

**UW-Madison ILL Lending (GZM)**

728 State Street / Madison, WI 53706



**GZM TN: 3096681**

**Borrower:** NJR

**Lending String:**

\*GZM,IUL,MNU,UIU,UPM,EEM,ZIH,DR  
B,PTS

**Patron:**

**Journal Title:** Contemplative literature :  
a comparative sourcebook on  
meditation and contemplative prayer /

**Volume:** **Issue:**

**Month/Year:** 2015 **Pages:** ????

**Article Author:**

**Article Title:** edwin bryant: Hindu  
Classical Yoga: Patanjali's Yoga  
Sutras."

**OCLC Number:** 908553267

**ILL # -** 185549937



**Location:** Mem

**Call #:** BL625 .C663 2015

**Request Date:** 20180207

**MaxCost:** 25.00IFM

**Billing Category:**

**Shipping Address:**

INTERLIBRARY LOAN  
SERVICES/ALEXANDER LIBRARY/RUTGERS  
UNIVERSITY/169 COLLEGE AVE./NEW  
BRUNSWICK, NJ 08901-1163

**Borrowing Notes:** Borrowing Notes: Our  
patron is requesting a chapter from this item,  
please do not send book. Thank you! The  
ODYSSEY address is 128.6.218.91 FEIN # =  
FI226001086 (maxCost: \$25.00)

**Copyright Compliance:** CCG

**ODYSSEY**

This material may be protected by copyright law (Title 17 U.S. Code).

## Chapter 10

# Hindu Classical Yoga

## Patañjali's *Yoga Sūtras*

*Edwin F. Bryant*

A text of unclear provenance, the *Yoga Sūtras* (Yoga Aphorisms; abbr. YS) is a Sanskrit text on classical Yoga. Originally written in Sanskrit, the text was composed by Patañjali, an obscure figure who probably lived during the first or second century CE and who became identified in later times as the founder of the “Yoga school.” In the *Yoga Sūtras*, Patañjali describes a fairly systematic process of meditative discipline aimed at liberation (*mokṣa*) through the purification of consciousness, perhaps most famously expressed as the “eight limbs” (*aṣṭāṅga*). Based on the various preconditions and religious commitments for the practice, the text appears to be addressed to Hindu ascetics and renunciants.

### Patañjali and Second-Century-CE Hinduism

Patañjali (ca. 1st–2nd c. CE) was the compiler of the *Yoga Sūtras*, one of the ancient treatises on Indic thought that eventually came to be regarded as the basis of the “Yoga school,” one of the “six classical schools of Indian ‘philosophy.’”<sup>1</sup> Patañjali presents a teaching that focuses on realization of *puruṣa*—the term favored by the Yoga school<sup>2</sup> to refer to the innermost conscious self, loosely equivalent to the soul in Western Greco-Abrahamic traditions. This school emerged from the sixth century BCE as perhaps the most important development in post-Vedic India and has exerted immense influence over the philosophical directions and religious practices of what has come to be known as mainstream “Hinduism,”<sup>3</sup> both in its dominant forms in India and in its most common exported and repackaged forms visible in the West. Accordingly, Patañjali's *Yoga Sūtras* is one of the most important classical texts in Hinduism and thus a “classic” of so-called “Eastern,” and therefore world, thought.

As with the reputed founders of the other schools of thought, very little is known about Patañjali himself. Tradition, first evidenced in the commentary of Bhoja Rāja in the eleventh century CE, considers him to be the same Patañjali who wrote the primary commentary on the famous grammar by Pāṇini and also ascribes to him authorship of a treatise on medicine. There is an ongoing discussion among scholars as to whether this was likely or not.<sup>4</sup> My own view is that there is not much to be gained by challenging the evidence of traditional accounts in the absence of alternative evidence to the contrary, especially evidence that is uncontroversial or at least adequately compelling. Other than this, a verse surfacing in the eleventh-century commentary of king Bhoja identifies Patañjali as an incarnation of *śeṣa*, a manifestation of the Supreme God Viṣṇu in the form of a cosmic serpent. In sum, we lack information on both the historical Patañjali and the provenance of the *Yoga Sūtras* attributed to him.

Patañjali's date can only be inferred from the content and context of the text itself. Unfortunately, as with most classical Sanskrit texts from the ancient period, early Sanskrit texts tend to be impossible to date with accuracy, and there are always dissenters against whatever dates become standard in academic circles. Most scholars seem to date the text shortly after the turn of the Common Era, around the first to second centuries CE, but it has also been placed as early as several centuries before the Common Era (see Larson and Bhattacharya 2008). Other than the fact that the text does not postdate the fifth century CE, the date of the *Yoga Sūtras* cannot be determined with exactitude. By the ninth century CE at the latest,<sup>5</sup> Yoga, as a tradition stemming from Patañjali's *Yoga Sūtras*, is situated as one of the "six schools of philosophy" and retained that status thereafter.

## Yoga and the "Yoga School"

In terms of *yoga's* origins, the Vedic period (1500–1200 BCE) is the earliest era in South Asia for which we have written records, and it provides the matrix from which later religious, philosophical, and spiritual expressions such as the "Yoga school" evolved in India, at least in the northern part of the subcontinent. *Yoga* evolved on the periphery of Vedic religiosity and beyond the parameters of mainstream Vedic orthopraxy. It is clearly in tension with Vedic (Brāhmanical) ritualism,<sup>6</sup> and its goals are in stark and explicit opposition to it (e.g., YS I.15–16).

Like other old world cultures, the dominant religious expression in the early Vedic period within which Yoga emerged was that of the sacrificial cult wherein animals and other items were offered to various gods through the medium of fire. One of the purposes of these rituals involved obtaining worldly boons such as offspring, cattle, victory over enemies, and so forth. While the intricacies of the Vedic sacrificial rite may seem alien to modern worldviews and practices, the mentality that supported it, what one may call materialistic religiosity—attempting to cajole or solicit higher powers for the purpose of receiving boons ultimately aimed at enjoying the pleasures of the material world through the medium of the sensual body—has remained constant throughout human history. It is for this reason that the post-Vedic reactions to this type of mentality, in the form of developments such as the various systems of *yoga*, remain perennially relevant to the human condition.

There is evidence as early as the oldest Vedic text, the *Rg Veda*, of a long-haired ascetic (X.136), indicating that there were *yogī*-like ascetics on the margins of the Vedic landscape. However, it is



Figure 10.1. Harappan Seal  
Mohenjo-daro (Sindh, Pakistan)<sup>7</sup>

Source: J. M. Kenoyer/Harappa.com and Department of Archaeology and Museums,  
Government of Pakistan

in the late Vedic age, marked by the fertile speculations expressed in a genre of texts called the *Upaniṣads*, that practices that can be clearly related to classical Yoga are first explicitly expressed in literary sources (Bryant 2009, xixff.). The *Upaniṣads* reveal a clear shift in focus away from the sacrificial rite, which is relegated to an inferior type of religiosity, replacing it with an interest in philosophical and mystical discourse, particularly the quest for the ultimate, underlying reality, Brahman, underpinning the external world, which is localized in living beings as *ātman*.<sup>8</sup> While the *Upaniṣads* are especially concerned with *jñāna*, or understanding Brahman, the Ultimate Reality, through the cultivation of knowledge, there are also several unmistakable references, especially in the *Katha Upaniṣad* and *Svetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, to a technique for realizing Brahman (in its localized aspect of *ātman*) called *yoga*. These are clearly drawn from the same general body of related practices as those articulated by Patañjali.<sup>9</sup> By the later (but pre-Patañjala) *Maitrī Upaniṣad*, we have a much more extensive discussion of *yoga*, including more specific references of the six *āṅgas* or “limbs” of *yoga*: Five of these “limbs” correspond precisely to the last five limbs of Patañjali’s system (see YS II).<sup>10</sup>

The *Mahābhārata* (Tale of the Great Bhārata Dynasty), which culminates in one hundred thousand verses,<sup>11</sup> is the largest literary epic in the world, and, like the *Maitrī Upaniṣad*, preserves significant material representing the evolution of *yoga*. Usually dated somewhere between the ninth and fourth centuries BCE, this epic exemplifies the transition between the origins of *yoga* in the Upaniṣadic period (ca. 8th–4th c. BCE) and its expression in the systematized tradition of Yoga as represented by Patañjali.<sup>12</sup> Nestled in the middle of the epic, the well-known *Bhagavad Gītā* (Song of the Lord; ca. 4th c. BCE), devotes a good portion of its bulk to the practices of *yoga*, which it considers to be “ancient” (IV.3); indeed, Kṛṣṇa presents himself as reestablishing teachings that had existed since primordial times. While the *Gītā* tends to use the term *yoga* as synonymous with *karma yoga*, the discipline of action, the techniques of Patañjalian-type *yoga* are outlined throughout the entire sixth chapter, albeit subsumed under devotion to Kṛṣṇa. The *Gītā* refers to this type of practice as *dhyāna yoga*, the discipline of meditation,<sup>13</sup> as did most early Indic texts.

While a comprehensive discussion of the references to *yoga* in the larger *Mahābhārata* is beyond the scope of this chapter, there are a number of references to practices that are clearly relatable to the system of Yoga as taught by Patañjali. Most of these appear in the *mokṣadharmā* section of book 12. The terms *yoga* and *yogī* occur about nine hundred times throughout the epic, expressed, as noted previously, in terms midway between the unformulated expressions of the *Upaniṣads* and the systematized practice as outlined by Patañjali. This, of course, indicates that practices associated with *yoga* had gained wide currency in the centuries prior to the Common Era, with a clearly identifiable set of basic techniques and generic practices, and it is from these that Patañjali drew for his systemization. For example, scholars have long pointed out a commonality of vocabulary and concepts between the *Yoga Sūtras* and Buddhist texts (see Larson and Bhattacharya 2008, 37ff.). All this underscores the basic point that there was a cluster of numerous, interconnected, and cross-fertilizing variants of meditational *yoga*, Buddhist and Jain as well as Hindu, prior to Patañjali. All of these drew from a common but variegated pool of terminologies, practices, and concepts (and indeed, many strains continue to the present day). One might envision a plethora of centers of learning and practice, spearheaded by charismatic renunciants, where parallel and overlapping philosophical doctrines and meditative practices, many going by the name of *yoga*, were evolving out of a common Upaniṣadic-flavored core.

The history of Yoga is inextricable from that of the Sāṃkhya tradition, one of the so-called “six schools” (see Bryant 2009, xxvff.). As discussed in more detail later, Sāṃkhya provides the metaphysical infrastructure for Yoga and thus is indispensable for understanding of Yoga. Usually translated as “enumeration” or “counting” due to its focus on the evolution and constituents of the twenty-four ingredients of *prakṛti*, material reality, Sāṃkhya might best be taken as the path striving to understand the ultimate truths of reality through knowledge, typically known as *jñāna yoga*, while Yoga focused on practice. Sāṃkhya seems to have been perhaps the earliest philosophical system to have taken shape in the late Vedic period, and, indeed, it has permeated almost all subsequent Hindu traditions: Vedānta, Purāṇa, Vaiṣṇava, Śaiva, Śakta, and even the medicinal traditions such as Āyurveda. Indeed some scholars see the classical Yoga of Patañjali as a type of neo-Sāṃkhya, updating the old Sāṃkhya tradition to bring it into conversation with the more technical philosophical traditions that emerged by the third to fifth centuries CE, most particularly Buddhist thought (see Larson and Bhattacharya 2008, 43ff.). Sāṃkhya and Yoga should not be considered different “schools” until very much later. In fact, the first reference to

Yoga itself as a distinct school seems to be the writings of Śaṅkara<sup>14</sup> in the ninth century CE. Their difference is not in metaphysics, ethics, or soteriology but in method: the terms *yoga* and *sāṁkhya* in the *Upaniṣads* and *Mahābhārata* simply refer to the two distinct paths of liberation through meditation and liberation through knowledge, respectively, rather than to distinct schools. The chief difference in the trajectory that Yoga took was its exclusive focus on the psychological mechanisms and techniques involved in *puruṣa*'s liberation (*mokṣa*), or more technically "perfect solitude" and "complete detachment" (*kaivalya*). Similarly Sāṁkhya concerned itself with the specificities of *prakṛti*'s ingredients, from which *puruṣa* was to be extricated.

We might note that *yoga* has been popularly translated as "union with the divine" and may refer to a number of different spiritual systems. The well-known *Bhagavad Gītā*, for example, discusses a number of practices that have been termed *yoga* in popular literature: *karma yoga* (*buddhi yoga*), the path of action; *jñāna yoga* (Sāṁkhya), the path of knowledge; *bhakti yoga*, the path of devotion; and *dhyāna yoga*, the path of silent meditation, the latter of which is the subject of Patañjali's text.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, terms such as *tantric yoga*, *siddhi yoga*, *nāḍa yoga*, and so forth, are now common in alternative spiritualities in the West. Typically, however, when the word is used by itself without any qualification, *yoga* refers to the path of meditation aimed at liberation, particularly as exemplified in the *Yoga Sūtras*, while the term *yogī* refers to a practitioner of this type of meditational *yoga*.

In addition to various "heterodox schools" such as Jainism and Buddhism, what came to be identified (in much later times) as six schools of orthodox thought<sup>16</sup> also eventually evolved out of the Upaniṣadic period.<sup>17</sup> (Of course, there were various other streams of thought, which did not gain this status but have nonetheless emerged as significant presences on the religious landscape of Hinduism.) They shared much of their overall worldview but dedicated themselves to different areas of human knowledge and praxis. While differing considerably on metaphysical and epistemological issues, they nonetheless did not necessarily reject the authority of the other traditions in other specific areas, especially where these did not conflict with their own positions. For example, the Nyāya (Logician) school accepts Yoga as the method to be used to realize the *ātman* as understood within that tradition (*Nyāya Sūtras* IV.2.42), and Vedānta primarily only objects to it to the extent that it does not accept Brahman as the ultimate source of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*, not to its authenticity in meditative technique and practice (*Vedānta Sūtras* II.1.3 and commentaries). Thus, rather than a distinct school, prior to the second millennium, *yoga* referred, first and foremost, to a form of rigorous discipline and concentration for attaining liberation that was appropriated and tailored by different traditions according to their metaphysical understanding of the Self.

In any event, eventually an "orthodox school" of Yoga came to be identified with Patañjali, the compiler of these *Yoga Sūtras*. It took its place alongside other traditions that also had distinct *sūtra* traditions and became one of the "six schools of Indian philosophy" (see Nicholson 2011). These are Sāṁkhya, Yoga, Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, Mīmāṃsā, and Vedānta.<sup>18</sup> These schools were deemed "orthodox" because they retained at least a nominal allegiance to the sacred Vedic texts; this stands in contrast to the "heterodox schools" such as Buddhism and Jainism that rejected them.

Indic schools, both "orthodox" and "heterodox," interacted intellectually and sometimes polemically, both debating and mutually enriching each other, and their emergence pushed the old Vedic cult further into the background. From this rich and fertile post-Vedic context, then,

emerged an individual called Patañjali whose systematization of the heterogeneous practices of *yoga* came to become the standard canon for all subsequent practitioners; this system eventually became reified into one of the six schools of classical Indian philosophy. Here it is important to stress again that Patañjali is not the founder, or inventor, of *yoga*, the origins of which had long preceded him in primordial and mythic times. Patañjali systematized and authored what came to be the seminal text for *yoga* discipline from preexisting traditions. There was never one uniform school or Ur-Yoga (or of any Indic school of thought for that matter): there were a plurality of variants and certainly different conceptualizations of meditative practices that were termed *yoga*. For example, while Patañjali organized his system into eight limbs, the *Mahābhārata* also speaks of *yoga* as having eight “qualities” (*aṣṭaguṇita*; XII.304.7). Similarly, as early as in the *Maitrī Upaniṣad* of the second century BCE, there is reference to a six-limbed *yoga* (VI.18), as there is in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa* (VI.7.91). *Yoga* is thus best understood as a cluster of techniques, some more and some less systematized, that pervaded the landscape of ancient India. These overlapped and were incorporated into the various traditions of the day, providing these systems with a practical method and technique for attaining an experience-based transformation of consciousness. However, in short, because he produced the first systematized treatise on the subject, Patañjali was to become the prime or seminal figure for the *Yoga* tradition after his times and accepted as such by other schools. For all intents and purposes, his *Yoga Sūtras* were to become the canon for the mechanics of generic *yoga*, so to speak, that other systems often adopted and then tinkered with and flavored with their own theological trappings. As discussed in more detail later, the fundamental characteristic of this practice involved meditative discipline aimed at liberation.

The *sūtra* writing style of the *Yoga Sūtras* is that used by the philosophical schools of ancient India, as evidenced in the *Vedānta Sūtras*, *Nyāya Sūtras*, and so forth. The term *sūtra*, from the Sanskrit root *sū*, and cognate with “sew,” literally means a thread. It essentially refers to a terse and pithy philosophical statement in which the maximum amount of information is packed into the minimum amount of words. Knowledge systems were handed down orally in ancient India, and thus source material was kept minimalistic partly with a view to facilitating memorization. Being composed for oral transmission and memorization, the *Yoga Sūtras*, and *sūtra* traditions in general, allowed the student to “thread together” in memory the key ingredients of the more extensive body of material with which the student would eventually become thoroughly acquainted. Each *sūtra* served as a mnemonic device to structure the teachings and facilitate memorization, almost like a bullet point that would then be elaborated upon.

This very succinctness—the *Yoga Sūtras* contain about 1,200 words in 195 *sūtras*—indicates that the text was composed as a manual requiring unpacking. That the *sūtras*, or aphorisms, are in places cryptic, esoteric, and incomprehensible in their own terms points to the fact that they served as a manual to be used in conjunction with a teacher. Thus, while some of the *sūtras* are somewhat straightforward, the fact is that we cannot construe meaning for many *sūtras* from Patañjali’s primary text. *Sūtras* such as I.17 are so obtuse that they are undecipherable in their own terms, and thus the text of the *Yoga Sūtras* requires commentaries, which are discussed later in this chapter. Thus, when we speak of the “*Yoga* school” we refer to Patañjali’s *Yoga Sūtras* and the earliest commentary of Vyāsa, which always accompanies any study of the *sūtras*, along with other primary commentaries of the premodern era.

## Classical Yoga as Hindu Soteriological System

Although situated as a work of the “Yoga school,” one of (what later came to be known as) the six schools of classical Hindu philosophy, Patañjali’s *Yoga Sūtras* is not so much a philosophical treatise as instructions on a psychosomatic technique of meditative practice. As a dualistic system that presupposes an ultimate and absolute distinction between matter and consciousness, it is concerned with presenting a psychology of mind and an understanding of human consciousness, along with a method of experiencing consciousness in its pure, unadulterated, and non-intentional potential, rather than with a metaphysics of manifest reality. In actuality, Patañjali’s text reads more like a manual for the practitioner interested in plumbing the depths of human consciousness than a philosophical exposition on metaphysics.

To realize pure unchanging awareness as an entity distinct and autonomous from the mind (and, of course, body), thought must be stilled and consciousness extracted from its embroilment with the mind and its incessant thinking nature. The process to accomplish this is classical Yoga. More specifically, *yoga* entails concentrating the mind on one object without deviation, and it is this stilling of the mind that is classical Yoga.

So why might individuals take up the practice of this type of meditation? When not in its pure state, the soul (*ātman*), the actual source of consciousness or being, is mistaken to be the mind and body, which is animated by its presence (YS II.5). Consciousness is therefore identified with the experiences of the body and mind—birth, death, rebirth, disease, old age, distress, anxiety, and so on—even though these are merely transformations occurring in the inanimate and external body and mind encompassing it and therefore unconnected with consciousness. They are nothing other than the permutations of gross and subtle matter external to and enveloping the soul that are pervaded by the soul’s awareness. Misidentifying with these permutations, the self (that is, the mind animated by consciousness) is thereby afflicted by suffering as a result of considering itself to be subject to birth and death, insecurity and stress, and so forth, and it is this misidentification, or ignorance, that is the root of bondage to the world and its consequent suffering (YS II.5–15). Yoga is therefore ultimately geared toward freeing consciousness from suffering (YS II.16), which is inherent in embodied life (perpetuated by incessant rebirth)<sup>19</sup> and is even defined as such in some ancient texts (e.g., *Vaiśeṣika Sūtras* V.2.16). The Vedānta tradition goes a step further and states that bliss is inherent in the soul (*Vedānta Sūtras* I.1.12), and therefore, since the soul is eternal, once awareness resituates itself in its own nature, it attains a state of eternal beatific bliss. The latter far surpasses any temporary pleasures that might be attained through the material body and mind.

While the notion of a distinction between the material body and a conscious soul has a well-known history in Western Greco-Hellenistic and Abrahamic religion and thought, Yoga, as with other strains of Indic thought, differs from most comparable Western schools of dualism by regarding not just the physical body but the mind, ego, and all cognitive functions as also belonging to the realm of inert matter. It is imperative to absorb this essential and prerequisite metaphysical presupposition of Yogic (and, for that matter, much, but not all Indic) thought in order to understand the basics of Yoga. The dualism fundamental to Platonic or Aristotelian thought, or to Paul of Tarsus (ca. 5–ca. 67) or Augustine of Hippo (354–430), is not at all the dualism of Yoga. Perhaps René Descartes (1596–1650) most famously represents the generic



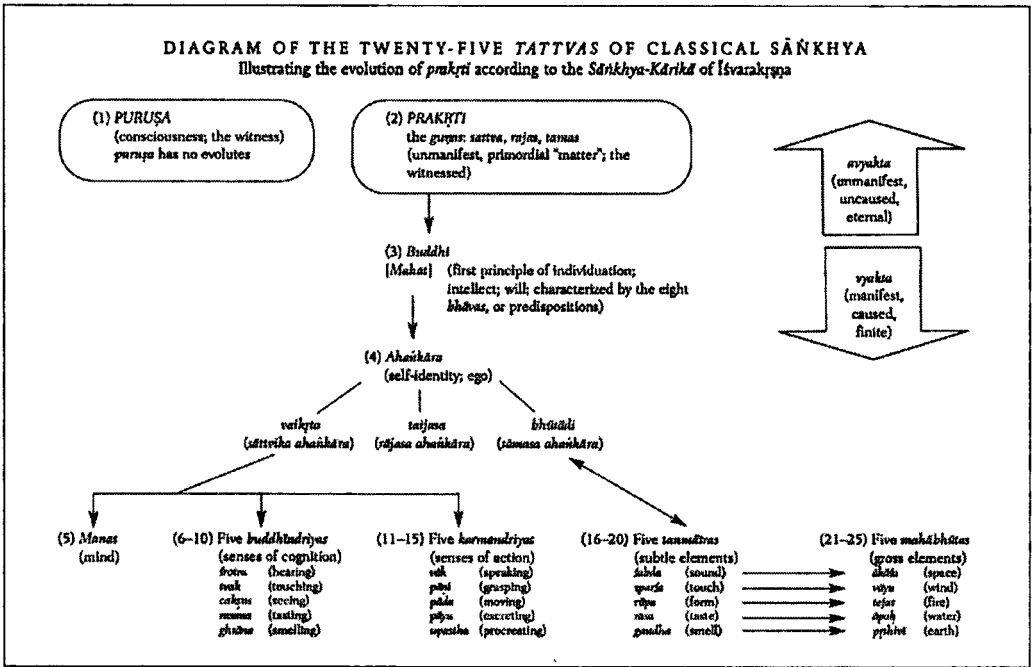


Figure 10.2. Classical Sāṅkhya and Yoga Psychology  
 Source: Larson 1979

Western notions of the dualism between self and body in his *Meditationes de prima philosophia* (*Meditations on First Philosophy*; dat. 1641): the self thinks and lacks extension, while the body is unthinking and extended. In other words, there are two types of realities in classical Western dualism: physical reality, which is extended in space and empirically perceivable, and mental reality, which does not have spatial extension and is not empirically perceivable but private.

In the Yoga tradition, the dualism is not between the material body and physical reality on one hand, and mental reality characterized by thought on the other. Rather, the dualism of Yoga is between pure awareness, on one hand, and all objects of awareness, on the other—regardless of whether these objects are physical and extended or internal and non-extended. In other words, in Sāṅkhya and Yoga, thought, feeling, emotion, memory, and so forth, are as material or physical as the visible ingredients of the empirical world. Pure consciousness, called *puruṣa* in this system, animates and pervades the incessant fluctuations of thought—the inner turmoil of fears, emotions, cravings—but the two are completely distinct entities.

There is thus a radical distinction between the mind, which is considered to be very subtle but nonetheless inanimate matter, and pure consciousness, which is the actual conscious animate life force. Animated by consciousness, it is the mind that imagines itself to be the real self rather than a material entity external to consciousness. The mind is therefore the seat of ignorance and bondage; *puruṣa*, in contrast, is “witness, free, indifferent, a spectator and

inactive” (*Sāṃkhya Kārikā* XIX). Therefore, while the goal of the entire classical Yoga system, and of Hindu and Jain soteriological (liberation-seeking) thought in general, is to extricate pure consciousness from its embroilment with both the internal workings of the mind as well as the external senses of the body, in fact, “No one is actually either bound or liberated, nor does anyone transmigrate; it is only *prakṛti* in its various manifestations who is bound, transmigrates, and is released” (*Sāṃkhya Kārikā* LXII). *Puruṣa* is eternal and therefore not subject to changes such as bondage and liberation;<sup>20</sup> in the Yoga tradition, the quest for liberation, in other words human agency, is a function of the prakṛtic mind, called *citta* in the *Yoga Sūtras*, not of *puruṣa*. Yoga claims to provide a system by which the practitioner can directly realize his or her *puruṣa*, the soul, or innermost conscious self, through mental practices. Put differently, the enlightened *citta* realizes that the source of its own animation is not inherent within or stemming from itself but radiating from a conscious entity more subtle than and beyond itself. Just as “ignorance” (*avidyā*) is the mind considering itself to be the ultimate entity, and this causes saṃsāric bondage, so “enlightenment” is the same mind realizing that consciousness is a metaphysically distinct entity beyond itself with which it is confusing itself. The mind thus determines that if it is to transcend its suffering, it has to remove itself, so to speak, from distracting consciousness. It does so by stilling all its activities through concentrating on one object without deviation.

The *citta* can profitably be compared to the software, and the body to the hardware. Neither is “conscious” but rather forms of matter, even though the former can do very intelligent activities. Both software and hardware are useless without the presence of a conscious observer. Only *puruṣa* is truly “alive,” that is, aware or conscious. When uncoupled from the mind, the soul, *puruṣa*, in its “pure state,” that is, in its own constitutional autonomous condition untainted by being misidentified with the physical coverings of the body and mind, is free of content and changeless; it does not constantly ramble and flit from one thing to another in the way the mind does. To realize pure awareness as an entity distinct and autonomous from the mind (and, of course, body), thought must be stilled and consciousness extracted from its embroilment with the mind and its incessant thinking nature. Only then can the soul be realized as an entity completely distinct from the mind. The process to accomplish this is classical Yoga.

In conventional existence, *puruṣa*’s awareness of objects is mediated by means of *buddhi*, the intellect. As the discriminatory aspect of the *citta*-mind, the intelligence is the first interface between the soul and the external world. More specifically, the soul becomes aware of the outside world when images of sense objects are channeled through the senses, sorted by the *manas*, the thinking, feeling, and organizing aspect of *citta*; appropriated by the *aharṅkāra*, the ego aspect of the *citta* that appropriates cognitions under the notions of “I” and “mine”; and presented to the intellect, the function of judgment and discrimination. Although inanimate, the intellect, in addition to its function of discrimination, “molds” itself into the form and shape of these objects of experience, thoughts, and ideas, and, due to the reflection of the consciousness of *puruṣa*, appears animated. Since the soul is “adjacent”<sup>21</sup> to the intellect (and the *citta* in general), the intellect is the immediate “covering” of *puruṣa*, hence, it is through the intellect that *puruṣa* becomes aware of these forms and therefore of the objects of the world. The pure consciousness of the soul pervades the *citta*, animating it with consciousness like a lightbulb—although distinct in its own right—pervades a nonluminous light-shade surrounding it with light, and makes it appear luminous.

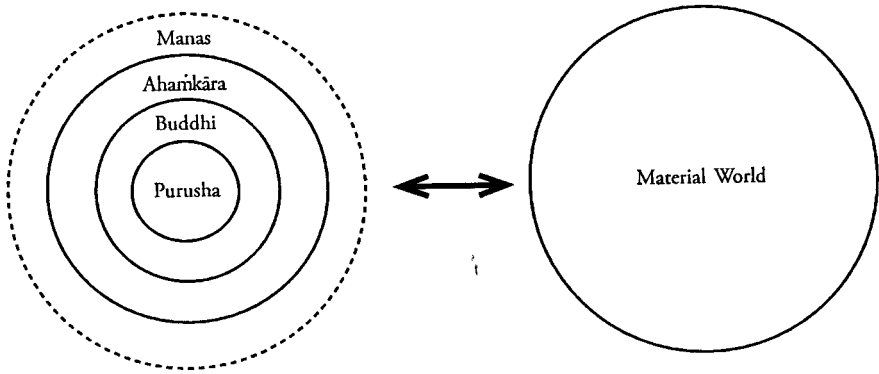


Figure 10.3. Yogic Consciousness

Pervaded by this consciousness, the *citta*-mind appears “as if” it itself was conscious in the same way that a metal ball placed into intense fire becomes molten and appears “as if” it were fire. However, the mind animated by consciousness is in reality unconscious, just as an object appears illuminated in its own right, but it is in actuality dependent on an outside light source for its illumination and visibility. Most importantly, the soul, the pure and eternal power of consciousness, never changes; as a “spectator” or “witness,” it does not itself transform when in contact with the ever-changing states of mind. It simply becomes aware of them. Just as light passively reveals gross and subtle objects in a dark room and yet is not itself affected or changed by them, consciousness passively reveals objects, whether in the form of gross external physical objects or subtle internal thoughts (*vr̥tti*), including the higher states of discrimination, but is not itself actually affected or “touched” by them. However, the awareness of the pure soul does permeate or shine on the *citta*, like a projector light permeating inanimate pictorial forms of a movie reel, thereby animating these pictures as if they had a life of their own. In so doing, the “animated” mind misidentifies consciousness with itself, identifying consciousness with the churning of thought, as if consciousness were inherent within itself rather than the effulgence of an entity outside and separate from itself. This misidentification is ignorance and the cause of bondage in *samsāra*. It is the mysterious glue that binds the self to the world of matter in all Indic soteriological traditions.

According to some commentators, such as the fifteenth-century exegete Vijñānabhikṣu, the intellect functions like a mirror; just as light bounces off an illuminated reflective object back to its source, the consciousness of the soul bounces off this animated intellect, which presents a reflection to the soul. Because *sattva*, discussed later, is predominant in the intellect, it is highly translucent and thus able to reflect pure consciousness back to itself. Just as one becomes conscious of one’s appearance in a mirror due to the mirror’s translucency, the soul becomes conscious of its reflection in the animated intellect. However, since the intellect is constantly being molded into the images presented to it by the mind and senses, this reflection presented back to *puruṣa* is distorted or transformed by constantly changing forms (*vr̥tti*), just as one’s reflection in a mirror is distorted if the mirror is warped. The soul, that is, the actual source of consciousness, is misidentified with this distorted reflection by the mind, which considers awareness to be inherent within itself rather than a feature of *puruṣa*, an entity completely outside of and separate from itself. The soul is thus misidentified with the world of change through these changing states of

mind (*vr̥tti*), just as one may look at one's reflection in a dirty mirror and mistakenly think that it is oneself who is dirty.

The soul thus becomes misidentified with the experiences of the body and mind—birth, death, disease, old age, happiness, distress, peacefulness, and anxiety—even though these are merely transformations occurring in the inanimate and external body and mind, and therefore unconnected with *puruṣa*. They are nothing other than the permutations of gross and subtle matter external to the soul that are pervaded by the soul's awareness. However, awareness is misidentified with these permutations as a result of which the self (that is, the mind animated by consciousness) considers itself to be subject to birth and death, happiness and distress, and it is this misidentification, or ignorance, that is the root of bondage to the world. Classical Yoga involves inhibiting the mind's tendency of being molded into these permutations, the *vr̥tti*, the impressions and thoughts of the objects of the world. This stilling of the mind is the practice of meditation outlined in the *Yoga Sūtras*.

A discussion of the metaphysics of this process requires an understanding of the infrastructure of Sāṃkhya metaphysics that underpins both the essential constituents of Yoga psychology and practice, as well as the supplementary aspects of the system such as the *siddhi*, or mystic powers, of chapter 3. As with the cluster of Yoga traditions, there were numerous variants of Sāṃkhya, but in generic Sāṃkhya, the universe of animate and inanimate entities is perceived as ultimately the product of two ontologically distinct categories; hence, this system is quintessentially *dvaita*, or dualistic in presupposition. These two categories are *prakṛti*, or the primordial material matrix of the physical universe, and *puruṣa*, the innumerable conscious souls or selves embedded within it. As a result of the interaction between these two entities, the material universe evolves in a series of stages. The actual catalysts in this evolutionary process are the three *guṇas*, literally, "strands" or "qualities," which are inherent in *prakṛti*. These are *sattva* (lucidity), *rajas* (action), and *tamas* (inertia). These *guṇas* are sometimes compared to the threads that underpin the existence of a rope; just as a rope is actually a combination of threads, so all manifest reality actually consists of a combination of the *guṇas*. These *guṇas* are mentioned incessantly throughout the commentaries on the text, as are the various evolutes from *prakṛti*, and thus require some attention.

Given the meditative focus of the text, the *guṇas* are especially significant to classical Yoga in terms of their psychological manifestation; the mind, and therefore all psychological dispositions, are *prakṛti*, and therefore also comprised of the *guṇas*—the only difference between mind and matter is that the former has a larger preponderance of *sattva* and the latter of *tamas*. Therefore, according to the specific intermixture and proportionality of the *guṇas*, living beings exhibit different types of mindsets and psychological dispositions. Thus, when *sattva* (from the root *as*, meaning to be)<sup>22</sup> is predominant in an individual, the qualities of lucidity, tranquility, wisdom, discrimination, detachment, happiness, and peacefulness manifest; when *rajas* (from the root *rañj*, meaning to color or to redden) is predominant, hankering, attachment, energetic endeavor, passion, power, restlessness, and creative activity manifest; and when *tamas* (from the root *tam*, meaning to stifle), the *guṇa* least favorable for classical Yoga, is predominant, ignorance, delusion, disinterest, lethargy, sleep, and disinclination toward constructive activity manifest.<sup>23</sup>

The *guṇas* are continually interacting and competing with each other, one *guṇa* becoming prominent for a while and overpowering the others, only to be eventually dominated in turn by the increase of one of the others (*Bhagavad Gītā* XIV.10). The *Yuktidīpikā*, a seventh-century Sāṃkhyan text, compares them to the wick, fire, and oil of the lamp, which, while opposed to

each other in their nature, come together to produce light (13). Just as there is an unlimited variety of colors stemming from the intermixture of the three primary colors, different hues being simply expressions of the specific proportionality of red, yellow, and blue, so the unlimited psychological dispositions of living creatures (and of physical forms) stem from the intermixture of the *guṇas*, specific states of mind being the reflections of the particular proportionality of the intermixture of the three *guṇas*.

The *guṇas* not only underpin the philosophy of mind in classical Yoga, but the activation and interaction of these *guṇa* qualities result in the production of the entirety of physical forms that also evolve from the primordial material matrix, *prakṛti*, under the same principle.<sup>24</sup> Thus the physical composition of objects like air, water, stone, fire, and so forth, differs because of the constitutional makeup of specific *guṇas*: air contains more of the buoyancy of *sattva*, stones more of the sluggishness of *tamas*, and fire more of the energy of *rajas* (although its buoyancy betrays its partial nature of *sattva* as well). The *guṇas* allow for the infinite plasticity of *prakṛti* and the objects of the world.

Returning to classical Yoga, one of its primary goals, discussed repeatedly by the commentators, is to maximize the proportion of the *guṇa* of *sattva* in the mind and correspondingly decrease that of *rajas* and *tamas*. When all trace of *tamas* and *rajas* is eliminated, the mind attains the highest potential of its prakṛtic nature—illumination, peacefulness, discernment, and inclination toward meditation and contemplation, all qualities inherent in *sattva*. When the *citta*-mind has cultivated a state of almost pure *sattva*,<sup>25</sup> the discriminative aspect of *buddhi*, intelligence, can reveal the distinction between the ultimate conscious principle, *puruṣa*, and even the purest and most subtle (but nonetheless unconscious) states of *prakṛti*. When manifesting its highest potential of *sattva* and suppressing its inherent potential of *rajas* and *tamas*, which divert consciousness away from its source, *puruṣa*, and into the external world of objects and internal world of thought, the pure *sattva* nature of the mind can recognize the distinction between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* and redirect consciousness back inward toward this inner self (one of the penultimate goals of classical Yoga), just as a dusty mirror can reflect things clearly when cleansed from the coverings of dirt. In short, classical Yoga can also be viewed as the process of stilling the potential of *rajas* and *tamas*, and allowing the maximum potential *sattva* nature of the mind to manifest, and the commentators often promote it in this way. The specific means of doing this involves fixing the mind on an object of concentration without deviation. These are some of the foundations of the soteriological system of classical Yoga. This system aims at complete liberation, which is defined as the extraction of pure consciousness (*puruṣa*) from materiality (*prakṛti*).

## Aphorisms on Discipline and Liberation

As mentioned, the *Yoga Sūtras* (Yoga Aphorisms) is attributed to Patañjali, an obscure figure who later became identified as the founder of the “Yoga school.” The text describes a sequential meditative practice aimed at purification of consciousness, or, in keeping with the text itself, at the realization of *puruṣa* as pure consciousness beyond materiality. The received text consists of 195 aphorisms, cryptic and esoteric guidelines or maxims on meditative discipline. The text is divided into four sections (*pada*), with the following titles and corresponding number of aphorisms:

1. <i>Samādhi Pāda</i> (Meditative Absorption) (51)	3. <i>Vibhūti Pāda</i> (Mystic Powers) (55)
2. <i>Sādhana Pāda</i> (Practice) (55)	4. <i>Kaivalya Pāda</i> (Absolute Liberation) (34)

Figure 10.4. Sections of the *Yoga Sūtras*

Chapter 1 occupies itself with a discussion of *yoga*, the various meditative states that accrue from its practice, and the various objects upon which the mind can concentrate. From a structural point of view, while situating the goal in chapter 1 before the practice to attain it in chapter 2 may challenge modern notions of narrative or pedagogical sequence, there is a logic to Patañjali's choice of informing his readership about the goal of the yogic journey before proceeding further with details of the journey itself and its accompanying mental landscape. In any event, according to Patañjali's definition in the second aphorism, *yoga* is the cessation (*nirodha*) of the activities or permutations (*vr̥tti*) of *citta*-thought. The *vr̥ttis* refer to any sequence of thought, ideas, mental imaging, or cognitive acts performed by either the mind, intellect, or ego as defined previously—in short, any state of mind whatsoever (I.1–5ff.). As has been stressed, the essential point for understanding classical Yoga is that all forms or activities of the mind are products of *prakṛti*, matter, and completely distinct from *puruṣa*, the soul or true self, which is pure awareness or consciousness (I.2–4; II.20).

The means prescribed by Patañjali to still the *vr̥tti* states of mind or fluctuations of thought is meditation, defined as keeping the mind fixed on any particular object of choice without distraction (I.23–39). *Īśvara*, often referred to as the “Lord of Yoga,” is a transcendent omniscient Being who comes highly recommended in this regard; Yoga is clearly, but non-dogmatically, a theistic system (I.23–29).<sup>26</sup> By concentration and meditation (or, by the power of *Īśvara*'s grace), the distracting influences of *rajas* and *tamas* can be curtailed, and the *sattva* constitution of the mind can exhibit its full potential. In this state, the mind can concentrate without being distracted. Several verses in section 1 point to intense levels of concentration that begin by penetrating the subtler substructure of the object of meditation, proceed to penetrate past the very organ of cognition, the mind, as the *yogī*'s awareness approaches its ultimate source and final goal, *puruṣa*, or pure consciousness itself (I.17, 42–51). When the mind is focused on an object, whether on the object's gross manifestation or subtle substructure, or even on the mind itself as an organ of cognition, its corresponding states are known as stages of *samprajñāta samādhi*, also known as *sabīja samādhi* (absorption with seed).<sup>27</sup> When consciousness is completely uncoupled from the mind and from any meditative objects upon which it might concentrate, that is, when consciousness abides in its own pure, unintentional nature, the ensuing state is *asamprajñāta samādhi*, also known as *nirbīja samādhi* (absorption without seed; I.18, 51).

Ultimately, through the grace of *Īśvara* (II.45) or the sheer power of concentration, the mind can attain an inactive state where all thoughts remain only in potential but not active form. In other words, through meditation one can cultivate an inactive state of mind where one is not cognizant of anything. Consequently, once there are no more thoughts or objects on its horizons or sphere of awareness, consciousness has no other alternative but to become conscious of itself. In other words, consciousness can either be “object” aware or “subject” aware (loosely speaking).<sup>28</sup>

The point is that it has no option in terms of being aware on some level, since awareness is eternal and inextinguishable. By stilling all thought, meditative concentration removes all objects of awareness; awareness can therefore now only be aware of itself. It can now bypass or transcend all objects of thought, disassociate from even the pure sãttvic *citta*, and become aware of its own source, the actual soul itself, *puruṣa*. This is “self-realization” (to use a neo-Vedãntic term), the ultimate state of awareness, the state of consciousness in which nothing can be discerned except the pure self, objectless consciousness itself, *nirbījalasamprajñãta samãdhi*. This is the final goal of classical Yoga and thus of human existence.

In terms of specifics, chapter 1 begins by introducing the subject of the work and providing a definition of *yoga*, namely, the cessation of all *citta vṛtti*, the fluctuating states of the mind (1–2). This is followed by a discussion of the two possible functions of awareness—exclusive awareness of awareness itself or awareness of the *vṛttis* (3–4)—a description of the *vṛttis* (5–11), and how to control them by practice (13–14) and dispassion (15–16). Then comes the division of *samãdhi* (the term that refers to the state of the mind when thought has, indeed, been stilled) into the important divisions of *samprajñãta samãdhi* (17) and *asamprajñãta samãdhi* (18) and how to attain it (20–22), after pointing to other states that might resemble it (19). Īśvara is then introduced as the easy method of attaining *samãdhi* if one fixes the mind on Him by means of chanting the sacred syllable *om*<sup>29</sup> that represents him (23), along with his nature (24–26), name and its recitation (27–28), and the fruits accruing therefrom (29). The chapter describes the distractions of the mind (30) and their accompanying effects such as grief, and so on (31); outlines the means to combat these by dwelling on one truth (32), practicing benevolence, and so on (33), breath control (34), and other such means (35–39) that are conducive to *samãdhi*. Additionally, the chapter explains the variety of *samãpatti* meditative states (a type of *samãdhi* state) (41) with definitions (42–44) and their fruits (46–48) and object (49). The chapter concludes with a discussion of *samprajñãta samãdhi*, the states when awareness is still being channeled through the mind and onto the objects of concentration, preceding the final stage of *asamprajñãta*. *Asamprajñãta samãdhi* is the highest stage of the eighth and final limb of yoga presented by Patañjali to attain this lofty goal: when consciousness “abides in its own pure nature” (1.34).

The second chapter is called *kriyã yoga*, “the discipline of action,”<sup>30</sup> and deals with the lifestyle and practices that are prerequisites for the higher meditational states outlined in chapter 1. The chapter begins with a very succinct but precise outline of the mechanisms underpinning karma, human action and its consequent effects (namely, rebirths), the nature of human suffering, ignorance, and the means to dissolve all of this through discrimination. The chapter is best known for its discussion of the “eight limbs of Yoga” (*aṣṭãnga yoga*), which are the practical means to develop discrimination. These include the following:

1. Abstentions/Moral restraints (*yama*)
2. Ethical observances (*niyama*)
3. Posture (*ãsana*)
4. Breath control (*prãnyãma*)
5. Sensory withdrawal (*pratyãhãra*)
6. Concentration (*dhãraṇã*)

7. Meditation (*dhyāna*)8. Meditative absorption (*samādhi*)

The first limb, *yama* or “restraints,” consists of nonviolence, truthfulness, refrainment from stealing, celibacy, and refrainment from coveting. *Yama* are universal (II.31), were standard in the ascetic culture of ancient India, and are in fact identical with the five Jain vows and with four of the five Buddhist ones. They deal with how the aspiring *yogī* relates to others. Obviously, if one’s goals are to remove consciousness from identification with the body and the mind, one must curb activities that pamper to the grosser urges of the body—violence, stealing, deceit, sexual exploitation, and coveting are acts that are generally performed with a view to improving one’s bodily or material situation and with a disregard for the well-being of others. They must be resisted by one striving for transcendent goals. They form the core of Yogic ethics. But they are not just ethical or social. They also carry an essential metaphysical dimension: for the mind to be able to settle and concentrate, its *sattva* potential must be at a maximum. Since the mind can be considered as nothing other than a “reservoir” of *saṁskāras* (*karmāśaya*), which are nothing other than impressions streaming in from the senses, classical Yoga requires the practitioner to direct attention to only submitting the mind to *sāttvic* sounds, tastes, sights, and so forth. Yoga is thus a culture and a lifestyle. Thus, for example, vegetarianism is not only an ethical issue relevant to the natural compassion of a *yogī* toward other helpless embodied beings, but food imbibed also translates into *saṁskāric* imprints. (Most vegetarian food contributes to the *sattva* potential of the mind, while meat creates *tamas*.)

*Niyama* or “observances” includes cleanliness, contentment, austerity, study [of scripture], and devotion to *Īśvara*. These deal with how the *yogī* cultivates his or her own lifestyle. Once the cruder and more destructive potentials of the body are curtailed by following the abstentions of the previous limb, consciousness can be turned more inward toward personal refinement. Each limb furthers and deepens this internal progression. The third limb, *āsana* or “postures,” focuses on stretches and postures with a view to preparing the *yogī*’s body to sit for prolonged periods in meditation. In this respect, the classical *padmāsana*, or “full-lotus,” posture is prioritized by the tradition (commentaries to II.46). It is this aspect of classical Yoga that has been most visibly exported to the West but all-too-often stripped from its context as one ingredient in a far more ambitious and far-reaching soteriological project.

While successful performance of the third limb begins the focusing of attention and stilling of the mind, the fourth limb furthers this process through fixing the mind on breath control (*prāṇāyāma*). By regulating and slowing the movement of the breath, the mind, too, becomes regulated and quiescent. The fifth limb, *pratyāhāra* or sensory withdrawal, deepens the process by removing consciousness from all engagement with sense objects (sight, sound, taste, smell, touch). The last three limbs are considered internal as opposed to the previous five “external” limbs (III.7); they include concentration (*dhāraṇā*), meditation (*dhyāna*), and complete meditative absorption (*samādhi*). These limbs, which Patañjali subdivides into seven rather esoteric stages (I.17, 42–51), are laid out at the beginning of chapter 3. The last three limbs are essentially increasingly focused degrees of concentrative intensity and culminate in the realization by awareness of its own nature, *asamprajñāta samādhi*, as outlined earlier. *Dhāraṇā* is compared to the dripping tap (that is, the mind is still distracted from its object of meditation); this stands in contrast to *dhyāna*, which is compared to the unbroken flow of thick unctuous oil.<sup>31</sup> In *samādhi*, at least as touched upon in



this section of the text, the “object alone shines forth and the mind is devoid of its own reflective nature” (III.3).<sup>32</sup> As this chapter makes clear, the *Yoga Sūtras*, in fact, are primarily a manual for the practitioner, rather than an exposition of Yoga philosophy.

In terms of specifics, the second chapter begins with an introduction of *kriyā yoga* as consisting of austerity, study, and devotion to *Īśvara* (1), its effects (2), and a discussion of the *kleśas*, the deep-rooted mental obstacles to Yoga, such as ignorance, ego, and desire, which it removes (3–11). Karma and its consequences are outlined, that is, the law of action and reaction (12–14), and the principle of suffering established (15–16). This is followed by the characteristics of the seer and the seen, *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* (17–22), the conjunction between them (23–24), and the definition of liberation (25–27). Next, the eight limbs of Yoga are introduced as the means to attain liberation (28–29), and the remainder of the chapter is dedicated to the first five of these: the restraints and their universality (30–31), observances (32), the means to counter tendencies contrary to the observances (33–34) and the side benefits accrued from observing them (35–45), postures (46–48), breath control (49–53), and withdrawal of consciousness from sense objects (54–55).

The third chapter focuses on the potential development of mystic powers (*siddhī*) that might accrue when the mind is in intense meditative states. Patañjali is not promoting such powers but warning yogic aspirants not to be distracted by them should they occur. One might note that the epic and folk literature of Hinduism (and even modern hagiographical literature of *yogīs*)<sup>33</sup> is replete with narratives of individuals who perform austere practices of mind control, with the motive of attaining mundane but supernormal power. This stands in contrast to the real goal of classical Yoga: experiencing one’s highest and ultimate self. It is because such erroneously motivated practices were so widespread that one might infer that Patañjali felt moved to dedicate an entire chapter to this topic. He does so with some intellectual rigor, however, initiating the chapter with a rational explanation of how *siddhis* can be understood metaphysically in terms of the substructural cause and effect principles of Sāṃkhya.<sup>34</sup>

The chapter begins by concluding the definitions of the last three limbs of classical Yoga (1–3), which are distinguished from the others by constituting *saṃyama*, another term for intense absorption in the object of meditation (4–6) and by being internal limbs (7–8). A discussion of the state of *nirodha*, the state of the stilled mind, ensues (9–12), followed by the metaphysics of the relationship between the substratum of matter and its characteristics (13–15). The remainder of the chapter is then dedicated to an extensive discussion of various mystic powers accrued from the performance of *saṃyama* on a variety of things (16–48), culminating in omniscience, followed by ultimate *kaivalya* liberation, the complete autonomy of consciousness (49–55).

The fourth chapter is the shortest, and among other things, features the Yoga tradition’s response to Vijñāna Buddhism,<sup>35</sup> which must have been quite prevalent at the time to merit Patañjali’s engagement with it, in an otherwise very curt and nonpolemical treatise. The chapter begins by listing other means of attaining *siddhis* (1). This is followed by some comments on *prakṛti*’s relationship with its effects (2–3) and by the phenomenon of the creation of multiple minds by the *yogī* (4–5). A more advanced discussion of karma (6–7), *saṃskāras* (8–11), as well as Time and the *guṇas* (12–14) then ensues. The next section critiques Buddhist idealist notions of the mind (15–21), followed by a discussion of the classical Yoga view of the relationship between mind and consciousness (22–26) and of distractions to meditation (27–28). The chapter

and thus the text ends with a type of *samādhi* called *dharma-megha* and its effects (29–33), and then ultimate liberation (34).

## Reading the *Yoga Sūtras* in Later Hinduism and the Modern West

Knowledge systems in ancient India were transmitted orally, from master to disciple, with an enormous emphasis on fidelity toward the original set of *sūtras* upon which the system was founded. The master unpacked the dense and truncated aphorisms to the students, and this system continues in traditional contexts today. Periodically, teachers of particular prominence wrote commentaries on the primary texts of many of these knowledge systems. Some of these gained wide currency to the point that the primary text was always studied in conjunction with a commentary, particularly since, as noted earlier, texts such as the *Yoga Sūtras* (and, even more so, the *Vedānta Sūtras*) contain numerous *sūtras* that are incomprehensible without further elaboration, and hence were designed to be “unpacked.” One must stress, therefore, that our understanding of Patañjali’s text is completely dependent on the interpretations of later commentators: it is incomprehensible, in places, in its own terms.

In any event, in terms of the overall accuracy of the commentaries, there is an *a priori* likelihood that the interpretations of the *Yoga Sūtras* were faithfully preserved and transmitted orally through the few generations from Patañjali until the first commentary by the sage Vyāsa<sup>36</sup> in the fifth century CE. Indeed, some commentators, both traditional and modern, even hold Vyāsa’s commentary to be that of Patañjali himself. In other words, unless compelling arguments are presented to the contrary, one must be cautious about questioning the overall accuracy of this transmission. Certainly, the commentators from Vyāsa onward are remarkably consistent in their interpretations of the essential metaphysics of the system for over fifteen hundred years, which is in marked contrast with the radical differences in essential metaphysical understanding that distinguishes commentators of the Vedānta school. While the fifteenth-century commentator Vijñānabhikṣu, for example, may not infrequently quibble with the ninth-century commentator Vācaspati Miśra, the differences generally are in detail, not essential metaphysical elements. And while Vijñānabhikṣu may inject a good deal of Vedāntic concepts into the basic dualism of the Yoga system, this is generally an addition (conspicuous and identifiable) to the system rather than a reinterpretation of it. There is thus a remarkably consistent body of knowledge associated with the Yoga school for the best part of a millennium and a half, and consequently one can speak of the “traditional understanding” of the *Yoga Sūtras* in the premodern period without overly generalizing or essentializing.

The first extant commentary (*bhāṣya*) by Vyāsa, typically dated to around the fourth to fifth century CE, was to attain a status that caused it to become almost as canonical as the primary text written by Patañjali himself. Consequently, the *Yoga Sūtras* has always been studied embedded in the commentary that tradition assigns to this greatest of literary figures. Practically speaking, when we speak of the philosophy of Patañjali, what we really mean (or should mean) is the understanding of Patañjali according to Vyāsa: it is Vyāsa who determined what Patañjali’s abstruse *sūtras* meant, and all subsequent commentators elaborated on Vyāsa. From one aphorism of a few words, Vyāsa might write several lines of comment, without which the *sūtra* remains

incomprehensible. It cannot be overstated that Yoga philosophy is Patañjali's philosophy as understood and articulated by Vyāsa. Subsequent commentators base their commentaries on unpacking Vyāsa's *bhāṣya*—almost never critiquing the latter but rather expanding or elaborating upon it. This point of reference results in a marked uniformity to the interpretation of the *Yoga Sūtras* in the premodern period as noted earlier.<sup>37</sup>

There have been numerous commentaries in the premodern period from which we can mention the half-dozen or so that have made a significant contribution.<sup>38</sup> The next best-known commentator after Vyāsa was Vācaspati Miśra, a brahmin from the Bihar region of India, whose commentary, the *Tattvavaiśārādī* (Insight into Truth), can be dated with more security to the ninth century CE. Also important, although its authorship is debated, is the commentary called the *Vivaraṇa* (Exposition), attributed to the great Vedāntin Śaṅkara in the eighth to ninth century CE. A fascinating Arabic translation of Patañjali's *Yoga Sūtras* was undertaken by the famous Arab traveler and historian Al-Bīrūnī (973–1050), the manuscript of which was discovered in Istanbul in 1922.<sup>39</sup> Roughly contemporaneous with Al-Bīrūnī is the eleventh-century king Bhoja Rāja, poet, scholar, and patron of the arts, sciences, and esoteric traditions. Then, in the fifteenth century, another prolific scholar, Vijñānabhikṣu, wrote to my mind the most insightful and useful commentary after that of Vyāsa; this is the *Yogavārttika* (Explanation of Yoga). In the sixteenth century, another Vedāntin,<sup>40</sup> Rāmānanda Sarasvatī, wrote his commentary, called *Yogamaṇiprabhā* (Light of the Jewel of Yoga), which adds little to the previous commentaries, but there are valuable insights contained in the *Bhāsvatī* (Dawning Sun) by Hariharānanda Āraṇya, written in Bengali in the nineteenth century. Although a traditional Sāṅkhya master, Hariharānanda was exposed to Western thought and thus situated in a context nearer to our own.

In terms of classical Yoga and the contemporary cultural landscape of the West, almost everyone, by now, has heard of *yoga*. Indeed, with millions of people in some form or fashion practicing *āsana*, the physical aspect of *yoga* in the United States,<sup>41</sup> the teaching and practice of *yoga*, at least in its aspect of techniques of body poses and stretches, are now thoroughly mainstream activities on the Western cultural landscape. *Yoga* in its exported manifestations has tended to focus on the physical aspect of the system of classical Yoga, the *āsanas* or stretching poses and postures, which most Western adepts of *yoga* practice in order to stay trim, supple, and healthy. Patañjali himself, we must note, pays much less attention to the *āsanas*, which are the third stage of the eight stages or “limbs” of yoga; discussion of posture only comprises 10 words from 1,200, or less than 1 percent of the content of the text. Instead, Patañjali focuses primarily on meditation, the various stages of concentration of the mind, as a path to liberation. As we have seen, this involves the extraction of pure consciousness (*puruṣa*) from materiality (*prakṛti*). The body, sensuality, physical beauty, and so forth, of course are associated with *prakṛti*. “Yoga” practiced for health, fitness, and beauty is antithetical to the informing views and soteriological system of classical Yoga.

After its initial introduction to the West by Vivekānanda (1863–1902), a key figure in the establishment of the Vedanta Society, at the end of the nineteenth century (see De Michelis 2004),<sup>42</sup> *yoga*, particularly as stretching and breathwork but also as a meditative technique leading to enlightenment (*samādhi*), was popularized in the West by a number of influential Hindu teachers of *yoga* in the 1960s. Most of these individuals came from two lineages: those of Sivananda (1887–1963), and those of Krishnamāchārya (1888–1989). Sivananda was a renunciant, and his

ashram tradition was transplanted by his disciples, especially Vishnu-devananda (1927–1993) and Satchidananda (1914–2002), each of whom founded their own independent missions in the West. These are the Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Centres and the Integral Yoga Institute, respectively (see Strauss 2005). Krishnamāchārya's three principal disciples each took his emphasis on the practice of *āsana* in their own direction. K. Pattabhi Jois (1915–2009) continued to promote his version of Ashtanga Vinyasa Yoga; Krishnamāchārya's son, T. K. V. Desikachar (b. 1938), developed Viniyoga; and, perhaps most influential of all, Krishnamāchārya's brother-in-law, B. K. S. Iyengar (b. 1918), established Iyengar Yoga.

While B. K. S. Iyengar and Satchidananda both wrote commentaries on the *Yoga Sūtras*, the others all referred frequently in their writings to the text as a source of authority. However, the *yoga* taught by (especially) the disciples of Krishnamāchārya, which prioritizes *āsanas* so prominently, has departed considerably in emphasis from classical Yoga, where only 3 of the 195 aphorisms focus on postures. As a consequence, *yoga* in the Western cultural landscape is almost exclusively associated with *āsana* and might be better referred to as “modern postural yoga” (De Michelis 2004). Indeed, recent research has shown that the phenomenon of modern postural yoga has much more to do with European gymnastics and Hindu nationalism in twentieth-century India than any imagined ancient Vedic Yoga (see Sjoman 1996; Alter 2004; Singleton 2010). Seeking an indigenous form of physical fitness that could hold its own against the introduction of British gymnastics and body-building techniques into the subcontinent, Hindus alighted on the *āsanas* of classical Yoga as a supposed indigenous alternative. In so doing, of course, they massively emphasized and inflated the third of the eight limbs and equally conspicuously minimized much of the rest of the actual system.<sup>43</sup> The more mainstream and acculturated forms of modern *yoga* have thus come to be associated with modern attitudes and modalities associated with psychophysical well-being rather than the radical enterprise outlined in the *Yoga Sūtras*, which is aimed at the absolute uncoupling of a transcendent consciousness from all forms of psychophysical embeddedness.

While we have focused here on the *Yoga Sūtras*, since, once fossilized as one of the six *darsanas* (views), it became referenced in orthodox Hindu scholastic circles as the authoritative manual of a systematized and generic rendition of concentrative practice, there were other forms of *yoga* in ancient India as touched upon earlier. All, however, subscribed to the *ātman/karmal samsāra/mokṣa* paradigm of Hindu soteriology. Prominent forms of these are the *yogas* of *bhakti* (devotion), *jñāna* (knowledge), and *karma* (selfless action), as exemplified in the *Bhagavad Gītā* (Song of the Lord). Moreover, albeit marginalized and excluded from traditional doxographical schemas (the *darsanas* were construed variously at different historical periods by Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain scholastics; see Nicholson 2011), there are also the *yogas* of *tantra* or *siddha* as exemplified in the *Haṭha-yoga-pradīpikā* (Light on Hatha Yoga). While a discussion of these is beyond the scope of the present chapter, in terms of *yoga* on the Western landscape, one can mention in this regard Bhaktivedanta Swami (1896–1977), founder of ISKCON (International Society for Krishna Consciousness; Hare Krishna Movement), who, in the 1960s, traveled to the West and transplanted a form of monotheistic devotional *yoga* focusing on worship of Krishna (Kṛṣṇa) as supreme Godhead and featuring *mantra* recitation (*jāpa*) and chanting (*kīrtan*) as personal and congregational praxis, respectively (see, e.g., Bryant 2004). Similarly, Swami Muktananda (1908–1982), founder of SYDA (Siddha Yoga Dham Associates) Yoga, which is a monistic form of devotional *siddha yoga* focused on the divinity Śiva, also emphasized *mantra* recitation and

other devotional activities (see Brooks et al. 1997).<sup>44</sup> Gurus such as these, who (most significantly in the case of Bhaktivedanta Swami) demonstrated less accommodation to modernity and its discourses, and far greater commitments to preserving and promoting a traditional and orthodox reading of the practices, theologies, and ideologies of their respective Hindu sectarian lineages, made little or no use of the *Yoga Sūtras* in their canons. They also had little interest in *āsana*-centered praxis (Syman 2010).

Nowadays, of course, *yoga* is completely mainstream in Western society and taught in every neighborhood and on every college campus, often completely stripped of its traditional worldview, soteriological system, and Indian trappings. However, a large percentage of *yoga* teachers trace their lineage to tradition-based teachers, and the more serious among such teachers or practitioners of postural *yoga* will have a valued copy of the *Yoga Sūtras*. Our primary text and the *Bhagavad Gītā* are the two books that most popularly represent transplanted “Hinduism.” Here I might add that Patañjali’s *Yoga Sūtras*, while likely written for ascetics, is not an overtly sectarian text in the sense of prioritizing a specific deity or promoting a particular type of worship, as is the case with many Hindu scriptures such as the *Bhagavad Gītā*. Therefore, as a template, its schematic essentials can be and have been appropriated and reconfigured by followers of different schools and traditions throughout Indian religious history. The text continues to lend itself to such appropriations, most recently in secular contexts of the West. In short, among those more serious about engaging the practice of Hindu classical *Yoga* on its own terms, Patañjali’s *Yoga Sūtras* is a classical Hindu text that has received the most attention and interest outside of India. This is specifically the case among individuals interested in meditation and contemplative practice. It is one of the most important classical texts in Hinduism and thus a “classic” of Indian, and therefore world, thought.

### Yoga as Yoga

As a concluding reflection then, while, from the perspective of its adherents, mainstream (and increasingly consumerized) forms of postural *yoga* have contributed enormously to the psychophysical well-being of those who practice them, the meditative (i.e., more primary) focus and concern of the Hindu classical *Yoga* and other tradition-based forms of *yoga* offer another prospective contribution to modernity. *Yoga* emerged from the margins of a highly consumption-focused ancient culture: Vedic ritualism was highly materialistic (i.e., primarily concerned with the pursuit and attainment of fulfillment and happiness through the gratification of the sensual body and mind). Vedic religion was essentially a technology of highly ritualized sacrificial acts accompanied by meticulously precise and formalized *mantra* recitation, the basic goal of which was to manipulate the physical environment through the forces that controlled it. It was a method through which boons associated with the “good life”—cows (the currency of the time), offspring, victory over enemies, and so on—could be attained. In short, the goal of early Vedic ritual, reflective of the perennial goal of human endeavor, was the fulfillment of desire. Put differently (and provocatively), one might argue that the only difference between many of the Vedic goals of life and our modern consumer-centered ones is in the methods employed in the attaining of the good life: the ancients adopted sonic- and ritual-centered technologies, and we machine engineered industrial ones. Constructed, glamorized, and manipulated by the media and other institutions of mass propagation, modern attitudes to what constitutes the basic goal

of life may not be that different from some of the essential core presuppositions underlying the Vedic ones.

A radical critique of this attitude to life and meaning emerged on the margins of the mainstream culture in the form of the earliest teachings promoting *yoga*. These texts, such as the *Upaniṣads*, the *Bhagavad Gītā*, and the *Yoga Sūtras*, proposed an alternative paradigm of human existence and possibility. As the *Gītā* notes, desire is insatiable, burns like fire, and is our eternal enemy (III.39). It is the cause of suffering and malaise (YS II.15). From the perspective of these *ātman*-based traditions, one can never find fulfillment through the physical body and mind because these do not form the real basis or source of the “self”; rather, they are simply inanimate coverings. Ultimate and enduring happiness, meaning, and fulfillment come when the mind realizes the *ātman* as distinct from the body-mind mechanism and reconfigures and redirects its notion of self away from identification with these layerings and onto the *ātman* as the ultimate source of consciousness and awareness. It is out of ignorance of this ultimate *ātman* that embodied beings seek fulfillment through the gratification of the coverings that are misidentified as the self and potentially become victims of greed, excessive consumption, and extravagant accumulation as ultimate goals (*Gītā* XVI).

Taken to excess and with little sociopolitical restraints, these endeavors can easily translate into enormous damage being inflicted on the individual, social, political, cultural, economic, and environmental worlds that human and nonhuman beings inhabit. Indeed, from the perspective of the Indic soteriological systems, it is this ignorance of the self and the consequent proliferation of endless desires that perpetuates suffering and *saṃsāra* (YS II.3–15). And it is as a deconstructive critique of this perennial mindset that the Indic soteriological systems such as *yoga* emerged on the margins of the consumer cultures of their day and offer an alternative mode of being that remains perennially relevant to the human condition.

With respect to insights and challenges related to contemplative studies and religious studies, the *Yoga Sūtras* thus brings our attention to the radical alterity of tradition-based Indic contemplative practice, especially as rooted in specific religious and soteriological systems. Patāñjali’s system of *yoga*, a discipline aimed at the purification of consciousness and ultimately liberation, emphasizes a radical “mind-body” (*puruṣa-prakṛti*) dualism and utilizes a distinctive psychology. The latter includes a sophisticated map of human consciousness, which consists of both gross and subtle, material and immaterial dimensions. According to Hindu classical Yoga, through dedicated practice of meditation, the consciousness of a practitioner may enter the deep interior recesses of its own ultimate nature, *puruṣa*, the transcendent aspect of personhood that is immortal, eternal, untainted, autonomous, and free. This soteriological system contrasts sharply with various decontextualized and reconceptualized forms of modern “yoga.” Hindu classical Yoga emphasizes that aspiring *yogīs*, individuals seeking the ultimate goal of liberation (*mokṣa*) from *saṃsāra*, must remove themselves from the phenomenal world, physical embodiment, sensory engagement, materialistic life goals, as well as various emotional and mental attachments and misconceptions. Viewed from a larger perspective, Hindu classical Yoga might thus inspire one to reflect on the extent to which concern for beauty, health, materialism, and so forth, is incompatible with contemplative practice. Perhaps the *Yoga Sūtras* encourages us to consider *yoga* as it was understood in the premodern period: a profound and sophisticated system of liberation rooted in committed and prolonged meditative praxis. This includes, ironically, liberation from the very things with which *yoga* has come to be associated, namely, the goals of a body-centered, consumer-based lifestyle.

## Notes

This chapter incorporates some material from my book *The Yoga Sūtras* (Bryant 2009).

1. The Sanskrit term *darsana*, which is typically translated as “philosophy,” more accurately indicates a point of view. In actual fact, the *Yoga Sūtras* are more of an instruction manual for practitioners than a philosophical tradition. For historical analyses and overviews of the so-called six schools, see Hiriyanna 1995; King 1999a.
2. Throughout the present chapter, “Yoga” refers to the philosophical school, or the Yoga tradition, while *yoga* is used to indicate various practices or systems of *yoga*.
3. The term “Hindu” was introduced by invaders from the West to refer to people living on the other side of the Sindhu (Indus) River. It surfaces for the first time in Indic sources in the sixteenth-century Bengali text *Caitanya Caritāmṛta* to refer to communities engaged in Vedic-derived practices deemed distinct from those of the Muslims, the dominant power in Bengal. It is now used as a term of convenience to refer to an enormously variegated cluster of interrelated, but distinct practices that lay claim to some connection to the old Vedic texts discussed later in this chapter.
4. For a discussion of the problem of the “three Patañjalis,” see Larson and Bhattacharya 2008, 54ff.
5. The first reference to Yoga as a school separate from Sāṅkhya is in the writings of the ninth-century Vedāntin Śaṅkara.
6. Here Vedic is used to refer to the oldest corpus of Sanskrit texts, namely, the four Vedas (hymns), *Brahmanas* (ritual expositions), *Āraṇyakas* (forest books), and *Upaniṣads* (philosophical treatises). Much of what comes to be placed under the rubric of “Hinduism,” especially the “traditional Indian worldview and soteriology,” has its roots in the last of the four strata, the *Upaniṣads*, rather than the earlier ritualistic corpus. For an easily available flavor of the Vedic worldview, see Doniger O’Flaherty 1981.
7. First discovered in 1922 with further excavations in the 1930s and 1940s, Mohenjo-daro is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site (est. 1980). This seal is associated with Harappa culture, also known as the Indus Valley Civilization. It dates to around 2,600 BCE and thus relates to prehistoric Indus culture. As the Harappan (Indus) script remains undeciphered, there is debate concerning the actual meaning and symbolism of the various archaeological discoveries. Under one reading of the present figure, it is one of the earliest depictions of a *yogī* in full-lotus posture, although this is disputed. See, for example, Srinivasan 1975–1976; McEvilley 1981.
8. While the term “Brahman” is used primarily for the Absolute Truth in its all-encompassing aspect, and *ātman* for the more localized aspect of that same truth in the individual, the two terms are interchangeable in the *Upaniṣads*.
9. The earliest reference to *yoga* actually appears in the *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* (II.5.4), after a discussion of the five *kośas* or “layers” that make up an individual. However, it is unclear if this refers to a meditative technique.
10. This *Maitrī Upaniṣad* adds *tarka*, or “inquiry,” to the last five limbs later found in Patañjali’s *Yoga Sūtras* and reverses the order of *dhāraṇā* and *dhyāna* from that found in Patañjali’s system.
11. While both traditional narrative and critical scholarship consider this epic to have developed over centuries, it reached its present size of one hundred thousand verses prior to the fifth century CE. This is confirmed by a land grant that mentions this number of verses.
12. For *yoga* in the *Mahābhārata*, see Brockington 2003 and 2005.
13. For example, XIII.25 and XVIII.52.
14. Śaṅkara is the earliest commentator on the *Vedānta Sūtras* who has left extensive writings.
15. The identification of these “four *yoga* systems” in the *Bhagavad Gītā* was first popularized in *Rāja Yoga* by Vivekānanda (1863–1902), who became popular in the West after his address to the Chicago World’s Parliament of Religions in 1893. For a genealogy of neo-Vedānta, see De Michelis 2004.
16. Of course, there were various other streams of thought that did not gain this status but have nonetheless emerged as significant presences in the religious landscape of Hinduism. For a discussion of

the history of Sanskrit doxographies culminating in the formation of the “six schools” as presently known, see Nicholson 2011.

17. “Orthodox” here refers to the “Vedic schools” that claim at least nominal allegiance to the Vedic corpus. “Heterodox” refers to those that have no such association but, in the case of Jainism and Buddhism, develop their own canons.

18. Sāṅkhya and Vaiśeṣika are metaphysical schools; Nyāya is primarily associated with Hindu logic; and Mīmāṃsā and Vedānta are exegetical schools, with the former concerning itself with the earlier ritualistic corpus and the latter with the *Upaniṣads*.

19. Any action performed in the unenlightened state, that is, in a state of ignorance (defined in YS II.5 as identifying oneself with the body and mind covering, as opposed to pure consciousness), plants a seed of corresponding reaction, which requires subsequent births to come to fruition. However, when these fruits manifest in due course, they trigger a further response, causing fresh seeds of karma, in an ever-spiraling vicious cycle of action, reaction, re-reaction, and so forth. This cycle is known as *saṃsāra*, which is often translated as “reincarnation” or “transmigration.”

20. It is an axiom in Indic thought that anything eternal cannot be subject to change. If the soul is eternal, it therefore cannot undergo changes for Sāṅkhya.

21. Since *puruṣa* is omnipresent, its “adjacency” with *buddhi* is not spatial; conceptualizing their relationship is one of the main philosophical problems of Hindu thought.

22. *Sat-tva* literally means “being-ness.”

23. For a selection of characteristics associated with the *guṇas*, see chapters 14, 16, and 18 of the *Bhagavad Gītā*.

24. When the *guṇas* maintain what we might call an “equi-tension,” *prakṛti* remains in a pre-creative state of dynamic potential called *avyakta*. Once the equilibrium is disrupted, however, creation takes place.

25. *Rajas* and *tamas* can never be completely eliminated due to the inherent constitution of *prakṛti*.

26. *Īśvara* in philosophical discourse refers to a supreme creator god. While creation is not a topic relevant to the focus of the *Yoga Sūtras*, I have argued elsewhere that we must assume that Patañjali is using the term in its long-established conventional meaning (see Bryant 2009, 88ff.). This stands in contrast to Eliade’s (1969) notion of *Īśvara* as the “archetypal *yogī*.”

27. The “seed” referred to here is the imprint left on the mind by the object of meditation. The mind is stilled by fixing itself upon an object of meditation. This object, like any object perceived by the mind in normal cognitive activities, leaves a seed or *saṃskāric* imprint. Once consciousness is uncoupled from the mind, the mind remains in a state of complete vacuity and, hence, retains no “seeds” (*nirbija*).

28. I use the notion of the soul as pure “subjectivity,” or the soul as “subject-aware,” loosely throughout this commentary. The notion of “subject” is only meaningful in contrast to some interaction with an object. In ultimate *asamprajñāta samādhi*, by definition, there are no interactions with objects, so the notion of subjectivity becomes inapplicable. However, I find it useful to retain the usage with this caveat so as to underscore the transference in the focus of awareness in *yoga*, from “other” to pure “self.”

29. *Om* has been correlated with the sonic manifestation of Brahman, the ultimate Truth of the *Upaniṣads*, since the time of these texts (ca. 8th–4th c. BCE). See, for example, *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* I.8.1.

30. The term *kriyā yoga* is rarely found in the early texts. *Kriyā* usually refers to ritual action.

31. Hariharānanda commentary (III.2).

32. The idea here is that the meditator is so focused on the object that he or she is not even aware of what the object is (which requires the activation of memory), nor of the fact that he or she is meditating. This is the second of the seven *samādhis*.

33. See, for example, Paramahansa Yogānanda’s (1893–1952) *Autobiography of a Yogi* (1st ed., dat. 1946).

34. Gross matter, in Sāṅkhya, is a “densification” of subtler matter, and this, in turn, of mind stuff, which underpins all manifest reality. In intense concentrative states, the *yogī* can merge his or her mind with this “cosmic” mental substrate and then rearrange the grosser effects emanating from it.



35. See Larson and Bhattacharya (2008, 37ff.) for a perspective arguing that the *Yoga Sūtras* was perhaps written to bring the old Sāṅkhya traditions in line with later philosophical developments, including a response to Viññānavāda Buddhism, with the latter also known as Yogācāra or the “Consciousness-Only” school.

36. Vyāsa is the legendary sage who is reputed to have divided the one Veda into four, written the 100,000-verse *Mahābhārata* epic, and compiled the eighteen *Purāṇas*.

37. For a translation of Vyāsa along with a more recent commentary, see Āraṇya 1984.

38. For select translations of commentaries, see Larson and Bhattacharya 2008; Bryant 2009.

39. It had, however, been known since the publication of Al-Bīrūnī’s more famous work, published in 1887, that he had translated the *Yoga Sūtras*. The latter is quoted copiously in the former work.

40. Rāmānanda Sarasvatī also wrote a commentary, called *Ratnaprabhā* (Light on the Gem), on Śaṅkara’s commentary on the *Vedānta Sūtra*, the *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya* (Commentary on the Aphorisms of Vedānta).

41. *Business Magazine*, September 2002 issue, gives the number as 18 million. *Yoga Journal* in 2003 174 (May–June) estimated that 25.5 million people were “very interested,” 35.5 percent of the population intended to try *yoga* in the coming year, and 109.7 million had a “casual interest.”

42. Vivekānanda’s well-known book, *Raja Yoga* (1st ed., dat. 1896), drew from Patañjali but was heavily influenced by both Western rationalism and esotericism, as well as neo-Hindu nationalism (De Michelis 2004). While Vivekānanda was the first to introduce *yoga* to the West in a relatively mainstream context, there are references to awareness of *yogīs* on the Western landscape as early as Greek classical sources; Alexander (356–323 BCE; r. 336–323 BCE) was perhaps the most notorious early Westerner to be fascinated with Indian ascetics. See Halbfass 1981.

43. Along with Western esotericism and scientific discourse, elements of British gymnastics were nonetheless still absorbed in this process (see De Michelis 2001; Singleton 2010). Mention should also be made of the fifteenth- to sixteenth-century *Haṭha-yoga-pradīpikā* (Light on Haṭha Yoga), which dedicates one of its four chapters to *āsanas*. Although this was a very marginal and barely known text in mainstream Hindu circles, it was one of the few premodern Sanskrit sources that could be produced to attempt to authenticate this sudden emphasis on postural *yoga*. It has thus gained a far greater readership in the modern period (and mostly in the West, at that) than would ever have been the case previously.

44. Also very influential in the 1960s and 1970s and still promoted internationally is Maharishi Mahesh’s (1917–2008) Transcendental Meditation (TM) movement, an extremely simplified form of meditational practice.

## Works Cited and Further Reading

- Alter, Joseph. 2004. *Yoga in Modern India: The Body between Science and Philosophy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Āraṇya, Swāmi Hariharānanda. 1984. *Yoga Philosophy of Patañjali*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Bhattacharya, Ram Shankar. 1985. *An Introduction to the Yoga Sūtra*. Delhi: Bharatiya Vidya Prakasansa.
- Brockington, John. 2003. “Yoga in the Mahābhārata.” In *Yoga: The Indian Tradition*, edited by David Carpenter and Ian Whicher, 13–24. London and New York: Routledge.
- . 2005. “Epic Yoga.” *Journal of Vaishnava Studies* 14.1 (Fall 2005): 123–38.
- Bronkhurst, Johannes. 1993. *The Two Traditions of Meditation in Ancient India*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas.
- Brooks, Douglas et al. 1997. *Meditation Revolution: A History and Theology of the Siddha Yoga Lineage*. South Fallsburg: Agama.
- Bryant, Edwin F. 2004. *The Hare Krishna Movement*. New York: Columbia University Press.

- . 2009. *The Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali: A New Edition, Translation and Commentary*. New York: North Point Press.
- Carrette, Jeremy, and Richard King. 2004. *Selling Spirituality: The Silent Takeover of Religion*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Chapple, Christopher. 2003. *Reconciling Yogas: Haribhadra's Collection of Views on Yoga*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Dasgupta, Surendranath. 1922. *A History of Indian Philosophy*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
- . 1927. *Hindu Mysticism*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
- De Michelis, Elizabeth. 2004. *History of Modern Yoga: Patañjali and Western Esotericism*. New York and London: Continuum.
- Diamond, Debra. 2013. *Yoga: The Art of Transformation*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution.
- Doniger O'Flaherty, Wendy. 1981. *The Rig Veda*. New York: Penguin.
- Eliade, Mircea. 1936. *Yoga: Essai sur l'origine de la mystique Indienne*. Paris: Geuthner.
- . 1958. *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*. Translated by Willard R. Trask. London: Kegan Paul.
- . 2009 (1969). *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*. Translated by Willard R. Trask. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Feuerstein, Georg. 1989. *The Yoga-Sutra of Patañjali: A New Translation and Commentary*. Rochester: Inner Traditions.
- . 1996. *The Philosophy of Classical Yoga*. Rochester: Inner Traditions.
- . 2001. *The Yoga Tradition: Its History, Literature, Philosophy, and Practice*. Prescott: Hohm Press.
- . 2003. *The Deeper Dimension of Yoga: Theory and Practice*. Boston: Shambhala.
- Forman, Robert K. C., ed. 1990. *The Problem of Pure Consciousness: Mysticism and Philosophy*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- , ed. 1998. *The Innate Capacity: Mysticism, Psychology, and Philosophy*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Halbfass, Wilhelm. 1981. *India and Europe: An Essay in Understanding*. Basel: Schwabe and Co.
- Hiriyanna, Mysore. 1995. *The Essentials of Indian Philosophy*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
- Hopkins, E. W. 1901. "Yoga Technique in the Great Epic." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 22: 333–79.
- Jacobsen, Knut, ed. 2005. *Theory and Practice of Yoga: Essays in Honour of Gerald James Larson*. Leiden: Brill.
- Jacobi, Hermann. 1911. "The Dates of the Philosophical Sūtras of the Brahmans." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 31:1–29.
- King, Richard. 1999a. *Indian Philosophy*. Washington: Georgetown University Press.
- . 1999b. *Orientalism and Religion: Postcolonial Theory, India and 'The Mystic East.'* London and New York: Routledge.
- Larson, Gerald James. 1979. *Classical Sāṃkhya*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
- . 1999. "Classical Yoga as Neo-Sāṃkhya: A Chapter in the History of Indian Philosophy." *Asiatische Studien Études Asiatiques* 52.3: 723–32.
- Larson, Gerald James, and Ram Shankar Bhattacharya. 2008. *Yoga: India's Philosophy of Meditation*. Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies, Volume 12. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.
- McEvilley, Thomas. 1981. "An Archaeology of Yoga." *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 1: 44–77.
- Nicholson, Andrew. 2011. *Unifying Hinduism: Philosophy and Identity in Indian Intellectual History*. New Delhi: Permanent Black.
- Prasad, Jwala. 1930. "The Date of the Yoga-sūtras." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 84: 365–75.
- Singleton, Mark. 2010. *Yoga Body: The Origins of Modern Posture Practice*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Sjoman, N. E. 1996. *The Yoga Tradition of the Mysore Palace*. New Delhi: Abhinav Publications.

- Srinivasan, Doris. 1975/76. "The So-Called Proto-Śiva Seal from Mohenjo-Daro: An Iconological Assessment." *Archives of Asian Art* 29: 47–58.
- Strauss, Sarah. 2005. *Positioning Yoga*. Oxford: Berg.
- Syman, Stefania. 2010. *The Subtle Body: The Story of Yoga in America*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Whicher, Ian. 1998. *The Integrity of the Yoga Darśana*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Yamashita, Koichi. 1994. *Patañjala Yoga Philosophy: With Reference to Buddhism*. Calcutta: Firma KLM.