

# Yoga Sutras of Patanjali

The *Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali* are a collection of 196 Indian sutras (aphorisms) on the theory and practice of yoga. The *Yoga Sutras* were compiled prior to 400 CE by Sage Patanjali who synthesized and organized knowledge about yoga from older traditions.<sup>[1][2][3]</sup> The *Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali* was the most translated ancient Indian text in the medieval era, having been translated into about forty Indian languages and two non-Indian languages: Old Javanese and Arabic.<sup>[4]</sup> The text fell into relative obscurity for nearly 700 years from the 12th to 19th century, and made a comeback in late 19th century due to the efforts of Swami Vivekananda, the Theosophical Society and others. It gained prominence again as a comeback classic in the 20th century.<sup>[5]</sup>

Before the 20th century, history indicates that the medieval Indian yoga scene was dominated by the various other texts such as the Bhagavad Gita and the Yoga Vasistha, texts attributed to Yajnavalkya and Hiranyagarbha, as well as literature on hatha yoga, tantric yoga and Pashupata Shaivism yoga rather than the *Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali*.<sup>[6]</sup>

Hindu orthodox tradition holds the *Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali* to be one of the foundational texts of classical Yoga philosophy.<sup>[7][8]</sup> However, the appropriation - and misappropriation - of the *Yoga Sutras* and its influence on later systematizations of yoga has been questioned by scholars such as David Gordon White,<sup>[5]</sup> but reaffirmed by others such as James Mallinson.<sup>[9]</sup>

Modern scholars of yoga such as Philipp A. Maas<sup>[10]</sup> and Mallinson<sup>[11]</sup> consider the Bhasya commentary on the Sutras to be Patanjali's own, and the Sutras to be his summary of older accounts of yoga. The combined document is thus considered to be a single work, the *Pātañjalayogaśāstra*.<sup>[11]</sup>

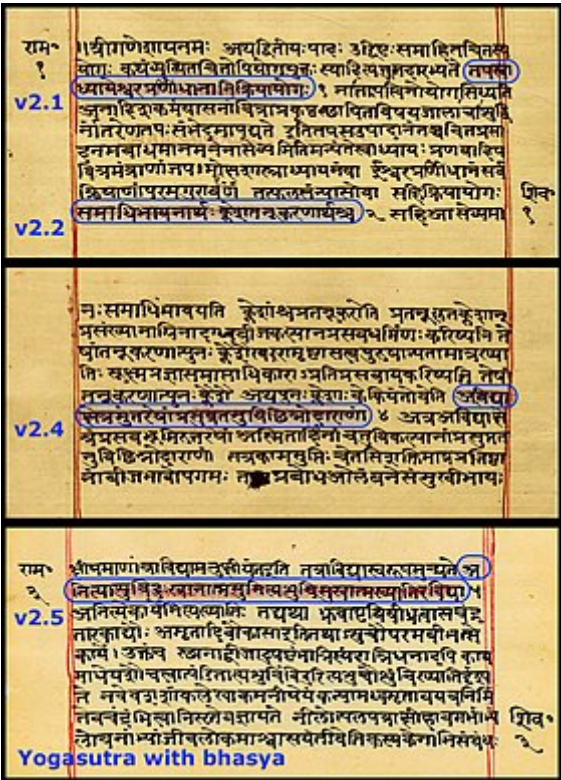
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Some pages from a historic *Yogasutra* manuscript (Sanskrit, Devanagari). The verses are highlighted and are embedded inside the *bhasya* (commentary).



Patañjali Statue (traditional form indicating kundalini or incarnation of Shesha)

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### Author

The *Yoga Sūtras* text is attributed to Patanjali.<sup>[12][13][14][15]</sup> Much confusion surrounds this Patañjali, because an author of the same name is credited to be the author of the classic text on Sanskrit grammar named *Mahābhāṣya*. Yet the two works in Sanskrit are completely different in subject matter. Furthermore, before the time of Bhoja (11th century), no known text states that the authors were the same.<sup>[note 1]</sup>

### Dating

Philipp A. Maas assesses Patañjali's Yogasutra's date to be about 400 CE, based on tracing the commentaries on it published in the first millennium CE, and a review of extant literature.<sup>[10]</sup>

Edwin Bryant, on the other hand, surveys the major commentators in his translation of the *Yoga Sūtras*.<sup>[16]</sup> He observes that "Most scholars date the text shortly after the turn of the Common Era (circa first to second century), but that it has been placed as early as several centuries before that."<sup>[17]</sup> Bryant concludes that "A number of scholars have

dated the *Yoga Sūtras* as late as the fourth or fifth century C.E., but these arguments have all been challenged. ... All such arguments [for a late date] are problematic."<sup>[18]</sup>

Michele Desmarais summarizes a wide variety of dates assigned to Yogasutra, ranging from 500 BCE to 3rd century CE, noting that there is a paucity of evidence for any certainty. She states the text may have been composed at an earlier date given conflicting theories on how to date it, but latter dates are more commonly accepted by scholars.<sup>[19]</sup>

## Compilation

The *Yoga Sutras* are a composite of various traditions.<sup>[2][3][1]</sup> The levels of *saṁādhi* taught in the text resemble the Buddhist *jhanas*.<sup>[20][note 2]</sup> According to Feuerstein, the *Yoga Sutras* are a condensation of two different traditions, namely "eight limb yoga" (*aṣṭāṅga yoga*) and action yoga (*Kriya yoga*).<sup>[21]</sup> The *kriya yoga* part is contained in chapter 1, chapter 2 *sutras* 1-27, chapter 3 except *sutra* 54, and chapter 4.<sup>[2]</sup> The "eight limb yoga" is described in chapter 2 *sutras* 28-55, and chapter 3 *sutras* 3 and 54.<sup>[2]</sup>

According to Maas, Patañjali's composition was entitled *Pātañjalayogaśāstra* ("The Treatise on Yoga according to Patañjali") and consisted of both *Sūtras* **and** *Bhāṣya*.<sup>[10]</sup> According to Wujastyk, referencing Maas, Patanjali integrated yoga from older traditions in *Pātañjalayogaśāstra*, and added his own explanatory passages to create the unified work that, since 1100 CE, has been considered the work of two people.<sup>[1]</sup> Together the compilation of Patanjali's *sutras* and the *Vyasabhasya*, is called *Pātañjalayogaśāstra*.<sup>[22]</sup>

According to Maas, this means that the earliest commentary on the *Yoga Sūtras*, the *Bhāṣya*, that has commonly been ascribed to some unknown later author Vyāsa (*the editor*), was Patañjali's own work.<sup>[10]</sup>

## Contents

Patañjali divided his *Yoga Sutras* into four chapters or books (Sanskrit *pada*), containing in all 196 aphorisms, divided as follows:<sup>[23][24]</sup>

- **Samadhi Pada**<sup>[23][24]</sup> (51 *sutras*). *Samadhi* refers to a state of direct and reliable perception (*pramāṇa*) where the yogi's self-identity is absorbed into the object meditated upon, collapsing the categories of witness, witnessing, and witnessed. *Samadhi* is the main technique the yogin learns by which to dive into the depths of the mind to achieve *Kaivalya*. The author describes yoga and then the nature and the means to attaining *saṁādhi*. This chapter contains the famous definitional verse: "*Yogaś citta-vritti-nirodhaḥ*" ("Yoga is the restraint of mental modifications").<sup>[25]</sup>
- **Sadhana Pada**<sup>[23][24]</sup> (55 *sutras*). *Sadhana* is the Sanskrit word for "practice" or "discipline". Here the author outlines two forms of Yoga: *Kriyā Yoga* and *Ashtanga Yoga* (Eightfold or Eightlimbed Yoga).
- \* *Kriyā Yoga* in the *Yoga Sūtras* is the practice of three of the *Niyamas* of *Aṣṭāṅga Yoga*: *tapas*, *svādhyaya*, and *īśvara praṇidhana* – austerity, self-study, and devotion to god.
- \* *Aṣṭāṅga Yoga* is the yoga of eight limbs: *Yama*, *Niyama*, *Āsana*, *Prāṇāyāma*, *Pratyahara*, *Dhāraṇa*, *Dhyāna*, and *Samādhi*.
- **Vibhuti Pada**<sup>[23][24]</sup> (56 *sutras*).<sup>[26]</sup> *Vibhuti* is the Sanskrit word for "power" or "manifestation". 'Supra-normal powers' (Sanskrit: *siddhi*) are acquired by the practice of yoga. Combined simultaneous practice of *Dhāraṇā*, *Dhyāna* and *Samādhi* is referred to as *Samyama*, and is considered a tool of achieving various perfections, or *Siddhis*. The text warns (III.37) that these powers can become an obstacle to the yogi who seeks liberation.
- **Kaivalya Pada**<sup>[23][24]</sup> (34 *sutras*). *Kaivalya* literally translates to "isolation", but as used in the *Sutras* stands for emancipation or liberation and is used where other texts often employ the term *moksha* (liberation). The *Kaivalya Pada* describes the process of liberation and the reality of the transcendental ego.

## Purpose of yoga

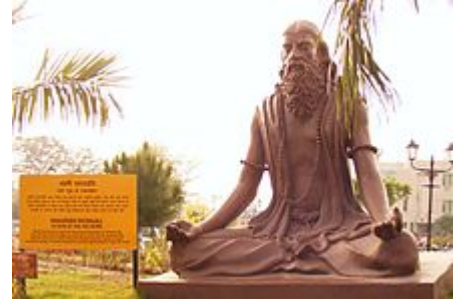
Patanjali begins his treatise by stating the purpose of his book in the first *sutra*, followed by defining the word "yoga" in his second *sutra* of Book 1:<sup>[27]</sup>

योगश्चित्तवृत्तिनिरोधः ॥२॥

*yogaś citta-vṛtti-nirodhaḥ*

— *Yoga Sutras* 1.2

This terse definition hinges on the meaning of three Sanskrit terms. I. K. Taimni translates it as "Yoga is the inhibition (*nirodhaḥ*) of the modifications (*vṛtti*) of the mind (*citta*)".<sup>[28]</sup> Swami Vivekananda translates the sutra as "Yoga is restraining the mind-stuff (*Citta*) from taking various forms (*Vrittis*)".<sup>[29]</sup> Edwin Bryant states that, to Patanjali, "Yoga essentially consists of meditative practices culminating in attaining a state of consciousness free from all modes of active or discursive thought, and of eventually attaining a state where consciousness is unaware of any object external to itself, that is, is only aware of its own nature as consciousness unmixed with any other object."<sup>[30][31]</sup>



A statue of Patañjali practicing dhyana at Patanjali Yogpeeth

## Ashtanga, the eight components of yoga

Patanjali defines yoga as having eight components (अष्टाङ्ग *aṣṭ āṅga*, "eight limbs"): "The eight limbs of yoga are yama (abstinences), niyama (observances), asana (yoga postures), pranayama (breath control), pratyahara (withdrawal of the senses), dharana (concentration), dhyana (meditation) and samadhi (absorption)."<sup>[32]</sup>

### 1. Yamas

Yamas are ethical rules in Hinduism and can be thought of as moral imperatives. The five yamas listed by Patañjali in *Yogasūtra* 2.30 are:<sup>[33]</sup>

1. Ahiṃsā (अहिंसा): Nonviolence, non-harming other living beings<sup>[34]</sup>
2. Satya (सत्य): truthfulness, non-falsehood<sup>[34][35]</sup>
3. Asteya (अस्तेय): non-stealing<sup>[34]</sup>
4. Brahmacarya (ब्रह्मचर्य): chastity,<sup>[35]</sup> marital fidelity or sexual restraint<sup>[36]</sup>
5. Aparigraha (अपरिग्रह): non-avarice,<sup>[34]</sup> non-possessiveness<sup>[35]</sup>

### 2. Niyama

The second component of Patanjali's Yoga path is called niyama, which includes virtuous habits, behaviors and observances (the "dos").<sup>[37][38]</sup> Sadhana Pada Verse 32 lists the niyamas as:<sup>[39]</sup>

1. Shaucha (शौच): purity, clearness of mind, speech and body<sup>[40]</sup>
2. Santosha (संतोष): contentment, acceptance of others, acceptance of one's circumstances as they are in order to get past or change them, optimism for self<sup>[41]</sup>
3. Tapas (तपस्): persistence, perseverance, austerity<sup>[42][43]</sup>
4. Svadyaya (स्वाध्याय): study of Vedas (see *Sabda* in epistemology section), study of self, self-reflection, introspection of self's thoughts, speeches and actions<sup>[43][44]</sup>
5. Ishvarapranidhana (ईश्वरप्रणिधान): contemplation of the Ishvara (God/Supreme Being, Brahman, True Self, Unchanging Reality)<sup>[41][45]</sup>

### 3. Āsana

Patanjali begins discussion of Āsana (आसन, posture) by defining it in verse 46 of Book 2, as follows,<sup>[27]</sup>

स्थिरसुखमासनम् ॥४६॥

Translation 1: An *asana* is what is steady and pleasant.<sup>[46]</sup>

Translation 2: Motionless and Agreeable form (of staying) is *Asana* (yoga posture).<sup>[47]</sup>

## — Yoga Sutras II.46

*Asana* is thus a posture that one can hold for a period of time, staying relaxed, steady, comfortable and motionless. Patanjali does not list any specific *asana*, except the terse suggestion, "posture one can hold with comfort and motionlessness".<sup>[48]</sup> Āraṇya translates verse II.47 of Yoga sutra as, "asanas are perfected over time by relaxation of effort with meditation on the infinite"; this combination and practice stops the quivering of body.<sup>[49]</sup>

The *Bhasya* commentary attached to the *Sutras*, now thought to be by Patanjali himself,<sup>[10]</sup> suggests twelve seated meditation postures:<sup>[50]</sup> Padmasana (lotus), Virasana (hero), Bhadrasana (glorious), Svastikasana (lucky mark), Dandasana (staff), Sopasrayasana (supported), Paryankasana (bedstead), Krauncha-nishadasana (seated heron), Hastanishadasana (seated elephant), Ushtranishadasana (seated camel), Samasansthanasana (evenly balanced) and Sthirasukhasana (any motionless posture that is in accordance with one's pleasure).<sup>[47]</sup>

### 4. Prāṇāyāma

Prāṇāyāma is made out of two Sanskrit words *prāṇa* (प्राण, breath)<sup>[51]</sup> and *āyāma* (आयाम्, restraining, extending, stretching).<sup>[52]</sup>

After a desired posture has been achieved, verses II.49 through II.51 recommend the next limb of yoga, *prāṇāyāma*, which is the practice of consciously regulating breath (inhalation and exhalation).<sup>[53]</sup> This is done in several ways, inhaling and then suspending exhalation for a period, exhaling and then suspending inhalation for a period, slowing the inhalation and exhalation, consciously changing the time/length of breath (deep, short breathing).<sup>[54][55]</sup>

### 5. Pratyāhāra

Pratyāhāra is a combination of two Sanskrit words *prati-* (the prefix प्रति-, "against" or "contra") and *āhāra* (आहार, "bring near, fetch").<sup>[56]</sup>

Pratyahara is drawing within one's awareness. It is a process of retracting the sensory experience from external objects. It is a step of self extraction and abstraction. Pratyahara is not consciously closing one's eyes to the sensory world, it is consciously closing one's mind processes to the sensory world. Pratyahara empowers one to stop being controlled by the external world, fetch one's attention to seek self-knowledge and experience the freedom innate in one's inner world.<sup>[57][58]</sup>

Pratyahara marks the transition of yoga experience from first four limbs that perfect external forms to last three limbs that perfect inner state, from outside to inside, from outer sphere of body to inner sphere of spirit.<sup>[59]</sup>

### 6. Dhāraṇā

*Dharana* (Sanskrit: धारणा) means concentration, introspective focus and one-pointedness of mind. The root of word is *dhr̥* (धृ), which has a meaning of "to hold, maintain, keep".<sup>[60]</sup>

Dharana as the sixth limb of yoga, is holding one's mind onto a particular inner state, subject or topic of one's mind.<sup>[61]</sup> The mind is fixed on a mantra, or one's breath/navel/tip of tongue/any place, or an object one wants to observe, or a concept/idea in one's mind.<sup>[62][63]</sup> Fixing the mind means one-pointed focus, without drifting of mind, and without jumping from one topic to another.<sup>[62]</sup>

### 7. Dhyāna

*Dhyana* (Sanskrit: ध्यान) literally means "contemplation, reflection" and "profound, abstract meditation".<sup>[64]</sup>

Dhyana is contemplating, reflecting on whatever *Dharana* has focused on. If in the sixth limb of yoga one focused on a personal deity, Dhyana is its contemplation. If the concentration was on one object, Dhyana is non-judgmental, non-presumptuous observation of that object.<sup>[65]</sup> If the focus was on a concept/idea, Dhyana is contemplating that concept/idea in all its aspects, forms and consequences. Dhyana is uninterrupted train of thought, current of cognition, flow of awareness.<sup>[63]</sup>

Dhyana is integrally related to Dharana, one leads to other. Dharana is a state of mind, Dhyana the process of mind. Dhyana is distinct from Dharana in that the meditator becomes actively engaged with its focus. Patanjali defines contemplation (*Dhyana*) as the mind process, where the mind is fixed on something, and then there is "a course of uniform modification of knowledge".<sup>[66]</sup>

## 8. Samādhi

*Samadhi* (Sanskrit: समाधि) literally means "putting together, joining, combining with, union, harmonious whole, trance".<sup>[67][68]</sup>

Samadhi is oneness with the subject of meditation. There is no distinction, during the eighth limb of yoga, between the actor of meditation, the act of meditation and the subject of meditation. Samadhi is that spiritual state when one's mind is so absorbed in whatever it is contemplating on, that the mind loses the sense of its own identity. The thinker, the thought process and the thought fuse with the subject of thought. There is only oneness, *samadhi*.<sup>[63][69][70]</sup>

# Discussion

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## Samadhi

Samadhi is of two kinds,<sup>[71][web 1]</sup> with and without support of an object of meditation:<sup>[web 2]</sup>

- **Samprajnata Samadhi**, also called *savikalpa samadhi* and *Sabija Samadhi*,<sup>[web 3][note 3]</sup> meditation with support of an object.<sup>[web 2][note 4]</sup>  
*Samprajnata samadhi* is associated with deliberation, reflection, bliss, and I-am-ness.<sup>[75][note 5]</sup>

The first two associations, deliberation and reflection, form the basis of the various types of *samapatti*.<sup>[75][77]</sup>

- **Savitarka**, "deliberative":<sup>[75][note 6]</sup> The citta is concentrated upon a gross object of meditation,<sup>[web 2]</sup> an object with a manifest appearance that is perceptible to our senses,<sup>[78]</sup> such as a flame of a lamp, the tip of the nose, or the image of a deity. Conceptualization (*vikalpa*) still takes place, in the form of perception, the word and the knowledge of the object of meditation.<sup>[75]</sup> When the deliberation is ended this is called *nirvitarka samadhi*.<sup>[79][note 7]</sup>
- **Savichara**, "reflective":<sup>[78]</sup> the citta is concentrated upon a subtle object of meditation,<sup>[web 2][78]</sup> which is not perceptible to the senses, but arrived at through inference,<sup>[78]</sup> such as the senses, the process of cognition, the mind, the I-am-ness,<sup>[note 8]</sup> the chakras, the inner-breath (*prana*), the *nadis*, the intellect (*buddhi*).<sup>[78]</sup> The stilling of reflection is called *nirvichara samapatti*.<sup>[78][note 9]</sup>

The last two associations, *sananda samadhi* and *sasmita*, are respectively a state of meditation, and an object of *savichara samadhi*:

- **Sananda Samadhi**, *ananda*,<sup>[note 10]</sup> "bliss": this state emphasizes the still subtler state of bliss in meditation;<sup>[web 2]</sup>
- **Sasmita**: the citta is concentrated upon the sense or feeling of "I-am-ness".<sup>[web 2]</sup>
- **Asamprajnata Samadhi**, also called *Nirvikalpa Samadhi*<sup>[web 1]</sup> and *Nirbija Samadhi*:<sup>[web 1][note 11]</sup> meditation without an object,<sup>[web 2]</sup> which leads to knowledge of *purusha* or consciousness, the subtlest element.<sup>[78][note 12]</sup>

## Ananda and asmita

According to Ian Whicher, the status of *sananda* and *sasmita* in Patanjali's system is a matter of dispute.<sup>[81]</sup> According to Maehle, the first two constituents, deliberation and reflection, form the basis of the various types of *samapatti*.<sup>[75]</sup> According to Feuerstein,

"Joy" and "I-am-ness" [...] must be regarded as accompanying phenomena of every cognitive [ecstasy]. The explanations of the classical commentators on this point appear to be foreign to Patanjali's hierarchy of [ecstatic] states, and it seems unlikely that *ananda* and *asmita* should constitute independent levels of *samadhi*.

— [81]

Ian Whicher disagrees with Feuerstein, seeing *ananda* and *asmita* as later stages of *nirvicara-samapatti*.<sup>[81]</sup> Whicher refers to Vācaspati Miśra (900-980 CE), the founder of the Bhāmātī Advaita Vedanta who proposes eight types of *samapatti*.<sup>[82]</sup>

- *Savitarka-samāpatti* and *Nirvitarka-samāpatti*, both with gross objects as objects of support;
- *Savicāra-samāpatti* and *Nirvicāra-samāpatti*, both with subtle objects as objects of support;
- *Sānanda-samāpatti* and *Nirānanda-samāpatti*, both with the sense organs as objects of support
- *Sāsmītā-samāpatti* and *Nirasmītā-samāpatti*, both with the sense of "I-am-ness" as support.

Vijnana Bikshu (ca. 1550-1600) proposes a six-stage model, explicitly rejecting Vacaspati Misra's model. Vijnana Bikshu regards joy (*ananda*) as a state that arises when the mind passes beyond the *vicara* stage.<sup>[77]</sup> Whicher agrees that *ananda* is not a separate stage of *samadhi*.<sup>[77]</sup> According to Whicher, Patanjali's own view seems to be that *nirvicara-samadhi* is the highest form of cognitive ecstasy.<sup>[77]</sup>

## Epistemology

The epistemology in Patanjali's system of Yoga, like the Sāmkhya school of Hinduism, relies on three of six *Pramanas*, as the means of gaining reliable knowledge.<sup>[83]</sup> These included *Pratyakṣa* (perception), *Anumāna* (inference) and *Sabda* (*Āptavacana*, word/testimony of reliable sources).<sup>[84][85]</sup>

Patanjali's system, like the Samkhya school, considers *Pratyakṣa* or *Dr̥ṣṭam* (direct sense perception), *Anumāna* (inference), and *Śabda* or *Āptavacana* (verbal testimony of the sages or *śāstras*) to be the only valid means of knowledge or *Pramana*.<sup>[84]</sup> Unlike few other schools of Hinduism such as Advaita Vedanta, Yoga did not adopt the following three *Pramanas*: *Upamāna* (comparison and analogy), *Arthāpatti* (postulation, deriving from circumstances) or *Anupalabdi* (non-perception, negative/cognitive proof).<sup>[85]</sup>

## Metaphysics

The metaphysics of Patanjali is built on the same dualist foundation as the Samkhya school.<sup>[86]</sup> The universe is conceptualized as of two realities in Samkhya-Yoga schools: *Puruṣa* (consciousness) and *prakṛiti* (matter). It considers consciousness and matter, self/soul and body as two different realities.<sup>[87][88]</sup> *Jīva* (a living being) is considered as a state in which *puruṣa* is bonded to *prakṛiti* in some form, in various permutations and combinations of various elements, senses, feelings, activity and mind.<sup>[89]</sup> During the state of imbalance or ignorance, one of more constituents overwhelm the others, creating a form of bondage. The end of this bondage is called liberation, or *moksha* by both Yoga and Samkhya school of Hinduism.<sup>[90]</sup> The ethical theory of Yoga school is based on Yamas and Niyama, as well as elements of the Guna theory of Samkhya.<sup>[86]</sup>

Patanjali adopts the theory of Guna from Samkhya.<sup>[86]</sup> Gunas theory states that three *gunas* (innate tendency, attributes) are present in different proportions in all beings, and these three are *sattva* guna (goodness, constructive, harmonious), *rajas* guna (passion, active, confused), and *tamas* guna (darkness, destructive, chaotic).<sup>[91][92]</sup> These

three are present in every being but in different proportions, and the fundamental nature and psychological dispositions of beings is a consequence of the relative proportion of these three *gunas*.<sup>[86]</sup> When *sattva* guna predominates an individual, the qualities of lucidity, wisdom, constructiveness, harmony, and peacefulness manifest themselves; when *rajas* is predominant, attachment, craving, passion-driven activity and restlessness manifest; and when *tamas* predominates in an individual, ignorance, delusion, destructive behavior, lethargy, and suffering manifests. The *gunas* theory underpins the philosophy of mind in Yoga school of Hinduism.<sup>[86]</sup>

## Soteriology

Samkhya school suggests that *jnana* (knowledge) is a sufficient means to *moksha*, Patanjali suggests that systematic techniques/practice (personal experimentation) combined with Samkhya's approach to knowledge is the path to *moksha*.<sup>[86]</sup> Patanjali holds that ignorance is the cause of suffering and *samsāra*.<sup>[86]</sup> Liberation, like many other schools, is removal of ignorance, which is achieved through discriminative discernment, knowledge and self-awareness. The *Yoga Sūtras* is Yoga school's treatise on how to accomplish this.<sup>[86]</sup> *Samādhi* is the state where ecstatic awareness develops, state Yoga scholars, and this is how one starts the process of becoming aware of *Purusa* and true Self. It further claims that this awareness is eternal, and once this awareness is achieved, a person cannot ever cease being aware; this is *moksha*, the soteriological goal in Hinduism.<sup>[86]</sup>



The fusion of *Dharana*, *Dhyana* and *Samadhi* is *Sanyama* – the path to *Kaivalya* in Yoga school.

Book 3 of Patanjali's *Yogasutra* is dedicated to soteriological aspects of yoga philosophy. Patanjali begins by stating that all limbs of yoga are necessary foundation to reaching the state of self-awareness, freedom and liberation. He refers to the three last limbs of yoga as *sanyama*, in verses III.4 to III.5, and calls it the technology for "discerning principle" and mastery of *citta* and self-knowledge.<sup>[63][93]</sup> In verse III.12, the *Yogasutras* state that this discerning principle then empowers one to perfect *sant* (tranquility) and *udita* (reason) in one's mind and spirit, through intentness. This leads to one's ability to discern the difference between *śabda* (word), *artha* (meaning) and *pratyaya* (understanding), and this ability empowers one to compassionately comprehend the cry/speech of all living beings.<sup>[94][95]</sup> Once a yogi reaches this state of *śamyama*, it leads to unusual powers, intuition, self-knowledge, freedoms and *kaivalya*, the soteriological goal of the yogi.<sup>[94]</sup>

## God

Patanjali differs from the closely related non-theistic/atheistic Samkhya school by incorporating the concept of a "personal, yet essentially inactive, deity" or "personal god" (*Ishvara*).<sup>[96][97][98][99]</sup> Hindu scholars such as the 8th century *Adi Sankara*, as well as many modern academic scholars describe Yoga school as "Samkya school with God."<sup>[97][100][101]</sup>

The *Yogasutras of Patanjali* use the term *Isvara* in 11 verses: I.23 through I.29, II.1, II.2, II.32 and II.45. Ever since the Sutra's release, Hindu scholars have debated and commented on who or what is *Isvara*? These commentaries range from defining *Isvara* from a "personal god" to "special self" to "anything that has spiritual significance to the individual".<sup>[97][102]</sup> Whicher states that while Patanjali's terse verses can be interpreted both as theistic or non-theistic, Patanjali's concept of *Isvara* in Yoga philosophy functions as a "transformative catalyst or guide for aiding the yogin on the path to spiritual emancipation".<sup>[103]</sup>

Patanjali defines *Isvara* (Sanskrit: ईश्वर) in verse 24 of Book 1, as "a special Self (पुरुषविशेष, *puruṣa-viśeṣa*)",<sup>[27]</sup>

क्लेशकर्मविपाकाशयैरपरामृष्टः<sup>[104]</sup> पुरुषविशेष ईश्वरः ॥२४॥



## — Yoga Sutras I.24

This sutra adds the characteristics of *Isvara* as that special Self which is unaffected (अपरामृष्ट, *aparamṛsta*) by one's obstacles/hardships (क्लेश, *klesha*), one's circumstances created by past or one's current actions (कर्म, *karma*), one's life fruits (विपाक, *vipāka*), and one's psychological dispositions/intentions (आशय, *ashaya*).<sup>[105][106]</sup>

## Philosophical roots and influences

The *Yoga Sutras* incorporated the teachings of many other Indian philosophical systems prevalent at the time. Samkhya and Yoga are thought to be two of the many schools of philosophy that originated over the centuries that had common roots in the non-Vedic cultures and traditions of India.<sup>[107][note 13][note 14]</sup> The orthodox Hindu philosophies of Samkhya, Yoga, Vedanta, as well as the non-orthodox Nastika systems of Jainism and Buddhism can all be seen as representing one stream of spiritual activity in ancient India, in contrast to the Bhakti traditions and Vedic ritualism which were also prevalent at the same time. The Vedanta-Sramana traditions, iconolatry and Vedic rituals can be identified with the Jnana marga, Bhakti marga and the Karma marga respectively that are outlined in the Bhagavad Gita.

### Hinduism

The *Yoga Sutras* are built on a foundation of Samkhya philosophy, an orthodox (Astika) and atheistic Hindu system of dualism, and are generally seen as the practice while Samkhya is the theory. The influence of Samkhya is so pervasive in the Sutras that the historian Surendranath Dasgupta went so far as to deny independent categorization to Patañjali's system, preferring to refer to it as *Patanjala Samkhya*, similar to the position taken by the Jain writer Haribhadra in his commentary on Yoga.<sup>[111]</sup> Patañjali's *Yoga Sutras* accept the Samkhya's division of the world and phenomena into twenty-five tattvas or principles, of which one is *Purusha* meaning Self or consciousness, the others being *Prakriti* (primal nature), *Buddhi* (intellect or will), *Ahamkara* (ego), *Manas* (mind), five *buddhindriyas* (sensory capabilities), five *karmendriyas* (action-capabilities) and ten elements.<sup>[112][113]</sup> The second part of the Sutras, the Sadhana, also summarizes the Samkhya perspectives about all seen activity lying within the realm of the three *Gunas* of *Sattva* (illumination), *Rajas* (passion) and *Tamas* (lethargy).<sup>[114]</sup>

The *Yoga Sutras* diverge from early Samkhya by the addition of the principle of *Isvara* or God, as exemplified by Sutra 1.23 - "Íśvara pranidhānāt vā", which is interpreted to mean that surrender to God is one way to liberation.<sup>[112][115]</sup> *Isvara* is defined here as "a distinct Consciousness, untouched by afflictions, actions, fruitions or their residue".<sup>[116]</sup> In the sutras, it is suggested that devotion to *Isvara*, represented by the mystical syllable Om may be the most efficient method of achieving the goal of Yoga.<sup>[117]</sup> This syllable Om is a central element of Hinduism, appearing in all the Upanishads, including the earliest Chandogya and Brihadaranyaka Upanishads, and expounded upon in the Mandukya Upanishad.<sup>[118]</sup>

Another divergence from Samkhya is that while the Samkhya holds that knowledge is the means to liberation, Patañjali's Yoga insists on the methods of concentration and active striving. The aim of Yoga is to free the individual from the clutches of matter, and considers intellectual knowledge alone to be inadequate for the purpose – which is different from the position taken by Samkhya.<sup>[112]</sup>

However, the essential similarities between the Samkhya and Patañjali's system remained even after the addition of the *Isvara* principle,<sup>[note 15]</sup> with Max Müller noting that "the two philosophies were in popular parlance distinguished from each other as Samkhya with and Samkhya without a Lord...."<sup>[119]</sup> The Bhagavad Gita, one of the chief scriptures of Hinduism, is considered to be based on this synthetic Samkhya-Yoga system.<sup>[120][121]</sup>

The *Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali* is a foundational text of the Yoga philosophy school of Hinduism.<sup>[7][8]</sup>

## Buddhism

Scholars have presented different viewpoints on the relationship between Patanjali's Yoga Sutras and the teachings in Buddhist texts.<sup>[122][123][124]</sup>

Karel Werner writes, "Patanjali's system is unthinkable without Buddhism. As far as its terminology goes there is much in the *Yoga Sutras* that reminds us of Buddhist formulations from the Pāli Canon and even more so from the Sarvāstivāda Abhidharma and from Sautrāntika."<sup>[125]</sup> He adds, "upon the whole it [Patanjali's Yoga sutras] is more elaborate and summarizes the actual technique of Yoga procedures more exactly than the Buddhist exposition".<sup>[126]</sup> However, states Werner, "The Buddha was the founder of his system, even though, admittedly, he made use of some of the experiences he had previously gained under various Yoga teachers of his time. Patanjali is neither a founder nor a leader of a new movement. (...) The ingenuity of his [Patanjali's] achievement lies in the thoroughness and completeness with which all the important stages of Yoga practice and mental experiences are included in his scheme, and in their systematic presentation in a succinct treatise."<sup>[126]</sup> Werner adds that the ideas of existence and the focus on "Self, Soul" in Patanjali's Yogasutra are different from the "no Self" precepts of Buddhism.<sup>[127]</sup>

According to David Gordon White, the language of the *Yoga Sutras* is often closer to "Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit, the Sanskrit of the early Mahayana Buddhist scriptures, than to the classical Sanskrit of other Hindu scriptures".<sup>[128]</sup> He adds, historical evidence suggests that yoga philosophical systems influenced, and were influenced by, other philosophical systems in India such as early Buddhism and Jainism.<sup>[129]</sup> White mentions controversies about the Yoga Sutras.<sup>[122]</sup> A significant minority of scholars, notes White for example, believes that Vyasa lived a few centuries after Patanjali and his "Hindu-izing" commentary subverted Yoga Sutras' original "Buddhist" teachings; while the majority scholarly view disagrees with this view.<sup>[130]</sup>

Other scholars state there are differences between the teachings in the Yoga Sutras and those in Buddhist texts.<sup>[123][124]</sup> Patanjali's Yoga Sutras for example, states Michele Desmarias, accept the concept of a Self or soul behind the operational mind, while Buddhists do not accept such a Self exists. The role of Self is central to the idea of *Samyoga*, *Citta*, Self-awareness and other concepts in Chapters 2 through 4 of the Yoga sutras, according to Desmarias.<sup>[124]</sup>

According to Barbara Miller,<sup>[123]</sup> the difference between Patanjali's Yoga Sutras and teachings in Buddhist texts is, "In Samkhya and Yoga, as in Buddhism and Jainism, the most salient characteristic of existence is *duhkha* or suffering. According to Buddhism, the origin of suffering is desire; according to Yoga, it is the connection between the observer (Purusha) with the observed (Prakrti). In both systems, the origin of *duhkha* is ignorance. There are also similarities in the means of deliverance recommended by the two systems. In Buddhism, the aspirant is asked to follow the eightfold path, which culminates in right meditation or *samadhi*. In Yoga, the aspirant is asked to follow a somewhat different eight fold path, which also culminates in *samadhi*. But the aim of yoga meditation is conceived in terms that a Buddhist would not accept: as the separation of an eternal conscious self from unconscious matter. The purpose of Patanjali's Yoga is to bring about this separation by means of understanding, devotion and practice."<sup>[123]</sup>

Robert Thurman writes that Patanjali was influenced by the success of the Buddhist monastic system to formulate his own matrix for the version of thought he considered orthodox.<sup>[131]</sup> However, it is also to be noted that the Yoga Sutra, especially the fourth segment of Kaivalya Pada, contains several polemical verses critical of Buddhism, particularly the Vijñānavāda school of Vasubandhu.<sup>[132]</sup>

## Jainism

The five yamas or the constraints of the *Yoga Sutras of Patanjali* bear an uncanny resemblance to the five major vows of Jainism, indicating influence of Jainism.<sup>[133][134][135]</sup> Three other teachings closely associated with Jainism also make an appearance in Yoga: the doctrine of "colors" in karma (*lesya*); the *Telos* of isolation (*kevala* in Jainism and Kaivalyam in Yoga); and the practice of nonviolence (*ahimsa*), though nonviolence (*ahimsa*) made its first appearance in Indian philosophy-cum-religion in the Hindu texts known as the Upanishads [the Chāndogya Upaniṣad, dated to

the 8th or 7th century BCE, one of the oldest Upanishads, has the earliest evidence for the use of the word *Ahimsa* in the sense familiar in Hinduism (a code of conduct). It bars violence against "all creatures" (*sarvabhūta*) and the practitioner of Ahimsa is said to escape from the cycle of metempsychosis/reincarnation (CU 8.15.1).<sup>[136]</sup> It also names Ahimsa as one of five essential virtues].<sup>[137]</sup>

## Translations and commentaries

The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali was the most translated ancient Indian text in the medieval era, having been translated into about forty Indian languages and two non-Indian languages: Old Javanese and Arabic.<sup>[4]</sup>

- In early 11th century, the Persian scholar Al Biruni (973-1050 CE) visited India, lived with Hindus for 16 years, and with their help translated several significant Sanskrit works into Arabic and Persian languages. One of these was Patanjali's *Yogasutras*. His translation included the text and a hitherto unknown Sanskrit commentary.<sup>[138][139][140]</sup> Al Biruni's translation preserved many of the core themes of Yoga philosophy of Hinduism, but certain sutras and analytical commentaries were restated making it more consistent with Islamic monotheistic theology.<sup>[139][141]</sup> Al Biruni's version of Yoga Sutras reached Persia and Arabian peninsula by about 1050 AD.
- The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali was translated into Old Javanese by Indonesian Hindus, and the text was called *Dharma Patanjala*.<sup>[142]</sup> The surviving text has been dated to about 1450 CE, however it is unclear if this text is a copy of an earlier translation and whether other translations existed in Indonesia. This translation shares ideas found in other Indian translations particularly those in the Śaiva traditions, and some in Al Biruni translation, but it is also significantly different in parts from the 11th century Arabic translation.<sup>[142]</sup> The most complete copy of the *Dharma Patañjala* manuscript is now held at the Staatsbibliothek in Berlin.<sup>[143]</sup>

By early 21st century, scholars had located 37 editions of Patanjali's Yoga Sutras published between 1874 and 1992, and 82 different manuscripts, from various locations in India, Nepal, Pakistan, Europe and the United States, many in Sanskrit, some in different North and South Indian languages.<sup>[144][145]</sup> The numerous historical variants show that the text was a living document and it was changed as these manuscripts were transmitted or translated, with some ancient and medieval manuscripts marked with "corrections" in the margin of the pages and elsewhere by unknown authors and for unclear reasons. This has made the chronological study of Yoga school of philosophy a difficult task.<sup>[144]</sup>

Many commentaries have been written on the *Yoga Sutras*.<sup>[note 16]</sup>

## Yogabhashya and others

The *Yogabhashya* is a commentary on the *Yoga Sutras of Patañjali* which has traditionally been attributed in the discourse of the tradition to the legendary Vedic sage Vyasa who is said to have composed the Mahabharata. This commentary is indispensable for the understanding of the aphoristic and terse Yoga sutras, and the study of the sutras has always referred to the *Yogabhashya*.<sup>[138]</sup> Some scholars see Vyasa as a later 4th or 5th century CE commentator (as opposed to the ancient mythic figure).<sup>[138]</sup> Other scholars hold that both texts, the sutras and the commentary were written by one person. According to Philipp A. Maas, based on a study of the original manuscripts, Patañjali's composition was entitled *Pātañjalayogaśāstra* ("The Treatise on Yoga according to Patañjali") and consisted of both *Sūtras* and *Bhāṣya*. This means that the *Bhāṣya* was in fact Patañjali's own work.<sup>[10]</sup> The practice of writing a set of aphorisms with the author's own explanation was well-known at the time of Patañjali, as for example in Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* (that, incidentally, Patañjali quotes). These research findings change the historical understanding of the yoga tradition, since they allow us to take the *Bhāṣya* as Patañjali's very own explanation of the meaning of his somewhat cryptic sūtras.<sup>[10][note 17]</sup>

The *Yogabhashya* states that 'yoga' in the *Yoga Sutras* has the meaning of 'samadhi'. Another commentary (the *Vivarana*) by a certain Shankara, confirms the interpretation of *yogah samadhih* (YBh. I.1): 'yoga' in Patañjali's sutra has the meaning of 'integration'.<sup>[146]</sup> This Shankara may or may not have been the famed Vedantic scholar Adi Shankara (8th or 9th century). Scholarly opinion is still open on this issue.<sup>[138]</sup> Another later writer is Vācaspati Miśra (900–980 CE) who composed the commentary *Tattvavaiśārādī* on the sutras.

Other commentaries on the Yoga sutras include:

- Bhoja Raja's *Raja-Martanda*, 11th century.
- Vijnanabhiṣu's *Yogabhashyavarttika* ("Explanation of the Commentary on the Yoga Sutras" of Vyasa). The writer was a Vaishnava philosopher and exegete who tried to harmonize Samkhya and Vedanta and held the Bhedabheda view.<sup>[138]</sup>
- Ramananda Sarasvati's *Yogamani-Prabha* (16th century)
- Swami Hariharananda Aranya's *Bhasvati*

## Modern translations and commentary

Countless commentaries on the *Yoga Sutras* are available today. The *Sutras*, with commentaries, have been published by a number of successful teachers of Yoga, as well as by academicians seeking to clarify issues of textual variation. There are also other versions from a variety of sources available on the Internet.<sup>[note 18]</sup> The many versions display a wide variation, particularly in translation. The text has not been submitted in its entirety to any rigorous textual analysis, and the contextual meaning of many of the Sanskrit words and phrases remains a matter of some dispute.<sup>[147]</sup> Some modern translations and interpretations are:

- Ganganath Jha (1907) rendered a version of the *Yoga Sutras* with the *Yogabhashya* attributed to Vyasa into English in its entirety.<sup>[148]</sup> This version of Jha's also include notes drawn from Vācaspati Miśra's *Tattvavaiśārādī* amongst other important texts in the Yoga commentarial tradition.
- *Raja Yoga* - an 1896 book by Swami Vivekananda which provides translation and an in-depth explanation of *Yoga Sutra*.
- *The Science of Yoga* - a 1961 book by I.K. Taimni which provides commentary with Sutras in Sanskrit and translation and commentary in English.<sup>[149]</sup> An online version is available.<sup>[150]</sup>
- Barbara Stoler Miller, *The Yoga Sutras Attributed to Patanjali; "Yoga – Discipline of Freedom*. University of California Press, Berkeley, 1996.
- Swami Satchidananda, *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*. Integral Yoga, Yogaville.
- Swami Prabhavananda, *Patanjali Yoga Sutras*, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, India.
- B. K. S. Iyengar's *Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patañjali*
- Edwin F. Bryant's *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali: A New Edition, Translation, and Commentary*
- Georg Feuerstein PHD, *The Yoga-Sūtra of Patanjali: A New Translation and Commentary*, Inner Traditions International; Rochester, Vermont, 1989.
- Swami Kriyananda, *Demystifying Patanjali: The Yoga Sutras - The Wisdom of Paramhansa Yogananda*. Crystal Clarity Publishers, Nevada City, CA, 2013.
- Charles Johnston Dublin University, Sanskrit Prizeman: *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali: The Book of the Spiritual Man*, 1912.

## Influence

### Indian traditions

Patañjali was not the first to write about yoga.<sup>[151]</sup> Much about yoga is written in the Mokṣadharma section of the epic *Mahābhārata*. The members of the Jaina faith had their own, different literature on yoga,<sup>[152]</sup> and Buddhist yoga stems from pre-Patanjali sources.<sup>[153]</sup>

Some of the major commentaries on the *Yoga Sutras* were written between the ninth and sixteenth century.<sup>[154]</sup> After the twelfth century, the school started to decline, and commentaries on Patanjali's Yoga philosophy were few.<sup>[154]</sup> By the sixteenth century Patanjali's Yoga philosophy had virtually become extinct.<sup>[154]</sup> The manuscript of the *Yoga Sutras* was no longer copied, since few read the text, and it was seldom taught.<sup>[155]</sup>

Popular interest arose in the 19th century, when the practice of yoga according to the *Yoga Sutras* became regarded as the science of yoga and the "supreme contemplative path to self-realization" by Swami Vivekananda, following Helena Blavatsky, president of the Theosophical Society.<sup>[156]</sup>

## Western interest

According to David Gordon White, the popularity of the *Yoga Sutras* is recent, "miraculously rehabilitated" by Swami Vivekananda after having been ignored for seven centuries.<sup>[4]</sup> It was with the rediscovery by a British Orientalist in the early 1800s that wider interest in the *Yoga Sutras* arose in the West.<sup>[155]</sup> It has become a celebrated text in the West, states White, because of "Big Yoga – the corporate yoga subculture".<sup>[4]</sup>

## See also

- Patanjali
- Samkhya

## Notes

- Radhakrishnan and Moore attribute the text to the grammarian Patañjali, dating it as 2nd century BCE, during the Maurya Empire (322–185 BCE): see Radhakrishnan and Moore, p. 453. Scholars such as S.N. Dasgupta, (*Yoga-As Philosophy and Religion* Port Washington: Kennikat Press, 1924) claim this is the same Patañjali who authored the Mahabhasya, a treatise on Sanskrit grammar. For an argument about the philosophical nature of Sanskrit grammarian thought see: Lata, Bidyut (editor); *Panini to Patañjali: A Grammatical March*. New Delhi, 2004. Against these older views, Axel Michaels disagrees that the work was written by Patañjali, characterizing it instead as a collection of fragments and traditions of texts stemming from the 2nd or 3rd century: see Michaels, p. 267.
- See Eddie Crangle (1984), *Hindu and Buddhist techniques of Attaining Samadhi* ([https://www.ahandfulofleaves.org/documents/Articles/A%20Comparison%20of%20Hindu%20and%20Buddhist%20Techniques%20of%20Attainin%20Samadhi\\_Crangle\\_1984.pdf](https://www.ahandfulofleaves.org/documents/Articles/A%20Comparison%20of%20Hindu%20and%20Buddhist%20Techniques%20of%20Attainin%20Samadhi_Crangle_1984.pdf))
- The seeds or samskaras are not destroyed.<sup>[web 3]</sup>
- According to Jianxin Li *Samprajnata Samadhi* may be compared to the *rupa jhanas* of Buddhism.<sup>[72]</sup> This interpretation may conflict with Gombrich and Wynne, according to whom the first and second *jhana* represent concentration, whereas the third and fourth *jhana* combine concentration with mindfulness.<sup>[73]</sup> According to Eddie Crangle, the first *jhana* resembles Patanjali's *Samprajnata Samadhi*, which both share the application of *vitarka* and *vicara*.<sup>[74]</sup>
- Yoga Sutra 1.17: "Objective *samadhi* (samprajnata) is associated with deliberation, reflection, bliss, and I-am-ness (*asmita*)."<sup>[76]</sup>
- Yoga Sutra 1.42: "Deliberative (*savitarka*) *samapatti* is that *samadhi* in which words, objects, and knowledge are commingled through conceptualization."<sup>[75]</sup>
- Yoga Sutra 1.43: "When memory is purified, the mind appears to be emptied of its own nature and only the object shines forth. This is superdeliberative (*nirvitaka*) *samapatti*."<sup>[79]</sup>
- Following Yoga Sutra 1.17, meditation on the sense of "I-am-ness" is also grouped, in other descriptions, as "sasmita samapatti"
- Yoga Sutra 1.44: "In this way, reflective (*savichara*) and super-reflective (*nirvichara*) *samapatti*, which are based on subtle objects, are also explained."<sup>[78]</sup>
- See also Pṛti
- Without seeds or Samskaras<sup>[web 1]</sup> According to Swami Sivananda, "All the seeds or impressions are burnt by the fire of knowledge [...] all the Samskaras and Vasanas which bring on rebirths are totally fried up. All Vrittis or mental modifications that arise from the mind-lake come under restraint. The five afflictions, viz., Avidya (ignorance), Asmita (egoism), Raga-dvesha (love and hatred) and Abhinivesha (clinging to life) are destroyed and the bonds of Karma are annihilated [...] It gives Moksha (deliverance from the wheel of births and deaths). With the advent of the knowledge of the Self, ignorance vanishes. With the disappearance of the root-cause, viz., ignorance, egoism, etc., also disappear."<sup>[web 1]</sup>
- According to Jianxin Li, *Asamprajnata Samadhi* may be compared to the *arupa jhanas* of Buddhism, and to *Nirodha-Samapatti*.<sup>[72]</sup> Crangle also notes that *sabija-asamprajnata samadhi* resembles the four formless *jhanas*.<sup>[74]</sup> According to Crangle, the fourth *arupa jhana* is the stage of transition to Patanjali's "consciousness without seed".<sup>[80]</sup>

13. Zimmer: "[Jainism] does not derive from Brahman-Aryan sources, but reflects the cosmology and anthropology of a much older pre-Aryan upper class of northeastern India - being rooted in the same subsoil of archaic metaphysical speculation as Yoga, Sankhya, and Buddhism, the other non-Vedic Indian systems."<sup>[108]</sup>
14. Zimmer's point of view is supported by other scholars, such as Niniam Smart, in *Doctrine and argument in Indian Philosophy*, 1964, p.27-32 & p.76,<sup>[109]</sup> and S.K. Belvakar & R.D. Ranade in *History of Indian philosophy*, 1974 (1927), p.81 & p.303-409.<sup>[109]</sup> See Crangle 1994 page 5-7.<sup>[110]</sup>
15. Zimmer (1951), p. 280. These two are regarded in India as twins, the two aspects of a single discipline. *Sāṅkhya* provides a basic theoretical exposition of human nature, enumerating and defining its elements, analyzing their manner of co-operation in a state of bondage ("**bandha**"), and describing their state of disentanglement or separation in release ("**mokṣa**"), while Yoga treats specifically of the dynamics of the process for the disentanglement, and outlines practical techniques for the gaining of release, or "isolation-integration" ("kaivalya").
16. For an overview of the scope of earlier commentaries: *Complete Commentary by Sankara on the Yoga Sutras: Vivarana Sub-commentary to Vyasaḥśya on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali Tr.fr. Sanskrit*, Trevor Leggett, Rev. Ed. Routledge (1990) ISBN 978-0-7103-0277-9.
17. See James Woods, *The yoga-system of Patañjali; or, The ancient Hindu doctrine of concentration of mind, embracing the mnemonic rules, called Yoga-sutras, of Patañjali, and the comment, called Yoga-bhashya (1914)*, archive.org (<https://archive.org/details/yogasystemofpata00wooduoft>) for a complete translation
18. A list of 22 Classical commentaries can be found among the listings of essential Yoga texts at mantra.org) Mantra.org.in, Fundamental Texts of Yoga ([http://www.mantra.org.in/yoga/myweb/fundamental\\_texts\\_of\\_yoga.htm](http://www.mantra.org.in/yoga/myweb/fundamental_texts_of_yoga.htm))

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## External links

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- Works by Patañjali (<https://www.gutenberg.org/author/Patañjali>) at Project Gutenberg
- Works by or about Yoga Sutras of Patanjali (<https://archive.org/search.php?query=%28Patanjali+OR+Patañjali%29>) at Internet Archive

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### Commentaries

- [Patañjali - Yoga-Sutras: A word by word translation with grammar and comment](https://web.archive.org/web/20120202032732/http://www.ashtangayoga.info/philosophy/yoga-sutra-Pata%C3%B1jali/) (<https://web.archive.org/web/20120202032732/http://www.ashtangayoga.info/philosophy/yoga-sutra-Pata%C3%B1jali/>)
- *The Yoga Sutras of Patañjali: the Book of the Spiritual Man by Patañjali* (<http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/2526>), an interpretation by Charles Johnston, at Project Gutenberg
- *The Yoga Sutras of Patañjali* by Charles Johnston ([https://web.archive.org/web/20150402101645/http://read.libripass.com/charles\\_johnston-the\\_yoga\\_sutras\\_of\\_patanjali.htm](https://web.archive.org/web/20150402101645/http://read.libripass.com/charles_johnston-the_yoga_sutras_of_patanjali.htm)). Read Online at LibriPass (<http://www.libripass.com>)
- Audio lectures on the *Yoga Sutras* (<https://archive.org/details/PatañjaliYogaSutrasswamiHarshanananda>), by Swami Harshananda, at archive.org
- *Yoga Sutras* Online Program (<http://www.yogasutrasonline.net>) by A. G. Mohan
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