

**A New Reading of the**  
***Manubr̥haspatisaṃvāda* (the *MBsmvd*)**  
**of the *Mokṣadharmaparvan* of the *Mahābhārata*:**  
**A Few Salient Points at the Outset**

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## Past Study of the Text

There is a substantial text not far from the beginning of the *Mokṣadharmaparvan* of the *Mahābhārata*'s *Śāntiparvan* that has received very little attention from scholars discussing the generalities of the philosophical and religious texts of the *Mokṣadharmaparvan*: The *Manubr̥haspatisaṃvāda* (*MBh* 12.194-99). In his survey of "Epic Philosophy," in chapter three of the *Great Epic of India*,<sup>1</sup> Hopkins takes note of individual words and ideas in the text on a few occasions—misconstruing them as often as not—but he takes no cognizance of the text as a larger entity attempting to make an argument. Franklin Edgerton ignores this text completely in his great essay "*The Meaning of Sāṃkhya and Yoga*,"<sup>2</sup>—an essay to which the *Manubr̥haspatisaṃvāda* (*MBsmvd*) is quite relevant, if primarily in a negative way—and he ignores it too in his annotated anthology *The*

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<sup>1</sup> Edward Washburn Hopkins, *The Great Epic of India: Its Character and Origin* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901), 85ff.

<sup>2</sup> Franklin Edgerton, "The Meaning of Sāṃkhya and Yoga," *American Journal of Philology* 45, no. 1 (1924): 1-46.

*Beginnings of Indian Philosophy*.<sup>3</sup> Erich Frauwallner alone provides a detailed and generally accurate description of several of the particular teachings in the vulgate version of this text in the fourth chapter of his extremely valuable and often insightful *Geschichte der indischen Philosophie*.<sup>4</sup>

Frauwallner had an important advantage that Hopkins did not—the use of the translation of Paul Deussen and Otto Strauss.<sup>5</sup> However, that translation and Frauwallner’s own reading of the text were based on the vulgate version of the *Mahābhārata*, which had a number of misleading readings. And then quite apart from the soundness of the base text itself, this tract poses numerous difficulties for interpreters like them, and myself, who stand so very far from the discourse in which it originated. That is to say, there is room for improvement even where the vulgate and critical editions read the same—these superb scholars did not, in my judgment, always construe the text correctly. Someone will find room for improvement in my work on the text too, someday after it is available—I myself first of all, probably. But we today have an important advantage that Frauwallner and the early Edgerton did not have—the critical edition of Pune. One of the principal advantages of the Pune edition of course is a large number of improved, though often *difficilior*, readings. It demonstrated that many elements of the written vulgate *traditio* of the text were post-archetypal creations of the continuing dynamism of the epic tradition, and these demonstrably later additions were set to the side for special study. We have, in fact, from the point of view of research into the history of ideas, a much better text of the *MBh* and the *Mokṣadharmaparvan* than the vulgate text.

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<sup>3</sup> Franklin Edgerton, *The Beginnings of Indian Philosophy* (Cambridge, Ma.: Harvard University Press, 1970).

<sup>4</sup> Erich Frauwallner, *Geschichte der indischen Philosophie*, 1953: v. 1, pp. 103-113.

<sup>5</sup> Paul Deussen and Otto Strauss, *Vier Philosophische Texte des Mahābhāratam* (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1906).

## The Critical Edition and Discontinuity on the Surface of the Text

But beyond the obvious good of the text's<sup>6</sup> being pared down as close to the main archetype as it feasibly can be, there is another very important way the critical edition aids us in studying texts such as the *MBsmvd*. The reciprocal of this paring is that the stamping of the critically constituted text—with all the complexity and problems that appear on its surface—as relatively old and important within the tradition of the text. And the critical edition confirms that much of the text's surface complexity—various stray verses, apparently tangential pericopes and the like, which some scholars would quickly suspect to be post-authorial interpolations—goes far enough back in the tradition that it is universally represented in the manuscript tradition of the written text. That fact does not demonstrate conclusively that all such complexity was part of the putative archetypal written text, but the initial presumption now must be that it was, for whatever significance that fact may have. Any and all apparently interrupting episodes or comments, tangential discussions, seemingly incongruous terminology, or unexpected doctrines or themes found in the constituted text are present in all the sampled manuscript sub-traditions, and they either were part of the archetype, or, if not, were additions that were so well received and became so well established in the tradition that they achieved, eventually, universal representation among the manuscript sub-traditions. So while we may still suspect some of the surface complexity of the critically constituted text of the *MBh* to be later than the original composition of a text or passage, we cannot dismiss such passages summarily as “late interpolations.” Some of them may well be early interpolations, but they are not late ones! Someone trying to construe an often baffling text such as this one now has to take the whole of the text more seriously as the deliberate product of the editorial process that created the written Sanskrit archetype that did exist for most of the

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<sup>6</sup> While all general comments about the critical edition apply to the *Mahābhārata* as a whole, the *Mokṣadharmaparvan* within it, and the *Manubr̥haspatisaṃvāda* within that, most of what I am saying here is directed primarily at issues presented by the *MBsmvd* and many other didactic texts of the *Mokṣadharmaparvan* and the epic generally. The surface discontinuity I refer to is that found in these kinds of texts in particular, though there are parallel issues at the higher levels of the epic's textual hierarchy *mutatis mutandis*.

whole *MBh*. Interpolations to texts that were absorbed into the *MBh* collection go far back into the history of that particular component text and were knowingly accepted into the written archetype—nothing can be summarily dismissed as superficially adventitious any longer.

(I would also suggest that the textual complexities the critical edition has now seconded to us as relatively ancient within the written tradition of the Sanskrit *Mahābhārata*, should invite us to try to conceive of different models of authorship and textual aggregation somewhere in between the ‘Brownian motion’ of the old model of ‘anonymous literature’ and the even older model of the single authorial intelligence controlling every syllable of a text. Ronald Inden suggested a ‘composite authorship’ for the *Viṣṇudharmottarpurāṇa*<sup>7</sup> and Alf Hiltebeitel has described the process of the *MBh*’s creation as some kind of ‘symposium’ of seers engaged in a twelve year sitting [*sattra*] intended to “set the world in motion.”<sup>8</sup> Hiltebeitel says that these poets’ motivations were “extraordinarily subtle” and that they combined “bold instructive teachings with a delight in concealment; [were] not averse to rough joins, repetitions and reiterations, multiple and deepening causalities, overdeterminations, and intriguing contradictions. . . .”<sup>9</sup> Neither of these suggestions is developed in such a way as to shed much light on most of the didactic texts of the *Mokṣadharmaparvan*, but both are helpful by inviting us to think about the possibility that the composition of some important Indian texts is simultaneously conscious and collective.)

To come at the problem of the surface discontinuity of epic didactic texts, I want to commend to your attention the 1999 paper of Hans Bakker and Peter Bisschop that reconsidered the discussion of the famous, putative *adhyātmika* text found in three putative versions in the vulgate *Bhārata* (the text

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<sup>7</sup> Ronald B. Inden, Daud Ali, and Jonathan S. Walters, *Querying the Medieval: Texts and the History of Practices in South Asia*, 1st ed. (Oxford University Press, USA, 2000), 31-55.

<sup>8</sup> Alf Hiltebeitel, *Rethinking the Mahābhārata: A Reader's Guide to the Education of the Dharma King* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 157-9. A fuller discussion of Hiltebeitel’s theories of the *Mahābhārata*’s composition is available in my article reviewing this book, “The Many Voices of the *Mahābhārata*,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 123, no. 4 (2003): 803-818.

<sup>9</sup> Hiltebeitel, *Rethinking the Mahābhārata: A Reader's Guide to the Education of the Dharma King*, 164.

found at 12.187 and 239-40 of the critical edition, while 12.286 of the Bombay vulgate was properly relegated to the critical apparatus).<sup>10</sup> After carefully reviewing the work of Frauwallner and van Buitenen<sup>11</sup> on this text, Bakker and Bisschop argued persuasively that the attempts of those authors to reduce the three versions to a single text that had been distorted by some kind of corruption downstream in the tradition—an argument actually advanced first by Hopkins<sup>12</sup>—was misguided. Bakker and Bisschop argued that the heterogeneity in the readings of the three texts revealed important differences of thinking that must be preserved, rather than washed away in misguided textual reconstruction. (I don't know about any others in this room, but I never found my revered guru's explanation that a flipped over palm leaf caused the corruption of the original text to be the least bit persuasive.)

Frauwallner was committed to using a reading of the whole of an individual text collected into the *MBh* as the ground for deciding how to read any given line or stanza.

. . . nur eine sorgfältige Interpretation aus der Gesamtheit jedes Textes heraus vermag zu einigermaßen verlässlichen Ergebnissen führen.<sup>13</sup> (“ . . . only a careful interpretation based on the totality of any given text enables us to proceed to results that are reliable in some measure.”)

Nonetheless, his focus upon particular doctrines—as fundamentally important as that was—meant that he was not looking at the text as a literary, rhetorical, or historical whole; as, possibly, a deliberately constructed or consciously redacted argument, even while reflecting complex discourse modes rooted in a long history of oral composition and transmission. The interpretation of particular words, sentences, and doctrines in the *MDh* depends, at times, upon having a capacious sense of different text-registers and their modulation: the recognition that a stream of verses contains various pericopes

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<sup>10</sup> Hans Bakker and Peter Bisschop, “Mokṣadharmā 187 and 239-241 Reconsidered,” *Asiatische Studien* 53, no. 3 (1999): 459-472.

<sup>11</sup> J. A. B van Buitenen, “Studies in Sāṃkhya (I): An Old Text Reconstituted,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 76 (1956): 153-157.

<sup>12</sup> Hopkins, *The Great Epic of India: Its Character and Origin*, 157-162.

<sup>13</sup> Frauwallner, *Geschichte der indischen Philosophie*, v. 1: 102.

consisting of a run of stanzas—or just one stanza—and that this stream of verses may have the kinds of continuity we expect in a paragraph, or it may not. And in the midst of these stanzas there are asides, and quotations of objections or doubts, or the author’s own voicing of objections or doubts. And all of this heterogeneity occurs often, usually, without any formal marking of boundaries on the surface of the text itself. And, there are, similarly, paraphrases, notes and clarifications to the text embedded within it without any formal markers. Typically none of this sometimes abrupt and puzzling context- or register-switching requires us with necessity to postulate interpolations by an outside hand after the fact. All of this heterogeneity formed a presumptive whole that made continuous sense on some level to the man who redacted it, and evidently, to his audiences. Frauwallner’s principal gift was in sorting through the large raft of texts and finding important doctrinal continuities across many different texts; he was not concerned to deal seriously with those parts of a text that distracted him from that commendable endeavor. But as someone translating this collection of texts in its received form, I am driven to search out the flow of ideas from line to line and stanza to stanza, as the text moves from one doctrine to another, one argument to another, whether there is apparent doctrinal continuity or not. There are post-authorial interpolations and lapses of transmission to be sure—but such explanations should be invoked only when there really is no better explanation of apparent discontinuities in the text.

## **A New Study of the *Manubr̥haspatisaṃvāda* in Context**

### **A. Mapping the *Manubr̥haspatisaṃvāda***

Enough with these broad methodological pronouncements about the reading of Sanskrit ‘anonymous literature.’ Since I have said that my own work is characterized by the requirement to deal with the actual *Gesamtheit* of a text and not merely its essential *Gesamtheit*, it is appropriate, I think, to resort to a map of the text that takes into account its salient material facts and the apparent segmentation of its topics and arguments. And that is what I present to you on the two maps on the

Handouts (now presented as the “Block Map of the *MBsmvd*”, which is available at [http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Sanskrit\\_in\\_Classics\\_at\\_Brown/BrownMBhPhilosophyConference/Papers/ManuB/ManuB.BlockMap.pdf](http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Sanskrit_in_Classics_at_Brown/BrownMBhPhilosophyConference/Papers/ManuB/ManuB.BlockMap.pdf), and as an “Outline Map of the *MBsmvd*”, which is available at [http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Sanskrit\\_in\\_Classics\\_at\\_Brown/BrownMBhPhilosophyConference/Papers/ManuB/ManuBmap.1.pdf](http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Sanskrit_in_Classics_at_Brown/BrownMBhPhilosophyConference/Papers/ManuB/ManuBmap.1.pdf)). Let me make a few broad comments regarding the way the text is segmented metrically. The Outline Map takes systematic note of the meters, while the Block Map is an attempt to bring the metrical segmentation of the whole text into view all at once. I’m sorry it’s only notionally proportional and that its graphics are so crude.

Immediately after the two ślokas that connect the *saṃvāda* to the *MDh* as a whole, we have a longish text in classic Upajāti *triṣṭubhs* [Text A in the Outline Map, 48 stanzas, 196 pādas] that has two single-stanza interruptions that are both doctrinally very significant.<sup>14</sup> Then there are two stanzas at the end of the *triṣṭubh* run which seem to be something of a summary coda to Text A. I quote them, the second is a Jagatī tag:

That one [“the single supreme soul” that was the predicate of the preceding stanza] goes to the Attributes that are known only through knowledge [*jñānaguṇān*, obviously not the only interpretation]—Energy, Darkness, and Lightness, third—which do not have manifest form.

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<sup>14</sup> The first such apparent interruption is the one completely non-classical *triṣṭubh* (at 194.11) that occurs in this run of almost perfectly classical *triṣṭubhs* making up Manu’s initial teaching. This pre-classical *triṣṭubh* introduces a doctrine that seems somewhat at variance with the trenchant separation of *karman* and *jñāna* with which Manu has begun his teaching. This stanza seems to suggest that *karman* plays a fundamental cosmic role (and on this theme see a similar idea presented at 199.5-8): “Beings were created by means of Mind and Action—and so there are two good paths which are favored by people. Having seen both Action which is everlasting and Action which is finite, renunciation by way of the Mind is the basis, the other is not.”[194.12] *prajāḥ sṛṣṭā manasā karmanā ca dvāv apy etau satpathau lokajuṣṭau / dṛṣṭvā karma śāśvataṃ cāntavac ca manastyāgaḥ kāraṇaṃ nānyad asti* //194.12: and then the one and only śloka found within the bounds of this Text A (195.1), a śloka that explicitly presents the descent of the five material elements directly from the absolute reality, the *akṣara*. This śloka is topically apposite, but thematically tangential, to 195.2ff (it is something of an aside offering relevant background theory).

Similarly, the soul enters into the sense faculties like the wind enters fire burning atop firewood.[196.3]

One does not see any visible form of the Self with one's eye, one does not perceive any tactile sensation of it, and so on with each of the senses—there is no manifestation of it in the ear. The indication of it is in Holy Learning. One perceives it when it comes that way and then it disappears. [196.4]<sup>15</sup>

The latter of these two stanzas is the only Jagatī *triṣṭubh* of the entire run, a fact which reinforces the notion that someone saw this run of *triṣṭubhs* as being deliberately brought to an end here.

Text A here is followed by a longish *śloka* text, which shares the philosophical presuppositions of A and its terminology. I refer to this run of 82 *ślokas* as Text B. The first part of B can be said to restate the epistemological claims of A and what A has to say about the *sādhana* for realizing *brahmadarśana*. I refer to this first part of B as B1. Text B2 is a very interesting passage that relates the basic metaphysical and ethical teachings of A to four different systems of thought (an unnamed doctrine that strongly resembles the explicit Sāṃkhya doctrines of the late *MDh*, the Yoga school, Vaiṣṇava theology, and the commitment to Vaidika learning). And then B3 is a series of practical reflections explaining why everyone does not realize *brahmadarśana* even though it is not something that is *yatnasādhya* (199.17).

What I call Text C is simply a series of wrap-ups of the teaching in (5) *ślokas*, then in *triṣṭubhs* (one classical *triṣṭubh* followed by four pre-classical ones), and then, at the very end, a coda of two Rucirās (a Rucirā is essentially a Jagatī with a 'break' of four short syllables). I wish I could propose a neat hypothesis suggesting that the classical *triṣṭubh* Text A was a rewrite of the *śloka* text, which it then preserved in its train. But there is just too much fundamental metaphysical content argued in A, but which is at the same time absent from B, to support that view. It is conceivable that A is a

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<sup>15</sup> *rajas tamaḥ sattvam atho tṛtīyaṃ gacchaty asau jñānaguṇān virūpān / tathendriyāṇy āviśate śarīrī hutāśanaṃ vāyur ivendhanastham //12.196.3 // na cakṣuṣā paśyati rūpam ātmano na paśyati sparśam indriyendriyam / na śrotraliṅgaṃ śravaṇe nidarśanaṃ tathāgataṃ paśyati tad vinaśyati //12.196.4 //*



statement inspired by B and which restates some of B in classical *trīṣṭubhs* while adding new explanations. This possibility will need close examination before it can even be posed as an hypothesis.

## B. The Framing Questions

Let me next take note of the items requested in the two sets of questions that precede Manu's teaching here and call your attention to the way Yudhiṣṭhira's request simplifies Br̥haspati's significantly, even as it does point to significant portions of Manu's teaching. (Putting the matter this way suggests that I think the text of Br̥haspati's questions pre-existed the *Mokṣadharmakāra*'s insertion of them into his text. I do not merely assume this priority; if we envisioned a single author composing the *MBsmvd* at the same time he was creating the *Mokṣadharmā* (a task that presumably entailed composing the Bhīṣma-Yudhiṣṭhira frame), then the discrepancy between the two sets of questions would be puzzling.) In 12.194.1 Yudhiṣṭhira wants to know about the *phalas* of *jñānayoga*, on the one hand, and of *vedāniyama*, on the other. As a third and final topic, he wants to know how the *bhūtātman* is to be known, using the gerundive *jñeya* that figures prominently in Manu's lecture with different applications.<sup>16</sup> Br̥haspati poses the same two topics first—the respective fruits of the *mantravidhi* and of *jñāna*. But then he introduces a different topic, “what is not revealed by the words of the Vedic formulas” (194.4).<sup>17</sup> Conceivably this phrasing could be an oblique way of indicating the same matter as Yudhiṣṭhira's third question—“how do we know of the *bhūtātman* (something not revealed by the *mantrasābda-s*)”—but that does not seem likely, especially in light of the fact that shortly below, in 194.7, Br̥haspati says he is ignorant of the highest reality, even though he has

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<sup>16</sup> *kiṃ phalaṃ jñānayogasya vedānāṃ niyamasya ca / bhūtātmanā vā katham jñeyas tan me brūhi  
pitāmaha //12.194.1//*

<sup>17</sup> *yatkāraṇaṃ mantravidhiḥ pravṛtto jñāne phalaṃ yat pravadanti viprāḥ / yan mantrasābdair akṛtaprakāśaṃ  
tad ucyatāṃ me bhagavan yathāvat //4//*

studied the words of the Vedas. It is clearly the *para*, the highest reality, the ultimate *jñeya*, that is not revealed in the *mantraśabda-s*.

Bṛhaspati probes more closely the question regarding the fruits of Vedic ritual action in 194.5, and then, in 194.6, switches to the cosmogonic reality that I suspect his final, epistemologically characterized request in 194.4 (to know what is not revealed in the *mantraśabda-s*) might refer to:

“Blessed one, tell me about that primordial thing from which have sprung the earth, the offspring of earth, the wind . . .”<sup>18</sup> What Bṛhaspati says next, 194.7,<sup>19</sup> asserts explicitly a link between knowledge and ethics (in the broad sense of the word) and seems a somewhat defensive excusing of himself for pursuing the question. On the basis of that justification he says in 194.8 that all his Vedic learning has failed to inform him on the subject of the *bhūtaprakṛti*, an expression which could signify “origin of the material elements” (a point addressed explicitly in the interrupting *śloka*, 195.1), or the ultimate origin of all that has (ever) come into being, another reference to the *para*, the absolute reality. It is of some interest that he uses the term *prakṛti* here, but we should not assume anything special about the meaning of the word here; it is a term that describes a relationship between causes and effects, the relationship of a base, *prakṛti*, and modifications or derivatives of that base, *vikṛti-s*. Bṛhaspati closes with a recap of 3 topics in 194.9—the fruits of *jñāna* and *karman*, once again, and then the movement of the embodied soul (*śarīrin*) between bodies. If we can see the topic of the movement of the *śarīrin* between bodies as not too far removed from the topic of the *bhūtātman*, then this threefold summation could be seen as not too far removed topically from Yudhiṣṭhira’s 3 requests.

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<sup>18</sup> *mahī mahijāḥ pavano 'ntarikṣaṃ jalaukasaś caiva jalaṃ divaṃ ca / divaukasaś caiva yataḥ prasūtās tad ucyatāṃ me bhagavan purāṇam //6//*

<sup>19</sup> “When a man seeks Knowledge regarding something, he then undertakes a procedure that aims for that thing. Now, I do not know this highest, primordial thing; so how can I avoid ever engaging in the wrong procedure? [194.7]” *jñānaṃ yataḥ prārthayate naro vai tatas tadarthā bhavati pravṛttiḥ / na cāpy ahaṃ veda paraṃ purāṇaṃ mithyāpravṛttiṃ ca katham nu kuryām //7//*

The collocation, in Br̥haspati's questions, of a concern with the ultimate source of all things and criticism of the Vedas for not providing such knowledge is highly unusual for the *MBh*. And though the juxtaposition of *jñāna* and *karman* is not a rare opposition in the philosophical portions of the epic, the crisply clear and sustained way Manu's lecture will develop an argument that *karman* is alien to *jñāna* and ineffective for one's realizing the highest beatitude seems to me to anticipate later Advaita arguments (though I know less about Advaita than many others in this room and will be glad to be enlightened by you). As I go along, I think you will see other topics and themes that seem to anticipate some of the salient differences between what came to be Sāṃkhya and what came to be Advaita. Bakker and Bisschop concluded the paper I mentioned earlier by specifically calling for scholars to stop viewing Sāṃkhya philosophy as teleologically implied in almost all Brahminic philosophical texts that have some form of a *pariṇāma* cosmology.

### C. Salient Aspects of Manu's Teaching in the *MBsmvd*

I'm not ready at this time to try to reduce this text to a *sāra*, a single essential teaching, or, in the alternative, to give a comprehensive account of its heterogeneity. There is a great deal of coherence within parts of the text<sup>20</sup> and the text as a whole seems governed by a coherent set of related concerns. What will be needed to chart and assess the teachings of the text is a two-fold reading of it: One that abstracts its overarching metaphysical, psychological, and ethical doctrine, the putative *sāra* of Manu's lecture here; the other reading will track the actual *krama* of the argument, which will reveal a 'practical hierarchy' among the doctrines of the *sāra*. The philosophical mind seeks to abstract ideas from the realm of contingency and articulate timeless truths, but the philosophers' timeless truths do in fact originate in the hurly-burly of human lives and the contingencies of time and desire and are an abstraction therefrom. Thus it is not sufficient to present Manu's teaching apart from the controversies

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<sup>20</sup> This can be seen, e.g., from a perusal of the questions in 194, or of the beginning of Manu's lecture at 194.10, or of his arguments for the existence of the embodied soul at 196.5-23.

that seem to animate it. So eventually there will be both a *sāra* presentation of this dialogue and a *krama* presentation, and the account of them will be interdependent in my determination of each of them, if not in my final description of them. For today, I simply present some general observations that I hope will pique your interest in what strikes me as a truly interesting text that stands midway between the *mukta* gems of the Upaniṣads and the richly woven tapestries of later *darśana* argumentation.

In what follows I list some of the salient topics and themes and make some general observations and comments of a wholly provisional nature.

### C1. General Observations

The text teaches a doctrine, or set of doctrines, that represents something of a minority report in the *Mokṣadharmaparvan*, that is, it is a text that derives the mental faculties and the material world from a single source, **but in two lines of descent from the unitary entity, not one** (see 12.195.1 [of Text A.], quoted above, for an unambiguous statement regarding the origin of the five elements directly from the absolute reality, and see 12.197.10-11 for an equivalent pair of statements regarding the emanation of the mental faculties from the absolute).<sup>21</sup> Most of the *ādhyātmika* texts of the *MDh* trend in the direction of the later Sāṃkhya by deriving the material world from the unmanifested in a single orthogenetic line of descent; this text, which is also **more insistent than most such texts in the MDh in identifying the highest reality as *brahman***, says otherwise.<sup>22</sup> How far off the mark would it be to say

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<sup>21</sup> "The Lower Mind is first after the sense faculties, the Intellect is beyond that, Consciousness is beyond the Intellect, the highest reality is further beyond Consciousness. [197.10] Consciousness came forth from the Unmanifested, the Intellect from that, and the Lower Mind from that; the Lower Mind directly perceives sounds, sights, and so on, when it is engaged with the ears, eyes, and so on. [197.11]" *indriyebhyo manaḥ pūrvam buddhiḥ paratarā tataḥ / buddheḥ parataram jñānam jñānāt parataram param //197.10// avyaktāt prasṛtam jñānam tato buddhis tato manaḥ / manaḥ śrotṛādibhir yuktam śabdādīn sādhu paśyati //197.11//*

<sup>22</sup> See, for example Vyāsa's, non-Sāṃkhya account to Śuka at 12.224.31-43, in which Brahmā sends forth the Universal (*mahat*, which is not manifested), from which emanates *manas*, which is manifested, which in turn sent forth the five material elements and seven *mānasa* derivatives (later designated "*puruṣas*," referring, probably, to

that this text may represent what will later be identified as the *brahmapariṇāma* version of the Vedānta?

Consistent with the notion that Br̥haspati may represent Johannes Bronkhorst's Mīmāṃsaka holdouts against notions of an unmanifested highest reality and its instantiation in a series of embodied beings,<sup>23</sup> this text makes the strong thematic point that **the Vedas know nothing of this highest *brahman***. At the same time, there is, **plausibly, a reference to the Upaniṣads as a source of the knowledge of it at 196.4**, a Jagatī tag-verse closing the long *triṣṭubh* passage that makes up the first half of the text. This verse, which was quoted above, also seems to make an allusion to Buddhist rhetoric of the transcendent with its studied use of the word *tathāgatam*, and its companion just above it in 196.3 (translated above as part of the putative coda to Text A) makes **the only unambiguous reference to the doctrine of the three *guṇas*** to be found in Manu's teaching here.<sup>24</sup>

## C2. The Antinomy between *jñāna* and *karman*

In coordination with this text's insistence that the Vedas (a concept here that seems not to embrace the Upaniṣads, which may be referred to separately with *śravaṇa* at 196.4) know nothing of the highest reality, and addressing the initial question-pair of both Yudhiṣṭhira and Br̥haspati, Manu's first major point is a juxtaposition of *karman* and *jñāna* that rests fundamentally upon people's using action to pursue pleasure (or avoid pain) and the indifference to pleasure and pain and their pursuit

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the five *indriyas*, *manas* (the organ, as opposed to *manas* "Mind" as a general cosmic reality similar to *jñāna* in the *MBsmvd*).

<sup>23</sup> Johannes Bronkhorst, *Greater Magadha: Studies in the Culture of Early India* (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

<sup>24</sup> 196.3 shows that 'Manu' has here some degree of awareness of the theme of the three *guṇas* as a unified realm over against *brahman* and as a realm into which descends the embodied soul. But the text does not make a clear or consistent use of the theme of the three *guṇas*. There are two ambiguous uses of the word *guṇa* at 194.16 (highly ambiguous, but probably a reference to *traiguṇya* in light of 16d) and 20 (ambiguous, but a familiar *traiguṇya* theme) that I currently interpret as references to *traiguṇya*, in no small measure because of 196.3. The text goes out of its way, toward its end (198.14ff.), to display familiarity with a body of thought highly consistent with what is later labeled Sāṃkhya, but the notion of the three *guṇas* does not turn up in that pericope.

and avoidance in a life based upon *jñāna*. Men pursuing pleasure by way of action do not go on to the highest reality (*nānāvidhe karmapathe sukhārthī naraḥ pravṛtto na paraṃ prayāti /194.11cd /*) because the *para* has nothing to do with *karman* and desire, *āśīḥ (paraṃ hi tat karmapathād apetaṃ nirāśiṣaṃ brahma paraṃ hy avāśyam // 194.11ef //)*. Undertaking action depends entirely upon *kāma* (is *kāmātmaka*, 194.11a) and is made up of the 3 *guṇas* (or, simply of features or attributes that are derivative, *guṇas* in general) (*guṇātmaka*, 194.16a), while the mental organism that consumes the results of actions is not (“But the enjoyer of the fruit is like the soul,” *phalasya bhoktā tu yathā śarīrī // 194.16d //*). The “highest embodied soul” (*paramaḥ śarīrī*, 194.21d [an interesting admission of the embodied soul’s having layers!]) After systematically relegating actions (and the Vedic texts upon which they are based) to a wholly inferior order of being, Manu then turns to the *para* at 194.22 and affirms its ontological, cosmological, and ethical uniqueness and primacy, noting among other points (from 195.2ff.) that failure to ‘reach’ the *para* after the dissolution of the body in death entails taking on a new body.

### C3. The *bhūtātman*

Having asserted in 195.1 that the five material elements descended from the highest reality in an emission distinct from its progressively coarsening transformations into *jñāna*, *buddhi*, *manas*, and *indriyas*,<sup>25</sup> Manu makes a number of points regarding the relation between the mental and the physical, the transcendent soul’s becoming ‘a soul possessed of a body,’ *śarīrin*, ‘a soul (*ātman*) amidst material elements,’ *bhūtātman*. (This term is used only once in Manu’s teaching, at 196.7, and it appears as the third item in Yudhiṣṭhira’s brief set of questions. There is not, however, any doubt that its use at 196.7 refers to a number of statements he makes regarding the presence of this entity

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<sup>25</sup> The two *ślokas* at 197.10 and 11 present this series of ‘mental’ transformations of the ultimate reality’s emanations as *jñāna*, and then in several progressively coarser instantiations of *jñāna* as *buddhi*, *manas*, and *indriyas*, and the cognitive operations of those structures, and the enduring intellectual realizations that ensue and persist in those mental derivatives as “knowledge.”

made up of consciousness, *jñāna*, among the material elements of the body and their perceptible attributes, with which consciousness comes into contact as the mental sense faculties dwell in the physical sense organs). These statements make up one of the striking teachings of this text on a fundamental philosophical aporia, explaining the interface between the material body and *jñāna* and its derivatives; they merit much closer study than I can present here.<sup>26</sup>

In brief, the doctrine involves an interweaving of metaphysical, psychological, and epistemological arguments. A fundamental tenet asserted a number of times is that the *para* is the cause of the conscious activity of empirical human beings. One of the best places to begin a presentation of this doctrine is 195.10:

*yathā hi rājño bahavo hy amātyāḥ pṛthak pramānaṃ pravādanti yuktāḥ /  
tadvac charīreṣu bhavanti pañca jñānaikadeśaḥ paramaḥ sa tebhyaḥ //195.10//*

Certainly, as the king's many ministers working together proclaim the distinct authority of the king, so in bodies there are the five senses, while the one and only locus of Consciousness is far above them.[195.10]

This stanza overlaps partially with a complex theme that occurs three times in the text—something singular alternately spreads out into many and then contracts into singularity again, over and over<sup>27</sup>—but that is not the point in 195.10. Here the point is that the several senses all proclaim the reality and demonstrate the power of Consciousness, the first mental emanation from the highest reality. 195.10 makes the same point made in the previous stanza:

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<sup>26</sup> See Angelika Malinar, *Rājavidyā: Das königliche Wissen um Herrschaft und Verzicht. Studien zur Bhagavadgītā* (Wiesbaden: Harrossowitz Verlag, 1996), 196-203 for a searching examination of the idea of *bhūtātman* and its ramifications for the theory of *yoga* praxis. By separating the mental and the physical in the manifested world, Manu's treatment of the subject is at some variance with the majority of *adhyātmika* texts found in the *MDh*.

<sup>27</sup> E.g., “Just as tongues of flame and gusts of wind—and the rays of the sun and the waters in rivers—go forth and then retreat as they stretch out, so too do the bodies of souls.”[195.11] *yathārciṣo 'gneḥ pavanasya vegā marīcayo 'rkasya nadīṣu cāpaḥ / gacchanti cāyānti ca tanyamānās tadvac charīrāṇi śarīriṇām tu //195.11//*The point of this is clearer if read with similar statements: 197.13-14 and 199.31.

*yathā pradīpaḥ purataḥ pradīptaḥ prakāśam anyasya karoti dīpyan /  
tatheha pañcendriyadīpavṛkṣā jñānapradīptāḥ paravanta eva //195.9//*

As when a lamp lit earlier reveals something else as it shines,<sup>28</sup> so the human 'lamp-stands,'<sup>29</sup> shining with the lights of their five senses that were lit previously with Consciousness, depend upon something which is beyond them.[195.9]

The senses and sensory experience depend upon the principle of Consciousness, their power of 'illumination' derives from it. This point was made earlier in this way:

*yato gr̥hītvā hi karoti yac ca yasmimś ca tām ārabhate pravṛttim /  
yasmimś ca yad yena ca yaś ca kartā tatkāraṇaṃ taṃ samupāyam āhuḥ //195.6//*

Truly, what a person does, and that from which he is able to conceive the idea of it,<sup>30</sup> and that within which he takes up the activity: in which, what, by which, and who is acting—they say this whole assemblage has that<sup>31</sup> for its basis.[195.6]

I believe we have here an excellent description of what is meant by the term *bhūtātman*, the Self, the transcendent principle as it finds itself amidst the material elements (as they occur as part of his body and as the world around his body); it is essentially the same as the *dehin* or *śarīrin*. But more fundamentally, epistemologically, it is the operation of the senses that reveals the existence of this entity that is not accessible to the senses (as they are unable to look back behind themselves to the source of their being and power; it is that that 'sees' them and 'sees' through them; see 195.16). And here, by arguing the inference of Consciousness from the action of the knowing senses, Manu mounts a major argument against materialist skepticism, if Bṛhaspati is thought to represent that in addition to championing the *mantraśabda* of the Vedas. The soul present in the physical body is like fire hidden in wood.

*yathā ca kaś cit paraśum gr̥hītvā dhūmaṃ na paśyej jvalanaṃ ca kāṣṭhe  
tadvac charīrodarapāñipādaṃ chittvā na paśyanti tato yad anyat //195.12//*

<sup>28</sup> Two senses: It casts light upon objects and points back, by implication, to the fire that is the source of its light.

<sup>29</sup> A metaphor for a person.

<sup>30</sup> = The source of his consciousness. See the Endnote Annotation to 195.6.

<sup>31</sup> = The "true being" (*svabhāva*) of a person pointed to in the immediately preceding stanza.



*tāny eva kāṣṭhāni yathā vimathya dhūmaṃ ca paśyej jvalanaṃ ca yogāt /  
tadvat subuddhiḥ samam indriyatvād budhaḥ paraṃ paśyati svaṃ svabhāvam //195.13//*

Just as someone using an axe does not see smoke or fire in a piece of wood,<sup>32</sup> so when one cuts the feet or hands or belly of a man's body they do not see that which is other than these things.<sup>33</sup>[195.12]

Just as if one were to rub those sticks [the *araṇi-s*, the two pieces of wood used to 'drill' fire], one on the other, one would see the smoke and fire<sup>34</sup> that comes from their conjunction, so a man using his Intellect well, understanding from the operation of his sense faculties what is common to all of them, comes to see what is beyond that, his own true being (*svabhāva*).[195.13]

While the *triṣṭubh* Text A moves on to the ethical issues of how a person might 're-patriate' his mental organism to its 'homeland,' the absolute reality, these psychological and epistemological arguments are repeated in the *śloka* Text B1 at some length. Analogies based on what human beings can observe and know about the moon and the sun are intertwined, switching the comparata freely. Using the post-perceptual Intellect (*buddhi*), a person may deduce that there is a backside of the moon or that the sun will return at dawn after disappearing at sunset (see 196.5-10). But even more significant, from one point of view, than the inference of the existence of the always or occasionally invisible entity (moon, sun, soul) is a point made by the analogy to the moon's cycles of waxing, waning, disappearing, and reappearing every month as its 'husk' (*kośa*), its visible form (*liṅga*), comes and goes. The invisible moon's existence can be known to us only by virtue of the moon's inhabiting that 'husk,' having that visible form (see 196.15-19). So too the invisible soul is known to us as a public intellectual fact only by virtue of its inhabiting a body. This point is made explicitly in 196.20-22, though

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<sup>32</sup> Though these must be present there, in a subtle form, as they do emerge from wood at times.

<sup>33</sup> = They do not see the soul, even though it is present.

<sup>34</sup> The partial phrase *paśyej jvalanaṃ ca yogāt* in 13b is a clue telling us that this pair of stanzas should be taken as a *śleṣa* referring to the regimen of *yoga* meditation as well as to the epistemological issue of demonstrating the existence of the imperceptible soul in the physical body.

here, somewhat unexpectedly, the comparatum for the soul is *tamas*, while the sun and the moon stand in for the body.

*nābhisarpad vimuñcad vā śaśinaṃ dṛśyate tamaḥ /  
visṛjaṃś copasarpaṃś ca tadvat paśya śarīriṇam //196.20//  
yathā candrārkaśamyuktaṃ tamas tad upalabhyate /  
tadvac charīrasamyuktaḥ śarīṛīty upalabhyate //196.21//  
yathā candrārkanirmuktaḥ sa rāhur nopalabhyate /  
tadvac charīranirmuktaḥ śarīrī nopalabhyate //196.22//*

Darkness is not seen either creeping onto or slipping off of the moon; understand the soul's leaving and slipping in in the same way.<sup>35</sup>[196.20] As the darkness is perceived when it has joined the sun or the moon, so the soul is perceived when it has joined with a body.[196.21] As Rāhu<sup>36</sup> is not perceived when he has left the sun or the moon, so the soul is not perceived when it has left a body.[196.22]

In sum, persons are understood as combinations of two thoroughly distinct kinds of things. One of these is manifest to the senses, the other is not. The existence of the non manifest component is known inferentially, but only by virtue of its connection to the other, the always manifest component. The idea of the soul being a direct transformation of a universal absolute reality is exhilarating and the various labile analogies to the sun and the moon are delightful, but the argument is a circular *petitio principii*.

#### C4. Mental Apparatus, *karman*, and *yoga*

The celestial analogies of the *śloka* Text B1 lead directly into B1's consideration of the practical and ethical aspects of the teaching with this final analogy:

*yathā candro hy amāvāsyaṃ nakṣatrair yujyate gataḥ /  
tadvac charīranirmuktaḥ phalair yujyati karmaṇaḥ //196.23//*

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<sup>35</sup> Leaving bodies (and slipping into new ones).

<sup>36</sup> = The demon who "consumes" the sun or the moon in an eclipse.

And just as the moon—though it is gone on the new moon day—is still yoked to the lunar constellations,<sup>37</sup> **in the same way the soul is still yoked to the fruits of actions even when it is separated from a body.[196.23]**

The enduring consequences, fruits (*phala-s*) of *karman* are mentioned several times throughout Manu's lecture, but he never explains exactly how deeds transmit causal energy across time or how they lodge in the Intellect and condition it. There is a 'theoretical' section on *karman* at 199.5-8, but it does not address this 'psychological' concern. Perhaps Peter Schreiner's paper on the requirements of a theory of *karman* will shed comparative light on this lacuna in Manu's teaching.

Be that as it may, Manu's general theory of the human condition and its repair is quite similar to what is found many of the texts of the *MDh* that cognize the regimen of mental transformation (*yoga*). (Another common type of remedy in the *MDh* is purely intellectual, simply coming to understand one's experience as processes that are external to oneself, that do not concern oneself. Examples at a later time.) Given that the principle of consciousness in the body is in contact with the characteristic features of the material elements (their *guṇas*), it is not surprising to hear Manu say that this contact constitutes the fundamental problem of the soul's 'exile' from the absolute. The soul's wanderings in the foreign lands of the *viśaya-s* are pleasant and entice the person's embodied consciousness to stay so engaged, to the neglect of the clarification and simplification of consciousness that would result in the 'vision' of the highest reality, *brahman*, when the Intellect is free of all *karmaguṇas*.

For the embodied soul that is taking no nutrition<sup>38</sup> the objects of sense disappear; even their savor goes away once he has seen the highest reality which has no savor.<sup>39</sup>**[197.16]** When the Intellect<sup>40</sup> operates within the Mind<sup>41</sup> and is devoid of any

<sup>37</sup> = The twenty-seven (or later twenty-eight) constellations demarcating the monthly passage of the moon through the sky.

<sup>38</sup> = Deprived of sensory contact with the external world while in meditation.

<sup>39</sup> This *śloka* is identical to *BG* 2.59, in the *sthitaprajña* pericope.

<sup>40</sup> I am becoming persuaded that *buddhi* has a sufficiently distinctive character as a mental faculty that "Higher Mind" is not adequate. I am not certain that this old word, "Intellect," is the right word, but I am going to use it for now, but not go back and revise all prior instances of "Higher Mind." My grasp of the terminology in the original is

traces of karma, then it<sup>42</sup> becomes complete in *brahman*, is gone to dissolution in it.<sup>43</sup>[197.17] It enters into that highest reality (*sattva*)<sup>44</sup> which is not touched, heard, tasted, seen, or smelled.[197.18] Mental Images<sup>45</sup> of things have submerged in the Lower Mind, the Lower Mind has gone on to the Intellect, the Intellect has gone on to Knowledge, **and Knowledge has gone on to the highest reality.**<sup>46</sup>[197.19] The operation of the Lower Mind ends with the sense-faculties, the Lower Mind is not aware of the Intellect; the Intellect is not aware of that unmanifested,<sup>47</sup> but the subtle one<sup>48</sup> sees these.[197.20]<sup>49</sup>

This account of the transformation of the self began with a telling analogy that makes the underlying principles strikingly clear.

As one can see visible forms with one's eyes in water that is placid, **so he whose sense faculties are placid sees that reality<sup>50</sup> which is to be known by means of**

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not yet re-settled from where I was content with it in volume 7. I have effectively superseded this note, putting in Intellect everywhere, but I leave it here as a reminder to revisit the policy.

<sup>41</sup> This phrase must mean something like the *buddhi* operates upon the *guṇas* brought forward into *manas* by the *indriyas*—the *buddhi* is engaged with the *manas* (*manoyukta*). Another way to think of it is to take *manasi* as metonymy for the *guṇas* transported by the *manas* from the *indriyas*.

<sup>42</sup> = The Mind.

<sup>43</sup> Just because originally the *manas* is born of the *buddhi*, does not mean a statement like this is inconsistent. The *buddhi*, devoid of karma, operates “in the *manas* (= “Lower Mind”) [that’s a general condition] and then [after that occurs] the *manas* goes all the way back to *brahman*, dissolves in *brahman* [of course it does so by way of returning up through the *buddhi*, which goes up into the *jñāna*, which goes back into the *para*]. And this is what 19 specifies.

<sup>44</sup> i.e., *brahman*.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. *ākṛtigrāma-s* in 12 and the *indriyarūpa-s* of 9.

<sup>46</sup> 19 here recapitulating the *laya* of 17-18.

<sup>47</sup> I am inclined to take this as masculine sing and referring to the same as the *sūkṣmaḥ* in d, i.e., the *kṣetrajñā*. But is it right to label the *kṣetrajñā avyakta*? Somehow I think not, unless *avyakta* just means *adrśya*, i.e., is merely a description of perceptibility and not a description of cosmogonic role.

<sup>48</sup> Identified as the *kṣetrajñā* at 196.5 above.

<sup>49</sup> *viṣayā vinivartante nirāhārasya dehinaḥ / rasavarjaṃ raso 'py asya paraṃ dr̥ṣṭvā nivartate //197.16// buddhiḥ karmaguṇair hīnā yadā manasi vartate / tadā saṃpadyate brahma tatraiva pralayaṃ gatam //197.17// sparśanam aśṅvānam anāsvādam adarśanam / aghrāṇam avitarkaṃ ca sattvaṃ praviśate param //197.18// manasy ākṛtayo magnā manas tv atigataṃ matim / mativ tv atigatā jñānam jñānam tv abhigataṃ param //197.19// indriyair manasaḥ siddhir na buddhiḥ budhyate manaḥ / na buddhir budhyate vyaktaṃ sūkṣmas tv etāni paśyati //197.20//*

<sup>50</sup> = The transcendent principle, the undying soul.

**Consciousness.[197.2]** But as one does not see any forms in the water when it is disturbed, so he does not see the reality to be known when his Consciousness is disturbed by the senses.**[197.3]** An absence of Knowledge causes a lack of insight<sup>51</sup> in the Intellect<sup>52</sup> and the Lower Mind is corrupted when the Intellect lacks insight;<sup>53</sup> when the Lower Mind is corrupted, the five agents of the Lower Mind completely deteriorate.**[197.4]**<sup>54</sup>

Untroubled by sensory impressions (and their consequences) the mental apparatus simply retracts into its original state. The descent of Consciousness (*jñāna*) into *buddhi*, *manas*, and *indriyas* is a process of corruption (*dūṣaṇa*) and the remedy is to retract *jñāna* back up into the absolute,<sup>55</sup> beginning with a withdrawal of the *indriyas* from the *viśayas*. At one level the whole text is about *jñāna*, as it says at the outset. It is **ALL ABOUT** what *jñāna* leads to (the transformation of embodied consciousness to the seeing of *brahman*), and its 'soteriology' is about the 'upgrading' of knowledge (to better content) and the 'clarification' of the 'states' of knowledge that do the 'knowing' in the body.

Knowledge arises for men from the destruction of evil action: And then it is that one sees the Self in the self,<sup>56</sup> which is like the surface of a mirror.**[197.8]** When the senses are running rampant a person is unhappy, but when they are held in check he is happy; **therefore by means of the self<sup>57</sup> he should hold himself back from the images<sup>58</sup> furnished by the sense faculties.****[197.9]**<sup>59</sup>

<sup>51</sup> The phrase "insight in the Intellect" is a compound translation of *buddhi* as both faculty and content. Perhaps a parallel solution for *jñāna* would be "Wise Consciousness," or the aptly ambiguous "Understanding."

<sup>52</sup> Literally: *abuddhi* is effected by *ajñāna*,

<sup>53</sup> Just as disorderly senses interfere with Knowledge, so too a lack of Knowledge interferes with the operation of the intellectual organs that depend upon Knowledge (see 10-11 below).

<sup>54</sup> *yathāmbhasi prasanne tu rūpaṃ paśyati cakṣuṣā / tadvat prasannendriyavāñ jñeyam jñānena paśyati //197.2// sa eva lulite tasmin yathā rūpaṃ na paśyati / tathendriyākulībhāve jñeyam jñāne na paśyati //197.3// abuddhir ajñānakṛtā abuddhyā duṣyate manaḥ / duṣṭasya manasaḥ pañca saṃpraduṣyanti mānasāḥ //197.4//*

<sup>55</sup> Manu's doctrine here vaguely reminds me of the four levels of consciousness distinguished in the *Māṇḍūkyaopaniṣad* and then, of course, Gauḍapāda's elaboration of that in the first *prakaraṇa* of his *Kārikās*.

<sup>56</sup> = in the general, mental part of the self, i.e., one's 'mind.'

<sup>57</sup> Again, the general, mental part of the self, the 'mind.'

<sup>58</sup> = *indriyarūpa-s*: the 'data,' sensory input, 'material' furnished by each sense up the chain of mental faculties.

As I said just above, at one level, the process of ‘repatriation’ to *brahman* is all about *jñāna*, a removal of the *jñāna*-based components of oneself from the magnetically enticing sensory *viśayas*. But as 8a suggests in this last quotation, *karman* also plays some stated but unspecified role in hindering the return. An interesting assertion on this topic was made at 197.5cd:

One who is satisfied with the absence of Knowledge is totally immersed in the realms of the senses and does not see.<sup>60</sup> But even without seeing, **one whose Self is pure** (or, one who is completely pure) withdraws from the sensory realms.[197.5]<sup>61</sup>

And though a complete absence of *karman* is one of the pre-conditions for the *brahmadarśana* discussed by Manu in 197 (see 197.17 quoted above), Manu returns to the theme of *yoga* in 198 and prescribes it more specifically “when the Intellect . . . is endowed with traces (*guṇas*) of karma.”

When the Intellect operates in the Mind **and is endowed with traces of karma**, then *brahman* becomes manifest to consciousness through the concentration (*samādhi*) involved in the regimen of meditation.<sup>62</sup>[198.2]<sup>63</sup>

Even though Manu started off with a thorough, even uncompromising, separation of *karman* and *jñāna*, we find that there is here a definite sense that one’s deeds do play a role in the ‘clarification’ or ‘simplification’ of the embodied self into its pristine state. This ‘mundane’ ethical strand<sup>64</sup> occurs in a number of places in Manu’s teaching, even though at other times Manu would seem to eschew such

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<sup>59</sup> *jñānam utpadyate puṃsāṃ kṣayāt pāpasya karmaṇaḥ / athādarśatalaprakhye paśyaty ātmānam ātmani //197.8// prasṛtair indriyair duḥkhī tair eva niyataiḥ sukhī / tasmād indriyarūpebhyo yacched ātmānam ātmanā //197.9//*

<sup>60</sup> **Make into endnote:** We have here the passive used with active sense; evidence is following *gloss dṛṣtvā*.

<sup>61</sup> *ajñānatṛpto viśayeṣv avagādho na dṛśyate / adṛṣṭvaiva tu pūtātmā viśayebhyo nivartate //197.5//*

<sup>62</sup> In 197.17ff. the dissolution of the person into *brahman* was direct and complete, as the *buddhi* was devoid of all *karman*. Here *karman* is still attached to the *buddhi*, so any vision or knowledge of *brahman* must take place in a regimen of meditation.

<sup>63</sup> *yadā karmaguṇopetā buddhir manasi vartate / tadā prajñāyate brahma dhyānayogasamādhinā //198.2//*

<sup>64</sup> By ‘mundane ethical strand’ I mean to refer to the realm of value and action that keeps track of good and bad deeds in the public world. I also use the term ethics to refer to the overarching values and behavioral orientations that dispose one to seek the absolute, to renounce actions altogether, if that be possible, and so forth.

an idea.<sup>65</sup> Manu here is not antinomian. He says more than once in his lecture that *dharma*, by which he means basically *nivṛttilakṣaṇadharmā*, is an essential element of the path to ultimate beatitude. A good deal more could be said on this topic, but I shall leave it for now.

And there is much more that could be said on a number of other important issues related to these, such as the specifics of Manu's psychology (the modes of inter-operation of *buddhi*, *manas*, and the *indriyas*). There are problems of apparent consistency in Manu's use of the term *manas* in this text—at times it seems to be simply a global term for all mental or spiritual operations of a being; at other times it is clearly a mental faculty more gross than *buddhi*, one that processes the *rūpas* conveyed by the senses from their appropriation of the *guṇas* of the elements in the body's sensory organs.

### C5. The Comparison to Other Systems

I will further hasten to a conclusion by simply calling your attention to the very interesting passage that begins at 198.14, Text B2. It begins a series of presentations by Manu of his teaching with reference to four other systems of thought and practice: what is elsewhere, but not here, referred to as Sāṃkhya, to Yoga (which is referred to here by name, as a school of thought, I believe), a form of Vaiṣṇava theology, and Vedism. This comparative passage is a strikingly unusual development, quite apart from the specifics statements it makes. Further reflection upon it and its contents will have to wait for another occasion. I am going to mention only one aspect of the very first of these, that having to do with the unnamed 'Sāṃkhya,' and I will do so briefly.

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<sup>65</sup> Recall 194.11e: *paraṃ hi tat karma pathād apetaṃ*, which I currently render with "For that highest reality is apart from the path of Action."

**C6. The Fatal Error**

In the nod towards 'Sāṃkhya,' with which Manu begins this series of comparisons, he registers the Sāṃkhya idea of the erroneous commingling of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*.<sup>66</sup> Manu has accounted for this error himself in his own way in his main lecture at 195.23. Manu's explanation for this error is that the absolute reality, the *para*, is beyond the range of the Intellect's direct gaze, so the Intellect erroneously takes the more proximate and larger form of the embodied self to be its essential form (*svarūpa*).

As when a moving object is passing out of the range of vision and yet one perceives that now tiny object as if it were still large, so too does the highest reality go beyond the purview of the Intellect and one intuits his body to be his essential form.[195.23]<sup>67</sup>

**D. The final Rucirā coda**

The final Rucirā coda, 12.199.31-32, captures some of the fundamental themes and perspectives of the text quite well, using a solar metaphor that is recurrent<sup>68</sup> in the text.

As the sun takes on attributes but then becomes free of all attributes when the circle of its rays fades away, so the sage in this world who is devoid of all particularity enters the never-waning brahman that has no attributes.[199.31]

Having investigated how those who act rightly gain the highest course that goes without return to the Self-Existent One, the never waning thing that is the origin and

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<sup>66</sup> "Now the very first step forward is that of the Universal: it emerges from the Chief Element. The second step forward establishes the appearance of a pair without distinction." [198.17] *ekasyādyā pravṛttis tu pradhānāt saṃpravartate / dvitīyā mithunavyaktim aviśeṣān niyacchati //198.17//* Belvalkar correctly reads the *lectio difficilior* in a—*ekasya*—and Arjunamiśra explains that plausibly as *mahadākhyaṣya. pradhāna* in b is the unmanifested Generative Matrix (*prakṛti*), and the one is the universal totality (*mahat*) that is the first manifestation from the *pradhāna*.

<sup>67</sup> *calaṃ yathā dṛṣṭipatham paraiti; sūkṣmaṃ mahad rūpam ivābhipāti / svarūpam ālocayate ca rūpam; param tathā buddhipatham paraiti //12.195.23 //*

<sup>68</sup> 195.11 and 197.13, and by mild implication, 196.9.



end, that is the everlasting—the never waning thing free of death—one then realizes this cool and calm state of never dying.[199.32]<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> *divākaro guṇam upalabhya nirguṇo yathā bhaved vyapagataraśmimaṇḍalaḥ / tathā hy asau munir iha nirviśeṣavān sa nirguṇaṃ praviśati brahma cāvyaṃ //199.31// anāgatiṃ sukṛtimatāṃ parāṃ gatiṃ svayaṃbhavaṃ prabhavanidhānam avyaṃ / sanātanaṃ yad amṛtam avyaṃ padaṃ vicārya taṃ śamam amṛtatvam aśnute //199.32// NB: with *praviśati brahma cāvyaṃ* the “br” fails to ‘make’ (that is, it fails to make a *guru* syllable, as normally it should; a mild degree of poetic license).*