

About

Yoga Sutra Study Group

Even though yoga has been mentioned in various ancient texts, including the Vedas, Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita etc, the credit for putting together a formal, cohesive philosophy of yoga goes to Sage Patanjali. In his Yoga Sutras, Patanjali has provided the very essence of the philosophy and teachings of yoga in a highly scientific and systematic exposition. The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali (YSP) form the basis for one of the six Hindu schools of philosophy (or 'shad-darshana,' literally six philosophies) and are a very important milestone in the history of Yoga. The book is a set of 195 aphorisms (sutras), which are short, terse phrases designed to be easy to memorize. Though brief, the Yoga Sutras are an enormously influential work that is just as relevant for yoga philosophy and practice today as it was when it was written.

In an effort to understand the underlying philosophy of the YSP, we started a Yoga Sutra Study Group in August, 2007. The SG meets on the second and fourth Saturday of each month. In the first go-round, we discussed the English translation of each sutra by various commentators (Taimni, Sw. Satchidananda, Sw. Vivekananda, Sw. Prabhavananda, Sw. Satyananda, Sw. Veda Bharati, Aranya, Karambelkar, Dvivedi, Rama Prasada, Jagannath Carrera, Vyaas Houston, Barbara Miller Stoler, and Georg Feurstein) and tried to understand the sutras by ourselves without referring to the detailed commentary by any of the authors.

At the completion of that round, which took a little over one year, we decided to continue with the discussion sessions and start from the beginning by studying the commentary by two authors in detail. We picked one author from the classical school, based on the commentary by Vyasa and one with a more modern, scientific, approach. For the former, we picked the commentary by Hariharananda Aranya and for the latter, Taimni. In this blog, we are presenting a summary of these discussions.

The activities of the study group are being co-ordinated by **Subhash Mittal**.