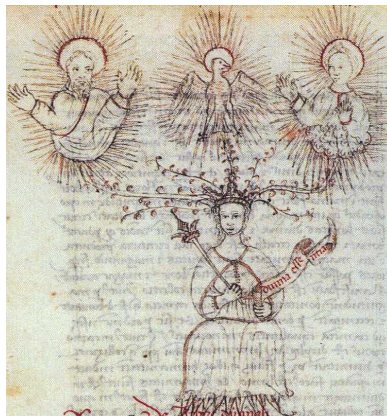


**Bringing the Divine down into Man: the building-up of the yoga path**  
**Trazendo o Divino para Dentro do Homem: a Construção do Sistema do Yoga**  
**Das Göttliche in den Menschen bringen: Die Konstruktion des Yoga**



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**Resumo:** O autor analisa a evolução do Yoga como uma disciplina ascética, desde o tempo da absorção dos habitantes originais da Índia pelas tribos arianas, que ali chegaram numa época proto-histórica. Ritos austeros, práticas mágicas, exercícios de controle respiratório e atitudes ascéticas dos habitantes locais foram incorporados na metafísica e na religião Védicas, e também no Yoga pré-clássico. A descoberta do poder das práticas ascéticas e meditacionais permitiu um distanciamento progressivo dos yogis em relação a práticas religiosas externas, tais como sacrifícios realizados com a intenção de favorecer os deuses, e a um avanço paralelo da visão do Yoga como um tipo de sacrifício em si mesmo, fundamentado na associação – entendida como uma ligação ou [re]união – entre o “Self”/a Alma vivente (âtman; jivâtman) do homem e a norma eterna (sanatana dharma), o “Senhor das Criaturas” (Prajâpati), o Ser Supremo (Parameshtin; Brahman; Shiva do Shaivismo; Vishnu do Vaishnavismo), ou a força ou poder (Shakti do Shaktismo [Tantrismo]) que torna a vida possível e que mantém o cosmos. Através de uma revisão do tema do Purusha (sânscrito para “pessoa; homem”, mas também para “Homem Universal; homem-deus”) em algumas referências clássicas da literatura indiana – incluindo o Rigveda, o Atharvaveda, muitos Upanishads, porções relevantes do Mahâbhârata (particularmente do Bhagavad-Gîtâ, e também do Mokshadharma e de outras seções do Shânti Parva), o Yoga-Sûtra de Patañjali (texto fundador do Yoga clássico), o Bhâgavata-Purâna, o Yoga-Vâsishtha atribuído a Vâlmîki, e o Kulârnavâ-Tantra (um texto essencial ao Tantra-yoga), entre outros –, percebe-se uma articulação que consolida a autonomia humana e o status superior do homem no universo, dando lugar à idéia de que pode-se ser “iluminado”, e que o status de Deus-no-homem pode ser alcançado, tanto através do conhecimento (jñâna) quanto através do yoga – o modo de “iluminação” associado com o controle e a estabilidade da mente, e com a obtenção de uma consciência trans-racional. Práticas de meditação e concentração “transcendental” progressivamente [re]dirigem-se para uma situação onde o corpo é valorizado como um tipo de “templo”, que deve ser apropriadamente construído e

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cuidado de modo a permitir e favorecer o encontro e assimilação final entre o homem e o Divino.

**Abstract:** The author analyzes the evolution of Yoga as an ascetic discipline, since the time of the absorption of the local inhabitants by the Aryan tribes, that settled in India in proto-historic times. Austerity vows, magical practices, breath control exercises and ascetic attitudes of the locals were incorporated in Vedic metaphysics and religion, and also in pre-classical Yoga. The discovery of the power of ascetic/meditational practices gave rise to a progressive distantiation of the yogis from external religious practices such as sacrifices, intended to propitiate the gods, and to a parallel advance of the view of yoga as a kind of sacrifice in itself, grounded on the association - thought as a binding or [re]union - between the Self/the living Soul (*âtman*; *jivâtman*) of man and the eternal norm (*sanatana dharma*), the “Lord of Creatures” (*Prajâpati*), the Supreme Being (*Parameshtin*; *Brahman*; *Shiva* of Shaivism; *Vishnu* of Vaishnavism), or the force or power (*Shakti* of Shaktism [Tantrism]) that makes life possible and maintains the cosmos. Through a review of the *Purusha* (Sanskrit for “person; man”, but also for “Universal man; man-god”) theme in some classical Indian literary references - encompassing the *Rigveda*, the *Atharvaveda*, many *Upanishads*, relevant portions of the *Mahâbhârata* (particularly of the *Bhagavad-Gîtâ*, and of the *Mokshadharma* and other sections of the *Shânti Parva*), the *Yoga-Sûtra* of *Patañjali* (the founding text of classical yoga), the *Bhâgavata-Purâna*, the *Yoga-Vâsishtha* attributed to *Vâlmîki*, and the *Kulârnavâ-Tantra* (an essential text to tantra-yoga), among others -, an articulation that consolidates human autonomy and superior status in the universe is perceived, giving way to the idea that one can be “enlighted”, and the God-in-man status can be achieved, both through knowledge (*jñâna*) and through yoga - the way of enlightenment associated with bodily and mental control and stability, and with the achievement of trans-rational conciousness. Purely “transcendental” meditation and concentration practices progressively [re]turn to a situation where the body is valued as a kind of “temple”, that must be appropriately constructed and cared for in order to allow and to favour the final encounter and assimilation between man and the Divine.

**Palavras-chave:** *Purusha*, *Yoga*, *Rigveda*, *Atharvaveda*, *Upanishads*.

**Keywords:** *Purusha*, *Yoga*, *Rigveda*, *Atharvaveda*, *Upanishads*.

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## Introduction

Yoga as an ascetic discipline probably originated in the austerity vows/magical practices (vrata) of a religious group called the vrâtya, “magicians and masters of breath control, familiar from the Âtharvaveda ([AV], XV), who were also known to have practiced sexual rites linked to agricultural magic and fertility” (JAYAKAR, 1980: 34. The question of the pre-Aryan contribution to the AV is open for discussion). For HAUER (1927), the vrâtya (cf. AV, IV.11, and Rigveda [RV], VII.103.1, and see also LUBIN: 2001) represented a mysterious fraternity belonging to the first Aryans [proto-Aryans?] to settle in India (Aryans outside the sphere of the Vedic culture, who were admitted into brahmanic circles by means of a specific sacrifice, the vrâtyastoma), but their ascetic practices are not easily distinguishable from experiences common to pre-Aryan aboriginal populations.

On the other hand, the Mânava-DharmaShâstra (Manu-Samhitâ; Manu-Smriti; “Laws of Manu”, trans. Bühler), speaks of the vrâtya as Aryans “who have not received their sacrament at their proper time”, as “outcasts”, “excluded from the Sâvitrî [= the Gâyatrî; RV, III.62.10] (initiation) and despised by the Aryans” (II.39), and furthermore as “those sons whom the twice-born [= the brahmins] beget on wives of equal caste, but who, not fulfilling their sacred duties, are excluded from the Sâvitrî” (X.20). Finally, KARMAKAR (1950), following an opinion already advanced by M. Winternitz (Die Vrâtyas. Zeitschrift für Buddhismus, 1924-25: 48 & 31), considers the vrâtya as non-Aryans. Other types of ascetics known to us through the Vedas - such as the brahmachâri, the keshinah, the muni, the yati, and others (see f. ex. AV, XI.5.6-7; RV, X.136, and KAELBER, 1989: 109-124) - have traces common to the yogis, though the Vedic inspired/poetic language, expressing itself through homologies, metaphors and enigmas, is not easy to interpret.

In a certain moment of Indian history, there seems to have existed a desire, a move and an action of the Aryan tribes to absorb the local inhabitants (maybe a reflex of that could be seen in the fact that the AV was first called Âtharva-Ângirasa, “[collections of hymns] of the Atharvans and Angiras”, while most of the authors of Rigvedic hymns were Angiras), and from the fusion of the Aryans and the locals two tendencies emerged: the mârgî or Vedic, intended to propitiate the gods through rituals, incantations and sacrifice, and the deshî or non-Vedic, concerned with vrata and Tantra, aiming at controlling and changing the course of things (JAYAKAR, 1980: 34-35) [The etymology of the word Tantra is doubtful. It may derive from tan, “to spread; to continue; to tie” and tra, “that which is (to be) thought”; or maybe it comes from tantr “to rule; to control; to maintain (through discipline)”, and tra “protect;

preserve (from the samsâra cycle of existences)". Some thinkers say Tantra explains, *tanoti*, the knowledge about *tattva* ("truth; fundamental principle") and *mantra* (sacred syllables, series of syllables, or godly names) - thence coming Tantra].

Mârgî and *deshî* tendencies have never been completely apart in Indian thought (see ELIADE, 1958: 108-113), and the question of the extension of their blending - particularly in the case of yoga, in our concern - is still open to debate. The discovery of the power of ascetic/meditational practices gave rise to pre-classical Yoga (before the specific *darshana* - skt. for "view; sight"; "system [of perception]" - organized by Patañjali), and in a certain moment "[the yogis] could achieve a kind of immortality, equal or indeed superior to that of the gods, through his own individual efforts" (O'FLAHERTY, 1976: 80). It is important to note here that immortality (*amrita*), an attribute of the soul, is not eternal life (*chiranjîvitva*), an utopic goal for the body.

By reviewing the trajectory of the *Purusha* (Sanskrit for "person; man", but also for "Universal man; man-god") theme in classical Indian written references, we try to show a metaphysical articulation between man and the divine - traced back to its Vedic registry [seen as encompassing "vedicized" elements], and analyzed forth along its course in time - that consolidates human autonomy and superior status in the universe. Special attention will be given to the appropriation and interpretation of the *Purusha* theme in the construction of the path of yoga, from its pre-classical instances to its position as classical *darshana*, firmly established in Indian tradition.

## **The Purusha theme and the building up of the Yoga path**

### **1) The Purusha theme in the Vedic hymns**

Somewhere in the trajectory of Indian thought, as a result of the association between the living soul (*jivâtman*) and the eternal norm (*sanatana dharma*) or "Supreme Self" (*Paramâtman*), between man and the universe, man's spiritual Self (*Âtman*) was identified with the *Skambha* ([cosmic/ontologic] "Pillar", "Support", "Axis") of the universe, resulting in the idea that he who knows *Brahman* in man [= *Âtman*], knows the "Lord of Creatures" (*Prajâpati*), the "Supreme Being" (*Parameshtin*), and he who knows the Supreme Being knows the *skambha* (*Atharvaveda* [AV], X.7.17, and X.8.43-44). The AV, X.7.15, asks: "In whom, as Man [*Purusha*], deathlessness [*amrita*] and death [*mrityu*] combine,/to whom belong the surging ocean/and all the arteries [*nadî*] that course within him;/Tell me of that Support [*Skambha*] - who may

he be?”. The “[Divine] Person” (Purusha) is apprehended as the highest expression of divinity, and “one who knows Purusha thinks ‘This is Brahman’, for all devatâ (divinities) are seated in him” (AV, XI.8.32, trans. Edgerton).

The Rigvedic hymn known as the Purushasûkta, “Purusha hymn”, defends the identity of the universe, God and man: “1. A thousand [= innumerable; infinite. Cf Yajurveda, XXXI] heads hath Purusha, a thousand eyes, a thousand feet. On every side pervading earth [bhûmi, ‘land’; the universe] he fills a space ten fingers (dasha-amgula) wide./ 2. This Purusha is all that yet hath been and all that is to be (Purusha eva idam sarvam yat bhûtam yat ca bhavyam); the Lord of immortality which waxes greater still by food (anna)./ 3. So mighty is his greatness; yea, greater than this is Purusha. All creatures [= external reality] are one-fourth of him, three fourths [= hidden reality] live in eternal heaven” (Rigveda [RV], X.90.1-3; trans. Griffith).

In the Shatapatha Brâhmana, I.2.3.6 and I.6.1.20 (trans. Eggeling), we find apparent references to the Purushasûkta: “At first, the gods offered up Man as the [sacrificial] victim (...). The sacrificer is Prajapâti [= Purusha as the “Lord of Creatures”] at his own sacrifice (yajñâ)”. This yajña is called sarvahut, the “offering of all”: Brahma, the creative aspect of Purusha, is the yajamâna, the sacrificer; the devas ([demi]gods), who are Purusha’s senses, are the attending priests (ritviks); prakriti (nature) is barhis, the sacrificial altar; Purusha’s heart is the sacrificial pyre; the vishvarûpa mahâkâya, Purusha’s body representing all creation, is the havi (the fire offering); and Purusha is the deity worshiped through the agnihotra (fire ritual). Many of the verses of the Brâhmanas (manuals of instructions for the practical use of data found in the samhîtâ, arrangements of Vedic chants and yajña-related texts), end up this way: “one who knows the sacrifice of creation is liberated [still] in this birth” (evam srishthiyajñâm yo jânâti as janmanîha mukto bhavati).

Ralph GRIFFITH (1992: 602, notes 1 & 2) explains that Purusha is the “embodied spirit, or Man personified and regarded as the soul and original source of the universe, the personal and life-giving principle in all animated beings”, that the “space ten fingers wide” is the “region of the heart of man, wherein the soul was supposed to reside. Although as the Universal Soul he [Purusha] pervades the universe, as the Individual Soul he is enclosed in a space of narrow dimensions”, and that “to wax greater still by food” means to grow greater “by the sacrificial offerings of men” (implying that creation/life feeds on itself). The importance of sacrifice will be later reverted, in the Upanishads (already in the so-called Vedic ones), by the working of the Âtman (the Self) within man, rendering the external sacrifice (yajña) unnecessary (see below, Brihadâranjaka-Upanishad, I.4.10).

According to Raimundo (Ramón) PANIKKAR (1977: part I, chapter A, section 5), the importance of the cosmotheandric perspective of the Purusha hymn is this: Without God and man, the cosmos is any-thing, sheer chaos “without consistency and being”; God without man [and the cosmos] is “nothing, literally no-thing”, and man without God [and without his “internal and constitutive link with the whole of reality”] is “exclusively a thing” - outside of his relations, “any life of contemplation would become sheer egoism or a kind of spiritual narcissism. It would become the ivory tower of a would-be reality, rather than the building of a temple containing all that is”.

The association between man and the eternal “all this” (*idam sarvam*; the universe) is perceived by some as pantheistic, but the truth is that the central presupposition of Hindu thinking is that behind everything we experience as the world there is a cosmic support (*skambha*)/a fundamental order (*rita*), norm/rule (*dharma*), truth (*satya*), binding homology (*bandhu*), link (*nidāna*), unity, design, system, organization, flow, rythm, harmony, breath or vitality. When considered in relation to the “condition and possibility of Being itself”, this onto-cosmologic foundation is “that naked ‘thatness’, *tat-tva*, which renders reality intelligible in its manifold character and also gives a basis to all that is” (PANIKKAR, *op. & loc. cit.*; section 3).

When apprehended in relation to the immanent reality, this onto-cosmologic foundation is “this” (*idam*); in relation to the transcendent reality, it is “That One” (*Ekam Sat*; RV, I.164.6) or simply (in the Upanishads) “That” (*Tad*). When perceived in an anthropocentric perspective, it is *Ātman*, the primordial unit of the Self; when seen in a cosmocentric perspective, it is “three-fourths of Purusha” - later (but not yet in the RV), *Brahman* ” (PANIKKAR, *op. & loc. cit.*; section 5).

The importance of the Purusha hymn can be perceived from the fact that it is the only hymn to be found in all four Vedas. The Atharvaveda [AV] rendering of the Purusha hymn, after stating that the creator, *Brahman*, is “the single God [who] put sacrifice in Man” (AV, X.2.14; trans. Zaehner) but, not withstanding, assuming that Purusha (see also AV, XI.8.4; XIX.6, etc.) creates himself (AV, X.2.21), provides a dubious etymology for the word *purusha*, acting as a link between *Brahman* and Man: “Brought forth above, brought forth athwart,/ All cardinal points did [Universal] Man [Purusha] pervade -,/ [Yes, Man] who *Brahman*’s city (*pur*) knows,/ By which he is called [Universal] ‘Man’ (Purusha)” (AV, X.2.4). The word *purusha* is made to derive from *puri-shaya*, “[he] who rests in the citadel [of the body]”. Man deepest Self, toward which the ascetic and sage travels, is called the true “city of *Brahman*” in the *Chândogya-Upanishad* (VIII.1.4 & 1.5), and in the

Bhagavad-Gîtâ (BG, V.13-14), dehî, the corporified âtman, is called prabhuh, the master of the city (BG, V.13) of the body.

## 2) The Purusha theme in the Upanishads

The Brihadâranyaka-Upanishad [BU] reworks the Purusha theme by assuming the identity of the universe, Brahman, Âtman and man. We can read there that “In the beginning this [universe] was Self [Âtman] alone, in the shape [= likeness] of a person (purusha)” (I.4.1; trans. Max Müller). Man is elevated to a privileged status, as we can see in BU, II.1.2-13; “(...) Whoso thus knows that he is Brahman, becomes this whole [universe]. Even the gods have not the power to cause him to un-Be, for he becomes their own self...” (BU, I.4.10; trans. Zaehner. In M. Müller, “(...) he who thus knows that he is Brahman, becomes all this, and even the Devas cannot prevent it, for he himself is their Self...”).

These passages can be seen in articulation with four other in the Upanishads that consolidate human autonomy and superior status: 1) in the Kaushitaki (I.5.5-6, trans. Max Müller), the righteous man (purusha) finds out “That”, before whom even the gods [Indra and Prajâpati] flee, for he is the Self of all living things and all elements, the Real, “That which is, the true (Sat-tyam)”, the universe, “all this whatever there is”; 2) in the Maitrâyanîya-Brahmaya [or Maitrî; Maitrâyana] (IV.4, trans. Max Müller), the ascetic, “by knowledge, by penance, by meditation”, can “gain Brahman”, and “go beyond Brahman, and to a divinity higher than the gods”, obtaining “bliss imperishable, infinite, and unchangeable”; 3) in the Taittîriya (trans. Max Müller), the yogi is the man who “obtains lordship, he reaches the lord of the mind. He becomes lord of speech, lord of sight, lord of hearing, lord of knowledge” (I.6.2), and enjoys a bliss (ânanda) a billion times superior to that of the highest gods (II.8), so that a yogi can boast: “I am the first-born of the Right (Rta [the world-order]). Before the Devas I was in the centre of all that is immortal (...). I overcome the whole world” (III.10.6).

Furthermore, 4) in the Mundaka-Upanishad (I.2.7) the Vedic sacrifices are compared to frail rafts floating in the broad ocean - while the MahâNirvâna-Tantra [MT] states that, in the kali-yuga (marked by ignorance, greed and fraud) in which the world presently is, “Vedic rites and mantras (...) are now as powerless as snakes, the poison-fangs of which are drawn and are like to that which is dead” (MT, II.15; trans. Woodroffe), though in the beginning, in satya-yuga [marked by truth], Vedic practices were efficacious, yielding immediate fruits (MT, II.14. See also MT, I.36-42).

In polar opposition to the frail sacrificial rafts of the Mundaka, I.2.7, the Shvetashvatâra-Upanishad [SU], II.8 (trans. Max Müller), teaches: “If a wise man hold his body with its three erect parts (chest, neck, and head) even, and turn his senses with the mind towards the heart, he will then in the boat of Brahman cross all the torrents which cause fear”. Here, the “boat of Brahman” is a technical term for the body in meditation, replacing the external sacrifice as a vehicle of passage to the divine realm. The body can be a vehicle to the Absolute as long as, in the SU, I.15 (trans. Max Müller), “the Self [Âtman (=Brahman)] is seized within the self [= in one’s own self (âtmani)], if a man looks for Him by truthfulness [satya] and penance [tapas]” (evam âtma-âtmani grhihyate’sal satyenainam tapasâ yo’nupashyati). We hear from a boat again in the Bhagavad-Gîtâ [BG] (IV.36; trans. De Nicolás): “even if you were among sinners the worse of sinners, you will cross beyond all evil (vriinam) by the boat of knowledge (jñâna-plavena)”. The knowledge (jñâna) mentioned here is that presented in the passage immediately precedent (BG, IV.35) - namely, that all the living beings are just a part of Brahman - and it must be remembered that already in the Rigveda we read that the brahmachâri (someone mind-oriented to the state of Brahman) engaged in duty “is a member of the God’s own body” (RV, X.109.5; trans. Griffith). With its strong personal theism, in the BG the liberating knowledge is often knowledge of the mystic truth of God’s nature (IV.9-10; VII.19; X.3; XIV.1 ff.), but elsewhere in the BG (viz., XIII.31-34) it is knowledge of the independence of the [divine] Âtman from the material nature (prakrityâ; BG, XIII.29) of the body, from all [non-spiritual] acts and qualities (BG, XIII.29 ff., paralleling V.13 ff.).

The attainment to divine power is thus explained in the Shvetashvatâra-Upanishad [SU] (I.3; trans. Max Müller): “The sages, devoted to meditation and concentration, have seen the power belonging to God himself...”. The Purusha hymn is then refashioned to suit the ascetic path: “7. Those who know beyond this [beyond Rudra] the High Brahman, the vast, hidden in the bodies of all creatures, and alone enveloping everything, as the Lord, they become immortal./ 8. I know that great person (purusha) of sunlike lustre beyond the darkness, A man who knows him truly, passes over death; there is no other path to go./ 9. This whole universe is filled by this person (purusha), to whom there is nothing superior, from whom there is nothing different, than whom there is nothing smaller or larger, who stands alone, fixed like a tree in the sky./ 10. That which is beyond this world is without form and without suffering. They who know it, become immortal, but others suffer pain indeed./ That Bhagavat [= Brahman] exists in the faces, the heads, the necks of all, he dwells in the cave (of the heart) of all beings, he is all-pervading,



therefore he is the omnipresent Shiva./ 12. That person (purusha) is the great lord; he is the mover of existence, he possesses that purest power of reaching everything; he is light, he is undecaying./ 13. The person (purusha), not larger than a thumb, dwelling within, always dwelling in the heart of man, is perceived by the heart, the thought, the mind; they who know it become immortal./ 14. The person (purusha) with a thousand heads, a thousand eyes, a thousand feet, having compassed the earth on every side, extends beyond it by ten fingers' breadth [cf. RV, X.90.1]./ 15. The person alone (purusha) is all this, what has been and what will be; he is also the lord of immortality; he is whatever grows by food" (SU, III. 7-15; our underlinings).

In conformity with the paraphrase of the last clause in the Bhâgavata-Purâna (trans. Burnouf; cit. by GRIFFITH, 1992: 602, n. 2), purusha is immortal "since he has transcended mortal nutriment". It is believed that, in the SU version of the Purusha hymn, an attempt is made to harmonize the two ideas of sacrifice and spiritual ascent through meditation and concentration. Spiritual ascent is also seen in the SU as only half the way to, or only one side of, full inspiration, the other way or side being God's revelation: The sage Shvetasvatâra reaches truth "through the power of his penance [tapah prabhâva] and through the grace of God [deva prashâda]" (SU, VI.21) [on the unfolding of the idea of tapas ("heat", "heated effort", then "ferveat application", "austerity", "penance", "purification", "asceticism") in Indian thought, see BLAIR, 1961, and KÄELBER, 1989. On the place of tapas in Patañjali's yoga, see Yoga-Sûtra, II.1; II.32; II.43; IV.1].

The Chândogya-Upanishad [CU] states that the ether (space) outside of a person is the same as the ether within a person; the space within a person is the same space within the heart (CU, II.12.7-9; trans. Max Müller), for "as large as this ether (all space) is, so large is that ether within the heart. Both heaven and earth are contained within it" (CU, VIII.1.3; see also VIII.3.3. Conformably, we read in the Mahâ-Nârâyana-Upanishad, X.10.1 [quoted in VARENNE, 1976: 45]: "tinier than the tiniest, vaster than the vastest, the Soul is inserted in the most secret part of the creature"). For this reason, one can reach "heaven" without moving outside of himself; he who knows the "five men of Brahma, the doorkeepers of the heavenly (Svarga) world" reaches and enters that world (CU, III.13.6). Those five doorkeepers, or "five gates belonging to the Devas (the senses)" (III.13.1) are the five classic types of breath (see EWING, 1901, and FILLIOZAT, 1949: 142): "1.(...) The eastern gate is the prâna (up-breathing), that is the eye, that is Aditya (the sun[-god]).... / 2. The southern gate is the vyâna (backbreathing), that is the ear, that is the moon[-god]... / 3. The western gate is the apâna (downbreathing), that is speech, that is Agni ([the] fire [-god])... / 4. The

northern gate is the samâna (on-breathing), that is mind, that is Parjanya ([the] rain[-god]).../ 5. The upper gate is the udâna (out-breathing), that is air [Vayu], that is ether. Let a man meditate on that as strength and greatness. He who knows this, becomes strong and great” (CU, III.13). The association between “gates” to the body, physiologic functions and heavenly bodies or natural elements recalls the effort to attune the ideas of yoga practices and Vedic sacrifice. The same tendency can be perceived in the Vaikhânâsasmârta-Sûtra (II.18; trans. Caland), where Âtman stands for the sacrificer, and body parts and physiologic functions substitute for ritual objects, for libations, and even for the agnihotra sacrifice.

In the CU we can find other teachings of the “yogi” path [in fact, in its technical sense, the word yoga appears for the first time in the Upanishads Taittîriya (II.4) and Katha (II.12, and VI.2)]: “There are a hundred and one arteries (nâdî) of the heart; one of them penetrates the crown of the head (the Sahasrâra-chakra or Brahmarandhra); moving upwards by it a man reaches the immortal” (CU, VIII.6.5, trans. Max Müller. The Atharvaveda already mentions the various nâdî [XV.15.2-9] and chakra, vital energy vortices [X, II, 31]). The Maitrâyanîya-Brahmaya (Maitrî)-Upanishad [MU] (VI.21, trans. Max Müller) mentions the prâna (vital energy; cf. RV, X.90.13) nâdî (channel) named sushumnâ, leading upwards to the crown of the head, and advocates the power of a specific combination of mudrâ and prânâyâma (“pressing the tip of the tongue down the palate [= doing the nabho or the more advanced kecharî mudrâ] and restraining voice, mind, and breath” - VI.20; “turning the tip of the tongue to the palate, without using any of the organs of sense; (...) having successfully fixed the breath, after it had be restrained, in the palate [in the vyomachakra]” - VI.21), besides that of mantra yoga - “as the spider, moving upward by the thread, gains free space, thus also he who meditates, moving upwards by the syllable Om, gains independence” (VI.22).

This independence is thus described”: the ascetic “sees Brahman by discrimination (tarka). And when, after the cessation of mind, he sees his own Self, smaller than small, and shining, as the Highest Self, then having seen his Self as the Self (see the Bhagavad-Gîtâ, XIII.24, and the Bhâgavata-Purâna, II.2.16), he becomes Self-less, and because he is Self-less, he is without limit, without cause, absorbed in thought. This is the highest mystery, viz. final liberation” (VI.20). Together with tarka (contemplative discrimination), consistently with the MU (VI.18), the other elements of shadanga (sextuple) yoga are prânâyâma (“breath” [vital energy] control), pratyâhâra (sense-withdrawal), dhyâna (meditation), dhâranâ (sustained attention) and samâdhi (enstasy). Classical Yoga, as it is exposed in the Yoga Sûtra of Patañjali (II.29),

introduces instead of tarka three other elements, yama ([ethical] restraint), niyama (discipline) and âsana (posture), resulting in ashtânga (octuple) yoga.

In an attempt to conciliate ascetic practices and external sacrifice, the Upanishads present homologies between physiological functions and the sacrificial scenario and ceremonies (CU, III.17.1-5; BU, VI.2.12), between bodily parts or functions and sections of the Vedic chant (CU, II.11.1, and II.19.1), and, as if summarizing all that, between a person's life and a sacrifice (CU, III.16) - verily, purusho vâva yajña ("Man is sacrifice"; CU, III.16, trans. Max Müller). Bringing together Vedic and tantric ideas, the BU (VI.4.3) compares the various parts of the female body to religious objects, while the CU compares the various parts of the Vedic chant (sâman) with the diverse steps of the sexual intercourse: "One summons, that is the syllable him [= the hinkara, preliminary vocalizing]. He makes request, that is a prastâva [introductory praise]. Along with the woman, he lies down, that is the udgîha [loud chant]. He lies on the woman, that is the pratihâra [response]. He comes to the end, that is the nidhana [conclusion]. He comes to the finish, that is the nidhana. This is the Vamadevya chant woven on sex intercourse" (CU, II.1.13.1, trans. S. Radhakrishnan). In the Aitareya-Brâhmana (I.3, trans. Keith), the iniciatic symbolism of the sacrifice is exposed in terms of gynecologic and obstetric analogies.

In conformity with the Maitrî-Upanishad (VI.18, trans. Max Müller), "when beholding by Yoga, he [= the yogi] beholds the gold-coloured maker, the lord, the person (Purusha), Brahman, the cause, then the sage, leaving behind good and evil, makes everything (breath, organs of sense, body, etc.) to be one in the Highest Indestructible (in the pratyajâtman or Brahman)". Thus it is said in the Ahirbudhnya-Samhitâ (XXXI.15, cit. by FEUERSTEIN, 1974: 69) that "The re-linking of the individual self with the supreme Self is what is called Yoga" (Samyogo yoga ity-ukto jiva-atmâ-parama-âtmanoh), and from the MahâNirvâna-Tantra (XIV.123, trans. Woodroffe) we learn that "Yoga is the union of the embodied soul [the individual self] (yogo jîva-âtamanor-aikyam) and the Supreme Soul".

This "linkage talk" could be seen as contradicting the Shaivist yogi king Bhoja in his affirmation that "yoga is separation" (yogah viyogah; Râja-Mârtanda [Râjamârtanda-Vritti or Bhoja-Vritti], I.1), if we don't have in mind that a separation between "everything" and Brahman, between the senses and the Self, can be perceived as truly existing in the material dimension, while an "all-pervading" imperceptible reality binds everything together in the plane of the cosmic Purusha, as can be learned from the Katha-Upanishad (II.6.6-11; trans. Max Müller): "6. Having understood that the senses are distinct (from the

Âtman), and that their rising and setting (their waking and sleeping) belongs to them in their distinct existence (and not to the Âtman), a wise man grieves no more./ 7. Beyond the senses is the mind, beyond the mind is the highest (created) Being, higher than that Being is the Great Self, higher than the Great, the highest Undeveloped./ 8. Beyond the Undeveloped is the Person (Purusha), the all-pervading and entirely imperceptible. Every creature that knows him is liberated, and obtains immortality./ 9. His form is not to be seen, no one beholds him with the eye. He is imagined by the heart, by wisdom, by the mind. Those who know this, are immortal./ 10. When the five instruments of knowledge [= the senses] stand still together with the mind, and when the intellect does not move, that is called the highest state./ 11. This, the firm holding back of the senses, is what is called Yoga. He must be free from thoughtlessness then, for Yoga comes and goes". Common sensorial/mental thinking is here perceived as "thoughtlessness", and Yoga is here presented as a separation that, in another dimension, is indeed a (re)-union (as a method and as a goal). When considering the limited forms of existence, the absolutely unconditioned state "beyond everything" is seen as a liberation (moksha) - and we read in the Râja-Mârtanda (IV.22) of King Bhoja that "every science that does not occupy itself with liberation is useless". Conversely, when related to the Absolute, the unconditioned state is indeed an yoga (from the Sanskrit root yuj, "to leash, unite, join"). Clearing up the sense of some words, it must be remembered that "liberation does not entail the Âtman becoming one with Brahman. It rather entails the realization that they always have been one and the same. As a consequence, when man is 'liberated', he does not 'go anywhere'. The only movement that takes place is a cognitive one" (KAELBER, 1989: 99).

### **3) The Purusha theme in Bhagavad-Gitâ of the Mahâbhârata**

From its very beginning, the Purusha theme permeates the great Indian epic, the Mahâbhârata (MB; Calcutta edition of 1834. Passages sometimes numbered differently in Prabhupâda's ed.), attributed to Vyâsa. In the opening lines of book I (Adî Parva), we read that "Vyâsa sang of the ineffable greatness and splendour of Lord Vâsudeva, Who is the Source and Support for everything, who is Eternal, Unchanging, Self-luminous, who is the Purusha in all beings, and the Truthfulness and Righteousness of the Pândavas". According to the MB, Vâsudeva is the Deva ("Shining One"; the Supreme Being in the form of a personal God - Krishna [also known as the "son of Vâsudeva"] in the MB) that resides (vâsanat) in all beings ("The Lord stands in the heart of all beings..." - Îshvara sarva-bhutanam hrid-deshe ...

tishtati - BG, XVIII.61; trans. De Nicolás). In the Bhagavad-Gîtâ of the MB, Vâsudeva-Krishna is clearly identified with the Vedic god Vishnu (taken as the Supreme Being, or at least as its working aspect [vish = “to work”], from a Vaishnava point of view), the operating soul of all living entities.

The yoga-mediated relation between man/microcosmos and the Absolute/macrocosmos, centered in Purusha, is the object of many passages of the MB. In book III (Vana Parva) there are frequent allusions to the practice of yoga, and book V (Udyoga Parva) details at considerable extension with the observances of yoga. But the most important parts of the MB to the study of yoga (see also HOPKINS, 1901) probably are the Bhagavad-Gîtâ (“Song of the Exalted One”) - the most known part (ch. 23-40 of book VI [Bhîshma Parva or “Book of Bhîshma [the patriarch of the kuru dynasty]”) of the eighteen books of the MB -; the Mokshadharma (ch.168-353 of book XII [Shânti Parva or “Book of the Appeasement”]), and the Anu-Gîta (“Posterior Song”; ch. 23-40 of book XIV [Āsvamedha Parva or “Book of the Horse-sacrifice”]). Abstaining from commenting here on the Anu-Gîta, we will now deal with sections of the Bhagavad-Gîtâ [BG], to see what we can learn there about Purusha.

The BG (trans. De Nicolás, with amendments) assumes that, with the mind fastened (âsakta-manâh) on the Supreme Lord (Sri-Bhagavân), by practicing yoga (yogam yuñjan) (BG, VII.1), one can reach the knowledge that the Supreme Lord is the “manliness (paurusham) in man” (VII.8), man’s supreme prakriti (“nature” [in Prabhupâda’s trans., “energy”] - VII.5). The yogic discipline on the BG, similarly to that of the Upanishads, proposes that, through knowledge and realization of the Âdhyâtman (“supreme Self”), one overcomes identification with body and mind and acquires the knowledge that man as Âtman is identical with the Absolute. As absolute consciousness, “he whose actions are centered on Brahman becomes Brahman” (IV.24).

In the BG (trans. De Nicolás, with amendments) we read that “... the one reaching his own ultimate fulfillment in yoga/ finds [his âtman] in himself (svayam... âtmani) with time (kâlena)” (IV.38), and we also learn that “some yogins offer sacrifices to the gods, while others make sacrifice by sacrificing the sacrifice itself” (IV.24; see RV, X.90.16: “The devas [Purusha’s senses], by sacrifice, sacrificed the sacrifice...” - Yajñena yajña-mayajanta deva...). “Sacrificing the sacrifice” (yajñam yajñena) is the attitude of interiorizing one’s ultimate fulfillment in one’s Self (svayam; âtmani): “by meditation (dhyâna) some (kecid [= a person]) see[s] the Self (âtman) in the Self by the Self...” (dhyânena-âtmani pashyanti kecid âtmânânam âtmâna... – BG, XIII.24).

Referring back to XIII.22, we learn that the Self seen by the Self in the Self is no other than Maheshvara, the “Great Lord”, Paramâtmâ, the “Supreme Self”, also known as Purusha parah, “transcendental Purusha” (untranslated by De Nicolás) - the same as Parameshvara, the “Supreme Lord”, in XIII.27. Jean VARENNE (1976: 59-60) explains that, when one has reached the goal of yoga, one succeeds in seeing the âtman, but this vision can only occur “within the âtman itself” and “by means of the âtman”, “because the sight of the Absolute is by definition unitary and must necessarily abolish all duality. There is therefore no longer any knower [jñā] or any known [knowable; jñeyam] but only knowing (knowledge [jñānam]), which is then coincident with the Absolute”.

Finally, we learn from the BG, VIII.4 (trans. De Nicolás, with amendments; underlines ours), that “a perishable condition is the basis of the lower domain (adhibhûtam, lower ground); the purusha is the basis of the higher domain (adhidaivatam, the domain of the devas)”. Brahman is “the ground of all sacrifice (adhiyajñam) in the body (dehe)” (VIII.4). Aparâprakriti, the lower nature (see BG, VII.4) [of the vyakta, “manifested” nature – VIII.18], and Parâprakriti, the Superior nature (VII.5) [the avyakta, “unmanifested” nature (VIII.18); Pradhâna, “undeveloped nature”, in the Sâmkhya system], “are reconciled in the body through the sacrifice where the Self and the ground coincide” (DE NICOLÁS, 1976: 222; full explanation of “the problem of embodiment” in pp. 245-251).

#### 4) The Purusha theme in the Shânti Parva of the Mahâbhârata

In a passage of the Shânti Parva intended to “explain the Sâmkhya-knowledge” (MB, XII.11393) - perceived as knowledge of the evolutions of prakriti ([material] nature) and their comebackings into the avyaktaprakriti (unevolved [unmanifest] nature), we learn that the “Great Self” (Mahân Âtmâ; XII.11403 - see XII.13748-54 for other epithets, such as atmân [“self”], Ekâtman [“One Self”], Paramâtman [“Supreme self”], Mahâ-Purusha [“Great Purusha”], and Sarvâtmâ Purusho [“Universal-Self Purusha”]) is the “Overseer”, Adhishtâtar (XII.11401, XII.11404)/ the Kshetrajña (“Knower of the field”; MB, XII.6921 & XII.11405-6 - see BG, XIII) of prakriti (kshetra, “the [corporeal] field” – see BG, XIII.5-6).

The Great Self is called Purusha when it joins the evolutions of avyaktaprakriti (MB, XII.11405); it is also called pañcavinshaka, “the 25th [tattva, ‘principle’]” (XII.11406). In the MB, XII.11408, “the 25th [principle]” (the human soul) is called anîshvara (“that which has no lord”) - an epithet

that (from the point of view of the aishvara-yoga, “[doctrine of the] lordly union”, of the BG), as its synonym *Īshvara* (“Lord”; from *ish* “to rule; reign”), is applied not only to Brahman, but also to the human soul (seen as ultimately one with the Supreme Soul - see MB, XII.13713-763) - which is called *īshvara* (“lord [of the body]”) in the BG, XV.8, and which is regarded as one of the *jīvabhūtaḥ* (“living entities”) that constitute eternal (*sanātanaḥ*) fractions (*amśah*) of Brahman (BG, XV.7) - who is to be known as *Nārayāna* (MB, XII.13754), the divine that manifests itself in man (from *nāra*, “human; having to do with the human”, and *ayana*, “path; way”). In the MB, XII.11476, we learn further that “the 25th [principle]” is the *budhyamāna* (“formerly unenlightened” - *apratibuddha*, “not-perfectly enlightened” in XII.11465) soul, whereas “the 26th [principle]” is the soul that reaches *buddhi* (“enlightenment”) [the *buddha*, “enlightened”, as (one with) *Īshvara*].

Conscious to prevent any confusion arising from the fact that the *sāṅkhya* followers from the Epic Era admitted 25 fundamental principles (*tattva*) of existence, while the *yogins* admitted 26, the MB, XII.11464-5, states that “no principle higher than the 25th is declared, but the supreme principle of the *sāṅkhya* has been correctly described as that [soul] which is enlightened, and that which from a state of not-perfect enlightenment becomes enlightened in truth (*tattvataḥ*, ‘in regard to the principles’).” The [soul] becoming-enlightened and that [already] enlightened is declared to be [also] the substance of yoga teaching”. *Sāṅkhya* method is grounded in traditional teachings (*shastravinishcāyah*), while yoga is based on immediate (*supraconscious*) perception (*pratyakshahetava*) (see MB, XII.11043 ff.).

*Sāṅkhya* is the way of enlightenment through knowledge (*jñāna*; see BG, III.3, and V.1-5), while yoga is the way of enlightenment through action (*karma*; BG, III.3) associated with the mental stability (*samatvam*; BG, II.48) of the disciplined- (lit. “yoked”) intellect (*buddhi-yoga*; BG, II.49, referring back to II.39). Though analytically separated [“*sāṅkhya-knowledge*” is presented in the MB, XII.11655-73, while the yoga method - to be expressed in *yoga-balam*, “power” (XII.11675 ff.), and *yoga-kriyam*, “activity” (XII.11682; “active” or *karma-yoga* in the BG) - is exposed in XII.11679-702], they are really one, and only silly people separate them (XII.11677), for “there is no knowledge (*jñāna*) like *sāṅkhya*, no power (*bala*) like yoga, both go to the same end” (MB, XII.11676), and “the same that the *yogas* contemplate, that *sāṅkhya* also does”. In the BG, both ways, *sāṅkhya* and yoga (II.3), are seen as efficient (V.4) and similar (V.5).

In the *Mokshadharma* section of the MB, we read that yoga-activity has two instances (XII.11682), *saguna* (“qualified”; having the *gunas*, “qualities” of

prakriti) and nirguna (“qualityless”; beyond prakriti). The saguna instance consists in prânâyamâ (“vital energy” control, through control of the senses), while the nirguna instance consists in dhâranam manasah (fixation of manas, the mind)/ekâgratâ manasah (concentration of the mind) (XII.11375 and XII.11683-4) - first, there is fixation/concentration in the ahamkara (I-consciousness; XII.11689); then, the ahamkara must be fixed in the buddhi (discriminatory element; XII.11381) or in the âtman (self; XII.8784) [buddhi draws upon the intelligence and consciousness of âtman]; finally, âtman/buddhi must be concentrated in its prakriti (primal nature; XII.11384 and XII.11690), that is nothing else than the avyaktaprakriti (unevolved nature), meditated on (as the “eternal Lord and imperishible Brahman”; XII.11691), contemplated (XII.11386), and finally (XII.8789) lived as an equality (sâmyatâ) [between the human and the trans-human Purusha]. “Understand how and by what means men reach salvation through yoga. The person who, having mastered the subtle (sûkshma; ‘superior’) powers of yoga, ceases [from worldly activities], is emancipated (yogâishvaryam atikrânto yo nishkrâmati mucyate)” (XII.11685 ff.). Thus, yoga is a control/a restraint that finally releases. The subtle powers (siddhis, “perfect abilities”, or vibhûtis “acute; powerful [abilities]”) can lead the yogin to forget his final goal of self-transcendence (or transcendence-in-immanence), and the yogin who is delighted in undertakings to gain these powers does not gain emancipation (XII.7180).

## 5) The Purusha theme in Patañjali's Yoga-Sûtra

In the Yoga-Sûtra [YS] of Patañjali (III.35; our trans.) we read that “[passive] experience (bhoga) arises due to the non-discernment between sattva (ipseity) and [the absolutely unmixed] Purusha. [The practice of] discipline/control (samyama) of the essential goal [of Purusha] brings Self-knowledge (Purusha-jñâna), instead of a distinct goal (para-arthatva)”.

This passage is elucidated thus (II.20-25; our trans.): “20. The Seer (Drastâ; Drashtuh [I.3] - i.e., Purusha, the Ekarishi “Single Seer” of the Atharva Veda, X.7.14) is pure vision (= pure conscience/consciousness). Though pure, he sees through the contents of mind (pratyaya)./ 21. The seen (drishyam [III.18]; = existence; nature) exists for the Seer./ 22. Though ceasing to be for him who has reached his goal, yet it (drishy; the seen) exists for others, being common to them/ 23. The association (samyoga) [between the Seer and the seen, between Purusha and prakriti] is the cause of the realizing of the nature of the Owner (svâmin), and likewise of the owned (sva)./ 24. The cause [of



this association] is ignorance (avidyâ)./ 25. When ignorance is eliminated the association [with perceived things] disappears: the Seer (Drisheh) is liberated (= achieves the state of kaivalya, “absoluteness; exclusivity; uniqueness” (see ahead), without conditions or qualities - cf. III.55, and IV.22-34)”.

Brahmacharya, “continence” in thoughts, words and deeds, is one of the five virtues of the first stage (yama) of Patañjali’s yoga (YS, II.38). In keeping the Vedic precepts, the four stages (âshrama) of life for a Hindu (not described in the YS) are brahmacharya, grihashtha, vânaprastha, and sannyâsa. In the brahmacharya âshrama, the candidate develops mental abilities and the virtues that lead to spiritual life. The grihashtha âshrama (“stage of the householder”) requires marriage, having a family and an insertion among one’s peers, as a spiritual exercise of both self-control and expansion of one’s consciousness. The vânaprastha âshrama consists in an withdrawal to the “forest”, in order to devote one’s time to the study of the shastras and to improve the practice and results of meditation. Finally, the sannyâsa âshrama is a stage of renunciation to selfish interests and worldly attachments (both material and spiritual), aiming at the realization of moksha, “liberation”, or kaivalya (according to one interpretation of the Mânava-DharmaShâstra, the sannyâsin attains liberation while still living in society – see OLIVELLE, 1981: 270-271).

The yoga technique of the YS represents the practical way by which the human potential is “yoked” (brought under control) in order to attain cessation of the empirical conscience (chitta vritti nirodhah, “the supression of the modifications of the mind” - YS, I.2. See the Katha Upanishad, I.3.6) and to achieve its replacement by extra-sensory and trans-rational conciousness (chiti-shakti, “the power/energy of [sheer] conciousness” - IV.34), seen as liberation [moksha/kaivalya] or true Self-knowledge. The knowledge of purusha is achieved through vairâgya (impassibility; non-attachment) in relation to the guna (modes/qualities; see ahead) of prakriti (I.16-17). The [changing] functions of the mind (chitta-vrittayas) are always known to the prabhuh (the corporified âtman, master of the city of the body - see BG, V.13-14), due to the changelessness of purusha (IV.18). Through indriya-jaya, “control over the organs of the senses” (III.47), the yogin gains vikarana-bhâvah pradhâna, “control over the undeveloped prakriti/primal matter [as opposed to Purusha, the primal Spirit]” (III.48).

The yogin that realizes only the discernment between sattva (ipseity) and [the absolutely unmixed] Purusha obtains supremacy and omniscience (sarva-bhâva adhishtâtrtvam sarvajñanatrtvam) over all states/forms of existence (bhâva) (III.4), but only when there happens vairâgya even to this discernment

– i.e., when the distinction between the Seer and the seen disappears (in IV.23, the mind, when it reflects [lit., it is “coloured by”] both the Seer and the seen, it is all-embracing [sarvârtham]) -, the seed of error (dosha-bîja; contrasted with the sarvajña-bîja, the “seed of omniscience” that is contained in Îshvara Purusha – [YS, I.24-25], the “Overseer” (Adhishtâtâr) of the Drastâ/drishyam dichotomy from the Shânti Parva of the MB) is [fully] destroyed, and kaivalya is achieved (III.50) – so purusha is established in its essential nature, as sheer [spiritual] conciousness-energy (IV.34).

Quoting from BANERJEA (1983: 91-92; underlines ours), “according to Kapila [establisher of Sâmkhya as a darshana] and Patañjali [proponent of the sâmkhyanized Yoga darshana], every purusha or jîva (individual spirit), in the state of moksha or kaivalya, becomes perfectly dissociated from prakriti, but retains its individuality and exists eternally as pure Chit (pure transcendent Conciousness), distinct from all other liberated purushas as well as from Îshvara (on Patañjali’s system); while, in line with Goraknath and the Siddha-yogi school, every such liberated purusha realises its identity with Îshvara or Shiva and thus attains Shivahood and experiences prakriti or Shakti [see ahead] as non-different from itself”.

Certainly on grounds of the difficulty of interpreting any individuality in YS, IV.29-31, Organ doesn’t agree with Banerjea: for him, “in the kaivalya state man realizes a trans-purusha-prakriti condition, he is neither body nor mind, but something beyond. (...) When one fully is, knowledge loses its savor. The objective, the prakriti, having vanished, there is no thing to be known. Chitta [the mind] is no more. A trans-subjective purusha is all” (ORGAN, 1970: 314).

## 6) The Purusha theme in Bhâgavad-Purâna

According to the Bhâgavata-Purâna [BP; = Shrîmad Bhâgavatam, ed. Prabhupâda], attributed to Vyâsa, the Supreme Living Entity (Viryavân), appearing as a transcendental personification (adhokshajah purushena)/an entification of the Soul (âtma-bhûtena), fecundates Mâyâ (the “appearance”; the phenomenal world; the foundation of mind and matter), with its [three] modes/qualities (guna; see ahead), and thus, through the influence of Kâla (“time”), the living entities (viryam, “exertions”) appear.

The higher Self is situated in each and all living beings within our Selves (Âtmânânam Âtma-stham sarva-bhûthesu avasthiham... – BP, IV.24.70). When the higher Self (Âtmânânam) forgets/ignores the Bhagavân (“Noble; Exalted

One”)/the Param-guru (“Supreme Instructor”) [=Brahman], purusha (the living entity) consigns himself to the modes/qualities (guna) of nature (prakriti) (BP, IV.29.26) – namely, sattva (lightness, serenity, mundane goodness, dream), rajas (activity, restlessness, passion, wakefulness), and tamas (heaviness, immobility, ignorance, unconsciousness).

Yoga is the condition of transcending the guna (“separating the higher Self from the modes of nature” – gunebhyah Âtmânam viyujya – BP, VI.2.43), in order to find the way back into Brahman. The yogi (the yati, “ascetic” [II.2.15]; kshetrajña; the “knower of the field” [II.2.16]), with his pure intelligence (buddhyâmalayâ), must fuse his Self in the [higher] Self, then reaching the Superself (ninayet... Âtmani Âtmânam Âtmany - remember the BG, XIII.24). One who has reached this complete blissfulness attains full well-being, stopping all other activities (BP, II.2.16).

In the BP, I.18.26, the muni (ascetic sage) that was seen sitting silently, with closed eyes (âsinam shântam mîlita locanam), in an hermitage in the forest (vane... âshramam – BP, I.18.25), is described as being in a condition with his sense organs (indriya) – breath (prâna), mind (manah), and intelligence (buddhi) - restrained (pratiruddha)/inactive (upâratam), and as having achieved (prâptam) a “transcendental” condition (param; [yogic] “trance”) “unaffected (avikryam) by the three [gunas]” - a condition equivalent to the Absolute (Brahma-bhûtam). Here, yoga is implicitly described as the restriction of the sense organs (cf. Patañjali’s YS, I.2) in order to reach equality with Brahman (see YS, I.3).

The image of the forest hermit (vânaprastha âshrama) as a stage or place of withdrawal from worldly attachments reappears in the BP, IV.23.3-18, when Mahârâja Prithu, accompanied by his wife, goes to practice tapas in the forest (tapah-vanam). His tapas includes austerities (niyama), respiratory exercises (prânâyâma) executed in special postures (âsana), devotion (bhakti), and the acquisition of [mystic] knowledge (jnâna), associated with kundalinî-yoga (IV.23.14-16) to form yoga-gatibih (IV.23.12), the practice (gati = “mode of existence”) of mystic yoga, leading to his liberation (moksha)-in-yoking [the microcosm with the Macrocosm] (yoga; IV.23.17-18).

One who has controlled the postures (jita-âsanah), and also controlled the respiration (jita-shvâsah; jita-asuh in II.2.15), turning his six senses (sad-indriyah: seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touch, and mental representation) toward the “Dispeller of sins” (Hari; = Vishnu/Krishna), and becoming absorbed (bhâvanayâ) in Him, has surpassed (dhvasta; “conquered”) the contaminations (malah) of rajas, sattva, and tamas (BP, I.13.54). The yogi has

to fetter (samyojya) his [highest] consciousness (vijñana) to his self (âtmani), and then, “as a knower of the field” (kshetrājñe), has to merge (pravilâpya) his self in the Absolute (Brahmany âtmânâ - BP, I.13.55). Only then the yogi can apprehend the expansions of the Godhead (Bhagavân), in the form of Purusha (paurusham rûpam) and its evolvments, with the ingredients of the material world (mahat-âdibhih), in or as different “worlds” (loka - BP, I.3.1).

Purusha is also the indestructible (avyavam) source and seed (nidhânâ - BP, I.3.1). Demonstrating the value of creation and life, only after the creation of living entities (purusha) the Supreme Being provides for the lifting of the Earth from the nether regions of the universe (BP, I.3.7. After that, He propagates on Earth devotional service and nonfruitive actions - BP, I.3.8). Purusha is also said to be born from Dharma (the cosmic order; lit. “holding; carrying”), and – in an exemplary manner to instruct mankind - to undertake severe [yogic] tapas (“heated effort”, “penance”, “asceticism”) to control the senses [for the realization of transcendence] (BP, I.3.8).

## 7) The Purusha theme in the Yoga-Vâsishtha

In the Yoga-Vâsishtha [YV], VI.53.22-23 (trans. Mitra, with modifications accepted from FEUERSTEIN, 1998: original text 16), it is said of “Yoga meditation” that “the learned know that as the true form of Brahman, which we can reduce to no form (âkarâ) or conception (bhâvanâ), but that may be known after the restraining of our volitions and the pacification of our desires./ Promptitude (udyoga) after This [supreme Brahman] is what those of mature intellect (krittâ-buddhi) know as wisdom, and perseverance in these practices is what is called Yoga. Self-dedication to Brahman rests on the belief that ‘Brahma is all this world and myself also’ ” (for this last quotation, see the Mahâvâkyâ, “Great Statements”, in the conclusion).

In a passage evocative of Patañjali’s yoga (YS, I.2), we are advised, in the YV, VI.I.30 (trans. Mitra), to “know the unconsciousness of all things to be the true trance-yoga [param-(transcendental-) yoga?], and requiring the entire suppression of mental operations. Remain wholly intent to the Supreme Spirit, until thou art one and the same with it”.

The sequent passage describes kaivalya (“the Absolute State” – BANERJEA, 1983: 235) through samyoga (association), in the spirit of Advaita (non-dualist) Vedânta: “Being identified with that tranquil and subtile Spirit, and

divested from the sense of dualism or existence of anything else; nobody can sorrow for ought, when he is himself absorbed in his thought, in the endless and pure essence of God” (VI.I.31). The description of kaivalya in the YV (III.3.52-80) associates this word with kevalībhāva, “non-chalance of all things”, “the state of abstraction of the mind from whatever is real or unreal in the world” (III.3.54), in which an Advaita perspective, similar to that of Goraknath and the Siddha-yogis, can be perceived:

“... When the observer comes to know the unreality of the phenomena of the three worlds [rajasic, sattvic, and tamasic], as well as of his own entity, it is then that his pure soul [= his ātman] attains to the knowledge of kaivalya or soleity of divine existence [= the uniqueness of Purusha]./It is such a mind that reflects the image of God in itself as in a mirror; while others are blocks of stone, and incapable of receiving any reflection at all” (III.3.56-57).

This idea of kaivalya must be compared with that of moksha (“liberation”), from the YV, Uttarāddha (supplement to book VI).55.15-17:

“As the conscience becomes clear and bright, after the dross of its consciousness (of the subjective and objective), [it] is cleansed and wiped from it, so shines the pure soul which they term the liberated and free (mukta)./ It is upon the utter absence of our consciousness that there ensues a total disappearance of our knowledge of the phenomenals also, and then our intellect rises without a vestige of the intelligibles in it, as also without its intelligence of the existence of the the world. / He that knows God becomes unified with the divine nature, which is neither thinkable nor of the nature of the thinking principle or intellect, or any which is thought of by the intellect, and being so absorbed in meditation, remains quite indifferent to all worldly pursuits”.

The way to conform to the illusory reality of phenomena without despising the body as a delusory material vehicle of Purusha is explained by the venerable Vedic sage Vāsishtha (to whom the seventh book of the Rigveda is ascribed) to his royal pupil Rāma. In his “obloquy of the body” (YV, I.18; trans. Mitra), Rāma expresses his opinions, saying:

“1. This body of ours that struts about on earth, is but a mass of humid entrails and tendons, tending to decay and disease, and to our torment alone./2. It is neither quiescent nor wholly sentient, neither ignorant nor quite intelligent. Its inherent soul [ātman] is a wonder, and it is reason (and its absence) that makes it graceful or otherwise.//4. (...) There is nothing so pitiable, abject and worthless as our bodies.//8. This shady arbor of the body, is but the temporary resort of the passing soul (...)/ 9. (...) This body is

repeatedly assumed only to serve him [man; purusha] as a boat to pass over the sea of the world./18. The body is the big abode of its owner's egoism, and therefore it is of no interest to me whether it lasts or falls./ 19. This body which is linked with its limbs like beasts of burthen [burden] labour, and is the abode of the mistress Avarice - painted over by her faints of passions, afford me no delight whatever”.

Râma goes ahead talking that the “abode of the body (...) is no way desirable” to him (I.18.20), “is no way suited” to his liking (.21), “is filled with errors and delusions” which he does not like (.22).

He cries: “23. I do not like this dwelling of the body with its bed of pleasure on one side, and the cries of pain as those of its children on the other, and where our evil desires are at work like its bawling hand-maids./24. I cannot like this body, which like a pot of filth, is full of the foulness of worldly affairs, and mouldering under the rust of our ignorance”.

Proceeding with his complaints, Rama makes them into questions to his master: “35. I dont like this wilderness of the body, which is infested by the bears of the senses (...)./36. I am unable, O chief of the sages! To drag my domicile of the body, just as a weak elephant is incapable do draw another immersed in a muddy pit./37. Of what good is affluence or royalty, this body and all its efforts to one, when the hand of time must destroy them all in a few days?./38. Tell me, o sage! What is charming in this body, that is only a composition of flesh and blood within and without it, and frail in its nature./39. The body does not follow the soul upon death; tell me, Sir, what regard should the learned have for such an ungrateful thing as this [body]!”.

Râma's interrogations are made more important in the light of affirmations such as the one voiced by Mitra, the translator of the YV: “yoga (...) has nothing to do with the body which is of this earth [Earth], and which we have to leave here behind us” (MITRA, 1999: 32). The sage Vâsishtha's reply to Râma (offered only 3 books later, in the YV, 4.22) is of tantamount importance to the role the [physical] body acquires in the building up of the yoga path (particularly in Tantra texts):

“17. The life of man, knowing the proper use of his body and mind, is prosperous in everything; it is attended by happiness and advantages, and no disadvantage whatever./18. This body is also the source of infinite troubles to the ignorant, but it is the fountain of infinite happiness to the wise man./19. Its loss is no loss to the wise, but its continuance is the cause of continued happiness to the wise man./ 20. The body serves as a chariot to the wise [see the Katha-Upanishad, I.3.3-6, where âtman is pictured as the lord of the

chariot of the body], who can traverse everywhere by riding in it, and can produce and procure everything conducive to his welfare and liberation./21. The possession of the body is of no disadvantage to the wise man, who can obtain by it all the objects of his hearing and seeing, of his touch and smelling, and his friends and prosperity./ 22. It is true that the body is subject to a great amount of pain and pleasure, but the wise man can well bear with them./23. Hence the wise man reigns over the dominion of his body, without any pain or trouble, in the same manner as one remains the lord of his house, without any anxiety or disturbance./29. This city of the body [purusha as deriving from puri-shaya] is pleasant to one acquainted with his spiritual nature, because he deems it as the paradise of Indra [the Vedic god that obtained divinity through tapas (RV, X.167.1); the personification of kratu, a tapasic force (see RÖNNOW, 1932). Here, probably there could be a word-play between Indra and indriya, the sense organs], which is filled with pleasurable fruits, as well as of those of immortality./30. (...) These bodily cities which fill the earth, cannot be unpleasant to any body”.

## 8) The Purusha theme in the Kulârnavâ Tantra

In conformity with M. P. PANDIT (1965: 17), the Kulârnavâ, a text of the kaula mârگا (“Kula path”), “is the most frequently cited text in the Tantra literature”. Kula is the ecstatic experience of the Shiva-Shakti union, fundamental to Tantra metaphysics and spirituality, where Shakti (“force; power; energy”; the triple nature of knowledge [jñâna], desire [icchâ] and effort/operation [kriyâ]) is the dynamic aspect of Shiva (“the Kind [or Friendly] One”) as the transcendent Absolute. Through Shakti’s agency, the Absolute creates, maintains and dissolves/destroys. As macrocosmic force, Shakti is known as Mahâ-Kundalinî, the “Great Serpent”. In microcosmic terms, the [re]union of Shakti and Shiva is achieved through kundalinî-yoga (see WOODROOFE & GOSVAMI, 1913. On the Shiva/Shakti union, see also the YV, Uttarâddha.84).

BANERJEA (1983: 68) arguments that “Kula means the phenomenal self-expression of Reality”, referring to “the self-manifestation of the One in terms of finite/temporal/relative/derivative existences”, implying “Eternal Becoming”, while Akula, implying “Eternal Being”, “means the noumenal essence of Reality”, referring to “the Infinite/Eternal/Absolute/Self-existent One” and pointing to Changeless/Differenceless/ Transcendent Existence-Consciousness-Bliss (Sat-Chit-Ânanda). In the MahâNirvâna-Tantra, Akula is equivalent to Nishkala- (or Para-) Brahman, while Kula is equivalent to Sakala Brahman (see WOODROOFE, 1913: XLV).

Sometimes the term Kula (literally, “family; herd”) is taken as a synonym of Shakti as the power resulting from the union of the active/male and passive/female aspects of divinity. According to BANERJEA (1983: 97), “on account of the internal urge of the Divine Shakti for phenomenal self-expression and self-enjoyment, there is some sort of awakening and activation and development (which is often described as tapas in the Vedas) in the transcendent nature of the Absolute Spirit (Brahma or Shiva [or Īshvara – p. 91] or by whatever name the transcendent Spirit may be designated)”. “The yogi has to realise not only the unity of the individual soul [jīva] with the Cosmic Soul [Ātman], but also the unity of the individual body [pinda] with the Cosmic Body [Ādya-Pinda]” (BANERJEA, 1983: 31).

Only someone who knows the identity between the body (pinda) and the Manifest World (Brahmānda, the “egg of Brahmā”) can be said to be a guru (Kulārṇava Tantra, XIII.88). When the supreme ideal of “perfect unification” (samarasakarana) is truly realised, “the difference between Matter [body] and Spirit [soul] vanishes” (BANERJEA, 1983: 31).

It becomes clear from reading the Kulārṇava Tantra [KT] (trans. Pandit) that its doctrine (KT, IX.30) considers yoga – essentially, the [practical knowledge of] identity of jīva (jivātman) and Ātman; the realizing of Aham Brahman asmi, “I am Brahman” (IX.30; quoting the Brihadāranyaka-Upanishad, I.4.10) -, as more important than ritual and austerity, that are necessary so long as Reality and Truth are not known (KT, I.113). Here, jīva (jivātman) and Ātman are equivalent to purusha and Mahā-Purusha/Purusha parah (Parama-Purusha) - the term purusha is not much employed in Tantra Shastras (in Goraknath’s Siddha Siddhānta Paddhati, Para-Pinda [Supreme Body, with Pinda meaning “an organized whole”] “means the self-manifestation of the Supreme Spirit as the Supreme Individual [Parama-Purusha]” – BANERJEA, 1983: 89 and 92]). Only supreme knowledge of the One liberates (I.113); the enjoyment of sense objects (bhoga) can obstaculize yoga in other paths, but in Kuladharmā (KT, II.23 ff.) the yogi, an active aspirant for Brahman, can be a bhogi – a participant in Brahman’s worldly manifestations -, and bhoga turns into yoga (bhogo yogāyate. For important precedents to that, in a “tapasic” context, see MB, III.2.24; BU, V.11, and Markandēya-Purāna, XXXIX.2). The Kula tapasvin (practicer of tapas) pictures himself (KT, XVIII) as someone who meditates upon [ultimate] Reality (tattva), rejects all censure/criticism (parivāda), and accepts (svīkāra) auspicious doings. Kula knowledge, however, can be reached only by one whose mind is pure and whose senses are controlled (KT, II.33; see also YS, I.3, and BP, I.18.25).



In ullâsa (chapter) IX, “Yoga” (text in PANDIT, 1965: 73-86 [English] and 237-251 [Sanskrit]. Some passages here follow the interpretation proposed by FEUERSTEIN, 1988: original text 20), we read that when the mind directly feels/becomes aware of the Divine, that is infinite, formed in light, and not perceivable to the eye, the knowledge of That is called Brahman (KT, IX.7). He whose movement of life-breath is arrested, who is immobile like the stone, knowing only the singular splendour (dhâman) of the Supreme entity (Jîva; from jîv, “to live”), is called the yogi/who knows yoga (IX.8). As no difference remains with water thrown into water, milk into milk, ghee into ghee, similarly no difference remains (to one in samâdhi “firm/established in ecstasis” [IX.9; IX.14]; to the jîvanmukta, “one liberated while still alive” [IX.11]) between the individual self (jivâtman) and the Supreme Self (Paramâtman) (IX.15). Just as the larva becomes a bee by the power of dhyâna (meditation; absorption), man can become Brahman by the power of samâdhi (“dhyâna devoid of form” [IX.9]) (IX.16). And once the self is separated from the qualities (guna) [of nature], it is never the same again – just as butter extracted from milk does not revert to its former state when thrown back into milk (IX.17).

To him who sees the Very Self (Âtmaka), All-pervading, Peaceful, Blissful, Imperishable, nothing remains to be attained and to be known (KT, IX.26). [True] yoga is not based on the lotus posture (padmâsana), nor on gazing at the tip of the nose (the nâsa-agra drishti mudrâ – see BP, VII.15.32): yoga is the identity (aikya) of jîva and Âtman, so declare the adepts of yoga (IX.30). The [best and] highest state of being is “the natural state” (sahava-ajastha; our real self in samâdhi, in which oneness with the Divine is spontaneous/permanent); the middle state is one of concentration (dhârana) and meditation (dhyâna); lower is laudation (stuti) and recitation (japa, mantra repetition), and the lowest is homa (sacrificial offering to a fire) and pûjâ (ritual worship ceremony) (IX.34).

Again, mental deliberation (cintâ) on reality is the highest state; preoccupation with recitation is the middle; study of the shâstra (“instruction; [doctrinal] textbook”) is lower, and occupation with affairs of the world is the lowest (IX.35). A billion ritual worships are worth a laudation (stotra); a billion laudations are worth a recitation; a billion recitations are worth a meditation, and a billion meditations are worth a merging (laya; melting in the Absolute) (pûjâkotisaman stotram stotrakotisamo japah japahkotisaman dhyânam dhyânakotisamo layah - IX.36). Not superior to meditation is mantra; not higher than the Self is a god (na dwastra-Âtmanah parah); not higher than inner pursuit is ritual worship; not higher than contentment is any reward (IX.37). Freedom from ritual is supreme worship, the supreme recitation is

silence, the supreme meditation is absence of thought, and the supreme reward is the absence of desire (IX.38).

Free from concern, unattached, beyond desire (*vasâna*) and associations (*upâdhi*; a concept imported from Vedânta), absorbed in the essence of oneself, the yogi knows the supreme Reality (KT, IX.40). The body itself is the domicile of god, the temple. The living entity (*jîva*; the individual soul, sometimes understood as the “astral body”, the subtle body comprising the transcendental Self and mind, with the last acting as a connecting link to the physical body) is God Sadâ-Shiva. Man must leave behind him the remains of ignorant worship, and must worship with the consciousness of “I am Him” (IX.41), for *jîva* is Shiva, Shiva is *jîva*, the pure *jîva* is Shiva. When in bonds, like an animal, it is *jîva*; it is Sadâ-Shiva when freed from [all] bonds (IX.42). Just as the tree indifferently throws away the flower after generating the fruit, the yogin attaining Reality (*tattva*) gives up the rituals (IX.131). Those who are one in their heart with Brahman are not affected by any kind of merit or demerit attached to sacrifices (IX.132).

## Conclusion

In conformity to their relation with the origin and rise of yoga, MITRA (1999: 13-16 [with amendments taken from FEUERSTEIN, 1998: ch. 3]) proposes the following division of Indian cultural periods: 1) Samhitâ or hymnic period [4500-2500 a.C., Vedas]: elementary worship of the physical forces; complicated sacrificial rites; traces of abstract contemplation (*dhyâna yoga*); 2) Brahmanic age [2500-1500 a.C., Brâhmanas]: ceremonial observances; further traces of *dhyâna yoga*; 3) Âranyaka period [post-Vedic or Upanishadic era, 1500-1000 a.C., Âranyakas and Upanishads]: yoga comes in vogue; “orthodox” yoga systems of the Upanishads and “heterodox” Yoga-Shastras of the Buddhists and Jainists; 4) “Puranic” period [pre-classic or Epic era, 1100-100 a.C., Mahâbhârata and Râmâyana; classic era, 100 a.C.-500 d.C., Yoga-Sûtra of Patañjali, Brahma-Sûtra of Bâdarâyana, Sâmkhya-Kârika of Îshvara Krishna; Tantric/Puranic era, 500-1300 d.C., Tantra works, Purânas]: ample spread of yoga and yogis.

Despite this didactic division, BIARDEAU and MALAMOUD (1976: 64) have demonstrated the continuity (= there is more a conceptual modification than a growing contradistinction) between the external, traditional sacrifice of the *yajamâna* (the ideal Vedic brahmin) and the internal sacrifice, the *prânâgnihotra* (sacrifice in the fire of vital breath/energy – see Vaikhânâsasmârta-Sûtra, II.18) of the *vânaprastha* (forest hermit; lit., “forest abode”) and *sannyâsin* (“renouncer”), with growing importance since the first

periods of Indian cultural history. The intimate relation between the outer and the inner sacrifice can be seen as more natural if we accept the suggestion, advanced by MITRA (1999: 33), that “the Purushamedha sacrifice of the Veda, which is misunderstood for the offering of a male-being, a horse, a bull or a he-goat or male of any animal, meant originally the sacrifice of the human soul, or self-immolation of the purusha or embodied intelligence to the Supreme Spirit, by means of its concentration into the same through the instrumentality of yoga abstraction” (for a brief reflection on the sacrifice as the principle of active life as taught by the Veda, see BANERJEA, 1983: 258-260).

Again to BIARDEAU and MALAMOUD (1976: 56 and 71), the term purusha alludes not only to the [Universal] Man sacrificed at creation (RV, X.90), but also to the “man in the world” of the grihashtha (“householder”) âshrama, and then to the anthropocosmic foundation of the the sannyâsin (the “world renouncer”) and the yogi. To the followers of the Sâmkhya system, purusha as âtman is pure consciousness, is the “witness” (sâkshitva) and “spectator” (drashtritva) of the changes taking place in prakriti (Sâmkhya Kârîka, XIX – see CHAPPLE, 1990: 55. In pre-Kârîka Sâmkhya, and in some non-Kârîka Sâmkhya views, the Purusha-prakriti dualism lends itself to a promonistic interpretation, with mahat, “the great fundamental [principle]” as the living aspect of prakriti, appearing as a kind of “operating consciousness” of Purusha).

To Vedantins, Purusha as Âtman is identical with Brahman (see Viveka-Chûdâmani of Shankarâchârya, 133 and 243 ff., ed. Chatterji). The yoga path, with its beginnings somehow associated with the combination of Aryan and non-Aryan, Vedic and non-Vedic contributions, later incorporates elements both from Upanishadic/Vedantic thought and from Sâmkhya reasoning, harbouring the fullest expression of the Purusha theme. This theme consolidates the binding between traditional and philosophical yoga, mediated by the authority of the Mahâvâkyâ (“Great Statements”), important precepts from the Upanishadic part of the Vedic tradition perceived as forming an unity which proclaim the pâramârthika tattva - namely, that Âtman (the Self of man) and Brahman (the Absolute) are identical.

The Pancâkarana and the Shuka-Rahasya-Upanishad say the Mahâvâkyâ, seen as “yogic” by themselves - capable of destroying avidyâ (“ignorance”) with no other aid in the qualified persons -, are four. The first one, that could be a Sâmkhya saying, states that “Consciousness [‘Knowledge’ in Max Müller] is Brahman” (Prajñânam Brahma. Aitareya[-aranyaka]-Upanishad [of the Rigveda], VI.1.2-7). The second Mahâvâkyâ states that “I am Brahman”

(Aham Brahman asmi. Brihadâraanyaka-Upanishad [of the Shukla- or Vajasaneya-Yajurveda], I.4.10). The third Mahâvâkyâ declares that “That art thou” (Tat tvam asi. Chândogya-Upanishad [of the Samaveda], VI.7-16). Here, the jîva [tvam part of the sentence] is proclaimed as identical with Brahman [the Tat part of the sentence]. The fourth and last sentence asserts that “this Self [of mine] is Brahman” (ayam Âtmâ Brahma. Mândûkyâ-Upanishad [of the Atharvaveda], I.2).

In connection with the creation account from the Rigveda, X.90, these sentences can be complemented by three others from the Upanishads: 1st, “all this is Brahman” (sarvam kalvidam Brahma. Chândogya-Upanishad, III.14.1); 2nd, “[the Self is the] (...) unseen Seer, the unheard Hearer, the unperceived Perceiver, the unknown Knower. (...) This is thy Self (Âtman), the Ruler within (antayâmin), the Immortal (amrita). (Brihad-Araanyaka Upanishad III.7.23); 3rd, “all that exists is indwelt by the Lord (Isha) ...” (Ishavâsyam idam sarvam. Ishavâsya [or Isha-] Upanishad [Vajasaneyi-Samhita-Upanishad; ch. IV of the Vajaneyâ Samhita of the Shukla-Yajurveda], I.1).

From everything we have come to contemplate through the eyes of the âtman, it can be said that, indeed, “this Purusha is all that yet hath been, and all that is to be” (Rigveda, X.90.2).

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