



Does Liberation Entail Disembodiment? Re-examining the Concept of *Pratiprasava* in the *Yogasūtra*

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Accepted: 1 January 2025

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Abstract One of the central concepts in understanding the spiritual goal of Pātañjala Yoga is *pratiprasava*, which means a process of reversal. Yet disagreements persist over how *pratiprasava* and *kaivalya* (liberation) are to be interpreted. Two main lines of interpretation may be identified as the ‘ontological’ and ‘epistemological’ approaches. According to the first interpretation, *pratiprasava* means the literal dissolution of the empirical world, including one’s physical body and mind. According to the second, it means undoing of the misidentification of *puruṣa* with *prakṛti*. I will defend an interpretation that combines aspects of both of these approaches. I suggest that *pratiprasava* has two sequential stages: the epistemological stage and the ontological stage. In the epistemological stage, *pratiprasava* is the first stage of freedom (*kaivalya*) from all sorts of physical and mental bondages. This type of freedom is attained when all negative and positive effects of *prakṛti*’s manifestation no longer affect the yogin while living in this physical body. In the subsequent ontological stage, *pratiprasava* is final freedom from existence altogether, including the body and mind. Based on this understanding of the two stages of *pratiprasava*, I will contend that there are correspondingly two types of *kaivalya*: embodied and disembodied.

Keywords *Pratiprasava* · *Kaivala* · Pātañjala-Yoga · *Puruṣa* · *Prakṛti* · Embodied-liberation · Disembodied-liberation

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Introduction

One of the central concepts relating to the spiritual goal of yoga is *pratiprasava* (reversal) of material constituents (*guṇas*). Patañjali first introduces it in *sūtra* 2.10, where he states that “these subtle [afflictions] are to be cast aside by a retrograding process of reversal?”¹ Patañjali explains that *pratiprasava* is a personal method which needs to be adopted by the Yogin because as much as *pratiprasava* progresses or is achieved, only then these subtle afflictions are gone. In this *sūtra* “*pratiprasavaheyaḥ*” is an adjective and it is qualifying *kleśas* (afflictions). So, *pratiprasava* is a process of reversal of *kleśas* in the empirical context. Again, Patañjali mentions the concept of *pratiprasava* in *sūtra* 4.34, which states that “ultimate liberation takes place when the *guṇas*, having nothing to accomplish for the sake of *puruṣa*, reverse to their latent source; in other words, when the *puruṣa* itself as conscious force rests in its essential form.”² Here, *pratiprasava* is a process of reversal of *guṇas* in the ontological context. In this *sūtra*, *pratiprasava* process can be personal or impersonal or both. According to Patañjali, the ultimate result of this process of *pratiprasava* is *kaivalya*. Here, the term *pratiprasava* is directly mentioned to explain the nature of *kaivalya*. So, the concept of *pratiprasava* is bound up with that of *kaivalya*.

Understanding the importance of *pratiprasava* in the Yoga metaphysics, Kenneth Rose (2016, p. 107) regards *pratiprasava* as the “central nerve of Patañjali’s system” because Patañjali uses yogic *samādhi* to demonstrate how the universe of experience can be reabsorbed (*pratiprasava*) into primal *prakṛti*. Rose interprets *pratiprasava* as “reabsorption” or “mental simplification.” By “simplification,” Rose (2016, p. 149) indicates that “the mind transcends or simplifies itself factor by factor”. Rose (2016, p. 102) states that *pratiprasava* is an essential mechanism that describes the progressive levels of *saṃprajñāta-samādhi*.³ According to Rose (2016, p. 114), *pratiprasava* is a movement of simplification from one *saṃprajñāta-samādhi* stage to another.⁴ Here, *pratiprasava* is a psychological process. However, Rose (2016, p. 107) also understands *pratiprasava* as a reversal of the eternal, cosmological process by which *prakṛti* gradually emerges from a primal, potential condition into so many elements that make up the creation. Based on the importance of the cosmological *pratiprasava* process, Rose (2016, p. 108) says that “Patañjali’s Eight-Part Yoga can be seen as a procedure for reabsorbing these projected bits of differentiated *prakṛti* back into its pristine, stabilized, and potential form (*guṇānām*

¹ YS 2.10: *te pratiprasavaheyaḥ sūkṣmāḥ*.

² YS 4.34: *puruṣārtha-śūnyānām guṇānām pratiprasavaḥ kaivalyaṃ sva-rūpa-pratiṣṭhā vā citi-śaktir iti*.

³ Rose comments that “the extended fixity and mental simplification that characterize the ascending degrees of (*saṃprajñāta*) *samādhi*”. According to Rose, there are four levels which are *vitarka-samādhi* (concrete-reflection recollectedness), *vicāra-samādhi* (abstract-reflection recollectedness), *ānanda-samādhi* (delightful recollectedness), and *asmitā-samādhi* (mere self-awareness recollectedness). These are Rose’s translations.

⁴ Rose writes that “the whole preceding practice of Eight-Part Yoga was needed in order to arrive at the movement of simplification (*pratiprasava*) that was enacted in the move from *saṃvitarka-samādhi* to *nirvitarka-samādhi*”.

pratiprasavaḥ, YS 4.34; see also 1.45) at which point *puruṣa* shines clearly in the purified mind (*‘sāttvic citta’*) of the perfected yogi (YS 1.47).”

But Rose (2016, p. 122) unsatisfactorily accepts *kaivalya* as “the complete and final break with *prakṛti*”.⁵ When *pratiprasava* is a cosmological process, the potential form of *guṇās* indicates the returning to the unmanifest (*avyakta*) form of *prakṛti* from the manifest (*vyakta*) form. How is it possible to keep even a purified mind in the unmanifest condition of the *prakṛti* because there would be no physical body and mind in unmanifest (*avyakta*) form of *prakṛti*? It is to be noted that *citta* is made from the *prakṛtic* elements of *guṇās* and *citta* does not have an independent ontological existence from *prakṛtic*. The above-mentioned reference of *sūtra* 1.47 is about the purified mind in the *samādhi* stage, not in the *kaivalya* stage, because the *sūtra* tells us that “upon attaining the clarity of *nirvicāra-samādhi*, the inner self is lucid”.⁶ The question arises: when and why must the same *pratiprasava* process be psychological and cosmological? Does psychological *pratiprasava* lead to cosmological *pratiprasava*? Do these two processes work simultaneously or one at a time? Rose does not elaborate on these issues.

Chapple (2019, p. 196) considers that “in many ways, the word *pratiprasava* encapsulates the entire Yoga praxis and telos” because the reduction of *kleśas* and *karmas* through the process of *pratiprasava* involves the application of the entire yogic discipline rather than just one or a few specific yogic practices. In the words of Chapple (2019, p. 179), “*pratiprasava* requires the undoing of all karmas by tracing them back to their origins and effecting an incineration of karmic seeds.” According to Chapple, tracing back to the origins is the process of *pratiprasava*. Chapple (2019, p. 180) identifies this process as “a process of the reversal of directionality”—from the direction of activity (*pravṛtti*) towards the direction of cessation (*nivṛtti*). For Chapple (2019, p. 180), *nivṛtti* is not the cessation of all activities of mind rather it is the cessation of the “quelling of vitiated yearning” which “brings peace” to the yogin.⁷ The question arises: how can a yogin achieve complete peace through the process of *pratiprasava* while residing in this world? According to Patañjali, for the discriminating yogin, to exist in this ordinary world is to suffer perpetually (*duḥkhamēva sarvaṃ vivekinaḥ*).⁸

For Chapple (2019, p. 186), *pratiprasava* is exclusively an epistemological process because he comments that the *pratiprasava* process “signals a backing away from the spinning out or stitching or weaving the world”, not from the world itself. In another place, Chapple (2008, p. 107) says that *pratiprasava* is a mental process

⁵ Rose comments that “It is therefore difficult to give final allegiance to a soteriology that implies complete indifference to the world that appears to us and that presents us with both hardships and delights”.

⁶ YS 1.47 (*nirvicāravaiśāradye+adhyātmaprasādaḥ*).

⁷ Chapple comments that “Cessation (*nivṛtti*) brings peace, not in the sense of an escape from a dreadful irredeemable state, but through the quelling of vitiated yearning. By returning to the origin point before the issuance of the world transpires, one retreats to a place of peace. The reversal of directionality indicated by the return to the origin (*pratiprasava*) stands at the center of the Yoga experience”.

⁸ YS 2.15 (*pariṇāma tāpa saṃskāra duḥkhaiguṇāvr̥ttivirodhācca duḥkhamēva sarvaṃ vivekinaḥ*).

that purifies the *citta*.⁹ Chapple (2008, p. 107) thinks that *pratiprasava* is also a process that causes liberation.¹⁰ Chapple (2008, p. 89) explains the *pratiprasava* liberating process by saying that “the aspiring yogi strives to lessen his or her attachment first to the gross world, then to the subliminal influences that shape perception of the gross, and finally enters a liberated state wherein all obscurations are burned away.” When *pratiprasava* is understood as an epistemic process, Chapple’s interpretation of it is accurate. However, Patañjali seems to emphasize in the final *sūtra* that primordial matter (*guṇās*) returns to its original form, which is an unmanifested form; thus I disagree with Chapple’s assertion that *pratiprasava* is only an epistemological process in the *Yogasūtra*. When *pratiprasava* is an ontological process of dissolution, the return of primordial matter to its original source indicates the dissolution of all *prakṛtic* connections with *puruṣa*. The continuations of this formation of the everyday world are primal matter as it manifests. The absence of primordial matter indicates that a liberated *puruṣa* is ultimately totally cut off from the connection of the physical body and mind, which are byproducts of primordial matter.

Without a proper understanding of the concept of *pratiprasava*, we cannot understand the idea of *kaivalya* in the *Yogasūtra*¹¹ (hereafter *YS*) or *Pātañjalayogaśāstra*.¹² According to *YS* 4.34, *pratiprasava* is necessary for the attainment of *kaivalya* but scholars have interpreted these two terms in two different ways: from an ontological standpoint and from an epistemological standpoint. Traditional Sanskrit commentators and some modern scholars defend an ontological interpretation, according to which *pratiprasava* means the literal dissolution of one’s physical body and mind.¹³ So, *kaivalya* is achieved when the embodied *puruṣa* obliterates all its entanglements with *prakṛti*. Ontologically understood, *kaivalya* entails liberation after the death of the body (*videhamukti*). By contrast, a number of other scholars defend an epistemological interpretation, according to which *pratiprasava* means the dissolution of our misidentification of *puruṣa* with *prakṛti*, which is the result of ignorance (*avidyā*).¹⁴ It is the liberating knowledge of the distinction between the *puruṣa*’s original self and the psychophysical self. So,

⁹ Chapple writes that “The path to liberation is also discussed by Patañjali in yet another way that emphasizes subtilization (*pratiprasava*) as the means but using a terminology focused more directly on mental processes”.

¹⁰ Chapple comments that “It is only through the suspension of all identification by the process of *pratiprasava* that *kaivalyam* takes place”.

¹¹ See Āgāśe’s (1904) edition of *Yogasūtra*.

¹² Philip Maas (2013) has suggested that *Yogasūtra* and *Vyāsabhāṣya* were written by the same individual, Patañjali himself, based on his research of many yoga manuscripts where the colophons read *Pātañjalayogaśāstra* or *Pātañjala-Yoga-Śāstra Sāṃkhya Pravacana* instead of *Yogasūtra*. However, since there is currently no comprehensive critical edition of the entire text, I use the *Yogasūtra* and *Yoga-Bhāṣya* as distinct works by different authors in this paper. Only the first part the *Yogasūtra* was critically edited by Maas.

¹³ Dasgupta (1995), Eliade (1970), Feuerstein (1979), Rukmani (1997), Vedabharati (2001) and Bryant (2009). It will be shown below in the text that this is the standard interpretation of Sanskrit commentator (such as Vyāsa, Bhoja and Vijñānabhikṣu).

¹⁴ Taimni (1961), Larson and Bhattacharya (1970), Whicher (1998), Chapple (2008), Collins (2009), Foulks (2009), Michael Beloved (2007), Sarbacker (2005), Bachman (2011) and Carrera (2012).

kaivalya is attained when the empirical *puruṣa* ceases to identify with *prakṛti*. Upon the attainment of *kaivalya*, the afflictions and impurities of the mind are dissolved, but not the mind itself. Epistemologically conceived, *kaivalya* entails liberation while living in this physical body (*jīvan-mukti*).¹⁵

On a striking departure, Burley (2007, p. 135) interprets *pratiprasava* from a phenomenological perspective. Burley states that *pratiprasava* consists in the dissolution of experience and of the constitutive conditions of the possibility of experience of the yogin. According to Burley, the process of withdrawing or retreating from *prakṛtic* manifestation from experience is known as *pratiprasava*. Burley does not refer to any *Yogasūtra* evidence to support his claim that *pratiprasava* is merely a process of distancing oneself from experience, not the presence of a *puruṣa* - *prakṛti* relationship. Burley refers to the *Sāṃkhya* metaphor of *prakṛti* as a dancer, in which the dancer withdraws from the audience's perspective after the performance is finished. Additionally, Burley believes that the *Yogasūtra*'s *pratiprasava* procedure is comparable to the *Sāṃkhya* concept of "*prakṛtilaya* (lost in *prakṛti*)."¹⁶ It is to be noted that *pratiprasava* is a personal yogic technique that leads to liberation, while *prakṛtilaya* is a state of advanced yoga practitioners rather than liberated *puruṣa*. *Pratiprasava*, as it is known in technical terms, is the culmination of the entire yoga practice and the ultimate achievement of that culmination which is *kaivalya*. Because Patañjali states in *sūtra* 2.10 that subtle afflictions are to be dissolved by the process of *pratiprasava*, and in *sūtra* 4.34 that *pratiprasava* is a process of melting *prakṛtic* manifestation into a dormant state. *Pratiprasava* is defined in the *Yogasūtra* as a process of separating oneself from all incorrect associations of *puruṣa* with *prakṛti* as well as breaking down manifested *guṇās* into unmanifested *guṇās*. Patañjali emphatically states that at the end of yogic journey, *pratiprasava* is a process of return of the *guṇas* to their source which indicates that *guṇas* return to their *avyakta* (unmanifest) state. So, *pratiprasava* is not only a phenomenological process, but also an ontological process. As an ontological process, *pratiprasava* is a process of dissolution of those material constituents which constitute the experience.

Pratiprasava, according to Karen O'Brien-Kop (2023, p. 12), is "dissolution or involution, the inverse of the process of the emanation of material reality." For O'Brien-Kop, *pratiprasava* is a method of "reversal of the material process." Given that material reality is this living world, which is composed of three *guṇās*, and that reversing the process of material reality entails returning to the unmanifest reality, it appears that O'Brien-Kop views *pratiprasava* as an ontological process. O'Brien-Kop does, however, also interpret *pratiprasava* as an epistemic process. O'Brien-Kop (2023, p. 12) states that "in terms of individual practice, then, *pratiprasava* entails the gradual withdrawal of the senses from the everyday world during meditation to the point where the practitioner starts to dissociate from the conventions of material existence—the identification with the body, the social self,

¹⁵ The term "*jīvan-mukti*" is not mentioned in the *Yogasūtra* and Vyāsa's commentary. It is a popular term in the Advaita *Vedānta* tradition. Here, I am using this term *jīvan-mukti* to indicate liberation in the realm of *prakṛti*.

one's environment, even time and space." Her psychological interpretation suggests that *pratiprasava* appears to be a shift in perception or mindset.

However, O'Brien-Kop understands *pratiprasava* as a reversal of the material process, rather than a reversal of mental perception. If *pratiprasava* is a reversal of materiality, then the mind as a matter has to reverse to its source—the unmanifested form of *guṇās*. A contradiction appears to exist between these two forms of *pratiprasava* if *pratiprasava* is only a material process. O'Brien-Kop does not clarify why *pratiprasava* serves these two purposes—ontological and epistemological in Patañjali's metaphysics when she believes that *pratiprasava* is both an epistemological and ontological process? It should be mentioned that in *Yogasūtra* 2.10, *pratiprasava* is specifically not intended for simple sense withdrawal from worldly attachments, which is achieved through *pratyāhāra* and *saṁyama*, but rather for eliminating subtle afflictions, which cannot be even accomplished through mere meditation (*dhyāna*). Even as an epistemological process, *pratiprasava* is not simply a withdrawal of the senses but instead a process of dissolving the subtle afflictions." O'Brien-Kop (2023, p. 12) does not give reference to any *Sāṃkhya* literature or provide any justification for her belief that *pratiprasava* is a *Sāṃkhya* technique, even though it is a significant yogic practice necessary for attaining liberation.

These different views do not completely explain the plausible meaning of the soteriological goal of yoga in the interpretive literature and provide incomplete explanation for understanding the plausible goal of Pātañjala Yoga. How is it possible that the term *pratiprasava* can be interpreted in two mutually exclusive ways: ontological and epistemological? I argue that these opposite results come from the wrong method of interpretation—the first interpretation only considers the relation of the term *pratiprasava* with *kaivalya*, but not with *Citi-śakti* and the second method focuses only on giving an incomprehensive independent meaning of the term which does not fit in the overall metaphysics of the *YS*. We need a comprehensive and proper understanding of this process of *pratiprasava* in *YS* to solve this apparent dichotomy regarding the more plausible meaning and goal of *Pātañjala Yoga*.

In this paper, I seek to provide a more comprehensive interpretation of *pratiprasava* in the *YS* by combining aspects of both the ontological and epistemological approaches. This approach will provide a more plausible understanding of the more plausible soteriological goal of Pātañjala-Yoga, which is both liberation while living and liberation after death, because until now the possibility of these two stages of liberation have been overlooked by an isolationistic, one-sided reading of the *YS* by interpreting the concept of "*pratiprasava*" exclusively from an ontological perspective or epistemological perspective. In analyses of the texts that are the basis for the study, this approach will try to reach the essence and understand the nature of the phenomena of *pratiprasava* and *kaivalya* using the possibilities offered by intertextual reading of the *YS* and its commentaries authored by different scholars.

With respect to the ontological interpretation, if *kaivalya* is the permanent separation of the *puruṣa* from this physical world, there could not be any enlightened teachers like Patañjali to teach Yoga to others (Whicher, 1998, p. 290).

Moreover, ontological interpreters¹⁶ one-sidedly emphasize *kaivalya* as defined in the first portion¹⁷ of YS 4.34 at the expense of another definition of *kaivalya* as *Citi-śakti* in other portion of YS 4.34 because they believe that the goal of Patañjali's yoga philosophy is a world-denying one which signifies that the ultimate goal (*kaivalya*) of yoga cannot be attained while living.¹⁸ Epistemological interpretations also face some problems because they believe that the goal of yoga is a world-affirming one which means that the ultimate goal of yoga is attainable even in this world living a life with physical body and mind.¹⁹ First, epistemological interpreters fail to explain why Patañjali says that the turning back of the *guṇa*-s to their source leads to *kaivalya*.²⁰ Here, *kaivalya* indicates complete dissociation from the physical body and mind altogether. Epistemological interpreters have not been able to provide a plausible explanation of YS 4.34, which strongly implies that liberation occurs only after death (*videhamukti*). Otherwise, the question arises, If one is liberated, why is one still in a body? For, karma as a byproduct of ignorance (*avidyā*) still causes the body to exist. Since attaining *kaivalya* is claimed to eradicate ignorance, it ought to result in instantaneous liberation and eliminate all *karma*, including that of the body. Since the body continues to exist even as knowledge increases, it would appear that some type of ignorance must endure. How, therefore, can *avidyā* remain after the end of *avidyā*? The epistemological interpreters thus face the problem of whether *jivanmukti* entails total liberation.

It is to be noted that *Sāṃkhya-Yoga* metaphysics follows the theory of causation known as *satkāryavāda*, according to which an effect is implicitly pre-existent in its cause prior to its production. The original *prakṛti* (primeval matter) is the primary matrix out of which all differentiations arose and within which they were all contained in an undistinguished manner. Thus, the mind is ultimately a product of *prakṛti*. Mind does not have independent ontological existence, which is different from *prakṛti* even if mind cannot be perceived, because YS 2.19 has already stated that "the levels of the *guṇa*s are the particularized, the unparticularized, the marked, and the unmarked."²¹ Following this theory of causality, I suggest that *pratiprasava*, which is a subjective experience of the yogin, has two sequential stages: the empirical stage, which is the same as the epistemological stage, and the transcendental stage, which is the same as the ontological stage. I think that it is better to understand the more comprehensive meaning of *pratiprasava* based on the context in which Patañjali used the idea.

Pratiprasava, in an empirical sense, in worldly existence, is the first stage of freedom (*kaivalya*) from all sorts of physical and mental bondages. This type of

¹⁶ I divide the views of the scholars into two groups, namely the ontological and epistemological interpreters, based on the ontological and epistemological emphasis while they interpret the concept of *pratiprasava*.

¹⁷ YS 4.34: *guṇānām pratiprasavaḥ kaivalyaṃ*.

¹⁸ Koelman (1970), Rukmani (1997), Dasgupta (1995), Eliade (1970), Feuerstein (1979), Vedabharati (2001), Bryant (2009), Pflueger (2003) and Grinshpon (2002).

¹⁹ Taimni (1961), Larson and Bhattacharya (1970), Whicher (1998), Chapple (2008), Collins (2009), Foulks (2009), Beloved (2007) Sarbacker (2005), Bachman (2011), Samuel (2008) and Carrera (2012).

²⁰ YS 4.34: *sva-rūpa-pratiṣṭhā vā citi-śaktir iti*.

²¹ YS 2.19: *viśeṣāviśeṣa-līṅga-mātrālīṅgāni guṇa-parvāṇi*.

freedom is attained when the negative and positive effects of *prakṛtic* manifestation do not affect the yogin while living in this physical body. Patañjali claims that *kaivalya* is attained when *sattva* and *puruṣa* are equal in terms of purity.²² From the empirical perspective, *pratiprasava* is empirical in the sense that the process of empirical *pratiprasava* takes place in the realm of *prakṛti*, where the liberated *puruṣa* retains his individuality and mundane activities. *Pratiprasava*, in an ontological sense, in immaterial existence, is the second or final stage of freedom from existence altogether, including the physical body and mind. From the ontological perspective, *pratiprasava* is transcendental in the sense that the process of transcendent *pratiprasava* does not take place in the realm of *prakṛti* and is where liberated *puruṣa* loses his individuality along with the physical mind and body. Based on this understanding of the two stages of *pratiprasava*, I will contend that there are correspondingly two types of *kaivalya*. I call these two stages of liberation the *citi-śakti* type of liberation (embodied liberation) and the *puruṣārtha-śūnya* type of liberation (disembodied liberation).

Citi-śakti generally means the power of pure consciousness. This power of consciousness is the innate power of *puruṣa*, which protects a yogin from all physical, mental, and emotional sufferings and enables the embodied *puruṣa* to realize his pure self, which is unaffected by anything that is a manifestation of *prakṛti*. *Puruṣa* himself becomes an embodiment of power as a result of *Citi-śakti*. This power is solely for the sake of *Puruṣa's* autonomy to remain as pure consciousness. This state of pure consciousness is the state of *puruṣa* in himself (not affected by anything). Due to the awakening of *Citi-śakti*, the embodied *puruṣa* finds its true self and becomes liberated even while in this physical body. The *citi-śakti* type of liberation is consistent with the empirical interpretation. The *citi-śakti* type of liberation is a state of liberation where *puruṣa* remains in its own self even while *puruṣa* prevails in the realm of *prakṛti*. The *citi-śakti* type of liberation is a state of liberation where embodied *puruṣa* is detached from the effects of *prakṛti*, not from the association of *prakṛti*, which is similar to the stage of *jīvanmukti*, which is the first stage of *kaivalya*. Accordingly, Patañjali states in 3.55 that when *sattva* and *puruṣa* are equal in terms of purity, then there is *kaivalya*.²³ The *puruṣārtha-śūnya* (disembodied liberation) type of liberation means that for *puruṣa*, nothing remains purposeful and necessary when *prakṛti* resolves into its unmanifest form. This type of liberation is consistent with the transcendental interpretation and entails *videhamukti*, since Patañjali says that the turning back of the *guṇa-s* to their source leads to *kaivalya* (*guṇānāṃ pratiprasavaḥ kaivalyaṃ*). These two stages of liberation are two sides of the same coin (*kaivalya*). These two stages of liberation do not conflict but complement each other when the meaning of *pratiprasava* becomes clear to us.

For a better understanding of the concept of *pratiprasava* in the YS, I will first critically analyze YS 2.10. In section 1 [empirical *pratiprasava* in YS 2.10](#), I will show that understanding *pratiprasava* exclusively in a literal sense as the opposite action of “*prasava*” (creation) is problematic without considering the possible metaphysical meaning of the term “*pratiprasava*”. To interpret *kaivalya*

²² YS 3.55: *sattva-puruṣayoḥ śuddhi-sāmye kaivalyam iti*.

²³ YS 3.55: *sattva-puruṣayoḥ śuddhi-sāmye kaivalyam iti*.

ontologically as the complete aloneness of *puruṣa* from all *prakṛtic* manifestation as stated in YS 4.34 at the expense of other meanings of *kaivalya* in YS is not plausible. *Pratiprasava* has been unduly equated with certain Samkhya terms that are similar in idea. I will critically analyze them later. I will show that *pratiprasava* should be understood as an epistemic phenomenon rather than an ontological phenomenon in YS 2.10. In section 2 [transcendent *pratiprasava* in 4.34](#), I will demonstrate that *pratiprasava* is an ontological process of dissolution because of the clear definition of *kaivalya* as “*guṇānām pratiprasavaḥ kaivalyaṁ*” by Patañjali in YS 4.34, whereas other scholars have given an epistemological emphasis on *pratiprasava* with no plausible arguments in this *sūtra*. I will argue that “*guṇānām pratiprasavaḥ*”, “*svarūpapraṭiṣṭhā*”, and “*citiśakti*” are not exactly the same as *kaivalya* as understood by most scholars. The standard interpretation of “*citiśakti*” by scholars as the power of “*citi*” is not plausible because it ignores the question of what “power” actually means in the context of *puruṣa*. In section 3 [empirico-transcendental *pratiprasava* in the YS](#), I will argue that YS 2.10 indicates *pratiprasava* as an epistemological reversing process of the dissolution of subtle afflictions of *citta* whereas YS 4.34 suggests *pratiprasava* as an ontological reversing process of dissolution of *citta* depending on the contextual meaning of *pratiprasava* in the YS.

Empirical *Pratiprasava* in YS 2.10

In the *sādhana-pāda*, which outlines several yogic practices or a collection of yogic practices for achieving freedom, Patañjali introduces the idea of *pratiprasava* for the first time. According to YS 2.10, “these subtle [afflictions] are to be cast aside by a retrograding process of reversal.” In other words, once the five ailments become subtle through the practice of *kriyā-yoga*, the subtle five afflictions should be abandoned by a process of opposing movement in order to completely eradicate the afflictions, which will result in liberation. *Pratiprasava* is a method for thoroughly forsaking the five afflictions. But what does this *sūtra*’s reference to this abandonment through the reversal process (*pratiprasavaheyāḥ*) mean? We find no explanation for 2.10 in the interpretive literature.

Vyāsa, the most celebrated and oldest commentator of the YS, interprets *pratiprasava* as “*pralīna*,” which literally means melted or dissolved. In explaining the meaning of this *sūtra* 2.10, Vyāsa writes that “when the mind of a *yogin* has fulfilled the purpose of its existence and gets absorbed in *prakṛti*, those five *kleśas*, which become like burnt-seeds, also disappear along with *prakṛti*.”²⁴ Now question arises: what does this disappearance (*astam gacchanti*) mean? Vyāsa is not clear here. This disappearance can mean both dissolved or ineffective state of *citta*. But depending on the ontological usages of the concept of *pratiprasava* in other places in the text,²⁵ it seems to be the case of dissolution of the *citta* because the afflictions

²⁴ Vyāsa on YS 2.10: *te pañca kleśā dagdhabījakaalpā yoginaścaritādhikāre cetasi pralīne saha tenaivāstam gacchanti*.

²⁵ Vyāsa on YS 3.50: *tad eteṣāṁ guṇānāṁ manasi karmakleśavipāka svarūpeṇābhivyaktānāṁ caritārthānāṁ pratiprasave puruṣasyātyantiko guṇaviyogaḥ kaivalyaṁ tadā svarūpapraṭiṣṭhā citiśaktir eva puruṣa iti*.

first dissolve in *citta* and then *citta* along with the afflictions gradually dissolves in unmanifest *prakṛti*. From Vyāsa's interpretation of this *sūtra*, it seems that *pratiprasava* is a process of disappearance of manifested state of *prakṛti* rather than reversal. Vyāsa prefers to give a transcendental emphasis to this phenomenon of *pratiprasava* in the whole text because he understands *pratiprasava* as process of dissolution of *guṇas*. Vyāsa first uses the term *pratiprasava* in YS 2.2 which tells that "[the yoga of action (*kriyā-yoga*)] is for bringing about *samādhi* and for weakening the *kleśās* (impediments) [to yoga]." ²⁶ Vyāsa introduces the term "*pratiprasava*" before YS 2.10 in the context of when the five parched afflictions of a yogin at the stage of *samprajñāta samādhi* get dissolved in the *asamprajñāta samādhi* stage, in which *kaivalya* is achieved. ²⁷ So, here we see that *pratiprasava* means dissolution. In YS 2.27, Vyāsa uses *pratiprasava* once again. According to Vyāsa's commentary on this *sūtra*, when *citta* dissolves in *prakṛti*, the yogin becomes *guṇātīta*, beyond the reach of *guṇas*, at which point the yogin achieves liberation. ²⁸ Once more, according to Vyāsa, the *puruṣa* who experiences these seven-fold insights is called an adept (*kuśala*). ²⁹ Vyāsa uses the word *pratiprasava* with an apparent transcendental connotation once more in YS 3.50. ³⁰

Nearly all Sanskrit commentators read *pratiprasava* in a transcendental sense, following Vyāsa's line of interpretation in YS 2.10 of this text. Some scholars interpret *pratiprasava* as "*pratiloma*", which denotes an opposite route that is opposed to creation or generation. ³¹ Other commentators define *pratiprasava* as *pralaya* ³² or

²⁶ YS 2.2: *samādhi-bhāvanārthaḥ kleśa-tanū-karaṇārthaś ca*.

²⁷ Vyāsa on YS 2.2: *pratanūḥkṛtānkleśānprasaṅkhyānāgninā dagdhabījakaḥpānaprasavadharmināḥ kariṣyatiṭi teṣāṃ tanūkaraṇātpunaḥ kleśairaparāmṛṣṭā sattvapuruṣānyatāmātrahyātīḥ sūkṣmā prajñā samāptādhikārā pratiprasavāya kalpiṣyata iti*.

²⁸ Vyāsa on YS. 2.27: *pratiprasave pi cittasya muktaḥ kuśala ity eva bhavati guṇātītātvaḥ iti*.

²⁹ Vyāsa YS 2.2: *etāṃ saptavidhāṃ prāntabhūmiprajñāṃ anupaśyaṇ puruṣaḥ kuśala ity ākhyāyate*.

³⁰ Vyāsa on YS. 3.50: *tad eteṣāṃ guṇānāṃ manasi karmakleśavipākaśvarūpeṇābhiviyaktānāṃ caritārthānāṃ pratiprasave puruṣasyātyantiko guṇaviyogaḥ kaivalyaṃ tadā svarūpapratīṣṭhā citiśaktir eva puruṣa iti*.

³¹ Bhoja on YS 2.10: *te sūkṣmāḥ kleśā ye vāsanārūpeṇaiva sthītā na vṛttirūpaṃ parīṇamam ārabhante te pratiprasavena pratilomapariṇāmena heyāḥ tyaktavyāḥ | svakāraṇāsmītyāṃ kṛtārthaṃ savāsanam cittaṃ yadā praviṣṭaṃ bhavati tadā kutasteṣāṃ nirmūlānāṃ saṃbhavaḥ |*

Anantadeva on 2.10: *ta iti | te sūkṣmāḥ kleśāḥ pratilomapariṇāmena heyāḥ tyaktavyāḥ*.

³² Rāmānandasarasvatī on 2.10: *cittasya kṛtakṛtyasyāsmītyāṃ svaprakṛtau pralayaḥ pratiprasavaḥ | tena "heyāḥ" sūkṣmāḥ te kleśāḥ | dharmināśādeva taddharmānāṃ saṃskāraṇāṇāṃ nāśa ityārthaḥ*

Bhāvagaṇeśa on 2.10: *kleśānāmeva saṃsāranidānatvaṃ prapañcayīṣyate | ataste kleśā anāgatāvasthā vakṣyamāṇajñānāgninā dagdhabījavatkāryākṣamīkṛtāḥ pratiprasavena cittasya pralayeṇāntyāntikena heyā dharmināśenochedyā ityārthaḥ | namu dagdhabījakaḥpasyānarthahetutvāsaṃ bhavāttānnāśo na puruṣārtha ity cettathāpyasya sūtrasya [na] svarūpākhyānamātratvaṃ saṃbhavati | vastutatu kleśatvāvacchedenaiva duḥkhanidānatayā kleśasāmānyābhāvatvenaiva puruṣārthateti*.

Sadāśivendra Sarasvatī on 2.10: *cittasya nivr̥ttādhikārasya prakṛtau pralayaḥ pratiprasavaḥ | tena heyāḥ sūkṣmāḥ kleśāḥ | svamūlabhūtacittahānau tatsaṃskārarūpāḥ sūkṣmāḥ samūlaghātāṃ hatā bhavanītyārthaḥ*.

Vijñānabhikṣu on 2.10: *kriyāyogaḥ kleśatanūkaraṇārtha ityuktaṃ tatra kleśatanūkaraṇasya phalaṃ vaktumāha | prasavādviruddhaḥ pratiprasavaḥ pralayaḥ | tatāḥ ca pratiprasavena cittasya pralayeṇa sūkṣmā dagdhabījabhāvāḥ kleśā heyā ityārthaḥ | tadeva bhāṣyakāra āha*.

Hariharānanda āraṇya on 2.10: *pratiprasavaḥ prasavādviruddhaḥ pralayaḥ | punarutpattihīnalaya ityārthaḥ | sūkṣmībhūtā vivekakhātīmacchitasvopādānarūpā ityārthaḥ | kleśā eva pratiprasavena*

laya³³ which literally translates as “dissolution”. Therefore, it is evident that *pratiprasava* is interpreted as a process of transcendence from all kinds of entanglements with the *prakṛti* in this *sūtra* 2.10 by all Sanskrit commentators. Even the majority of modern scholars writing in English, Hindi, and Bengali explain *pratiprasava* in a transcendental sense. Swami Vedabharati (2001, p. 113) states: “*prasava* means creation or birth; its opposite, dissolution (*laya*),” is *pratiprasava*. Feuerstein (1979, p. 65) interprets *pratiprasava* as “a process of involution.” For Feuerstein (1979, p. 65), *prasava* is evolution, and *pratiprasava* is involution, the opposite of evolution. Most of the transcendental interpreters seem to understand *pratiprasava* in a literal sense which is not a plausible interpretation because even if one takes *pratiprasava* literally, it does not exclusively mean a process of dissolution. *Pratiprasava* means to turn around, shift course, oppose, and go against the ongoing process of *prasava*. Consequently, *pratiprasava* in this *sūtra* should not be interpreted literally because *pratiprasava* can mean many different things.³⁴

Footnote 32 continued

heyāstyājyā iti sūtrārthaḥ | **ta iti** | jñānecchādirūpaṃ cittakāryaṃ parisamāpyate vivekena | atastena samāptādhikāśasya cittasya kleśā dagdhabhijakalpā bhavanti | tataḥ punaḥ pareṇa vairageṇa vivekasyāpi nirodhaḥ kāryaḥ | tadātyantavṛttinirodhāi kleśānāmatyantaprahāṇaṃ bhavāṇīyārthaḥ

Śāṅkara on 2.10: ‘*kleśamūlāḥ karmāśayaḥ*’, ‘*sati mūle tadvipākāḥ*’ iti vakṣyate | tasmāte kleśā hātavyāḥ | hānārthaśca te pradārśaitāḥ | tadavahānau copāyaṃ vakṣyati – ‘*dhyānaheyastadvṛttayaḥ*? iti | tatra na jñāyate kiṃviśayo dhyānaprayogaḥ, kiṃ dagdhabhijakarmakleśaviśayaḥ ? kiṃ sarvaviśayaḥ ? iti | tadviśayavibhajanārthamidaṃ sūtramārabhyate– **te pratiprasavaheyāḥ sūkṣmā iti** || te pañca kleśāḥ dagdhabhijakalpāḥ yoginaśvaritādhikāre cetāsi pralīne saha tenāstaṃ gacchanti | etaduktaṃ bhavati– samyagdarśanābhyāsānaladagdhabhijāsāmāthyānāṃ kleśānāṃ kṛtāśeṣapuruṣaprayojanasya cetasaḥ pratiprasavenaiva pralayenaiva pralayoṭpattina dhyānasādhanaṇpekṣā | na hi dagdhaṃ dāhamapekṣate, piṣṭaṃ vā peṣanamiti | cestatu sādhitapuruṣārthatvāt sthitiṣṭiprayojanābhāvācca svayameva nivartate || 10 ||).

³³ Nārāyaṇatīrtha’s (*Yogasiddhāntacandrikā*) on 2. 10: te vivekajñānadagdhāḥ sūkṣmāḥ kleśāḥ pratiprasavaheyāḥ prasavaviruddhaḥ pratiprasavaḥ cittasya kṛtakṛtyasyāsmītiyāṃ svaprakṛtau layas-tena heyāḥ nāśyāḥ, dharmināśādeva taddharmānāṃ saṃskārāṇāmatyantanaśā iti bhāvaḥ, nanu kleśasaṃskārā eva saṃsārahetavaḥ, teṣāṃ nāśa eva mokṣāyāpekṣate na cittanāśaḥ, ato’tra cittanāśāntā’ nusaṇamananucitamiti cenna, yogisaṃkalpena bhraṣṭabījādīta iva dagdhabhijāsaktikādapi kadācit punaraṅkuroṭpattiprasaṅgāditi saṃkṣepaḥ. 10.

Nārāyaṇatīrtha’s (*sūtrārthabodhinī*) on 2.10: cittasya kṛtakṛtyasyāsmītiyāṃ svaprakṛtau layaḥ pratiprasavaḥ, tena heyāḥ sūkṣmāste kleśāḥ, dharmināśādeva taddharmānāṃ saṃskārāṇāṃ nāśa ityarthaḥ. 10.

Vācaspati Mīśra on 2.10: tad evaṃ kleśā lakṣitāḥ teṣāṃ ca heyānāṃ prasuptatanuvicchinodārarūpatayā catasro avasthā darśitāḥ/ kasmāt punaḥ pañcamī kleśāvasthā dagdhabhijabhāvatayā sūkṣmā na sūtrakāreṇa kathīteṇa ata āha te pratiprasavaheyāḥ sūkṣmāḥ/ yat kila puruṣaprayatnagocaras tad upadiśyate/ na ca

Rāghavananda-Sarasvatī on 2.10: pratiprasavena = kāraṇabhāvāpattyā heyā iti sūtrārthaḥ, na tasya prāṇa utkrāntanti ihaiva samavalīyanta iti śrutimāśṛityāha-caritādhikāre cetāsi bhāṣyaṃ, na hi nā’kāśahanane niyujyate kintu ghaṭtādāvītyāha-na ceti, asmitālakṣaṇaṃ yat kāraṇaṃ tadākāratā’pat-tyaiva, mṛlocchede puruṣasya vyāpārād yā hi kapālasthānīyā; nāvidyāyāmīti bhāvaḥ.

³⁴ *Pratiprasava* is described as a “counter-order, suspension of a general prohibition in a particular case, an exception to an exception, and return to the original state” by Monier-Williams (1899). *Pratiprasava* is described by Vaman Apte (1965) as “a counter exception, an exception to an exception (where in the general rule is shown to be applicable to cases falling under the exception), a contrary effect.” *Pratiprasava* is defined as “retirement, involution, retreat, reduction, reabsorption, reemergence, immersion” by Bhagavan Das (2009).

According to Vedabharati (1986, p. 38), the process of *pratiprasava* is a similar to the process of *Nirodha*. According to Vedabharati, *nirodha* is a similar process to *pratiprasava* in which the *guṇas* dissolve. But why does Patañjali not utilize the *nirodha* notion again in *YS* 2.10 in place of *pratiprasava*? This begs the question of whether *pratiprasava* is *nirodha*. *Nirodha* is a word that is extremely difficult to translate or comprehend, but it is obvious that in yoga metaphysics it has been used to describe a method of stopping or restricting the modifications or fluctuations of the mind, because in *YS* 1.2, Patañjali states that yoga is *cittavṛttinirodhaḥ* (suppression of the states of mind). *Nirodha* is therefore categorically not a transcendental dissolution process, and it cannot be compared to *pratiprasava*. “The stopping of that (five *vṛttis*) by repeated practice and dispassion,”³⁵ says Patañjali in his work. *Abhyāsa* and *vairagya* are the means by which this *nirodha* process operates, but *pratiprasava* itself is a useful yogic procedure that causes dissolution. As opposed to what Veda Bharati believed, these two phenomena can be regarded as being very different from one another.

Vedabharati (1986, pp. 146, 406) also interprets *pratiprasava* as *pratisaṅcara* (backward dissolution) due to similar process of these two concepts.³⁶ In a similar fashion, Gokhale (2020, p. 75) compares the concept of *pratisarga*—which he believes to be a *Sāṃkhya* concept of backward creation—with the term *pratiprasava*.³⁷ I believe that unduly equating *pratiprasava* with *pratisaṅcāra* and *pratisarga* as a process of annihilation without considering the nuanced differences among these concepts is an unjustified over-imposition of *Sāṃkhya* concepts upon *YS*. *Pratiprasava* is a very complex and significant idea in yoga metaphysics; hence, I don’t believe it is acceptable to compare it to *pratisarga* without justification. It is an entirely yogic technical terminology with practical and spiritual importance. *Pratiprasava*, in my opinion, is interpreted in a transcendental sense because it has been compared to the *Sāṃkhya* concepts of *pratisaṅcara* and *pratisarga* because of their apparent similarity as a process of dissolution. This comparison highlights the

³⁵ *YS* 1.12: *abhyāsavairāgyābhyāṃ tannirodhaḥ*.

³⁶ According to Swami Vedabharati (2001, p. 113), the terms *pratiprasava* and *pratisaṅcara* are equivalent in terms of the *Sāṃkhya* theory of causality because “the devolutes are dissolved by the yoga process in their respective causes in the reverse order, just as they arise from their respective causes in the chain of causation”. Bharati links *pratiprasava* with *pratisaṅcara* based on how similar the process of disintegration appears to be. It is incorrect to interpret *pratiprasava* from a *Sāṃkhya* perspective because neither the words *pratiprasava* nor *pratisaṅcara* can be found in *Sāṃkhyakārika* literature. The word “*pralaya*” has been used to refer to dissolution in *Sāṃkhya*. Only in the *Tattvasamāsa Sūtra* does the word “*pratisaṅcara*” emerge, and it is there that it is described as a process of cosmological breakdown or destruction, whereas “*saṅcara*” is described as a process of creation. If *saṅcara* is a process of creation, *pratisaṅcara* is the process of disintegration or destruction, which is the antithesis of *saṅcara*. However, it should be noted that whereas *pratiprasava* is the prerequisite for liberation in yoga, *pratisaṅcara* is not directly associated with the concept of liberation in *Sāṃkhya*. Unlike “*saṅcara*,” which is found in the *Tattvasamāsaśūtra*, the term “*prasava*” is not mentioned in the *Yogasūtra*. The idea that *pratisaṅcara* is the reverse of “*saṅcara*” in yoga thus does not make sense.

³⁷ The word *pratisarga* does not occur in *Sāṃkhyakārika* or any commentary of this text. Only the creation-related word *sarga* is provided in *Sāṃkhyakārika* 21, 24, 52, 53, 54, and 66. According to Gokhale, *pratisarga* would be the antithesis of *sarga* if *sarga* meant creation. Therefore, *pratisarga* refers to a dissolution or destruction process. Gokhale does not mention where in the *Sāṃkhya* literature he discovered the term *pratisarga*.

unjustified imposition (by interpreters) of concepts from the *Sāṃkhyakārikā* or the latter Samkhya thoughts upon the *YS*.

Because this dissolution results in *kaivalya*, all transcendental interpreters hold that *pratiprasava* is the method by which the yogin's physical body dissolves. They assert that *kaivalya* is, in fact, *videhamukti*. *Pratiprasava* and *kaivalya* are taken literally, and because of this reductionist notion of *kaivalya* as total separation of the *puruṣa* from *prakṛti*, I believe *pratiprasava* has been construed in a transcendent sense. While this argument of complete dissociation of *puruṣa* from *prakṛti* is correct in the context of reversing process of *guṇas* in *YS* 4.34, it is not plausible in the context of reversing process of subtle afflictions (*pratiprasavaheyāḥ*) in *YS* 2.10, which has an existential and practical connotation, as a process of reversal.

Feuerstein, one of the most well-known transcendental interpreters, conceptualizes *pratiprasava* and *nirodha* in a transcendent way. According to Feuerstein's commentary on *YS* 2.10, "*pratiprasava* is the gradual involution of the yogin's personal cosmos, which ends in the flowing back of the primary constituents (*guṇas*) into the primal cosmic matrix" (Feuerstein, 1979, p. 65). Feuerstein argues that *kaivalya*, or disembodied liberation, is achieved through yoga by separating *puruṣa* from *prakṛti*, the physical body. This separation is crucial, as *puruṣa* is vulnerable to ignorance and cannot be achieved while alive. He also argues that *jīvan-mukta*, is a stage on the way to *kaivalya*. *Jīvan-mukta* is not true *kaivalya*. Mircea Eliade (1970, p. 31) suggests that *kaivalya*, the ultimate form of emancipation from the body, can be understood as "aloneness," a complete dissociation of the self from the world. This interpretation contradicts liberation in life, as *kaivalya* involves the complete dissociation of *puruṣa* from *prakṛti*, including the physical body and mind.

The meaning of *pratiprasava* in this *sūtra* 2.10 should be understood from a transcendental perspective, according to the transcendental interpreters. I believe that because yoga metaphysics seems to require that *kaivalya* be outside the grasp of the three *guṇas* and because the body is composed of the three *guṇas*, all commentators are compelled to understand *pratiprasava* in a transcendent sense. The facts that the body is the product of *prārabdha-karma* and that *kaivalya* is above all *kleśas* and *karma* are equally significant. Therefore, since Patañjali defines *kaivalya* as the *pratiprasava* of the *guṇas* (*guṇānāṃ pratiprasavaḥ kaivalyaṃ*), the body must likewise be abandoned in order to achieve *kaivalya*. However, since *kaivalya* is regarded differently in other *sūtras* of *YS*, one must consider the extent to which these transcendental interpreters are justified in interpreting *kaivalya* entirely as "*guṇānāṃ pratiprasavaḥ kaivalyaṃ*". As an illustration, one might refer to *YS* III.55, which claims that freedom can be realized in the *sattva* state, which is a component of *prakṛti*, when the purity of the intellect is equivalent to that of the *puruṣa*. According to *YS* 2.25, when *avidyā* is absent, the bond between the observer and the observed is severed, and this state of being cut off is known as emancipation.³⁸ Again, according to *YS* 3.50, isolatedness (*kaivalya*) is attained when the very germ of defectivity is eradicated.³⁹

³⁸ *YS* 2.25: *tadabhāvāt saṃyogābhāvo hānaṃ taddr̥ṣeḥ kaivalyaṃ*.

³⁹ *YS* 3.50: *tad-vairāgyād api doṣa-bīja-kṣaye kaivalyaṃ*.

I contend that a transcendental interpretation of this *sūtra* 2.10 is not justified to place such a transcendental stress on the idea of *pratiprasava*. The yogic practices that a *sādhaka* who is not an adept should practice in order to achieve the culmination of the yogic itinerary, namely *kaivalya*, are described in this chapter, which makes use of the notion of *pratiprasava*. *Pratiprasava* has thus been employed as a yogic exercise that necessitates the effort and focus of a yogin. Thus, it is more of a personal practice that a yogin must develop through her mental exercises. Therefore, it would appear that *pratiprasava* is a habitual and active mental action of the yogin. In other words, since transcendental phenomena do not rely on the yogin's practice, it is an epistemic phenomenon rather than a transcendental one. If *pratiprasava* were merely a transcendent reality that was outside the purview of yogin's practice and effort, Patañjali would not have recommended it in this *sūtra*.

It is likewise problematic to interpret *pratiprasava* solely from an transcendent perspective without comprehending the full significance of the YS. In addition to *pratiprasava*, the word *heya* (to be cast aside) is also crucial and demands our attention. The word *heya* comes from the Sanskrit root *hā* which can connote: to be avoided, to be given up, to be forsaken. If *heya* is simply understood literally it can also be translated as “*tyāga*” (giving up). *Heya* is also the first division in the “*caturvyūha*” (fourfold division) of yoga metaphysics. The four are *heya* (suffering, *duḥkha*), *heya-hetu* (cause of suffering), *hāna* (relief from suffering), and *hānopāya* (means or method of destroying suffering). Vyāsa compares this fourfold division with the fourfold division of the medical science (Ayurveda). According to Ayurveda, there is disease (*heya*), cause of disease (*heya-hetu*), relief from disease (*hāna*) and Medicine as means of relief from disease (*hānopāya*).⁴⁰

In the context of this *sūtra* 2.10, *heya* is subtle afflictions and the cause of this subtle afflictions is *avidyā* and relief from *avidyā* (*kaivalya*) is getting rid of five subtle afflictions and the means or process of getting rid of five subtle *kleśas* is *pratiprasava*. The question arises; what does this *pratiprasava* process of getting rid of five subtle afflictions mean? Is it a transcendental process or empirical process? If one uses Vyāsa's comparison with the ayurvedic four division system with yogic four division, it becomes easy to relate *kleśas* with disease. According to that comparison, *heya* in this *sūtra* is *kleśa* and *kleśa* is disease. In this context, *pratiprasavaheya* is a process of getting rid of disease in the form of afflictions which does not mean getting rid of the body itself. As *pratiprasava* is not a process of transcending the body which is a product of *guṇas* in this context, it is not an ontological process because transcending *guṇas* entail the dissolution of physical body and mind of the yogi. Therefore, it is better to understand *pratiprasava* as an epistemological process of reversal in this *sūtra*.

It is also to be noted that the term *heya* seems to have an epistemological overtone rather than an ontological one when it is used as a compound word in the YS because in the next *sūtra*, Patañjali again uses the term *heya* in the phrase “*dhyānaheyās*”⁴¹ as he did with *pratiprasavaheya*. YS 2.25 tells us that “those gross

⁴⁰ Vyāsa on YS 2.15: *yathā cikitsāsāstraṃ caturvyūham - rogo rogahetur ārogyaṃ bhaiṣajyam iti. evam idam api śāstraṃ caturvyūham eva.*

⁴¹ YS 2.11: *dhyānaheyās tadvṛttayaḥ.*

vr̥ttis which have been weakened by the practice of *kriyāyoga* should be cast aside by meditation (*dhyāna*).” In other words, meditation is a process of getting rid of the weakened *vr̥ttis*, but meditation does not dissolve or destroy *vr̥ttis* completely. To get rid of weakened *vr̥ttis* means to purify *citta* which is the source of *vr̥ttis*. Meditation is a process of purification. Getting rid of the weakened *vr̥ttis* is also a psychological process than an ontological process because complete dissolution of *vr̥ttis* is only possible at the time of *kaivalya*. In this context, *dhyāna* does not entail *kaivalya*. So, this use of *heya* seems to be associated with a process of purification than annihilation. It can be construed that the term *heya* in the *YS* is employed in a psychological and empirical sense. Therefore, it requires the yogin’s will and effort. On the surface, it may appear that the term *pratiprasava* is intended to contrast with the concept of *prasava*, which refers to creation or genesis. So, destruction is the reverse of creativity. *Pratiprasava* denotes a reversal process. In the larger yoga metaphysics, it is partially accurate to say that *pratiprasava* is a process of disappearance of manifested state of *prakṛti* as a transcendent fact, but this is not the case for this specific *sūtra*, which appears to have an undertone of empirical reality.

On the other hand, some contemporary scholars have given *pratiprasava* an empirical interpretation. Deshpande (1978, p. 86) defines *pratiprasava* as a psychological and self-illuminating movement to end all kinds of defilements (*kleśas*). According to Deshpande (1978, p. 86), *pratiprasava* is an epistemological process of cleaning the mind, like using meditation.⁴² Swami Vivekananda (1896, p. 130) translates *pratiprasava* as “opposite modifications” in *YS* 2.10 as an epistemological phenomenon.⁴³ Taimni (1961, p. 139) explains *sūtra* 2.10 that “These, the subtle ones, can be reduced by resolving them backward into their origin.” For Taimni, *pratiprasava*, the process entails nullification rather than annihilation. Taimni (1961, p. 141) describes *pratiprasava* as a process of tracing backward which is “not merely an intellectual recognition but a realization that nullifies the power of the *kleśas* to affect the mind of the Yogi.”

According to Taimni, *pratiprasava* is a process of nullifying the power of the *kleśas*, making them ineffectual to the operation of the mind, rather than a method of destroying the *kleśas*. The understanding of this tracing back of the power of the *kleśas* can be attained to some extent on the physical plane, but it can only be fully realized when the Yogin ascends to higher planes in *samādhi*, according to Taimni, who also thinks that *pratiprasava* is an empirical reality. Taimni states that the practice of *pratiprasava* is not a solitary or independent method of going backward; rather, it incorporates all yogic rituals that aid in going back in order to achieve liberation. For Taimni, *Pratiprasava* is also a voluntary, continuous yogic activity undertaken by the Yogin. Stuart Ray Sarbacker (2005, p. 39) questions whether *pratiprasava* implies withdrawing from reality identification but still manifesting a

⁴² Deshpande (1978, p. 7) comments (The right way to free oneself from all tensions is the way of *pratiprasava*. This means a journey of exploration in reverse of going back from the peripheral surface tensions to their very roots. This is the way of meditation. In meditation one’s mind remains stationary and only pure perception is allowed to operate on at! the impulses emerging out of one’s conditioned consciousness.)

⁴³ Vivekananda’s translation of *YS* 2.10 (They, to-be-rejected-by-opposite-modifications, are fine). By Modification Vivekananda means *vr̥ttis*.

mind and body focused on *viveka-jñana* perfection. Michael Beloved (2007, p. 122) equates *pratiprasava* with *pratyāhāra*, the fifth step of yoga, which involves withdrawing sensory expressions to preserve psychic energy, crucial for supernatural perception development. Nicholai Bachman (2011, p. 155) emphasizes the importance of *pratiprasava* as a powerful exercise to end defilements and negative impressions, a crucial step before *kaivalya*.

It is clear from our above discussion that almost all epistemological interpreters understand *pratiprasava* as an epistemological, psychological, or perceptual process. While this interpretation is true in this *sūtra*, they do not give any plausible textual evidence for their claim, and most of these epistemological interpreters believe that *kaivalya* is living liberation in yoga, which is not completely correct.

Transcendent *Pratiprasava* in 4.34

The final *sūtra* uses *pratiprasava* again, which is crucial to understanding the *YS*'s notion of liberation. According to *YS* 4.34, "ultimate liberation takes place when the *guṇas*, having nothing to accomplish for the sake of *puruṣa*, reverse to their latent source; in other words, when the *puruṣa* itself as conscious force rests in its own essential form."⁴⁴ The *bhoga* and *apavarga* of *puruṣa* are *puruṣārtha*. *Puruṣārthaśūnya*, then, refers to a situation in which the *puruṣa* is not in need of this *bhoga* and *apavarga*. The *bhoga* and *apavarga* of the *puruṣa* are caused by the *guṇas*. *Guṇas* return to their unmanifest state after completing their mission for *puruṣa*. This process of returning is known as *kaivalya*. When the *guṇas* are separated from the *puruṣa*, the *puruṣa*'s original self (*svarūpapraṭiṣṭhā*) or the power of pure consciousness (*citiśaktir*) is permanently settled.

According to Vijñāna Bhikṣu,⁴⁵ *kaivalya* in this last *sūtra* are defined in two ways. (1) First, it is the gaining of their natural state by the *guṇas* through *pratiprasava*. (2) It is the state of the *puruṣa* abiding in its own self, that is, in "isolation" (*kaivalya*). This interpretation of *kaivalya* from two perspectives (from the perspective of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*) is supported by many Sanskrit and modern scholars. But it is just the two sides of the same coin. So, these two ways of explanation of *kaivalya* do not help us to understand the purpose of using these new terms *svarūpapraṭiṣṭhā* and *citiśakti*. Why does Patañjali give two definitions of *kaivalya* in the last *sūtra* as *guṇānām pratiprasavaḥ kaivalyaṁ svarūpapraṭiṣṭhā vā citiśaktiḥ*. It is not reasonable to believe that Patañjali's definition of *kaivalya* in this *sūtra* is the only one provided throughout the entire text, even if these two definitions point to the same phenomenon. These two definitions and new words are actually employed to describe the nature of liberation in the yoga *sūtra* which accommodates different definitions or meanings of *kaivalya* in the different stages of the development of yogic *sādhana*.

⁴⁴ *YS* 4.34: *puruṣārthaśūnyānām guṇānām pratiprasavaḥ kaivalyaṁ svarūpapraṭiṣṭhā vā citiśaktir*.

⁴⁵ Vijñāna Bhikṣu on *YS* 4.34: *kṛtabhogāpavargānām puruṣārthaśūnyānām yaḥ pratiprasavaḥ kāryakāraṇāmānām guṇānām tatkaivalyaṁ, svarūpapraṭiṣṭhā punarbuddhisattvānabhisa mbandhāt-puruṣasya citiśaktireva kevalā, tasyāḥ sadā tathaivāvasthānaṁ kaivalyamiti*.

To understand this last *sūtra* one has to take into consideration the whole metaphysics of the YS. For a clear discussion I divide this last *sūtra* into two parts—first part is *kaivalya* as *guṇānām pratiprasavaḥ* and second part is *kaivalya* as *svarūpapratīṣṭhā citiśaktiḥ*. According to the first part of the *sūtra*, *kaivalya* is the coming back of the *guṇas* to their original source which is *avyakta prakṛti*. So, *kaivalya* is the dissolution of *vyakta prakṛti* (all material phenomena including the mind and body of the yogin) into *avyakta prakṛti*. Therefore, *kaivalya* is *videhamukti*. This interpretation is right if one understands *pratiprasava* as an ontological process in the YS. But in *sūtra* 2,10 Patañjali uses *pratiprasava* as an epistemological process or a purificatory process. If *pratiprasava* is an epistemological process, then *kaivalya* means purification of the subtle *guṇas* in this portion of the *sūtra*. This process of purification starts from the epistemological state and ends in the ontological state. It is to be noted that the process of purification is an important theme of YS.⁴⁶ Even this process of purification is directly linked with the concept of *kaivalya*.⁴⁷ Based on the analysis of the first section of the *sūtra*, it may be inferred that *kaivalya* can be both a process of dissolution of *guṇas* or a process of purification of *guṇas*. If one accepts stages in the process of *pratiprasava*, then at the final stage, *kaivalya* is dissolution of all *prakṛtic* manifestation including the mind and body of the yogin. This *sūtra* seems to be indicating the final stage which comes after crossing the stages.

Most Sanskrit commentators and modern scholars accept *kaivalya* as disembodied liberation in this *sūtra* and even in the YS also. It is interesting to note that even some traditional commentators who interpret *pratiprasava* and *kaivalya* in a transcendental sense endorse the possibility of *jīvan-mukti* and try to explain the nature of the *jīvan-mukti* stage. But the notion of *jīvan-mukti* is understood differently by the commentators. They do not equate *jīvan-mukti* with *kaivalya*, or they do not say that *jīvan-mukti* is *kaivalya*. For Vyāsa⁴⁸ and Vācaspati Miśra,⁴⁹ on the cessation of the afflictions and *karma*, an enlightened aspirant becomes liberated in his lifetime for the simple reason that such a person is not born again because there is no birth again because there is no false knowledge (*viparyaya*). Nārāyaṇatīrtha⁵⁰ and Rāmāṇaṣṭasaraśvatī⁵¹ and Sadāśivendrasaraśvatī⁵² think that

⁴⁶ YS 1.43: *smṛtipariśuddhau svarūpaśūnyevārthamātranirbhāsā nirvitarkā* || 43), YS 2.20 (*draṣṭā dṛṣṭimātrah śuddho'pi pratyayānupaśyaḥ*, YS 2.28: *yogāṅgānuṣṭhānādaśuddhikṣaye jñānadīptirāviveka-khyāteḥ*, YS 2.41: *sattvaśuddhisauṃmanasyaikāgryendriyajayātma darśanayogyatvāni ca*, YS 2.43: *kāyendriyasiddhiraśuddhikṣayāttapaśaḥ*,

⁴⁷ YS 3. 55: *sattvapuruṣayoḥ śuddhisāmye kaivalyamiti*

⁴⁸ Vyāsa on YS 4.30: *kleśakarmanivṛttau jīvan eva vidvān vimukto bhavati kasmāt, yasmād viparyayo bhavasya kāraṇam*.

⁴⁹ Vācaspati Miśra on 4.30: *kasmāt punar jīvan eva vidvān vimukto bhavati/ uttaraṃ — yasmād iti/ kleśakarmavāsaneddhāḥ kila karmāśayo jātyādininidānam/ na cāsati nidāne nidāni bhavitum arhati/*

⁵⁰ Cf. e.g. Nārāyaṇatīrtha on 4.30: *jīvanneva hi vidvān harṣāmarṣābhyāṃ vimukto bhavātīti*.

⁵¹ Cf. e.g. Rāmāṇaṣṭasaraśvatī on 3.51: *catvāraḥ khalv amī yoginaḥ ... caturthas tu bhagavān mahānubhavaḥ labdhavivekāntabhūmitraye viraktaḥ vighnaśaṅkāśūnyaḥ jīvanmuktaḥ caturthabhūmau vartate*.

⁵² Cf. e.g. Sadāśivendrasaraśvatī on 3.51: *catvāraḥ khalvamī yoginaḥ ... saṃ prāptapuruṣakhyātau paravairāgyasampannaścaturthaḥ, so'sau bhagavānmahānubhāvo jīvanmukto vighnaśaṅkāśūnyaḥ*.

jīvan-mukta is someone who is freed from anger, fear, sorrow, obstacles and doubts. Bhāvagaṇeśa explains that *jīvan-mukti* has stages of development. First stage is when the afflictions are burnt by the fire of knowledge,⁵³ the second stage when knowledge dispels passion,⁵⁴ and the third stage when affliction and *karma* depart for the Yogin.⁵⁵ Nāgōjībhṭa points out that *jīvanmukta* has to experience the effects of *prārabdha-karma* even after the emergence of true knowledge.⁵⁶ Rāghavānanda Sarasvatī says that the mind of a *jīvanmukta* is infinite.⁵⁷ Hariharānandārāya equates the *jīvan-mukta* state of liberation with different states of a yogic *sādhana*. In YS 2.4, Hariharānandārāya (1983, p. 120) says that when the *kleśa* becomes like a parched seed, then a Yogin becomes *jīvan-mukta* (i.e., liberated though alive). “Such a Yogin becomes free by subjugating the *Citta*, and that is why her present body becomes her last one as she is not born again.” For Hariharānandārāya, *jīvan-mukta* means someone who will not take birth again (the same view as Vyāsa and Vācaspati-Miśra). For Hariharānandārāya (1983, p. 399), when, through *dharma-megha* concentration, the Yogin is freed from afflictions and consequent actions, he is called *jīvan-mukta*. So *jīvan-mukti* happens when *dharma-megha samādhi* is achieved.

If all commentators believe that ultimate liberation is *kaivalya* as *videhamukti*, then how is it reasonable to call *jīvan-mukti* also liberation?. Even if many claim that it is a lower kind of *mukti*, how plausible is it to use the *mukti* concept? Hariharānandārāya (1983, p. 399) says in one place that “the word *mukti* means freedom from sorrows,” but in yoga, *mukti* means liberation (*kaivalya*). If *pratiprasava* is the precondition of liberation in YS, then how is it possible to understand *mukti* as freedom from sorrow? Patañjali defines the nature of *kaivalya* in the last *sūtra* as the complete dissolution of mind and body in *prakṛti* as a means of establishing one’s own original form as *citiśakti*. Even if they use the concept of *jīvan-mukta*, it is not true *kaivalya* but rather a step towards *kaivalya*.

In the second part of this *sūtra* 4.34, *kaivalya* is called *svarūpapraṭiṣṭhā vā citiśaktiḥ* (settling of *puruṣa* in its own real form as pure consciousness). According to Patañjali, the ultimate goal of yoga is *svarūpapraṭiṣṭhā*. In this *sūtra*, *Svarūpapraṭiṣṭhā* is an adjective qualifying *citiśakti*. This *sūtra* exactly matches with *sūtra* 1.3 in term of the content: *tadā draṣṭuḥ svarūpe ‘vasthānam’*. *draṣṭuḥ* relates to *citiśaktiḥ* and *svarūpe* ‘*vasthānam*’ relates to *svarūpapraṭiṣṭhā*. *Kaivalya* is *citiśakti* in its true form. Patañjali logically connects *upakrama* (introduction) and

⁵³ Bhāvagaṇeśa on 4.28: *teṣāṃ saṃskārāṇāṃ hānaṃ tu pūrvācāryaiḥ kleśānāṃ ivoktam | yathānāgatāḥ kleśāḥ jñānāgninā dahyanta evaṃ teṣāmatyantocchedas taccittena sahaiveti*.

⁵⁴ Bhāvagaṇeśa on 4.30: *etatsūtrokto jñānaniṣpattikāryo dvitīyo mokṣaḥ pañcasikhācāryair apy uktaḥ—dvitīyo rāgasam kṣayāditi. rāgaḥ kleśasāmānyopalakṣakaḥ*.

⁵⁵ Bhāvagaṇeśa on 4. 31: *tadā jīvanmuktāvasthāyāṃ sarvayoḥ kleśakarmanor jñānāvarakamalayor apagamana hetunā jñānasya satvaprakāśasyānantyādvibhutvādvypakatvājñeyam tatprakāśyamalpaṃ tadapekṣayā bhavati*.

⁵⁶ Nāgōjībhṭa on 2.13: *ato niḥśeṣāvidyākṣaye’pi jīvanmuktānāṃ prārabdhabhoga upapadyate*.

⁵⁷ Rāghavānanda Sarasvatī on 4.31: *jīvananmuktasya cittam vyācikirṣuḥ tat sūtrārūḍhaṃ karoti – tadeti , jñātasya cittasya svatojaganmaṇḍalavyāpinaḥ sarve’nantā iti śruter apētāvarāṇe vidyata iva sarvāvabhāsakasya jñeyamalpaṃ “āścaryavat paśyati kaścid etam āścaryavad vadat, tathaiva cānyaḥ” iti smṛtim āśrityāha – andho maṇimavidhyaditi, maṇiṃ sarandhraṃ kṛtvānityarthaḥ*.

upasaṃhāra (conclusion) in this *sūtra*. What was initially stated as *kaivalya* (*svarūpāvasthāna*) has reached the final stage which is *svarūpapraṭiṣṭhā*. But in between the beginning and the end of text, Patañjali uses many connected terms for *puruṣa*, *prakṛti* and *kaivalya*. On the one hand, Patañjali uses *draṣṭṛ*,⁵⁸ *dṛśi*,⁵⁹ *cetanā*⁶⁰ to indicate *puruṣa*. On the other hand, he uses *dṛśya*,⁶¹ *dṛgśakti*,⁶² *darśanaśakti* to indicate *prakṛti*. To indicate *kaivalya*, he uses *svarūpe* ‘*vasthānam*’ and *svarūpapraṭiṣṭhā* and *citiśakti*h.

It appears that many of these words or ideas that the YS uses to describe *kaivalya* are merely interchangeable. However, it should be emphasized that Patañjali had already defined *kaivalya* several times in the text prior to *sūtra* 4.34, therefore the final *sūtra*, which specifies *svarūpapraṭiṣṭhā citiśakti*, is more concerned with expressing the nature of *kaivalya* than with defining it. Now, if one says that *kaivalya* takes place when the *puruṣa* is established in its true form and then the question arises - established by whom? The obvious answer is by *prakṛti*, but *prakṛti* is *jaḍa* (inactive) unless it is activated by *puruṣa*’s consciousness. So, it is not only *prakṛti* but *prakṛti* connected with *puruṣa*. To attain *kaivalya* is to disconnect this connection between *prakṛti* and *puruṣa*. If one says that *puruṣa* establishes itself, then it means that *puruṣa* is a doer, which she is not. One is imposing agency on *puruṣa* who is *akarta*. So, *puruṣa* is not established by *prakṛti* or *puruṣa* in the general sense.

Citi as pure consciousness can literally and metaphysically mean *puruṣa*, but why is Patañjali adding the word *śakti* with *citi*? Daniel Raveh (2012, p. 80) seems to respond to this question by stating that the *śakti* in the *citiśakti* indicates a potential power “which is not to be used or which cannot be used by definition” because he finds “a correlation, even continuation, between the siddhi-s and the *śakti* of the *citi*, as they both convey a narrative of power not to be used.” Raveh (2012, p. 81) believes that in yoga, *śakti* refers to the “power to stand distinct” from siddhi-powers and *prakṛti*. I find this correlation implausible because siddhis are supernatural powers that the yogin is free to use, while *śakti* of the *citi* is inherently ineffective and impractical. So, siddhis are real and practical powers to act or perform supernatural activities that have practical results for the yogin, even though Patañjali recommends not using them due to their negative impact on the process of attaining *kaivalya*. It cannot also be a continuation of Patañjali’s discussion of the power from the level of siddhi-power to the level of *citiśakti* power because the purpose and nature of the siddhi-power and *citiśakti*-power are completely different from each other. Siddhi power is a negative power that impedes the yogic journey of liberation, whereas *citiśakti* power is a positive power that paves the way for liberation. The siddhi-theme of power ends before reaching the *citiśakti* stage

⁵⁸ YS 1.3: *tadā draṣṭuḥ svarūpe’vasthānam*; YS 2.17: *draṣṭṛdṛśyayoḥ saṃyogo heyahetuḥ*; YS 2.20: *draṣṭā dṛśimātraḥ śuddho’pi pratyayānupaśyaḥ*.

⁵⁹ YS 2.25: *tadabhāvātsaṃyogābhāvo hānaṃ taddṛśeḥ kaivalyam*

⁶⁰ YS 1.29: *tataḥ pratyaktcetanādhigamo’pyantarāyābhāvaśca*

⁶¹ YS 2.21: *tadartha eva dṛśyasyā’tmā*, YS 4.19: *na tatsvābhāsaṃ dṛśyatvāt*, YS 4.23: *draṣṭṛdṛśyoparaktam cittam sarvārtham*

⁶² YS 2.6: *dṛgdarśanaśaktiyorekātmatevāsmītā*

because embodied *puruṣa* had already left behind all relations with siddhi-power (whether to be used or not to be used) even while *puruṣa* was not liberated completely. It seems doubtful to accept the claim that this *śakti* (power) of the *citi* is simply powerless power and impractical, and it does not serve any purpose for *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*.⁶³ If this *śakti* is only potential power and this power has no practical impact on the yogic journey, why does Patañjali mention this concept of *śakti* in the final important *sūtra* that describes the nature of *kaivalya*?

One can argue that the term “*śakti*” in the phrase “*citiśakti*” does not have any independent meaning. *Citiśakti* is a phrase which is just an alternative term for *puruṣa*. Without understanding the meaning and role of the *śakti* in this phrase one cannot have a comprehensive understanding of the concept of *citiśakti*. Although Patañjali did not use the word “*citi*” anywhere else in the *YS*, the word “*śakti*” does appear three other times. The use of *śakti* as a force or power to engage with the *prakṛtic* manifestation is described by Patañjali in his statement that “ego is [to consider] the nature of the seer and the nature of the instrumental power of seeing (*dhāraṇā-śakti*) to be the same thing”.⁶⁴ According to *YS* 2.23, “[The notion of] conjunction is the means to understand the real nature of the powers of the possessor and of the possessed (*svasvāmīśakti*)”⁶⁵ (Bryant’s translation⁶⁶). Again in *YS* 3.21 one finds that “through *saṁyama* on the *kāya-rūpa*, when the capacity of the body (*grāhyaśakti*) to be perceived is suspended and the contact between the eyes (of other people) and the light (which the body reflects) is cut off (the yogin acquires) invisibility”.⁶⁷ *Śakti* in other *sūtras* is the capacity or power to engage with the *guṇas*. In the case of *citiśakti*, it is the capacity or power or force of *puruṣa* which only works for *puruṣa* himself.

One philosophical meaning of *citiśakti* can be *puruṣa*, but the other meaning of *citiśakti* as an adjective can be power or force which is the innate property of *puruṣa*. I think equating *citiśakti* exclusively with *puruṣa* at the expense of other possible meaning of *citiśakti* is not justifiable. Daya Krishna rightly points out that the concept of *citiśakti* and its relation with *kaivalya* have been overlooked in the Sanskrit interpretive literature (Daniel Raveh, 2012, p. 80). It is not reasonable to believe that Patañjali used the crucial term *citiśakti* without any significant meaning because every word in *sūtra* texts, especially in the *Yogasūtra*, is carefully chosen and used with significant meaning. I believe he is trying to draw attention to something by using the word “*citiśakti*” which is not contained in other words that indicate *kaivalya*. *citiśakti* literally refers to the force or power of *puruṣa*

⁶³ Daya Krishna also does not accept this idea of *śakti* as inactive-power. Raveh (2012, p. 81) comments that “DK does not buy the ideal of power divorced from action”. He is unimpressed by “the power to stand distinct,” unless it is accompanied by the “power to engage” and a sense of freedom to “travel” between the two at will”.

⁶⁴ *YS* 2.6: *dr̥gdarśanaśaktyor ekātmatevāsmītā*

⁶⁵ *YS* 2.23: *svasvāmīśaktyoḥ svarūpopalabdhihetuḥ saṁyogaḥ*

⁶⁶ I use Edwin Bryant’s (2009) translation of the *sūtras* in this paper except for *sūtras* 2.10, 4.34, 3.55, and 3.50 which are my translations.

⁶⁷ *YS* 3.21: *kāyarūpasamyamāt tadgrāhya śaktistambhe cakṣuḥprakāśāsāṁprayoge antardhānam*

(consciousness), as most scholars commonly think.⁶⁸ Daya Krishna interprets *citiśakti* as “*nīrodha-śakti*” which means the power “to stop or extinguish the *vṛtti-s*” (Daniel Raveh, 2012, p. 79). How can there be any effort of stopping the *vṛtti* when one is liberated because *citiśakti* is a state of liberation? In the *citiśakti* stage, *puruṣa* rests in its own place after the disengagement of all *vṛttis*. If this power of *puruṣa* to do something with *vṛttis* is accepted, then it seems to be the capacity of *puruṣa* to get engaged with the *guṇās*. Given that *puruṣa* in yoga is “*akartā*” (non-doer) or “*abhoktā*” (non-experiential) and “*akarma*” (inoperative) or without agency, how can *citi* or awareness, which is *puruṣa*, have power to engage with *guṇas*? What does “power” in the context of *puruṣa* mean?

For Patañjali, “*śakti*” is not merely a metaphor but rather a means of real power or force for doing action. So *śakti* in the *YS* is not only a potential form of action but rather a manifesting form of action. one can say that Patañjali should not have used this “*śakti*” word in the phrase *citiśakti* with a different meaning, which does not go along with the rest of the other *śakti* meanings. So, *citiśakti* is a form of manifesting the power of the conscious *puruṣa*. But if *citiśakti* is interpreted as the power of doing action of the *citi* (consciousness), it would be in contradiction to the understanding of *puruṣa*, which is *akartā* in yoga. It would be wrong to understand that *puruṣa* (*citi*) has power to engage with *prakṛti* because *puruṣa* is disengaged from *prakṛti* always. It is also wrong to think that *citiśakti* is the power of *citi* (consciousness or *puruṣa*) because for utilizing the power *puruṣa* needs *prakṛti* and in the *kaivalya* state, *puruṣa* is beyond the touch of *prakṛti*.

But I think that *citiśakti* may mean that the *citi* itself is a power. So, *citiśakti* is not the power of *citi*; it is the power itself. This power or force is the innate capacity of *puruṣa* to engage with himself. The existence of this *śakti* is not dependent on the existence of *prakṛti* because *śakti* is the innate property of *puruṣa*. When *puruṣa* is not liberated, this *śakti* is inaccessible to *puruṣa* and when *puruṣa* is liberated *puruṣa* has complete access to it and it starts functioning for the sake of *puruṣa*. This *citiśakti* power has two types of functionalities: *citiśakti* itself as manifesting power and *citiśakti* itself as potential power. When *puruṣa* lives in a liberated state in the realm of *prakṛti* *puruṣa* continues expressing itself as manifesting *śakti* and when *puruṣa* lives in a liberated state devoid of all *prakṛtic* manifestation *puruṣa* continues unmanifesting itself as potential *śakti*. *śakti* manifesting *puruṣa* is a state of liberation in life, and *śakti* potential *puruṣa* is a state of liberation after death.

If it is accepted that *kaivalya* has some stages of development because of the continuous working of “*śakti*”, it would be a contradiction to the definition of *kaivalya* given by Patañjali in the final *sūtra* as “the return of *guṇas* to their original unmanifested stage” (*guṇānām pratiprasavaḥ kaivalyaṃ*) because Patañjali clearly implies that *kaivalya* is attained when *puruṣa* is completely disconnected with any *prakṛtic* manifestation which includes the physical body and mind of the yogin also. But this apparent contradiction can be resolved if *pratiprasava* is not understood exclusively in a transcendent sense as a process of dissolution. If *pratiprasava*, as a

⁶⁸ Daniel Raveh (2012, p. 80) (In *YS* 4.34, Patañjali defines *kaivalya* as a state in which “the power of pure consciousness (*citi-śakti*) abides in its own essence (*sva-rūpa-pratiṣṭhā*).”), Daya Krishna’s “consciousness force” – to the force of “absolute consciousness.” Georg Feuerstein (1979, p. 145).

yogic metaphysical and practical concept, can mean only a process of reversal, different stages of *kaivalya* in yoga metaphysics can be accommodated because Patañjali has already introduced these two concepts of *praitprasava* and *kaivalya* in different contexts in the *YS* before *sūtra* 3.43, which helps us to understand the overall position or viewpoint of Patañjali regarding these concepts.

It has been shown that *pratiprasava* can be interpreted in both ways: in an empirical way and in a transcendental way. But the question is: What does *kaivalya* mean in the *YS*? In the interpretive literature, there are two completely opposite views of *kaivalya*, which are “embodied liberation” (*jīvan-mukti*)⁶⁹ and “disembodied liberation” (*videhamukti*).⁷⁰ These two opposite views are partially correct. On the one hand Patañjali seems to imply that *kaivalya* is embodied liberation in the *sādhana pada* in *YS* 2.25. *YS* 2.25 states that when *avidyā* does not function, there is disconnection between the *buddhi* and *puruṣa*, and the knowledge of this disassociation of *puruṣa* from the *buddhi* is considered *kaivalya*.⁷¹

What this *sūtra* means is that when *puruṣa* realizes that he is different from *buddhi*, *puruṣa* attains *kaivalya*. This is a clear indication of the psychological changes of the embodied *puruṣa*, not the cosmological changes. This *sūtra* can be understood in an epistemological sense. It is to be remembered that in this chapter, Patañjali introduced the concept of *pratiprasava* in an empirical sense, where *pratiprasava* is a process of reversing the course of *kleśa*, and *avidyā* is one of the five *kleśas*. *YS* III.55 states that when the purity of the intellect is equal to that of the *puruṣa*, *kaivalya* liberation ensues.⁷² So, *kaivalya* ensues in the *citta-sattva* state, which is in the realm of *prakṛti*. The purified *citta-sattva* state means the purification of the mind of the yogin. So, this *kaivalya* is also the result of the mental purification of the yogin. This *kaivalya* can also be understood in an empirical sense. So, *kaivalya* is liberation while living (*jīvan-mukti*) in the *YS*.

On the other hand, Patañjali explicitly defines *kaivalya* as disembodied liberation in which *kaivalya* actually means aloneness as the ultimate stage. *YS* IV.34 states that “ultimate liberation takes place when the *guṇas*, having nothing to accomplish for the sake of *puruṣa*, reverse to their latent source; in other words, when the *puruṣa* itself as conscious force rests in its own essential form”.⁷³ So, “*guṇānām pratiprasavaḥ*” generally means the reversal of the *guṇas* into unmanifest *prakṛti*. In other words, it is the dissolution of all entanglements of *prakṛtic* manifestation, including the physical body and mind of the yogin. This can be understood in a transcendental sense. So, *kaivalya* is liberation after death (*videhamukti*). A very important question arises: Do *guṇas*—for the other individuals too—get back to their original state when one attains *videhamukti*? The answer is no, because Patañjali states clearly in the *sūtra* that “although the seen ceases to exist for one

⁶⁹ Chapple (2008, p. 105), Whicher (1998, p. 278), Foulks (2009, p. 78), Samuel (2008, p. 223), Rose (2016, p. 107).

⁷⁰ Koelman (1970), Rukmani (1997), Dasgupta (1995), Eliade (1970), Feuerstein (1979), Vedabharati (2001), Bryant (2009), Pflueger (2003) and Grinshpon (2002).

⁷¹ *YS* 2.25: *tad-abhāvāt saṃyogābhāvo hānaṃ tad-dṛśeḥ kaivalyam*

⁷² *YS* 3.55: *sattva-puruṣayoh śuddhi-sāmye kaivalyam iti*

⁷³ *YS* 4.34: *puruṣārthaśūnyānām guṇānām pratiprasavaḥ kaivalyam svarūpapratīṣṭhā vā citiśaktir*

whose purpose is accomplished [the liberated *puruṣa*], it has not ceased to exist altogether, since it is common to other [not-liberated] *puruṣas*".⁷⁴ It is to be noted that the Yoga tradition aligns with the realist perspective, asserting that the world is objectively real, unlike the idealist perspective, which views it as a mind-created entity.

Patañjali vehemently declares that for the yogin who attained *vivekajñāna* (true knowledge), this world is an abode of suffering, and to live in this mundane world is to perpetuate suffering for the *puruṣa*. Patañjali states, "For one who has discrimination, everything is suffering on account of the suffering produced by the consequences [of action], by pain [itself], and by the *saṃskāras*, as well as on account of the suffering ensuing from the turmoil of the *vṛttis* due to the *guṇas*".⁷⁵ So, the yogin should depart from this physical world by dissolving her physical body and mind, as no one likes to tolerate pain and suffering while there is an escape from it. This *sūtra* indirectly suggests that *kaivalya* is not to be attained in this *prakṛtic* suffering world, which includes the body and the mind of the yogin.

Patañjali provides seemingly contradictory two different definitions of *kaivalya*: one is in an empirical sense (*jīvan-mukti*) and the other is in a transcendental sense (*videhamukti*). If *kaivalya* is understood as "*sattva-puruṣayoh śuddhi-sāmye kaivalyam*," which clearly indicates *kaivalya* is possible in this empirical world of *sattva*, which is an ingredient of *prakṛti*. So, it is not a complete disassociation from the *prakṛti*. In an empirical sense, *kaivalya* is liberation while living (*jīvan-mukti*). If *kaivalya* is understood as "*guṇānām pratiprasavaḥ kaivalyaṃ*" which clearly means the involution of the evolution which is nothing but the untying of all connections with *prakṛtic* manifestation including the physical body and the mind of the yogin. Thus, Patañjali appears to allow for the possibility of two divergent, seemingly incompatible interpretations of *kaivalya*. In what way may the text reconcile these disparate forms of *kaivalya*? The text's apparent differences in *kaivalya* are actually distinct stages of emancipated *puruṣa*, and understanding these stages helps to understand the intricate nature of *kaivalya*. Notably, Patañjali asserted that achieving *kaivalya* requires completing the *pratiprasava* process. If *pratiprasava* is a process, then it entails several developmental stages that culminate in the dissolution of the *guṇas*. In four chapters, these various stages of development are accepted in various packages. To certain extent when this process is complete, it has been defined in that context. When this process goes further from the earlier stage or development, further achievement is made, and Patañjali gives another definition of *kaivalya*. In *sūtra* 4.34, this process of *pratiprasava* culminates completely and dissolve all *prakṛtic* connections completely. This final *sūtra* indicates the end of the journey of the liberated yogin. It is important to keep in mind that *kaivalya* is neither a static stage nor an instant accomplishment. *kaivalya* is the yogin's personal project which consists of a multi-phase endeavor.

The several developing stages of liberation that depend on the context in which *kaivalya* occurs determine this multi-phase undertaking. In *sūtra* 1.3 Patañjali uses the word *tadā* which indicates a period of time or a stage of *sādhana*. In *sūtra* 1. 2

⁷⁴ YS 2.22: *kṛtārtham prati naṣṭam apy anaṣṭam tad-anya sādhanānatvāt*

⁷⁵ YS 2.15: *pariṇāma-tāpa-saṃskāra-duḥkhair guṇa-vṛtti-virodhāc ca duḥkham eva sarvaṃ vivekinah*

Patañjali states that “when all the *vṛttis* of mind are restricted, at that time (*tadā*) the *puruṣa* rests in its own original form” (*sūtra* 1.3). In other words, the result of *cittavṛttinirodha* is *kaivalya*. So, *kaivalya* is dependent of the *cittavṛttinirodha* activity. Patañjali begins the text by indicating the stage or context in which *kaivalya* happens. It can be said that in this *sūtra* *kaivalya* is *cittavṛttinirodha*-oriented *kaivalya*. It is a *cittavṛttinirodha* stage of *kaivalya*. It can be marked as “*kaivalya* I” because Patañjali describes this type of *kaivalya* in chapter one. In the second chapter, Patañjali describes *kaivalya* for the second time in *sūtra* 2.25. This *sūtra* tells us that when there is the absence of that *avidyā* (corrupted knowledge which is explained in the earlier *sūtra*), there is the absence of false relation between the seer and the seen. This absence of false relation is known as *hāna*. This *hāna* is otherwise known as *kaivalya* of the *puruṣa*.⁷⁶

When embodied *puruṣa* experiences the *prakṛtic* manifestation by the mind, sense-organs and body and embodied *puruṣa* thinks that this mind and sense-organs and body are part of *puruṣa*. This experience or engagement of embodied *puruṣa* with *prakṛti* is called *samyoga*. This *samyoga* (false relation) is the cause of *avidyā* (corrupted knowledge).⁷⁷ Knowledge that is not true is known as *avidyā*. For example, since the physical body is *prakṛti* and not the *puruṣa*, to recognize physical body as the *puruṣa* is *avidyā*. So, *avidyā* is the cause of the false relation between *prakṛti* and *puruṣa* and this false relation between *prakṛti* and *puruṣa* is the cause of bondage. If *avidyā*, the cause of bondage, is eliminated, then there is no bondage. How to eliminate *avidyā*? Patañjali instructs in the next *sūtra* 2.26 that *avidyā* should be eliminated by gaining true knowledge.⁷⁸ *Kaivalya* is explained in terms of acquiring true knowledge. In this stage of *sādhana* of yogin, *kaivalya* is knowledge-oriented liberation. It is to be kept in mind that this *kaivalya* is not the end of *sādhana* because the flow of the practice of true knowledge continues for the Yogin. So, it is a phase of the journey of *kaivalya*, not the end. This can be marked as “*kaivalya* II”.

In the third chapter, Patañjali again mentions *kaivalya* in *sūtra* 3.50. *sūtra* 3. 50 tells us that “when there is no attachment even for *viveka-khyāti* practice (which is the cause of the most powerful supernatural attainments like omniscience and omnipotence), there is no seed of faults (which keeps the yogin in bondage). In other words, the absence of the seed of faults is known as *kaivalya*”.⁷⁹ This chapter is all about the description of supernatural attainments of the Yogin. Why does Patañjali bring this topic of *kaivalya* in this chapter. Patañjali seems to be saying that *kaivalya* is also an attainment by the Yogin. This attainment of *kaivalya* is the supreme attainment (*siddhi*). One should not indulge in other attainments until or unless *kaivalya*, the supreme *siddhi*, is attained. *Kaivalya* is explained in terms of supreme attainment. In this stage of the erosion of the seed of faults, *kaivalya* is supreme *siddhi*-oriented liberation. It is to be noted that the practice of detachment for *viveka-khyāti* is also a yogic practice which the yogin continues for her yogic

⁷⁶ YS 2.25: *tadabhāvātsamyogābhāvo hānam taddṛśeḥ kaivalyam*.

⁷⁷ YS 2.25: *tasya heturavidyā*.

⁷⁸ YS 2. 26: *vivekakhyātiraviplavā hānopāyaḥ*.

⁷⁹ YS 3.50: *tadvairāgyādapi doṣabījākṣaye kaivalyam*.

sādhana even after the yogin attains *kaivalya* as the ultimate *siddhi* because the yogin is still alive. *Kaivalya* as the supreme *siddhi* can be marked as “*kaivalya* III”.

Again, *kaivalya* is defined in *sūtra* 3.55 which states that “when the *sattva* is equal to *puruṣa* in terms of purity, *kaivalya* ensues”.⁸⁰ What do the purity of *sattva* and *puruṣa* mean? Vyāsa explains *sattva* as *buddhisattva* (*buddhisattvaṃ*). Vyāsa says that “when *rajas* and *tamas* are ineffective in the *citta*. *Citta* is clean. It is the purity of *buddhisattva*. The only purpose of the *buddhisattva* is to differentiate between the real nature of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*. At this time of differentiation, *avidyā* and other *kleśas* become impotent like burnt seeds. So, *citta* becomes pure and clear, which is similar to the pure state of *puruṣa* because *puruṣa* is no longer influenced by *cittavṛttinirodha*. This detachment of *puruṣa* from *cittavṛttinirodha* is the pure state of *puruṣa*. The pure state of *puruṣa* and *buddhisattva* is otherwise known as *kaivalya*”.⁸¹ *Sattva* is an ingredient of *prakṛti*. So, *kaivalya* can be attained in the realm of *prakṛti*. In this stage of *kaivalya*, Yogin lives in this mundane world with physical body and mind. So, *kaivalya* is embodied liberation in this stage of liberation. *Kaivalya* is explained in terms of purity. Here, *kaivalya* is purity-oriented liberation. This *kaivalya* as the most pure stage of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* can be marked as “*kaivalya* IV”.

In the end of the fourth chapter, Patañjali gives a final definition of *kaivalya* where he says that *kaivalya* is the reversal of the *guṇās* to its original state which is unmanifest *prakṛti*.⁸² This reversal of *guṇās* indicates that *kaivalya* is a journey from the *vyakta-prakṛti* (manifested *prakṛti*) to *avyakta-prakṛti* (unmanifested *prakṛti*) through the process of *pratiprasava*. In this final stage of *kaivalya*, *kaivalya* is disembodied liberation. Here, *kaivalya* is explained in terms of the process of *pratiprasava*. So, *kaivalya* is *pratiprasava*-oriented liberation. This type of *kaivalya* can be marked as “*kaivalya*-V”.

On the basis of these different stages or types of *kaivalya*, it can be surmised that *kaivalya* is a journey with different incremental stages. In accordance with the place of occurrence of these different stages of *kaivalya*, they can be grouped broadly into two groups: liberation in the realm of *prakṛti* as first sequence and liberation outside the realm of *prakṛti* as the second sequence. The first sequence is in the empirical stage as *jīvan-mukti* and the second sequence is in the transcendental stage as *videhamukti*. *Jīvan-mukti* and *videhamukti* are the two sequential stages of true *kaivalya*. No stage of liberation is superior or inferior. Both are equal in their salvific efficacy.

Empirico-Transcendental *Pratiprasava* in the YS:

It has been shown that in the chapter on practice, *pratiprasava* is used in the empirical sense, while in the fourth chapter, “*pratiprasava*” is used in the

⁸⁰ YS 3.55: *sattvapuruṣayoḥ śuddhisāmye kaivalyamiti*.

⁸¹ Vyāsa on 3.55: *yadā nirdhūtarajastamomalaṃ buddhisattvaṃ puruṣasyānyatāpratītimātrādhikāraṃ dagdhakleśabijam bhavati tadā puruṣasya śuddhisārūpyam ivāpannam bhavati, tadā puruṣasyopacari-tabhogābhāvaḥ śuddhiḥ*.

⁸² YS 4.34: *puruṣārthaśūnyānāṃ guṇānāṃ pratiprasavaḥ kaivalyaṃ svarūpapratīṣṭhā vā citiśaktiriti*.

transcendental sense. Questions may arise: Does Patañjali appear to be inconsistent in his views? Is it a misinterpretation of the text when we understood that there are two different concepts of “*pratiprasava*” in the same text? Is “*pratiprasava*” a single yogic concept with two different functions? If “*pratiprasava*” has two functional stages, then why does Patañjali use *pratiprasava* with different sequential stages with two different meanings? Patañjali is completely coherent in his views because he has already given an indication of the stages of *prajñā*, which leads to *kaivalya*, or liberation. *Avidyā* is the cause of conjunction between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* (2.24). When there is no *avidyā*, there is no conjunction, and this lack of conjunction is known as “*hāna*”. And this *hāna* is the *kaivalya* of the seer (2.25). What is the method of *hāna*? The means of the *hāna* is *vivekakhyaṭi* (2.26). This *puruṣa* who has gained *vivekakhyaṭi* has seven consecutive ultimate states of knowledge (2.27). These seven *prajñās* have been divided into two groups by Vyāsa.⁸³ One is the *kāryavimukti* stage, which has the first four *prajñās*, and the other is the *cittavimukti* stage, which has the last three *prajñās*. *kāryavimukti prajñās* are those *prajñās* which are attained by efforts of the yogin, and *cittavimukti prajñās* are those *prajñās* which are automatically attained after the attainment of *kāryavimukti prajñās*.

It is interesting to note that all the commentators describe effort as the means of *kāryavimukti*, but they do not explain the means of *cittavimukti*, which is actually the main reason for *kaivalya*. A question might arise: if effort (by “effort,” we must understand yogic *sādhana* as a whole) causes *kāryavimukti*, then what causes *cittavimukti*? Vyāsa and other commentators do not answer this question. The explanation of the commentators that *cittavimukti* automatically happens after *kāryavimukti* does not seem to be a plausible answer because *cittavimukti-prajñā* has three successive stages. The result or effect of *kāryavimukti* may be the cause of one of the stages of *cittavimukti*, but it cannot be the cause of all successive *prajñās*. So, it is logical to believe that there must be a cause for these successive stages of *cittavimukti-prajñās*. I think Patañjali has implicitly answered this question. Patañjali seems to hint that *pratiprasava* is the cause of the *cittavimukti* because *pratiprasava* is the only method by which the yogin can get rid of the five afflictions completely which are the building blocks of the *citta* (2.10) and it is a continuous process ending in the dissolution of the *citta* itself (4.34).

One may object that if *pratiprasava* is a yogic *sādhana* or practice that involves the efforts of the yogin, then *cittavimukti* cannot be attained by effort or yogic *sādhana* because all efforts or *sādhana*s end in the *kāryavimukti* stage. The answer is that *kāryavimukti-sādhana* includes the external efforts of yogic practices that can be seen by others or the yogin’s external awareness of the mind itself, whereas *pratiprasava* includes internal practices that are not seen by others or the yogin’s

⁸³ Vyāsa on 2.27: *tasyeti pratyūditakhyāteḥ pratyāmnāyāḥ. saptadheti āsuddhyāvaraṇamalāpagaṃc cittasya pratyāyāntarānupāde sati saptaprakāraiva prajñā vivekino bhavati. tadyathā — pariñātāṃ heyam nāsyā punaḥ pariñeyam asti. kṣīṇā heyahetavo na punar eteṣāṃ kṣetavyam asti. sāksātkṛtāṃ nirodhasamādhinā hānam. bhāvito vivekakhyaṭirūpo hānopāya iti. eṣā catuṣṭayī kāryā vimuktiḥ prajñāyāḥ. cittavimuktis tu trayī caritādhikārā buddhiḥ. guṇā giriśikharatācayutā iva grāvāṇo niravasthānāḥ svakāraṇe pralayābhimukhāḥ saha tenāstaṃ gacchanti. na caiṣāṃ pravilīnānāṃ punar asty utpādaḥ prayojanābhāvād iti. etasyām avasthāyām guṇasaṃbandhātītaḥ svarūpamātrajyotir amalāḥ kevalī puruṣa iti. etāṃ saptavidhām prāntabhūmiprajñām anupaśyan puruṣaḥ kuśala ity ākhyāyate. pratiprasave pi cittasya muktaḥ kuśala ity eva bhavati guṇāñātātād iti).*

external mind. *Pratiprasava* is a more subtle yogic practice than other external and internal practices. Now the question may arise: even if *pratiprasava* is a subtle type of practice how does *pratiprasava* work in the process of *cittavimukti* because *pratiprasava* has two stages of functioning as empirical and transcendental phenomenon? In which stage of yogic *sādhana* do empirical *pratiprasava* and transcendental *pratiprasava* start working? What role do these empirical and transcendental *pratiprasava* play in the process of attaining liberation?

Cittavimukti has three states of *prajñā*. In the first stage of *prajñā*, *bhoga* and *apavarga* are accomplished with the help of intelligence. Cessation of *bhoga* is *apavarga*. As long as there is *bhoga*, there is no *apavarga*. In this stage of yogic *sādhana*, all kinds of external experiences completely cease but do not dissolve. In this state, the complete cessation of the *citta* takes place, and the fluctuating nature of the *citta* is destroyed forever. Vyāsa likens this to boulders losing their support and tumbling from the tops of mountains. What Vyāsa means is that once the *guṇas* detach themselves from the *puruṣa*, they cannot come back again to affect the *puruṣa*. In the final stage of *cittavimukti-prajñā*, *puruṣa* becomes detached from all kinds of *prakṛtic* effects, and he becomes the *kevalin* (alone). This is the ultimate stage of *prajñā*, which can be equated with *kaivalya*, or *kaivalya* offering insight.

It may be tempting to conclude that in the last stage of *cittavimukti*, *puruṣa* is completely disassociated from the *prakṛti*, but that is not the case. It is to be remembered that *prajñā* is also part of *prakṛti*, and complete dissociation of the *puruṣa* from *prakṛti* is not in control of embodied *puruṣa* because embodied *puruṣa* is bound to follow the law of *karma*. Unless or until all fructifying *karmas* are completely exhausted, the embodied *puruṣa* cannot gain liberation. It is better to understand liberation in successive stages. In the first stage of *kaivalya* embodied *puruṣa* is completely devoid of all kinds of *prakṛtic* effects and in the second stage of *kaivalya*, *puruṣa* is completely devoid of all kinds of *prakṛtic* manifestation including the physical body and mind. The first stage of *kaivalya*, which I call embodied liberation, is possible through the process of empirical *pratiprasava*, and the second stage of liberation, which I call disembodied liberation, is possible through the process of transcendental *pratiprasava*.

One might inquire that even if the first stage of *kaivalya* is devoid of all kinds of *prakṛtic* effects, *jīvan-mukta* cannot live or function with the *prakṛtic* body and mind because the physical body and mind are actually the effects of *prakṛti*. To answer this question, it can be said that it is true that physical body and mind are part of *prakṛti*, but it is also to be remembered that this physical body and mind are the result of the yogin's previous *karma*, and the yogin has no control over previous *karma*. So, this physical body and mind are predetermined by the law of *karma*, and the existence of the physical mind and body does not depend upon the bondage or liberation of the yogin. But even if the physical body and mind are independent of the yogin's status, the question is: how do these physical bodies and minds function? *Prakṛti* has ceased all its actions for the *puruṣa* when liberation takes place, but the body and mind still work. Body and mind work not due to the effects of *prakṛti* but rather the effects of the *śakti*, especially the manifesting *citiśakti* of *puruṣa* itself.

One might argue that even if the first stage of *kaivalya* is devoid of all kinds of *prakṛtic* effects, *jīvan-mukta* cannot live or function with the *prakṛtic* body and mind

because the physical body and mind are actually the effects of *prakṛti*. To answer this question, it can be said that it is true that the physical body and mind are part of *prakṛti*, but it is also to be remembered that this physical body and mind are the result of the yogin's previous *karma*, and the yogin has no control over previous *karma*. So, this physical body and mind are predetermined by the law of *karma*, and the existence of the physical mind and body does not depend upon the bondage or liberation of the yogin. But even if the physical body and mind are independent of the yogin's status, the question is: how do these physical bodies and minds function? *Prakṛti* has ceased all its actions for the *puruṣa* when liberation takes place, but the body and mind still work. Body and mind work not due to the effects of *prakṛti* but rather the effects of the *śakti*, especially the manifesting *citiśakti* of *puruṣa* itself.

One might ask whether the body and mind are still the same old, impure apparatus that store *kleśas*, *pāpa*, and *puṇya* concurrently, even if the manifesting *citiśakti* is the reason for their operation. It should be mentioned that although it may appear that the mind and body are the same as they were prior to liberation, this is not true. The human body and mind were reliant on the dominance of one specific *guṇa* at a time among three in the bondage condition; but, in the first liberated stage, the *sattva guṇa* constantly holds sway. In the bondage stage, *sattva-guṇa* could not dominate always because of its impure nature derived from *kleśas*, but in the liberated stage, it is a static, refined, and pure *sattva* that ensues *kaivalya* (3.55). So, the old body and mind are not exactly the same; rather, they are internally changed and purified apparatus in the liberated stage.

Due to pure *sattva* and manifesting *citiśakti*, the liberated yogi can retain the body and mind, but how do they functionally act like unliberated people? Because in yoga, liberation means the cessation (*nirodha*) of all *vṛttis* of *citta*. Activity of mind entails the presence of *vṛttis*, and actions performed by the mind will result in *karma-phala*. When there are no *vṛttis*, there is no mind. It seems that yogin has to become psycho-physically inactive. Does the yogin's body become like a cadaver (*mṛtavat/ mṛtakavat*)⁸⁴? Is this state a "yogic death" or "deathly otherness" state where actual sensory renunciation takes place⁸⁵? It is true that in the liberated stage, all kinds of physical and mental activities cease because those actions were the result of past impressions and five afflictions and ignorance, but when these motivated and influenced actions stop at the time of liberation, then *puruṣa* as *citiśakti* manifests its *śakti* through the internally refined body and yogically manufactured mind (*nirmāṇa-citta*), which begin to produce new psycho-physical activities. The only purpose of these new psycho-physical actions is to keep the human body and mind alive until the death of the liberated yogi through the medium of *nirmāṇa-citta*.

⁸⁴ Rocco Cestola (2024, p. 72) shows that this situation of the yogin who has attained liberation (in *asamprajñātasamādhi* stage) has been compared to a dead-body. Cestola writes that "Commenting on YBh/YS I.18, both Vijñānabhikṣu and Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa describe the yoga practitioner as being deeply absorbed in *asamprajñātasamādhi* and "remaining like a cadaver." The expressions used are *mṛtavat* in the PYV (*Yogavārttika*), and *mṛtakavat* in the YV (*Pātañjalayogasūtravṛtti*)".

⁸⁵ Grinshpon (2002, p. 6) states that ultimate goal of yoga is cessation of all psycho-physical actions. He comments that "Yoga is essential otherness," which suggests "[T]he creation of a yogic universe based on difficult and prolonged observances and practices culminating in actual sensory renunciation". He says that "The otherness of Yoga is expressed in terms of paranormal experiences (*siddhi*)".

Patañjali tells us that the yogin has the ability to construct a special kind of new mind (*nirmāṇa-citta*), and this special mind is made from ego only (*asmitāmātrāt*). This *asmitā* should not be mistaken as one of the five afflictions because liberated yogin as *citiśakti* is beyond the reach of these afflictions; rather, *asmitāmātrāt* means that this *asmitā* is the only egoistic knowledge rooted in pure sattva that differentiates manufactured mind (*nirmāṇa-citta*) from all other *prakṛtic* manifestations. This *asmitā* is a sense of ego that the embodied *puruṣa* carries to retain her sense of individuality as a liberated *puruṣa* from all other unliberated *puruṣas* and *prakṛtic* manifestations even while the *puruṣa* is in touch with *prakṛti* through the *nirmāṇa-citta*. This *nirmāṇa-citta* is gained through *Samādhi* meditation (*dhyānaja*), and in *nirmāṇa-citta*, there is no storage of *saṃskāra* (*anāśaya*). So, the actions performed by the *nirmāṇa-citta* are not the results of the bondage of the yogin and will not bind the yogin in the future because where there is no *saṃskāra*, there is no *karma-phala*. When the liberated yogin performs all her actions, the yogin remains detached from their effects.

These *nirmāṇa-citta*-generated actions are not the result of the effects of *prakṛti*; rather they are the effects of *puruṣa*'s self-illumination (*svābhāsaṃ*)⁸⁶ power as *citiśakti*. Patañjali says that the nature of *puruṣa* is self-illuminating. The term “*svābhāsaṃ*” is made of two words: *sva* (self) and *ābhāsa* (illumination). What Patañjali indicates is that *puruṣa* does not need any illuminator for its emanation of illumination. *Puruṣa* as *citiśakti* manifests or emanates its *śakti* through the *nirmāṇa-citta*. Due to the functioning of this manifesting *citiśakti*, liberated yogin performs all his activities in this mundane world. Manifesting *citiśakti* is a special self-emanating power of the *puruṣa* that allows the yogin to perform actions even after being liberated. This manifesting *citiśakti* stage of the liberated yogin can be equated with embodied liberation because this liberation takes place in the realm of *prakṛti*.

However, in the potential *citiśakti* stage, the yogin's body and mind cease to exist once they have exhausted all of the effects of fructifying karma, so there is no *nirmāṇa-citta* and no physical body. Since there is absolutely no connection to the *prakṛtic* manifestations, the manifestation of the *citiśakti* cannot be felt or exerted in *prakṛti*. *Puruṣa*'s *śakti* cannot be used if *prakṛti* is absent. From the perspective of *puruṣa*, *śakti* is an innate capacity; nevertheless, from the perspective of *prakṛti*, this *śakti* is the dormant power of *puruṣa*. Because of the inactivity of *puruṣa*'s power in *prakṛti*, this *śakti* can be named as a potential *Citiśakti*. Potential *citiśakti* indicates that although *puruṣa* possesses the ability to exert *śakti*, this ability cannot be known or articulated and instead exists in its potential form because no *prakṛtic* element is associated with it. This potential *citiśakti* stage of *puruṣa* can be equated with disembodied liberation because this liberation takes place beyond the realm of *prakṛti*. This journey of liberated yogin from embodied liberation to disembodied liberation is possible through the two successive stages of *pratiprasava*. Embodied liberation is the result of empirical *pratiprasava*, which is the process of reversing the functioning of the *kleśa*, whereas disembodied liberation is the result of

⁸⁶ YS 4. 18 (*na tatsvābhāsaṃ dṛśyatvāt*)

transcendental *pratiprasava*, which is the process of reversing the functioning of the “*guṇa-s*” from the manifest world to the unmanifest world.

The first stage is a process of barrenness of the effects of *tri-guṇas* on the *puruṣa*, which is the stage of *jīvan-mukti*. At the first stage of the liberating process of *pratiprasava*, *pratiprasava* should be understood in an empirical sense. *Pratiprasava* is not meant to be taken literally. Rather, it is a symbol of reversing the process in the *YS*. *YS* 2.10 tells us that these subtle [afflictions] are to be cast aside by a retrograding process of reversal (*pratiprasava*). What it means is that *kleśa-s* do not completely dissolve; rather, their functional effect on the *puruṣa* is dissolved. So, it is the reversal of the functioning of the *kleśa-s*. The second stage is a process of barrenness in the functioning of *triguṇas*, leading to the dissolution of all connections with the *puruṣa*, including the physical body and mind. This stage is the stage of *videhamukti*. At the second stage of the liberating process of *pratiprasava*, *YS* 4.34 tells us that “*kaivalya* is the turning back of the *guṇas* to their source, once (their work) for the sake of *puruṣa* is accomplished; or, it is the power of pure consciousness (*citi-śakti*) abiding in its own essence”. What this turning back (*pratiprasava*) of the *guṇa-s* to their original source means is the returning to that source from where *guṇas* no longer are in any kind of touch with *puruṣa*. It means the complete dissolution of everything that is created by *Prakṛti*, including the physical body and mind.

One might object by asking: How can both embodied liberation and disembodied liberation be forms of full-blown liberation? According to the *YS*, *kaivalya* is a dynamic yogic journey of freedom that begins with liberation from epistemic bondage and ends with ontological bondage through ongoing spiritual practices. It is not a sudden and instantaneous liberation condition. Therefore, embodied liberation and disembodied liberation can be forms or sequentially developing stages of a dynamic liberation process. One might ask: Doesn’t the *YS* imply that disembodied liberation is the highest form of liberation? Nowhere throughout the *YS* is it stated, either explicitly or implicitly, that disembodied emancipation is superior to embodied liberation. According to the *YS*, the final step of the Yogin’s dynamic liberation journey is disembodied liberation in the final *sūtra* of the text, whereas embodied liberation is explained as *kaivalya* in the remaining four previous *sūtra* s of the text.

Regarding the interpretation of *pratiprasava*, one might ask: Isn’t it possible—and, arguably, even more plausible—to take the term “*pratiprasava*” in the same sense throughout *YS*? In actuality, it is impossible to comprehend “*pratiprasava*” in a single, coherent sense because the term has multiple meanings within the *YS*’s metaphysics and operates simultaneously in the fields of ontology and epistemology. “*Pratiprasava*” is both an ontological and an epistemological notion. Owing to the functional distinctions between these two distinct realms, it would be challenging to comprehend the *YS*’s definition of “*pratiprasava*” from a single viewpoint. *Pratiprasava* is incomplete in its significance, even if one attempts to interpret it as a process of reversal throughout *YS*, because it is unclear what is being reversed and from what. In order to comprehend the concept of *pratiprasava*, it is necessary to reframe it as the epistemological reversal of mind impurities to their pure state and the ontological reversal of *guṇas* from their manifest existence to

their unmanifest existence. Thus, it is more likely to comprehend *pratiprasava* with two distinct forms of functionality: ontological *pratiprasava* and epistemological *pratiprasava*.

Conclusion

At the end, it can be said that the concept of *pratiprasava* is best understood when we interpret *pratiprasava* with two existing meanings from the transcendental and empirical perspectives. In the second chapter of the *YS*, *pratiprasava* should be understood in an empirical sense, in which *pratiprasava* is a reversing liberative process of the impurities of the mind, not the destruction of the mind, but rather the destruction of the impurities of the mind. In the fourth chapter of the *YS*, *pratiprasava* should be understood in a transcendental sense, in which *pratiprasava* is a reversing liberative process of the mind itself. In other words, the *guṇas* go back to their unmanifest stage, which entails the destruction of the mind and the body as well.

On the basis of these two meanings of *pratiprasava*, it can be said that *kaivalya* also has two sequential stages of liberation. One stage is embodied liberation, where all the effects of the *prakṛti* do not disturb the yogin's mind and the yogin is beyond the impure touch of *prakṛtic* manifestation. This stage is the stage of living liberation (*jīvan-mukti*). This is the first stage of liberation through the process of empirical *pratiprasava*. The final stage of liberation is transcendental liberation, where all entanglements of *prakṛtic* manifestations do not disturb the yogin, and the yogin is beyond the touch of any *prakṛtic* manifestation, including the mind and the physical body. This stage is the stage of liberation after death (*videhamukti*). This is the final stage of liberation through the process of transcendental *pratiprasava*.

Acknowledgements I am very grateful to Swami Medhananda, Marzenna Jakubczak, Diwakar Acharya, Mikel Burley and Nirmalya Guha and two anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments and questions. I am also thankful to Professor Gavin Flood with whom I discussed a portion of my initial draft version of the this paper when I was a visiting scholar at the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies (OCHS). I am thankful to OCHS for providing me a good research atmosphere during my visit to OCHS in Michaelmas term.

Funding No funding is received for this research paper.

Declarations

Conflict of interest There is no conflict of interest.

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