

“Edwin Bryant unpacks the layers of history and traditional commentaries that are in the suitcase of the *Yoga Sūtras*. Through his depth of understanding and research rendered in this detailed map, we are able to travel a little closer to our soul. I will be reading and referring to his text for a lifetime.” —Rodney Yee, author of *Moving Toward Balance*

“The greatest strength of Edwin Bryant’s work on the *Yoga Sūtras* is that he has taken the most abstruse commentaries and made of them a fluidly readable work. He has made an academically serious study into a presentation of most symmetrical beauty. He has brought together the views of different schools of philosophy and made them rhyme as though in poetry. We need more of such works of serious and yet readable philosophy.” —Swami Veda Bharati, D.Litt.,

Chancellor, HIHT University, Dehradun, India

“Bryant’s meticulous study of the *Yoga Sūtras* examines its reception throughout the past fifteen hundred years by a variety of commentators. Understanding that all religious books operate in the context of lived communities, Bryant suggests that the worship of Vishnu as taught by Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gīta* has played an important role in how the practice of *yoga* has been understood and communicated, particularly for the past five hundred years. For practitioners of *yoga*, this book provides a fresh look at a complex philosophy of applied spirituality.”

—Christopher Key Chapple, Doshi Professor of Indic and Comparative Theology, Loyola Marymount University, and author of *Yoga and the Luminous*

“What I like about Edwin Bryant’s edition is that it serves as a concordance of commentaries, a commentary on the commentaries without which this text (or any other compendium of sutras) is unintelligible. It is a pleasure to watch as Bryant uses the commentaries to show how thinking about the *Yoga Sūtras* shifted and evolved over the years.”

—Dr. Robert Svoboda, Ayurvedacharya



Bo Forbes

Edwin F. Bryant

THE YOGA SŪTRAS OF PATAÑJALI

Edwin F. Bryant received his Ph.D. in Indology from Columbia University. He has taught at Columbia University and Harvard University and since 2001 has been professor of Hindu religion and philosophy at Rutgers University. Bryant has written numerous scholarly articles and published five previous books, including a translation of the four thousand verses of the tenth book of the *Bhāgavata Purāna* called *Krishna: The Beautiful Legend of God*. In addition to his work in the academy, Bryant teaches workshops on the *Yoga Sūtras* and other Hindu texts in *yoga* communities around the world. His website is www.edwinbryant.org.

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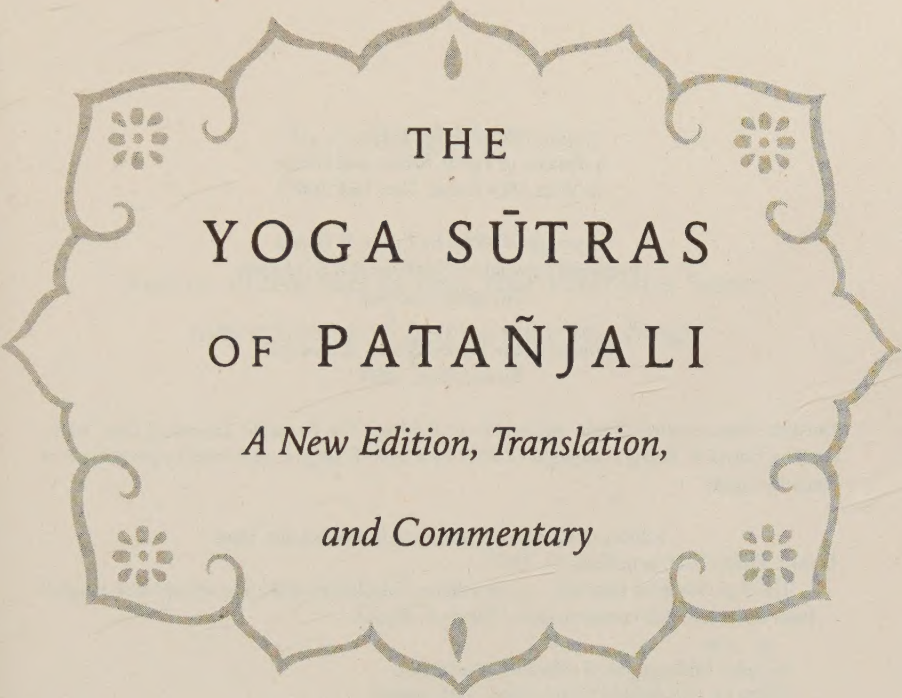
THE
YOGA SŪTRAS
OF PATAÑJALI

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
THE AUTHOR OF THE
"YOGA SŪTRAS"
BY
EDWIN T. BRYANT

THE
YOGA SUTRAS
OF PATANJALI

By Sri Swami Sivananda
Translated from the Sanskrit
of Sri Swami Sivananda
with the Commentary
of Sri Swami Sivananda
and the Introduction
of Sri Swami Sivananda

YOGA SUTRAS



THE
YOGA SŪTRAS
OF PATAÑJALI

*A New Edition, Translation,
and Commentary*

WITH INSIGHTS FROM THE
TRADITIONAL COMMENTATORS

EDWIN F. BRYANT

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To my daughter, Mohini

And to all teachers of *yoga*, that Patañjali's *Sūtras*
may inform and inspire their teachings



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FOREWORD

by B.K.S. Iyengar

I congratulate you on your lucid commentary on the *Yoga Sūtras* of Patañjali. I have appreciated your commentary quoting the traditional commentators Vyāsa, Vācaspati Miśra, Śaṅkara, Bhoja Rāja, Vijñāna-bhikṣu, and Hariharānanda, and it reads well. You have presented it in simple and fluent language, which I am sure will be easily understandable to readers. As you are dedicating it to the teachers of *yoga*, I am sure your book will provide the readers with plenty of knowledge so that they may grasp the philosophy behind the subject and move toward the higher aspects of life in their *sādhana* (practice).

Pātañjala Yoga is a practical subject and not a discursive one. As each individual is electrically alive and dynamic, so *yoga* is a living, dynamic force in life. In order to savor its essence, one needs a religiously attentive dynamic practice done with awareness and absorption. The life of man is not only the conjunction of *prakṛti* (the sheaths of the body) and *puruṣa* (the soul), but also a combination of these two. *Yoga* is a means to utilizing the conjunction of *prakṛti* and *puruṣa* for freedom and beatitude (*mokṣa*), as the two are interwoven and interrelated.

Patañjali explains the practice of *kriyā-yoga* in *sūtra* I of the *sādhana pāda*, repeating the same ingredients as are found in the *niyama* disciplines, namely, *tapas*, *svādhyāya*, and *Īśvara-praṇidhāna* (discipline, self-study, and devotion to God). This three-tiered definition clearly indicates the paths of *karma*, *jñāna*, and *bhakti*. Though Patañjali advises *bhakti* in the beginning of the text in I.23, I consider the disciplines of *yama* and *niyama* (II.30–45) as corresponding to *karma-marga* (the path of action); *āsana*, *prāṇāyāma*, and *pratyāhāra* (II.46–55)

as corresponding to *jñāna-marga* (the path of knowledge); and *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna*, and *samādhi* (*saṁyama*, III.1–4) as corresponding to *bhakti marga* (the path of devotion).

Prakṛti and *puruṣa* being interwoven and interrelated, the practitioners of *yoga* have to understand this relationship clearly and perform *svādhyāya* in the form of *āsana*, *prāṇāyāma*, and *pratyāhāra*. *Svā* means “self” and *adhyāya* means “study.” These three aspects of Pātañjala Yoga lead the *sādhaka* (practitioner) to understand himself or herself from the skin to the self. Hence, this guides one on the path of *jñāna*. *Dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna*, and *samādhi* being the effect of *jñāna* earned through the practices of *āsana*, *prāṇāyāma*, and *pratyāhāra* along with *yama* and *niyama*, then lead the *sādhaka* toward the path of *bhakti*. *Bhakti* is the summum bonum of Pātañjala Yoga. But if the *sādhaka* abuses the *sādhana* with selfish motives, he or she ends up with only the joys of sensual pleasure (*bhoga*).

As *yoga* is a lively subject, interpretations of the *sūtras* may vary according to *dharma*, *lakṣana*, and *avastha pariṇāma* (character, qualities, and conditions) in *sādhana* (III.13). Therefore, I differ from the traditional commentators on two things. The first pertains to the effects of *āsana*: *tato dvandvānabhighātāḥ* (II.48). The entire text speaks of the intelligence of nature and the intelligence of the self. I understand that the perfection of *āsana* brings unity between the various sheaths of the body and the self (*puruṣa*), which Lord Kṛṣṇa calls *kṣetra-kṣetrajña yoga* in the *Bhagavad Gītā* (XIII.1ff). Hence, perfection in *āsana* means a divine union of *prakṛti* with *puruṣa*.

The practice of *āsanās* develops *sattva guṇa*, sublimating the *guṇas* of *rajas* and *tamas*. The aim of *āsanās* is to make the *prāṇa* (cosmic universal force) move concurrently with the *prajñā* (insight) of the self on its frontier. This means to make the awareness of the self (*sāsmitā*) move and cover the entire body (II.19) so that the mechanisms of nature are sublimated and the intelligence (*prajñā*) of the self engulfs the body with its *śakti*.

The second point pertains to the *virāma pratyāyā* of verse I.18 (*virāma-pratyāyābhyāsa-pūrvāḥ saṁskāra-śeṣo 'nyaḥ*—the other *samādhi* is preceded by cultivating the determination to terminate [all thoughts]. [In this state] only latent impressions remain). Patañjali himself does not call this other state *asamprajñāta-samādhi* (I.46). He

has said that it is part of *sabīja-samādhi* (I.46). The various commentators infer this state to be *asamprajñāta*, and this may be because Patañjali mentions *samprajñāta-samādhi* in the preceding *sūtra*. For me, this *sūtra* is referring to a consolidating state of *samprajñāta-samādhi*, after attaining which the *yogī* can move toward *asamprajñāta* (*nirbīja*) *samādhi*. Hence, this state acts as the intermediary state for *nirbīja-samādhi*. Just as *pratyāhāra* in *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* (II.54) is a consolidating stage, where one needs to integrate the external sheath (*bahirāṅga*) with the innermost sheath (*antarāṅga*), so is the case with the stage of *virāma pratyaya*, for which Patañjali has not coined any term. It is a consolidating stage of *sabīja-samādhi*, after which the *yogī* naturally moves toward *nirbīja-samādhi*.

For me, the state of *pratyāhāra* in *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* and *virāma-pratyaya* in *samādhi* are the touchstones in understanding the purity, clarity, and maturity of *prajñā*, intelligence. When this illuminative and luminous intelligence takes place, the union of *prakṛti* with *puruṣa* happens (*sattva-puruṣayoḥ śuddhi-samye kaivalyam iti* III.56*). Even in this *pratyāhāra* state of *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* and *virāma-pratyaya* state in *samādhi*, if one neglects *śraddhā*, *vīrya*, *smṛti*, *samādhi-prajñā* (faith, vigor, memory, and the insight of *samādhi*, the four legs of *yoga* in I.20), then, even if one has reached the zenith, one is bound to become a *yoga-bhraṣṭa*, a fallen *yogī*. Therefore, the practice of *pratyāhāra* in *aṣṭāṅga yoga* or *virāma-pratyaya* in *samādhi* is to be performed with these four legs of *yoga* so as to maintain and retain that state of seasoned wisdom (*ṛtambharā prajñā*, I.48) that consecrates *citi-śakti* (the power of *puruṣa*). It is this combination only that leads the *yogī* toward the highest state in *bhakti-marga*—the *śaraṇāgati-mārga*—total dependence on *Īśvara*, God. This is how I understand and practice the *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* of sage Patañjali.

Having expressed my feelings, I am sure your good work and expressions, using the attributes of all the earlier commentators on the *Yoga Sūtras*, will turn out as a study book for hundreds and hundreds of students who have embraced the subject in the West in knowing the light of that hidden illuminative intelligence on the inner self, the

*Editor's note: B.K.S. Iyengar accepts fifty-six verses in the third *pada* where other commentators accept fifty-five.

ātman, and making that light surface and active in their *sādhana*, which will help their fellow beings experience this unalloyed and untainted bliss with its stream of virtuous (*śīlatā*) wisdom.

With all my best wishes, I am sure this volume will benefit *yoga sādhakas* and spiritual seekers throughout the world.

Pune, December 5, 2007

SANSKRIT PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

DIACRITICS USED IN THIS TRANSLATION:

ā ī ū ṛ ḷ ḥ ṁ ṅ ṇ ṅ ṛ ḍ ś ṣ

The following pronunciation guide attempts to give *approximate* equivalents in English to the Sanskrit sounds used in this text.

VOWELS

Sanskrit vowels have both short forms and lengthened forms (the latter are transliterated by a line over the vowel—*ā, ī, ū*), as well as a retroflex *ṛ* sound articulated by curling the tongue farther back onto the roof of the mouth than for the English *r*. Other Sanskrit vowels alien to English are noted below. Vowels are listed in Sanskrit in the following traditional order (according to their locus of articulation, beginning from the back of the throat to the front of the mouth):

<i>a</i>	as in “but”
<i>ā</i>	as in “tar”; held twice as long as short <i>a</i>
<i>i</i>	as in “bit”
<i>ī</i>	as in “week”; held twice as long as short <i>i</i>
<i>u</i>	as in “bush”
<i>ū</i>	as in “fool”; held twice as long as short <i>u</i>
<i>ṛ</i>	as in “rim”
<i>ḷ</i>	no English equivalent; approximated by <i>l</i> followed by <i>r</i> , above
<i>e</i>	as in “they”
<i>ai</i>	as in “aisle”
<i>o</i>	as in “go”

- au* as in “vow”
ḥ (*visarga*) a final “h” sound that echoes the preceding vowel slightly; as in “aha” for *aḥ*
ṁ (*anusvāra*) a nasal sound pronounced like *mm*, but influenced according to whatever consonant follows, as in “bingo,” “punch”

CONSONANTS

Sanskrit consonants have both aspirated forms (*kh, gh, ch, jh*, and so on) and unaspirated forms (*k, g, c, j*, and so on); the former involve articulating the consonant accompanied by a slight expulsion of air. There is also a set of retroflexes (transliterated with a dot beneath them—*ṭ, ḍ, ṭh, ḍh, ṇ, ṣ*), which have no precise English equivalents, and these involve curling the tongue farther back onto the roof of the mouth than for the English dentals. Sanskrit dentals (*t, d, th, dh*) are articulated with the tongue touching the teeth, slightly farther forward than for their English equivalents. The consonants are listed in Sanskrit in the following traditional order (according to their locus of articulation, beginning from the back of the throat to the front of the mouth):

- k* as in “pick”
kh as in “Eckhart”
g as in “gate”
gh as in “dig-hard”
ṅ as in “sing”
c as in “charm”
ch as in “staunch-heart”
j as in “jog”
jh as in “hedgehog”
ñ as in “canyon”
ṭ as in “tub,” but with the tongue curled farther back
ṭh as in “light-heart,” but with the tongue curled farther back
ḍ as in “dove,” but with the tongue curled farther back
ḍh as in “red-hot,” but with the tongue curled farther back
ṇ as in “tint,” but with the tongue touching the teeth
t as in “tub,” but with the tongue touching the teeth
th as in “light-heart,” but with the tongue touching the teeth

<i>d</i>	as in “dove,” but with the tongue touching the teeth
<i>dh</i>	as in “red-hot,” but with the tongue touching the teeth
<i>n</i>	as in “no,” but with the tongue touching the teeth
<i>p</i>	as in “pin”
<i>ph</i>	as in “uphill”
<i>b</i>	as in “bin”
<i>bh</i>	as in “rub-hard”
<i>m</i>	as in “mum”
<i>y</i>	as in “yellow”
<i>r</i>	as in “run”
<i>l</i>	as in “love”
<i>v</i>	as in “vine”
<i>ś</i>	as in “shove”
<i>ṣ</i>	as in “crashed,” but with the tongue curled farther back
<i>s</i>	as in “such”
<i>h</i>	as in “hope”



THE HISTORY OF YOGA

Everyone by now has heard of *yoga*, and, indeed, with millions of Americans in some form or fashion practicing *āsana*, the physical aspect of *yoga*, the teaching and practice of *yoga*, at least in the aspect of techniques of body poses and stretches, are now thoroughly mainstream activities on the Western cultural landscape. *Yoga* has popularly been translated as “union with the divine”¹ and may refer to a number of different spiritual systems. The *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* (*sāṅkhya-yoga*), the path of knowledge; *bhakti-yoga*, the path of devotion; and *dhyāna-yoga*, the path of silent meditation (which is the subject of Patañjali’s text),² and terms such as *tantra-yoga*, *siddha-yoga*, *nāda-yoga*, and so forth are now common in alternative spiritualities in the West. Typically, however, when the word *yoga* is used by itself without any qualification, it refers to the path of meditation, particularly as outlined in the *Yoga Sūtras*—the Aphorisms on *Yoga*—and the term *yogī*, a practitioner of this type of meditational *yoga*.

Patañjali was the compiler of the *Yoga Sūtras*, one of the ancient treatises on Indic philosophy that eventually came to be regarded as one of the six classical schools of Indian philosophy. He presented a teaching that focuses on realization of the *puruṣa*—the term favored by the Yoga school³ to refer to the innermost conscious self, loosely equivalent to the soul in Western Greco-Abrahamic traditions. The practice of *yoga* emerged from post-Vedic India as perhaps its most important development and has exerted immense influence over the philosophical discussions and religious practices of what has come to

be known as mainstream Hinduism, 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 Eastern, and therefore world, thought. Along with the *Bhagavad Gītā*, it is the text that has received the most attention and interest outside of India. I might add here that Patañjali's *Yoga Sūtras* 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, including the *Bhagavad Gītā*. Therefore, as a template, it can be and has been appropriated and reconfigured by followers of different schools and traditions throughout Indian religious history⁴ and certainly continues to lend itself to such appropriations, most recently in nonreligious contexts of the West.

In its exported manifestation, *yoga* has tended to focus on the physical aspect of the system of *yoga*, the *āsanas*, or stretching poses and postures, which most Western adherents of *yoga* practice in order to stay trim, supple, and healthy. Patañjali himself, however, pays minimal attention to the *āsanas*, which are the third stage of the eight stages, or limbs, of *yoga*, and focuses primarily on meditation and various stages of concentration of the mind.

There are references to awareness of *yogīs* on the Western landscape as early as Greek classical sources, Alexander being perhaps the most notorious early Westener to be fascinated with Indian ascetics. Its initial introduction to the West in modern times was by Vivekānanda at the end of the nineteenth century. More recently, generic *yoga*—particularly as *āsanas*, postures, but also as a meditative technique leading to *samādhi*, enlightenment—was popularized in the West by a number of influential Hindu teachers of *yoga* in the 1960s, most of whom came from two lineages: Sivananda (1887–1963) and Krishnamāchārya (1888–1989). Sivananda was a renunciant and his ashram tradition was transplanted by his disciples Vishnudevananda (1927–1993), Satchidananda (1914–2002), and Chinmayananda (1916–1993), each of whom founded his own independent mission in the West (the Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Centres, the Integral Yoga Institute, and the Chinmaya Mission, respectively). Krishnamāchārya's three principal disciples took his emphasis on the practice of *āsana* in