



# INFLUENCE OF YOGA PHILOSOPHY ON KNOWING THE WORLD

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## Abstract

Although yoga has been practised for over 5,000 years, it has only recently been recognised for its unique potential to cure a wide range of physical and mental disorders. Yoga effectively tackles a wide range of philosophical and psychological concerns; it is sometimes referred to as an ancient form of philosophy and psychology as well. The ultimate objective of Yoga is to achieve oneness of mind and nature/body/purusa to enter a state of pure consciousness known as Moksha or Samadhi. Patanjali, in his *Yogasutra*, outlines several techniques, rituals, and procedures that might be used to achieve enlightenment. *Yogasutra* is like a guiding principle to know the world's reality and a journey toward self-realization, a better understanding of the universe, and a connection to something beyond both. Yoga's central theme is that the imperceptible may be sensed as well. Kant indeed acknowledges that it is imperceptible, but he does not guide how to get access to these realities. The goal of Yoga is self-realization, and its teachings and practices focus on how to achieve that end. According to Vedanta, the meaning of yoga is union or the spiritual joining of one's soul with the soul of the universe. This perspective is not made apparent. Patanjali defined yoga as an internal discipline aimed at achieving enlightenment by mastering one's the physical body, conscious mind, subconscious impulses, and superconscious ego. The purpose of this review article is to examine and assess the available literature on the topic of the impact of Yoga philosophy on worldview. Understanding the workings of the mind necessitates an examination of the Yoga school's theory of knowledge, which we will discuss below.

**Key words:** Yoga philosophy, Indian philosophy of mind, consciousness, Patanjali

## I. Introduction

If you ask Patanjali, "chitta vritti nirodhah" is the definition of Yoga. Yoga is beneficial for one's whole being. The term "global art" was used to describe this phenomenon. By becoming a well-functioning part of the global human body, we may promote health and peace in our communities, our countries, and the world. The deep philosophical and psychological knowledge of the mind-body connection underpins Yoga's widespread appeal. Regarding the relationship between the mind and the body, as well as our knowledge of the external world, it is a self-contained system. Though yoga asana (the physical practice) has exploded in popularity, the underlying

philosophies and psychological underpinnings are just as important. Yoga, the physical discipline, is useless without its mental counterpart.

The Yoga philosophy holds that spiritual blindness is the root of all suffering and keeps us trapped in the revolving door of samsara (cycle of rebirth). There are various methods according to which one can work towards removing one's ignorance (avidya). Yoga's philosophical foundations still emphasise the development of insight, dispassion, enlightenment, and self-awareness (Krishnananda, 1982). Karma is a fundamental principle in yoga. Karma keeps us stuck on the *samsaric* loop of pain and Maya's illusion of bliss. Maya, which translates to "illusion or ignorance," is the barrier that separates our consciousness from the oneness with which we perceive the cosmos. Westerners may find these underlying world beliefs puzzling, yet they are useful in retraining our brains to see and appreciate the interdependence of all things. Nonetheless, western philosophy offers its unique perspective on the world. Some are distinct from and unfamiliar to western philosophy, while others echo ideas central to Indian epistemology. Indian philosophy provides a worldview that is directed towards achieving permanence in the form of salvation as compared to western philosophical methods. Western philosophers were mostly concerned with the description of the world and the being. Most of them, even those who accepted that there is a non-sensual reality, couldn't provide a method for experiencing it. Such as, the German philosopher, Immanuel Kant, famous for his enlightenment thought differentiated between two kinds of reality one which is observable through the senses and the other which is present but is beyond the scope of one's perception. However, he couldn't specify the methods of knowing the non-sensual reality. On the other hand, within the yoga philosophy following a specific procedure, a route that may take one to knowledge that transcends time and space can help in knowing the reality that exists beyond the scope of senses. In fact, in the Indian philosophical system to have access to such esoteric information there are methods and practices. (Bivolaru, 2016).

Spacetime objects are called "appearances," and Kant contends that we know nothing substantive about the things in themselves of which they are appearances. Transcendental idealism is Kant's term for this body of thought (Eliade, 1963). Knowledge, according to Kant, may be broken down into two categories: noumena and phenomena. According to Kant's definition, a noumenon is the notion of an object of cognition for an intellect that is not discursive like ours and hence possesses a non-sensible type of intuition, which he calls "intellectual intuition" (Kaipaiyal, 2022). Intuitions may be classified as either "sensible," whereby things are seen only via their effects on the perceiver, or "non-sensible," when the mere perception of an item is enough to bring it into reality. Consequently, a noumenon is an idea of anything that may be known by a mind whose intuition creates the things it thinks about. Since knowing an object needs intuition, and since our intuition is sensual rather than intellectual, it is clear that we are not aware of any noumena. While phenomena are the appearances which are directly observed. The term came into use after Kant differentiated between the observable and the non-observable. (Nicholas and Stag, 2022)

It is clear that in Kant's philosophy, knowledge of things outside of space and time is conditional. Kant concedes that there must be things beyond our sensory perception that we cannot know since our human minds are just not

equipped to grasp such abstract concepts. You may argue that the Yoga school of Indian philosophy came up with a way to unite the human spirit with the natural world. When we talk about knowing one's "nature," we're referring to the ability to differentiate between things that exist in our physical universe and those that exist outside of it. The only way to understand these things is to attain a state of non-sensual awareness in which the mind merges with nature. The purpose of this paper is to examine the impact of the Yoga school of Indian philosophy on our understanding of the world's reality. Analysis of Yoga's theory of knowledge is crucial to understanding the philosophy's impact.

## II. Theory of Knowledge in Patanjali's Yoga

The 'Yoga-sutras' of Patanjali are the earliest comprehensive and authoritative treatments of yoga philosophy and practice. Good contributions to Yoga philosophy include Patanjali, Vasys' "Yoga-bhasya," and Vacavpati Mishra's "Tattva-vaisharadi." Yoga provides a method that may be followed to achieve self-awareness. According to the Gita, Yoga and Samkhya are only different perspectives on the same system. Samkhya and the Yoga tradition have many parallels, yet there are also notable differences. Both ideologies share the belief that enlightenment is a path to freedom. And the ability to master one's own body, mind, senses, intellect, and ego is essential for acquiring such knowledge. A person's mind is their whole set of mental faculties, including their ability to be aware, take in information, store it, retrieve it, apply it, and form opinions. It may also be thought as a person's internal thinking processes, both consciously and subconsciously. Patanjali defines yoga as the art of stilling the chattering mind in the Yoga Sutras. This is according to (Bhavnani and Ananda, 2016).

The Samkhya tradition agrees with Yoga's three *pramanas*. Perception, inference, and *śabda*. Despite the Yoga tradition's emphasis on the difference between knowledge and real belief, adherents of this school of thought see the truth and the process of knowledge production as inextricably linked. False sources are the only ones that claim otherwise. To put it another way: no information source generates non-veridical cognition. An authoritative doxastic practice is not the only definition of a knowledge source. Merely being dependable is not enough. Maybe the words "perception," "inference," and "testimony" would be the best way to translate traditional Indian concepts. according to (Schreiner, 1991) The Sanskrit word for testimony is exclusively used for what would be called "epistemically successful testimony" in English, i.e. with a hearer knowing a consequence of a speaker speaking the truth. A non-veridical perception is only an "appearing perception" (*pratyakṣa-bhāsa*) or "pseudo-perception" (*pratyakṣa-bhāsa*) that tries to fool the mind into thinking it has a true perception. It's an optical illusion; the snake isn't there, but you could be seeing it. According to Philips (2021).

## III. Patanjali's Yoga-sutra:

The Yoga sutra consists of four parts:

- i) **Samadhipada:** The first portion deals with the introduction to the nature and practises of yoga in its different forms. It discusses the numerous variations of the organs including citta which is an internal organ of the human person.



- ii) **Sadhanapada:** In the second section, we learn what makes people suffer and what may be done to end it. Karma and human connection are discussed.
- iii) **Vibhutipada:** The final section explains in detail how yoga may be used to attain superhuman abilities.
- iv) **Kaivalyapad:** Finally, the nature of freedom and spiritual unity with the highest soul/self are discussed.

In addition, having a solid mental grounding is necessary for entering the yoga path. In other words, having even a little familiarity with psychology may make the yoga journey much more comprehensible. Citta is the primary focus of yoga psychology. As defined by Samkhya philosophy, "citta" refers to the mind, the ego, and the intellect. The Prakriti with its first alterations is characterised by a preponderance of the sattva guna over the rajas and tamas.

Each Guna represents certain characteristics in a way that all that can be known in this universe is a manifestation of the *Gun*as. Philosophically, the theory of the three *Gun*as explains the makeup of the universe. The understanding of how *Gun*as influence our thoughts and emotions is crucial for controlling the emotional state of mind. Once you can observe the *Gun*as at work, you'll be able to better understand and navigate your emotional world. (Hueneburg, 2021).

#### IV. Citta vrtti (Modification) and Relationship with Gunas

*Rajas* are mostly material but become aware only when it comes into proximity to the Purusa. But it takes on the "shape" of whatever it is talking about in context. Vrtti is a kind of modification. Citta's tweaks have allowed the self to gain familiarity with the material world. No genuine or substantial alteration to the self has taken place. However, the look of change may be observed in it since the Purusa is reflected in the Citta's alterations. Similar to how the moon looks to be floating in the river and the waves appear to be bright, Purusa's reflection in Citta gives the impression that it is experiencing changes and gives the impression that it is aware. Upon acquiring the necessary information to modify Citta, the self ceases to exist after the object has been thoroughly studied. The mind became dissociated from the pleasures and sorrows of the external world. All of this liking and disliking is really "bondage." Humans, to escape this servitude, must master Citta's alterations. Only through regular yoga practice can one learn to rein in the fluctuations of Citta. Thus, Patanjali characterises yoga as the end of Citta alteration. Citta, according to Yoga philosophy, may take many shapes and forms. Allow me to propose that we tackle each of these questions in turn. (Bryant, 2002)

When the Purusa, or the self, is reflected in the Citta, the Citta transforms and gains awareness. Nonetheless, Citta's true essence is in the physical world. Vrttis adjustments describe the shifts in Citta. Citta may undergo five different kinds of customizations. In particular, they are:

- (i) **Pramana** (right cognition): The three Pramanas are fundamental to every Yoga school and are also central to Samkhya (sources of valid knowledge). A few examples of these are perception, inference, and Sabda (verbal testimony). When the Citta perceives anything, it does so by making physical touch with the item through its senses (both internal and external). The Citta understands the general character of objects in the event of inference, and this understanding extends to vocal evidence as well.

- (ii) **Viparyaya** (wrong cognition): The word "Viparyaya" means "doubt" in English. The state of being uncertain about something is called doubt. The inability to tell the difference between a shell and silver, for instance, might lead to confusion.
- (iii) **Vikalpa** (imagination): It's the kind of knowledge where the item is recognised but not present. Because of this, we ignore it as if it were a mental process and instead regard it as a verbal one. Ex: the offspring of sterile women, the horn of a horse, etc.
- (iv) **Nidra** (sleep): Nidra is a state of mind in which all thinking is suspended. It's the realisation that there are no things there. At this time, tamas has taken control of the Citta. The knowledge that is just faintly present when a person sleep will not be ignored at this stage. This is because upon regaining awareness, one realises that he or she had slept well and learned nothing new during that time. Even as you sleep, your body and mind undergo a variety of shifts.
- (v) **Smrti** (memory): What we call "memory" or "*Smrti*" is just our brains' way of rehashing what we've already experienced. The traces we left on the items we cognized allow for their subsequent recreation. As a result, *Citta* has undergone several forms of change at this point.

Further, the process of the modification of citta takes place in various stages described below (Burley, 2007):

### Stages of Citta

- a) **Ksipta** (Restless) Phase one of Citta has now arrived. At this time, Citta has become widely dispersed and entangled with material possessions. Take the power- and money-obsessed citizens of Citta, for instance.
- b) **Mudha** (Torpid): Tamas now predominates over the other two *Gunas*, sattva and rajas in this level.
- c) **Viksipta** (Distracted): Sattva Guna predominates over the other two guns in the third stage of Citta. At this point, Citta starts practising yoga in an attempt to connect with the divine or ultimate soul. As the sattva predominates, the Citta's evolution slows down for a while.
- d) **Ekagra** (concentrated): At this point, Citta has progressed to its fourth phase. At this point, Citta has been firmly attached to an item, most likely as a result of the dominance of sattva. It goes by the name Ekagra. A candle's flame, for instance, never veers or flickers; it always burns straight up.
- e) **Niruddha** (Restricted): Niruddha is the last and penultimate level of Citta. After the cession of changes, the Citta is still infused with impressions. Yoga is the term for this phase. The latter two of these five steps are very important, making yoga an applicable practice. However, the remaining phases are counterproductive to yoga practice and may be eliminated with regular effort.

### Forms of Citta

Citta is ever-evolving because it contains the three *Gunas* (sattva, rajas, and tamas). This is because certain guna tends to exert more influence than others. As a result, we can identify three distinct types of citta. (Dhungel, 2014). These are;

- i) **Prakhya**: Sattva guna, now is the time of Guna's preponderance. However, tamas continues to be sattva's inferior principle. In this state, the *Citta* seeks out various yogic abilities. Terms like "anima," "siddhi," "etc.,"

ii) *Pravrti*: *Pravrti* The rajas dosha has taken over the *Citta* in this state. In this context, *tamas* begins to falter. This shape, therefore, seems enlightened.

iii) *Sthiti Prakhya*: This kind of *Citta* includes the practices of *dhyana* and *dharna*. In the *Citta*, *sattva* is dominant while *rajas* are subservient. Here, *Citta* maintains its unique shape, setting it apart from similar concepts. (Dhungel, 2014)

## V. Kinds of Klesas

There are several factors at play in the *Citta*'s unrest. Some examples include preoccupation with material things, incorrect knowledge of those items, lack of initiative, uncertainty, carelessness, etc. *Citta*, inspired by *Purusa*'s reflection, falsely attributes agency and pleasure to itself, giving birth to these effects. Thus, we discover the tribulations of this world (*klesas*). According to Yoga philosophy, there are five distinct types of pain or *klesas*. (Manek, 2016) These are;

- i) **Avidya** (ignorance): The experience of *avidya* occurs when we realise that the self is temporal and made of matter. The true identity, however, is a source of unending joy and unadulterated awareness.
- ii) **Asmita** (egoism): *Asmita* has made a huge mistake by confusing *Purusa* and *Prakrti* and giving them each a voice. However, *purusa* and *Prakrti* are not the same thing and cannot be interchanged.
- iii) **Raga** (attachment): *Raga* refers to an inclination for material gains, such as fame, fortune, and power.
- iv) **Dvesa** (aversion): Anger expressed via pain is called *dvesa*.
- v) **Abhinivesa** (clinging for long life and fear of death): *Abhinivesa*, the last, is the universal dread of death shared by all creatures great and little (Agrawal, 2013).

## VI. Yoga as Practice

In the perceptual levels, the inner genius is still represented via the outward, personal man, and the spiritual vision is still operating at the level of the mind and the psyche. The spiritual man has not yet fully realised who he is in his world, with all psychical masks removed. When you do yoga, you enter a level of activity that may set in motion the three-step process (liberation, realisation, mergence) that ultimately leads to union. The Sanskrit word "yuj" means "to unite" or "to merge," and yoga is the practice of bringing together or uniting different aspects of oneself. (Kabel, 2018)

Practices like yoga are the foundation of any knowledge. The practice of yoga has the effect of widening our view. Consistent yoga practice fosters the maturation of this awareness into an understanding that ultimately leads to illumination. Exercising the body also strengthens the intellect and the heart, a process akin to meditation. Meditation on the heart facilitates a heightened perception of one's surroundings and, more crucially, one's self. This guide has a heart as enormous as the heart of the universe, and he or she is either a very accomplished yogi or a Master yogi (like the Overlord in Clarke's novel). (Ramkrishnan, 2019)

We, humans, are physical creatures with sensory organs and a cognitive brain; it seems to reason that we would have a strong emotional investment in the material things around us. Therefore, we have drained the sea of servitude and accumulated the pains of this world. For us to be free from the pain of this world and the ignorance

that lurks inside us, we must learn to rule over our senses, our thoughts, and our actions. The citta must be managed to achieve this goal. To that end, the eight-fold path is a set of tenets central to the yoga philosophic tradition that encourages us to rein in our baser desires. (Jarry and Colleagues2017).

**Table: 1 These eight-fold path are presented in the table below:**

Steps	Asthanga Yoga (Eight-fold Path)
<i>Yama</i>	Ethical values
<i>Niyama</i>	Daily Sanitation Chores
<i>Asana</i>	Practice of asana or poses.
<i>Pranayam</i>	Breadth Controlling exercises
<i>Pratyahara</i>	Self-extraction and abstraction
<i>Dharana</i>	Concentration
<i>Dhyana</i>	Contemplation
<i>Samadhi</i>	The disappearance of the duality/plurality of mind

i) Yama ii) Niyama iii) Asana iv) Pranayama v) Pratyahara vi) Dharana vii) Dhyana viii) Samadhi.

Now let us discuss these points one after another in a sequential manner.

The 8 limbs of yoga are a set of principles outlining what it means to live a fulfilling existence. They help us see the spiritual components of our nature and provide a prescription for moral and ethical behaviour and self-discipline. But wouldn't happiness, satisfaction, and freedom make it into our list of hopes, wants, and goals if we take a moment to reflect on what it is we want from life? Patanjali's description of nirvana at the end of the yogic path is the ultimate goal toward which every person strives. We should also consider that the ultimate goal of yoga, enlightenment, is not something that can be owned or acquired. Only through direct experience can its full price of unwavering dedication be calculated. (Carrico, 2021).





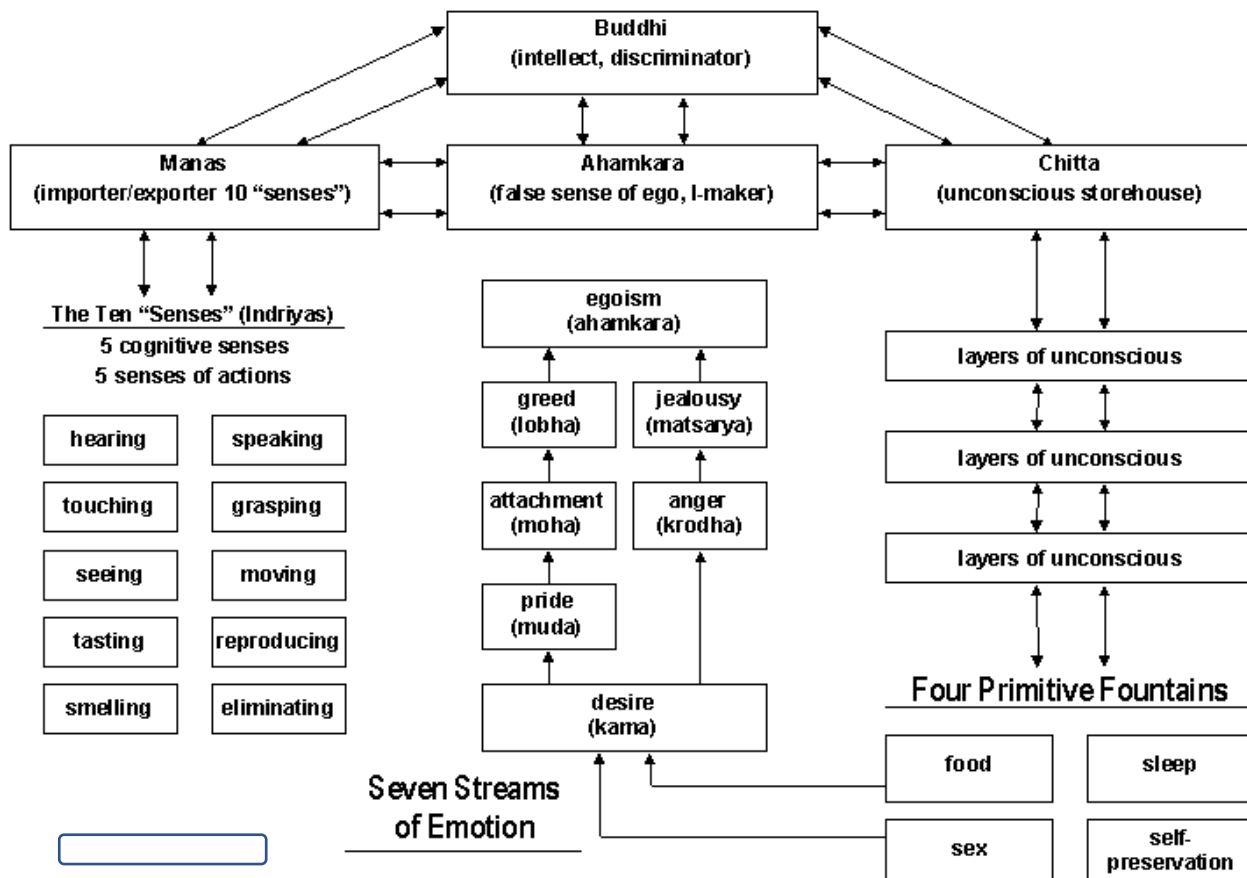


Fig 1: Inner Process of Mind according to Yoga Philosophy

## VII. Influence of Yoga Philosophy on Knowing the World

To become a better person and a constructive force in the world, we engage in physical postures, breathing exercises, and meditation. We'd want to train ourselves to respond with composure rather than anger when faced with pressure, such as while stuck in traffic or when facing an obstacle at work. However, responding with more awareness and acceptance requires first finding a means to defuse the tension.

Since becoming angrier about the traffic situation won't help us get there any sooner, we may as well accept it. Instead of arguing and making things worse, we should attempt to talk constructively and openly to find a way out of the unpleasant situation at work.

Keeping the question "Is there anything I can do to make the world a better place?" in the back of your mind is another great method to put this into practise' (Brent, 2022).

If we consider what a yogic way of life may be, we find that it entails acting in a manner that brings harmony to your being and kindness to others at all times. The new study is starting to provide light on how the practice of yoga may alter the brain, but scientists still don't have a clear understanding of how yoga achieves all that. (Kaipayl, 2022) Meditation helps us acquire perspective by stilling the chatter of the mind and taming the ego's dominant voice. To do this, one must develop a self-awareness that encompasses one's daily actions and reactions to the environment around them. Practising yoga is to practise cultivating this awareness inside, as well as through physical postures on the outside. Remaining open, loving, and honest even to those who have caused you



sorrow – are all attributes that anybody may chose to take up if they choose to devote themselves to a regular yoga practice. (Ealton, 2002).

For a long time, the Yoga Sutras have been seen as a set of rules that may help us reach out to God. Here we go on to psychic objects or mental pictures. When we compare, arrange, and superimpose these mental representations, we form broad ideas or concepts. The judicial activity of the mind referred to here is the process of selecting particular characteristics in a set of mind images and then ranking those of comparable quality. A poet or a man of genius uses a power closer to the sharp vision of the spiritual man when he or she practises rapid divination upon the mind's imagery (Mohanty, 2022). Our physical, external selves are unmistakable and unique in every way (name, location, makeup); our mental selves, composed of subtler elements, collide and recombine in a never-ending cycle of conflagration and collision; and our spiritual selves, capable of true consciousness only in the context of unity, where the barriers between ourselves and the Highest and between ourselves and others are torn down and we are all made perfect in the One, are finally dismantled. Only when all good minds come together can they access the greatest wealth. Together, we can transcend our differences and become who we were always meant to be (Gabriel, 2019).

### VIII. Conclusion

One of the main concepts that can be derived from this study is a cognitive model that may be used to understand the mind. This discovery has the potential to spark new investigations into how the mind works, and it already serves as a connecting point between the traditional yoga lore and our contemporary knowledge of the mind and cognition. Counselling and treatment in the mental health field may also benefit from this conceptual framework. According to the literature analysed here, the Yoga philosophy is an all-encompassing and holistic approach to the study of the mind. To put it another way, it helps clarify the distinction between the real and the maya (unreal). According to the results of this research, Yoga's widespread appeal may be traced back to the philosophy's all-encompassing explanation of knowledge theory and mental functioning.

The recent works studied in this paper show that Eastern philosophy is ahead of western philosophy when it comes to knowing one's mind and consequently the external world. Both the western and the Indian traditions accept that there are two kinds of realities, one, that is known to the senses and the other which cannot be known through the senses alone. It requires the consciousness of a different type, one that is higher than sensual knowledge. There exists a gap in Kantian philosophy when it comes to explaining how we know entities that are beyond the capacity of sensual knowledge. Yoga philosophy is capable of filling this gap. Yoga has become popular also a method of physical exercise and is shown to reduce the symptoms of many physical and mental illnesses. The subtle body, which is neither wholly physical nor spiritual, and the spiritual forces of prana and *kundalini* flowing via the *nadis* and chakras are also central to yoga theory. Yoga, in a nutshell, is the process of going beyond one's rational intellect to connect with one's "true self" or "highest self." Our fundamental essence is this state of unadulterated awareness. All intellectual and mental barriers vanish when one reaches this level of

freedom. To progress in one's yoga practice and attain enlightenment, a firm understanding of yogic philosophy is essential.

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