Eliade's account of Patañjali's classical Yoga is more selective and partial than Dasgupta's; Eliade chose only those sections of the Yoga philosophy which suited his purpose and he did not hesitate to cast the Indian terminology into a completely different language. It would be a very interesting (and also necessary) task to analyse Eliade's vocabulary in terms of what he knew his audience to be accustomed to and to expect from him. After all he was given a research grant by the Bollingen Foundation of New York "to devote several years to the present work,"¹⁰⁷⁶ a foundation named after the small Swiss village where C. G. Jung had a private rural retreat. The Bollingen Series (of which *Yoga. Immortality and*

¹⁰⁷⁶ Eliade, *Yoga*, xxii.

Freedom is volume LVI) consists of works by Jung and Freud, of various contributions by Eliade and other religionists (such as J. Campbell, for example) as well as of translations and interpretations of mythological and religious books from various cultures (Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, etc.).¹⁰⁷⁷ Eliade's endeavour to present Yoga as a pan-Indian and ultimately universal practice certainly matches the profile of the Bollingen Series.

Dasgupta also had a specific interest in presenting Yoga to his audience and he also assessed Patañjali according to his needs, but even in doing so he remained far closer to the sources and gave a far fuller vision of all the aspects treated in the Indian texts than Eliade.

As to the details of Eliade's and Dasgupta's procedure I would like to refer to the various chapters entitled "Conclusions" (4.2.3, 4.3.3.9, 4.3.3.16, 4.4.3., 4.6., 5.4.10, 5.6.3. and 5.8); a summary at this point could but repeat in an incomplete way what has been stated more elaborately and accurately above.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Cf. <http://www.pupress.princeton.edu/catalogs/series/bs.html>

6. Appendix: Dasgupta in Switzerland

6.1. The 1939 visit

This book is part of a project about the encounter of India and Switzerland through Yoga, and therefore Dasgupta's visit to Zurich cannot be omitted from it. According to Surama Dasgupta, her husband "lectured on the Concept of Psychology in Zurich (Switzerland) at the Psychological Institute of Jung in 1939."¹⁰⁷⁸ This information is only partly correct and calls for amendment.

The Institute of C. G. Jung was created only in 1948 as an offspring of the Psychological Club, founded already in 1916. This Club still exists and is located in Zurich, on Gemeindestrasse 27. The Institute of Jung was originally situated in the same building before it was transferred to Ksnacht in 1979. According to the librarian of the Psychological Club, Surendranath Dasgupta held a lecture on May 3rd, 1939 at Gemeindestrasse 27 on "The Relation of Mind and Body according to Yoga."¹⁰⁷⁹ Unfortunately, there is no copy of this lecture at the Club library, but it is likely that Dasgupta used part of it in his long essay entitled "An Interpretation of the Yoga Theory of the Relation of Mind and Body" in *Philosophical Essays*, published in 1941.¹⁰⁸⁰

Dasgupta's short visit of Zurich in the spring of 1939 was part of an extended lecture tour through Europe (cf. *supra*, chapter 3.1.) which was triggered off by the conferment of an honorary doctorate on Dasgupta by the University of Rome. Dasgupta left Bombay on April 5, 1939, travelling to Naples and Rome. It was during his stay in the Italian capital that he contacted Eliade (cf. *supra*, chapter 2.2.4). On April 26 he departed from Rome, spent a few days in Milan and reached Zurich on May 1st. The day following his lecture he continued his journey to Warsaw.¹⁰⁸¹

In September 2004, as I was leafing through old newspaper cuttings collected at the Yogendra Institute in Bombay, I came across a short note from the *Evening News*, Bombay, dated 24th July 1939, saying that Dr. Dasgupta had arrived that day on board the M. V. "Victoria".

"Dr. S. N. Das Gupta, Principal of the Sanskrit College, Calcutta, also returned to India. He was invited to Rome and was awarded the Honorary Doctorate of Literature. He delivered a course of lectures in Milan and Zurich on Indian art, medicine and mysticism. He delivered an address at the International Conference of Religions in Paris and during his visit of London was made an honorary Fellow of the Pests Club, London. Dr. Das Gupta also visited Warsaw on the invitation of the educational authorities

¹⁰⁷⁸ Dasgupta, *Quest*, 286.

¹⁰⁷⁹ Oral communication of Mrs Seel, May 8, 2003.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Dasgupta, *Essays*, 276-320.

¹⁰⁸¹ In a letter to Surama, dated April 23, 1939, Dasgupta describes these activities as follows (for some unknown reason avoiding to mention Zurich or Switzerland): "I am having a highly packed programme. My lectures on Art were very much welcomed here [in Rome]. Then I shall have to talk on Yoga Psychology. After that I shall start for Warsaw where I shall speak on Indian Medicine and also on Indian Mysticism." (Dasgupta, *Quest*, 151).

there and discussed with them questions relating to cultural and intellectual co-operation between Indian and Poland. As a result of the talks the Polish authorities have sent to India Dr. Maryla Falk to be Reader in the Calcutta University."

Next to this cutting there was another one, of a photograph taken of a smiling, garlanded Surendranath standing next to Dr. Falk, the headline reading "Prominent arrivals by the 'Victoria'" (*The Evening News of India*, Tuesday, July 25, 1939). Thus we know that his trip to Europe which included a visit to Zurich ended on July 24, 1939.



Dasgupta, by the way, seems to have been to Switzerland before, since in a letter to Surama, dated May 20, 1932, he describes rock-climbing in the Alps.

"In Switzerland I saw people climbing the Alps. Three of them start together tied with one another by a piece of rope. The first one cuts the ice with an axe, makes a space for one foot-step, then he proceeds and makes room for the others behind him. If any one of them slips, the others pull him up and keep him steady. Such is the way of any intellectual or spiritual achievement."¹⁰⁸²

¹⁰⁸² Dasgupta, *Quest*, 80.

6.2. An exchange of letters between Dasgupta and C. G. Jung

Dasgupta's stay in Zurich in 1939 was a result of his personal acquaintance with C. G. Jung. The two had met in Calcutta early in 1938 when Jung, invited by the British Government of India, participated in "an Indian scientific congress."¹⁰⁸³ As soon as Dasgupta knew that he would be going to Rome he contacted Jung, initiating a correspondence which is almost entirely extant and preserved in Zurich.¹⁰⁸⁴ The ten letters (seven by Dasgupta and three by Jung) were written over a period of three months and are registered under the following call numbers.¹⁰⁸⁵

1. Dasgupta to Jung, 27-01-1939 (Hs 1056:7857)
2. Jung to Dasgupta, 02-02-1939 (Hs 1056:8404)
3. Dasgupta to Jung, 28-02-1939 (Hs 1056:7856)
4. Dasgupta to Jung, 01-04-1939 (Hs 1056:7858)
5. Jung to Dasgupta, 17-04-1939 (Hs 1056:8405)
6. Dasgupta to Jung, 19-04-1939 (Hs 1056:7859)
7. Dasgupta to Jung, 22-04-1939 (Hs 1056:7560)
8. Dasgupta to Jung, 24-04-1939 (Hs 1056:7561)
9. Jung to Dasgupta, 25-04-1939 (Hs 1056:8406)
10. Dasgupta to Jung, 25-04-1939 (Hs 1056:7862)

¹⁰⁸³ Jung, *Indien*, 569 (translation C. G.). Unfortunately, Jung does not specify the topic of this congress. Alfred Ribi has reconstructed as many details as possible concerning Jung's trip to India (cf. Ribi, Jung, 201-207). Referring to Jung's own "*Erinnerungen*" (*Remembrances*), he notes that Jung claims to have been invited to India for the 25th anniversary of the University of Calcutta ("aus Anlass des 25jährigen Bestehens der Universität Calcutta," Ribi, Jung, 202). Since this University was founded as early as 1857, however, this statement cannot be correct. Hartnack informs us that it was the Department of Psychology of the University of Calcutta which celebrated its 25th anniversary in 1938 (cf. Hartnack, *Psychoanalysis*, 102), and we also learn that in the same year the Indian Science Congress Association published a book called *The Progress of Science in India during the Past Twenty-Five Years* in which Girindrasekhar Bose, the famous psychologist of Calcutta at the time, wrote on the "Progress of Psychology in India during the Past Twenty-Five Years" (cf. Hartnack, *Psychoanalysis*, 117, footnote 43). It looks like the anniversary of the Department of Psychology was organised by the Indian Science Congress Association (which corresponds to Jung's assertion that he participated in an Indian Scientific Congress). After all, the Department of Psychology was part of the College of Science at Calcutta University (and not of the arts complex; cf. Hartnack, *Psychoanalysis*, 91). According to Paramahansa Yogananda (*Autobiography of a Yogi*. Los Angeles: Self Realization Fellowship, 1985 [eleventh edition], 264) Jung even "received an honorary degree from the University of Calcutta." As to Jung's entire Indian sojourn, he reached Bombay in December 1937 and visited Ellora, Ajanta, Agra, Allahabad, Benares, Sanchi and Darjeeling before reaching Calcutta early January 1938 (cf. Ribi, Jung). From January 3 to 13 he was hospitalised there with dysentery and then he went on to Bhubaneswar and Puri before returning to Calcutta. On January 14 and 15 he visited Belur Math north of the city where he attended the consecration ceremony of the Sri Ramakrishna Temple. Jung continued his journey to Hyderabad and from there to South India (Mysore, Madurai, Trivandrum etc.); his trip ended in Sri Lanka in February 1938.

¹⁰⁸⁴ At the Jung Archive which is located at the Archives of the Swiss Federal Institute Zurich in the ETH-library.

¹⁰⁸⁵ I thank the Trust for the Works of C. G. Jung (Stiftung der Werke von C. G. Jung, represented by Paul & Peter Fritz AG, Literary Agency, Zurich) for granting me the non-exclusive, one-time right to publish Jung's letters in this electronical form (permission dated June 18, 2008). The original copyright remains with the above mentioned Trust.

The first letter¹⁰⁸⁶

Sanskrit College, Calcutta, 27th January 1939

Dear Prof. Jung,

I regret to say that I lost your address which you so kindly gave to me and consequently I could not write to you even when you were pleased to send me your charming book. But now I have been able to get your address from a friend of mine and beg to offer you my best thanks for your book which was so illustrating and instructive. I am proceeding to Rome for the investiture of an Hony. Doctorate which the University of Rome has recently conferred on me and I hope to be in Rome from 18th to 26th April 1939 C/o Istituto Italiano per il Medio Ed Estremo Oriente Via Merulana, Rome. I have a mind to visit Zurich if you are there and to deliver a few lectures there – if the same can be arranged. I shall leave Calcutta on the 1st of April and in Rome my address will be C/o Istituto Italiano per il Medio Ed Estremo Oriente via Merulana, Rome. I shall be glad to hear from you. My wife and daughter and my pupil Miss S. Mitra join with me in offering you our heartiest good wishes of the New Year.

With best regards,
Yours sincerely,
S. N. Das Gupta

Commentary

Unfortunately, Dasgupta does not mention the title of the book which Jung has sent him.

Dasgupta is inviting himself to Zurich. When he received Jung's book he did not bother to try to find out Jung's lost address. Now that he wants to go to Zurich all he had to do was to ask a friend about it.

"Miss S. Mitra" is Surama. Quite obviously, Jung had met Dasgupta's wife and daughter as well as Surama when he was in Calcutta, probably at one of the "numerous formal dinners and receptions" he attended.¹⁰⁸⁷

¹⁰⁸⁶ All the letters are written on a type-writer, except Nr. 7 (hand-written by Dasgupta). Punctuation and orthography (capital and small letters, Umlaut or not in "Zurich", etc.) corresponds in every case to the original.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Jung, Indien, 569 (translation C. G.).

The second letter

February 2nd, 1939

Professor S. N. Das Gupta,
48-8 Manoharpukur Road,
Baltygunge, [error for Ballygunge]
Calcutta.
India.

Dear Professor Das Gupta,

I have just received your very kind letter of January 27th. When I saw you in Calcutta I had a feeling as if we were going to meet again in not too far a future. So I hope sincerely that my anticipation will come true.

At the moment I am not yet able to make any definite propositions as to the lectures in Zürich, but I have already written to Professor Abegg, our Sanskritist, who surely enjoys the prospect of meeting you in Zürich. I hope we can arrange something satisfactory. I also would be very much obliged to you, if you would let me know what fee you expect.

Please give my best regards to Mrs. Das Gupta and also to your daughter who surely will enjoy her first visit to Europe.

Hoping you are always in good health
I remain, dear Professor Das Gupta,
yours sincerely
[no signature]

Commentary

Jung replies by return of mail with a very positive, open letter. He remembers Dasgupta well and seems to be fond of him.

If Jung assumes that Dasgupta's wife and daughter will be travelling with him, it might be due to an echo he has in his mind of Dasgupta's letter where it says: "My wife and daughter and my pupil Miss S. Mitra join with me..." The sentence goes on "in offering you our heartiest good wishes of the New Year", but Jung seems to have forgotten this part (cf. also Jung's next letter [fifth letter of the correspondence] where he again assumes that Mrs. and Miss Dasgupta are going to travel with their husband/father).

The third letter

Feb. 28th, 1939

Dear Prof. Jung,

Many thanks for your kind letter. I hope to finish my work in Rome and Milan by the 27th or 28th April and I shall then proceed to Zurich. I shall intimate you the exact date and hour of my arrival in Zurich. I wonder if you consider it desirable to have a lecture on Yoga Psychology or the relation of mind and body according to Yoga in your Psychological Institute. About my fees I do not know anything. I shall be glad to accept any suitable honorarium that the authorities there may be pleased to afford for me.

With kindest regards of my wife, daughter and myself,
I remain,
Yours sincerely,
Sd / S. N. Das Gupta

[address added at the bottom of the page:]

Prof. Dr. C. G. Jung.
Kusnacht Zurich
Seestrasse 228
Zurich, Switzerland.

Commentary

Somebody (most probably Jung himself) underlined the words "the relation of mind and body according to Yoga" and marked this passage by a little cross in the left margin of the letter, thus indicating his preference.

The signature "S. N. Das Gupta" is typed, not hand-written – this may be an indication that this letter is a copy and not the original sent by Dasgupta (cf. fourth letter).

So far the correspondance has gone smoothly and everything seems to be quite straightforward.

The fourth letter

Sanskrit College, Calcutta The 1st April 1939

Dear Prof. Jung,

In reply to your letter of the 2nd July [error for 2nd February], I wrote to you on the 28th Feb, 1939, but I have not heard anything in reply. I wonder if that letter of mine reached you safely. A copy of that letter is being enclosed. I do not also know if I can expect an invitation to your University. I shall be free from Rome on the 26th April and from Italy on the 30th April, 1939. I shall be glad to know if it will be possible for you to arrange some lectures for me in Zürich in the 1st week of May, 1939. I have not heard anything from Prof. Abegg. My wife and daughter can not accompany me and they send their best regards and respects to you. You may write to me if it so please you cf. Messrs Thomas Cook & Sons, Rome, where I shall stay till the 26th April, 1939. I am leaving Bombay on the 5th April by M. V. Victoria. After finishing Zürich I shall probably go to Poland if war conditions do not make my journey to that country impossible. Hoping that you are in good health.

I remain,
Yours sincerely,
S. N. Das Gupta

[Address added at the bottom of the page:]
Prof. Dr. C. G. Jung.
Kusnacht Zurich
Seestrasse 228

Commentary

This is the point where things start to go wrong. Dasgupta is writing just before leaving Calcutta; he is obviously getting nervous because he has not heard from Jung for a few weeks, and he has not received any letter from Prof. Abegg either.

The fifth letter

April 17th, 1939

Professor S. N. Das Gupta,
c/o Messrs Thos. Cook & Sons,
Roma.

Dear Sir,

I had your second letter, but I couldn't answer it because I was afraid that the letter wouldn't reach you before your departure.

I have arranged for you to lecture in the Psychological Club, Zürich, where you will find the best prepared and the most understanding audience. I shall also try to arrange for a lecture at the Federal Polytechnicum, where I am professor. I also have asked Prof. Abegg and Prof. Wehrli to arrange a lecture for you in the Society for Eastasiatic Culture.

The lecture in the Psychological Club will take place on Saturday, May 6th at 8 p.m. The lecture at the Federal Polytechnicum will be on Friday, May 5th at 6 p.m. We should be much obliged to you if you would give us a talk about the relation of mind and body according to yoga in your Saturday lecture at the Psychol. Club. As a theme for the lecture at the Polytechnicum I would propose Psychology or Philosophy of the Yoga (specially Patanjali Yoga Sutra).

I have given Prof. Wehrli your address [sic] and I expect him to write to you directly.

Please let me know at once when you arrive in Zürich. My Telephone number is 910.809.

I'm very disappointed to hear that Mrs. and Miss Das Gupta were unable to join you on your trip. I'm sure that Miss Das Gupta would have enjoyed Italy and Switzerland. But I understand that in these troubled times travelling includes a certain risk. Please give Mrs. and Miss Das Gupta my best regards when you write to them.

Hoping to hear from you soon
[no signature]

Commentary

It is impossible to know whether Jung really got Dasgupta's original second letter or not. If Jung got the original letter, it should have arrived early March (if mail was still as fast as earlier on in 1939, when Jung replied to Dasgupta's first letter, written on the 27th January, on the 2nd February), which would have left him enough time to respond (Dasgupta was planning to leave Calcutta on April 1st cf. 1st letter). To me Jung's explanation for not having written any earlier (fear that his answer would not reach Calcutta in time) sounds a little bit like an excuse; after all he had Dasgupta's address in Italy and could have sent a letter to Rome. Maybe he simply forgot about the Indian professor, being busy with other things.

In any case he took action very quickly after receiving Dasgupta's letter dated April 1st, organising two lectures in the first week of May (as Dasgupta had requested) and getting in touch (again) with Prof. Abegg and Prof. Wehrli.

As in his previous letter, Jung is very kind and polite, the only difference being that he addresses Dasgupta as "Dear Sir", whereas before he used "Dear Professor Das Gupta".

The sixth letter

Excelsior Roma
19-4-39

Dear Professor Jung,

I have not yet received any letter from you at Rome. I shall be glad to know if it will be possible for you to arrange any lectures in Zurich. The subjects of the lectures may be as follows: 1. Psychology of yoga. 2. Yoga in relation to Indian Art, philosophy and religion. 3. Indian Mysticism. @ [sic] Principles of Indian Art and so on. The terms need not be anything more than first class travelling and hospitality during the days of stay. I shall leave Rome on the 28th and in case I do not hear anything satisfactory, I shall start for Warsaw Immediately [sic]. I shall be eagerly waiting for your letter. In the meanwhile I offer you my sincerest salutations. My daughter could not come with me but she particularly told me to be remembered to you. The function of the conferment of the Doctorate Honris [sic] Causa by the University comes on the 26th April.

With best regards,
yours sincerely
S. N. Das Gupta

[added at the bottom of the page:]
Professor Jung.

Commentary

Dasgupta has not heard from Jung since February (he only got one letter so far) and has no idea whether by the end of April he will be able to go to Zurich or not. Apparently he is organising his trip onward to Poland (as announced in his letter dated April 1st). Possibly he is beginning to feel slightly uneasy about his trip to Zurich; in any case he multiplies the topics on which he is ready to talk and he reduces his expectations as far as his fees are concerned.

Dasgupta is residing at the Hotel Excelsior and not at the Istituto Italiano per il Medio Ed Estremo Oriente.

The seventh letter

Excelsior Roma
22/4/39

My dear Professor Jung,

Many thanks for your kind letter. I shall finish Milan on the 29th and may leave Milan the same night and arrive in Zürich on the 30th morning, or I may leave Milan on the 30th and arrive in Zürich on the 1st. Kindly advise me what I should do.

I shall also be glad if you will kindly suggest the name of any Hotel where I may go from the station. This is necessary for two reasons, firstly because I am new to Zürich and do not know which hotel is likely to be good and comfortable. Moreover as the organisers of the lectures should bear the hospitality, I do not wish to be too expensive to them.

Since my stay in Zürich is limited to 30th – 3rd May, I can give any lectures on any of these days. I propose to leave Zurich for Warsaw on the 4th May.

Many thanks for your kind invitation. I gather from your letter that your house is far away from the town. So please as arrange that I may be kept informed of everything about the meeting and some one may take me to the place of the meeting.

I have heard that Zürich is a great centre of medical studies. Do you know of any one who is a recognised expert in blood-pressure. I am suffering from this trouble for the last 15 years and shall be glad to consult a really good expert. If there is any such expert, I shall be glad if you will kindly fin [sic] a time with him for me. I am sorry that I am troubling you in many ways for which please accept my humble apologies.

With best regards,
yours sincerely
S. N. Das Gupta

Commentary

Dasgupta's relief about finally getting an answer seems to have found expression in his addressing Jung as "My dear...". He even feels encouraged to ask Jung to fix an appointment with a heart specialist.

Because Dasgupta has not heard from Jung for such a long time, he seems to have made his plans for Warsaw, cutting his (hypothetical) stay in Zurich short by a few days, thus bringing to naught Jung's arrangements for the 5th and 6th of May.

From the extant letters we cannot understand why Dasgupta refers to an invitation by Jung or why he thinks that Jung's house is far from Zurich. Was there another letter of which no copy was kept?

The eighth letter

24.4.39

Dear Professor Jung,

Many thanks for your letter of the 20th April. Since I am not so sure about the Sunday trains, I propose to arrive in Zurich on the 1st May Monday at 15.43 and shall stay there till the 3rd inst. I am free for lectures on any of these days. I have heard from Miss Wolff but have not heard anything from Professor Wehali [sic].

With best regards,
yours sincerely
S. N. das Gupta

P. S. If you wish you may [one word cut out due to the perforation of the sheet for the file; probably "get"] a lecture on the 1st also – say on Indian Mysticism.

[added at the bottom of the page:]
Professor Jung

Commentary

There is no copy of a letter by Jung written on the 20th April.

Dasgupta seems to be slightly ill at ease, cutting his stay in Zurich even shorter and suggesting yet another lecture, maybe trying to make up for the troubles he is causing Jung.

Neither Prof. Abegg nor Prof. Wehrli ever contacted Dasgupta – their interest in meeting him seems not to have been very keen (contrary to Jung's assumptions).

The P. S. is added by hand.

The ninth letter

April 25th, 1939

Professor S. N. Das Gupta,
Hotel Excelsior,
Roma.

Dear Professor Das Gupta,

As I shall still be away on Sunday April 30th I should prefer if you would come to Zürich on May 1st. I expect you to stay at my house. The distance from town is not very great and my car will take care of you. Please let me know the time of your arrival in Zürich on Monday, so that I can fetch you at the station.

As you know your lecture will be on Wednesday 8 p.m. at the Psychological Club. I haven't heard from Prof. Wehrli, so I'm afraid that will be the only lecture I could arrange for you, unless you have heard from Prof. Wehrli directly.

I shall try to arrange for an appointment for you with one of our specialists.

Sincerely yours,
[no signature]

Commentary

This letter is the answer to Dasgupta's letter dated April 22 (7th letter of this correspondence).

The tenth letter

Excelsior Roma
25.4.39

My dear Professor Jung,

Many thanks for your kind letter of the 24th inst and for the very kind hospitality that you have offered me in your own house for which I feel extremely grateful to you. I hope to star [sic] from Milan on the 1st May Monday and to arrive at Zurich at 15.43 that is 3.43 p.m. the same day. If you wish me to arrive on the 3rd instead of on the 1st kindly wire on receipt of this letter. I am very thankful for your kind proposal to send your car to the station to fetch me.

With best regards,
yours sincerely
S. N. Das Gupta

Commentary

I think that by now Dasgupta feels so indebted to Jung (for organising and reorganising lectures, for [maybe] fixing a date with a heart-specialist, for inviting him to his home and fetching him at the station) that he might have wished he had never suggested to go to Zurich. In any case his proposal to arrive on the very day of his lecture, thus reducing his stay in Zurich to just one day, could have been triggered off by a wish not to burden Jung any more with his presence.

6.3. Conclusions

In an age of e-mail correspondence the exchange of letters between Dasgupta and Jung is nearly painful to read, with its inefficiency due to the lack of immediacy in communication. After a quick and enthusiastic start, things ground to a halt because either Dasgupta's original second letter had got lost in the mail or was misplaced in Jung's office, or because Jung had failed to reply to it in time and then was afraid that his answer would not reach Calcutta before Dasgupta's departure. In case Jung got the original letter (as he claimed) it is not clear why he did not send a reply to Dasgupta's address in Rome. Whatever may have happened, the fact remains that between early February and the second half of April 1939 Dasgupta did not hear from Jung. By then his planned visit to Zurich was only two weeks away and he had no idea whether he would be able to go to Switzerland at all. This is the reason why he preponed his trip to Warsaw. When he finally received a letter from Jung in Rome (Jung's second letter), where the Swiss psychologist announced to the Indian philosopher that he had organised two lectures for him, on May 5th and 6th, Dasgupta could not (or did not want to) change his arrangements for Poland and replied that he would have to leave Zurich on May 4th (cf. Dasgupta's fifth letter). Thus, Jung's plans were annihilated and he had to organise another lecture.

Because of Jung's long silence Dasgupta had started feeling slightly awkward (after all it had been his idea to go to Zurich and not Jung's). This is reflected in his endeavour to multiply possible topics on which he could speak and in the increasing modesty of his expectation as far as remuneration is concerned (only travelling and lodging). On the other hand he does not hesitate to ask Jung for an appointment with a heart specialist (apologising for the troubles he is causing). This is possibly an indication of the seriousness and medical acuteness of his high blood-pressure but also of his trust in Jung.

Unfortunately we do not know anything about Jung's reaction when he saw that he had to reorganise the lectures at short notice and also to look for a heart specialist. He always remained very polite in his letters to Dasgupta and even invited him to stay at his home. This kindness seemed to have increased Dasgupta's sense of embarrassment – in the end he went so far as to suggest to go to Zurich just for one day, the day of his lecture.

Nothing is known about Dasgupta's visit to Zurich and to Jung's house. In Dasgupta's letters written in 1939 and published by Surama, Jung is not mentioned once, and, as far as I know, Jung does not refer to Dasgupta in his writings on India and Yoga. Their exchange of letters seems to have ended with Dasgupta's missive sent just before leaving Italy for Switzerland; no letter dating from afterwards has been preserved.

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