

PRAISE FOR YOGA AND SELF-ENQUIRY

We have arrived at a time of shared global crises and opportunities, a time that has been prophesied by spiritual communities and cultures around the world. The practices described in this timely book reflect ancient wisdom and are needed today like never before. ~ JOHN PERKINS, New York Times bestselling author

Lucy E. Johnson has written a classic. She tells us that her new book is meant to be a "practice manual for gaining direct Self-Knowledge." This is a high aspiration, and Johnson absolutely accomplishes her task. She guides the reader very precisely and methodically through a process of discernment developed over thousands of years by the most sophisticated masters of the yoga tradition. She does so without becoming bogged down in the sometimes incomprehensible welter of yoga metaphysics. Her guidance is exquisitely detailed, highly accurate, and profoundly practical and useful. I simply could not put this book down. Only a true practitioner of yoga, and one who is extremely knowledgeable about the breadth and depth of the yoga tradition, could have written this book. It is an awe-inspiring contribution. ~ STEPHEN COPE, bestselling author and Senior Scholar in Residence, Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health, Lenox MA, USA

Yoga and Self-Enquiry is a book which you will not only want to keep by your bedside for ongoing study, inspiration, and guidance, but a book which you will also want to share with anyone you know, who is earnestly seeking the understanding and experience of the most satisfying and fulfilling answer to the question, "Who am I?" ~ STEPHEN QUONG, Vedic Astrologer, California, USA

Steeped in yoga philosophy, Lucy Johnson draws upon traditional and key ancient yogic texts with expert skill as she blends and illuminates

the teachings of revered yogic masters for the modern reader. By providing accessible, easy to follow 'step-by-step' exercises to deepen one's understanding of Self exploration, Lucy guides and inspires the reader with grace towards further discovery and Self enlightenment while aligning with Patanjali's eight limbs of yoga. A valuable resource for anyone interested in deepening their exploration of spirituality and realization of the Self. ~ GARTH MCLEAN, Senior Iyengar Yoga Teacher,

Yoga and Self-Enquiry by Lucy Johnson is methodical and compelling study guide, both theoretical and practical, for everyone on the yogic path. It can act as a shortcut to uncovering who you are and to the art of being. It has a place in everyone's spiritual library. ~ DEAN LERNER, Senior Iyengar Yoga Teacher, Centre for Wellbeing, Pennsylvania USA

In an era in which yoga has become a consumer item, **Yoga and Self-Enquiry** is a refreshing antidote. Lucy Johnson seeks to communicate yoga in the only way it can be known, experientially. The book provides a structure to examine, explore and integrate the principles that underpin yoga. It is at once educative and insightful for any serious student who wishes to look into themselves. ~ ALAN GOODE, Senior Iyengar Yoga Teacher, Yoga Mandir, Australia

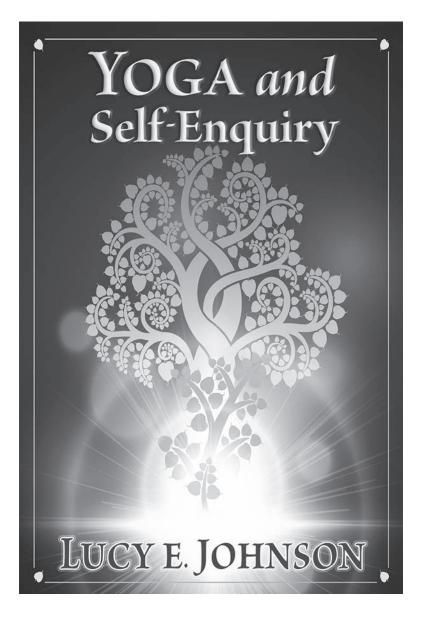
I'm very impressed with the amazing work Lucy has presented here in her book and the many pointers she uses to point to the One or try and explain Advaita Vedānta. Not two, but One. To tie the loose ends of three major systems (Yoga, Sāṁkhya and Advaita Vedānta) of the rich history of Indian culture. Lucy has gone very deep and it will be a great manual for an enquirer into Absolute Truth. I'm sure it will be an invaluable book for the sincere seeker. ~ SIMON M MARROCCO, Senior Iyengar Yoga Teacher, Australia

Living as we do at a time when the very roots and aim of yoga are being grossly neglected, this book is a timely contribution. I recommend it to everyone seriously engaged in the practice of yoga, and certainly to all practitioners of Iyengar Yoga who are eager to understand and explore its real meaning and purpose. The text gives insight into the traditions and methods of both Yoga and Advaita Vedānta, revealing the deep connection between these two apparently different teachings. Remarkable jewel-like quotes are provided from Vedic scriptures and other luminaries, inspiring the reader into contemplation. B.K.S Iyengar had photos of Śri Ramana Maharshi and Śri Ramakrishna on the walls of his own library – they were among his inspirational guidance for his teachings. ~ Stéphane N. Lalo, Senior Iyengar Yoga Teacher, Iyengar Yoga Center of Marseille, France

Yoga and Self-Enquiry is a uniquely successful attempt to take a highly complicated subject and hand it to the intelligent reader in a crisp, clear, and intriguing way. Seekers of Truth, lovers of philosophy, and all spiritual practitioners will find within this book practical guidance and stimulating teachings. This book is for you! Read it, practice what is taught, and see for yourself the power of this ancient knowledge. ~ SWAMI KASHI MUKTANANDA SARASVATI, Uttarkashi, India

Here is a book that unveils the mysteries surrounding timeless philosophical truths that are expressed in two of the most prominent "doctrines" that we know: Patañjali's Raja Yoga and Jñāna Yoga (the path of knowledge). Lucy has created a bridge between the ideologies of mankind, and the means or practices, to incarnate these universal truths. She has made important Yoga theories accessible through precise exercises which are related to the texts quoted within the book. One cannot help but feeling the enthusiasm in Lucy's translations and citations. A book not only of facts, but also, of encouragement. Citations are an important practice in Yoga as they act as technical symbols that elevate the mind. If you find a citation you adhere to, read it again, contemplate on its meaning, and then put it into action. Enjoy.... ~ CHRISTOPHER STEPHENS, Yoga Acharya and founder of Madhura Yoga, France

Yoga and Self-Enquiry is one of the best books I have ever read on the subject. The author breaks down complex ideas in a way that everyone can connect to. The exercises that put the teachings into action are both practical and provide a helpful means to apply yoga in your life and out into the world. Many realizations will be had if you read this book. ~ LESLIE HOWARD, Yoga Therapist and Teacher



YOGA AND SELF-ENQUIRY

by LUCY E. JOHNSON lucyejohnson123@outlook.com

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DESIGN & TYPOGRAPHY

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FRONT COVER

The peepel tree, also known as the bodhi tree, is traditionally used as a metaphor of saṃsāra (the cycle of birth and death in the empirical universe). The tree of saṃsāra has its highest root above, in Brahman (God). Its seed is ignorance (avidyā) of one's true nature, which is Pure Consciousness. Of this tree it is said:

"Buddhi [intellect] is its trunk, the sense-openings are its hollows, the great elements its boughs, the sense-objects its leaves and branches, Dharma and Adharma (virtue and vice) its beautiful flowers, pleasure and pain its fruits. Having cut asunder this tree with the powerful sword of knowledge of the Self, and then having attained to the eternal bliss of Brahman, no one comes back from there again." ~ SWAMI SIVANANDA

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FOREWORD

IN THE heart of all human beings abides the voice of the conscience. Its function is to discriminate the wrong from the right, the impure from the pure, the unpleasant from the pleasant and the impermanent from the eternal. Almost everyone can hear this voice, yet in order to avoid our weaknesses and for the purpose of our personal comfort we try not to listen to it, or to interpret its advice, or to promise ourselves that it is the last experience or last time that we don't follow its advice. In Hindu Philosophy this voice is called "Dharmendriya" or the organ of righteousness. The aim of the Hindu Spiritual Quest is to trace, to awaken, to tune this voice of dharma and to develop the required inner strength to listen to its indications and to follow its instructions.

I feel privileged having been one of the first readers of Lucy Johnson's *Yoga and Self-Enquiry*. I met Lucy some years ago in a workshop and noted very quickly her disciplined spirit and her devotional approach towards the spiritual quest and the practice of yoga. I felt that she was not a type of student to remain content with a gymnastic approach to yoga positions. She continued with a deep urge to learn and to study Indian Philosophy and the theory behind the practice of yoga. Now, in these pages which lay in front of us, she offers with a great clarity and true generosity the fruits of her long years of research work.

X YOGA AND SELF-ENQUIRY

Yoga, like other schools of Hindu philosophy (sad-darśanas) belongs to thirty-two primary vidyās (knowledges). Yet one of the main differences between yoga and other darśanas is that yoga is the only one with a practice.

The theory of yoga has been codified and systematised by the great sage Patañjali around 400 years B.C. Patañjali was not the inventor of yoga. We know that yoga had existed before him and his great work was to create a synthesis of the existing knowledge and information, putting it under the form of 195 aphorisms (sūtras), which may be considered as a precise roadmap for a spiritual seeker in yoga.

Through the study of these aphorisms we note that Patañjali is the first and last who could put the mechanism of the human mind under the form of mathematical formulas. All others, before or after him, had to use metaphors and even stories to convey their teachings.

The study and understanding of Yoga Sūtras is not a very easy task. From the very beginning of our eras many yogis and philosophers have tried to comment upon it. The most famous one is that of Vyāsa which is almost inseparable from the text. In traditional study, this commentary is studied before the text itself. To my knowledge there are about twenty-six classical commentaries on yoga-sūtra.

Traditionally, it is believed that yoga is 99% practice and only 1% theory. My revered Guruji, Yogacharya B.K.S. Iyengar, used to tell us that even that 1% could be understood through the practice.

Another well-known school of Hindu Philosophy is Vedānta. Vedānta itself has seven schools, the most famous one being Advaīta of Ādi Śankara. In this book, Lucy Johnson has successfully tried, following the examples of Swami Vivekananda and Swami Sivananda, to bring the practice of yoga and Śankar Vedānta closer to each other. Along with her clear explanations and practical exercises she creates a joyful urge and enthusiasm in the reader to take up a serious practice of the subject.

There is a beautiful quotation in Viṣṇu Purāṇa that sage Vyāsa includes in his commentary on yoga sūtras:

"Yoga is the teacher of Yoga; Yoga is to be understood through Yoga. Live in Yoga to realise Yoga; comprehend Yoga through Yoga; he who is free from distractions enjoys Yoga through Yoga".

I wish this book and its author the full and well-deserved success that they merit.

SRICHARAN FAEQ BIRIA, PHD Paris, 30th March 2021

Acknowledgments

Firstly, I would like to express my gratitude to Michael Langford, the author of *The Most Direct Means to Internal Bliss*, for pointing me with utmost clarity towards my own true nature.

A deep heartfelt thanks to the Chinmaya International Foundation for their authentic teaching programs in Vedānta and Sanskrit.

I am forever indebted to the tremendous contributions by the following and their associated work: *The Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali* by Edwin F. Bryant; *Light on the Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali* by B.K.S. Iyengar; and *Raja Yoga* by Swami Sivananda.

Thank you to Swami Kashi (*www.heartpilgrim.org*) for his willingness to look at my initial draft and his thoughtful observations.

Thank you to Swami Sarvapriyananda (current spiritual leader of the Vedānta Society of New York) for his wonderfully accessible teachings of classic Vedāntic texts such as Drg-Drsya-Viveka and Aparoksānubhūti.

My gratitude also goes to Swami Dayatmananda (previous spiritual leader of Ramakrishna-Vedānta Centre, U.K.) for his lectures on both Patañjali yoga sutras and Vedānta, which draw from the teachings and lives of Śri Ramakrishna, Śri Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda.

Finally, a big thank you to all the wonderful yoga teachers I have been fortunate to study with and learn from over the years. With a special thanks to Constance Braden of the Houston Iyengar Yoga Studio who gave me my first introduction to Patañjali's yoga sūtras.

DEDICATION

To my husband Kårstein and daughters Sophie and Isabel

Transliteration* and Pronunciation Guide					
VOWELS					
а	f u n	ļ	like "Iree"		
ā	car	Ī	same as ! but held twice as long		
i	pin	е	pl ay		
ī	feet	ai	high		
u	p u t	0	over		
ū	p oo l	au	cow		
ŗ	rig	aṃ	um brella		
ŗ	rea ch	aḥ	ah oy		
CONSONANTS					
ka	k ind	da	date		
kha	blo ckh ead	dha	kin dh earted		
ga	g ate	na	n umb		
gha	Lo g-h ut	ра	p urse		
'na	si n g	pha	sap ph ire		
са	ch unk	ba	but		
cha	mat ch	bha	a bh or		
ja	jug	ma	m other		
jha	he dgeh og	ya	y oung		
ña	bu n ch	ra	run		
ţa	touch	la	luck		
ţha	an t-h ill	va	v irtue		
фа	d uck	śa	sh ove		
ḍha	go dh ood	şa	bu sh el		
ņa	thu n der	sa	sir		
ta	take	ha	house		
tha	fain th earted	ksa	wor ksh eet		
		tra	tra p		
		jña	"j-nya"		

*Based on the International Alphabet of Sanskrit Transliteration (IAST)

PART 1

SELF-ENQUIRY

"Whatever be the means adopted, you must at last return to the Self; so why not abide in the Self here and now?" ~ Śri Ramana Maharshi ¹

Dear reader and fellow yogi,

In this book I aim to share with you a fresh look at Patañjali's Eight Limbs of Yoga as a direct means to Self-knowledge. By the term Self, I refer to your true essence. The goal of Selfknowledge is final liberation: an end to the cycle of birth and death for which various names are given including emancipation, kaivalya, mokṣa, nirvāṇa, or Self-realization.

You will come to understand firsthand that you do not have to wait until you are Self-realized to know the Self or God. If you give Yoga and Self-enquiry a good try, you will know the Self as a constant living presence, not just as a lofty, philosophical ideal to be actualized at some time in the future.

Not only that, your yoga practice will take on a deeper meaning and your everyday life will flow with greater ease by being connected to the infinite wisdom within. As Swami Vivekananda said:

"If the Student thinks he is the Spirit, he will be a better Student. If the Lawyer thinks he is the Spirit, he will be a better Lawyer, and so on."

2 YOGA AND SELF-ENQUIRY

Yoga, like all spiritual endeavors, begins with an inner longing to find meaning and happiness in life and reduce suffering. In yoga sūtra 2.4, Patañjali tells us that it is the lack of knowledge of one's true identity that is the source of all worldly suffering:

"Lack of true knowledge is the source of all pains and sorrows whether dormant, attenuated, interrupted or fully active." ²

We mistakenly think that we are limited, separate individuals rather than the One-Eternal-Infinite Spirit that we truly are. This constitutes spiritual ignorance (avidyā) which keeps us in the cycle of birth and death (saṃsāra).

Invested in this mistaken notion of individual personhood, we seek happiness externally while simultaneously trying to avoid everything that threatens pain. Our attractions and aversions lead to a mix of consequences. This process is commonly referred to as the wheel of karma, mentioned in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad:

"And here they say that a person consists of desires, and as is his desire, so is his will; and as is his will, so is his deed; and whatever deed he does, that he will reap." ~ Verses IV.iv.5-IV.iv.6

If spiritual ignorance is the fundamental cause of suffering, the remedy is removal of ignorance through knowledge of what we truly are. This can only be brought about by investigation into our true nature, which we identify as "Self-enquiry" (vichāra). The path of knowledge is also traditionally referred to as jñāna yoga.

The importance of Self-Knowledge is discussed in the Yogatattva Upaniṣad, one of the oldest yoga texts: "I relate to you the means to be employed for destruction of errors:

Without the practice of yoga, how could knowledge set the Ātman (Self) free?

Inversely, how could the practice of yoga alone, devoid of knowledge, succeed in the task?

The seeker of Liberation must direct his energies to both simultaneously.

The source of unhappiness lies in Ajñāna (ignorance); Knowledge alone sets one free. This is a dictum found in all Vedas." ~ Verses 14-16

In Aparokṣānubhūti, a text attributed to Ādi Śaṅkarācārya, Self-enquiry is defined as an investigation along the lines of:

"Who am I? How is this world created? Who is its creator? Of what material is this world made? This is the way of that Vichāra."

"I am neither the body, a combination of the five elements of matter, nor am I an aggregate of the senses; I am something different from these. This is the way of that Vichāra."

"Everything is produced by ignorance, and dissolves in the wake of Knowledge. The various thoughts must be the creator. Such is this Vichāra."

"The material cause of these two (i.e. ignorance and thought) is the One (without a second), subtle (not apprehended by the senses) and unchanging Sat (Existence), just as the earth is the material (cause) of the pot and the like. This is the way of that Vichāra."

"As I am also the One, the Subtle, the Knower, the Witness, the Ever-Existent and the Unchanging, so there is no doubt that I am 'That'. Such is this enquiry." ~ Verses 12-16 Thus, Self-enquiry is the process by which we uncover our real, inward Self and then turn our attention toward it.

Swami Venkatesananda, in his translation of the classic text Yoga Vāsiṣṭha explains:

"Vichāra has been translated 'enquiry' or Self-enquiry'. It should not be confused with intellectual analysis. It is **direct observation** or **'looking within'**."³

Part 1 of this book will lead you step by step through the process of Self-enquiry using a combination of simple, powerful contemplation and visu-

"There is a universal reality in ourselves that aligns us with a universal reality that is everywhere."

~ B.K.S. Iyengar ⁴

alization exercises. The exercises are presented to enable the first-hand acquirement of knowledge. I recommend that you carry out the exercises in the order that they are presented, as they build on each other.

In Part 2, the insights gained will be deepened and assimilated through the practice of Patañjali's eight limbs of yoga. It is only through direct experience that any doubts may be removed.

Part 2 will present methods for meditation on the Self. Swami Vidyāraņya, the author of Pañcadaśī (a 14th-century text on Vedānta), writes:

"To reach treasures deeply hidden in the earth, there is nothing for it but to dig. **So to have direct knowledge of Me, the Self, there is no other means than meditation on one's Self**". ~ Verse IX.153

Thus "knowledge" signifies more than just intellectual understanding. This book is meant to be a 'practice manual' for gaining direct Self-knowledge, which Patañjali clarifies in yoga sūtra 1.49: "This truth-bearing knowledge and wisdom is distinct from and beyond the knowledge gleaned from books, testimony, or inference." ⁵

The glorious result is described in yoga sūtra 2.25:

"The destruction of ignorance **through right knowledge** breaks the link binding the Seer to the seen*. This is Kaivalya, emancipation." ⁶

*Seer is another name used for the Self. "The Seer and the Seen" is the title of the first Self-enquiry exercise given in Chapter 1.

A Brief History of Knowledge

Advaita Vedānta is a non-dual teaching which traces its roots to the oldest Upaniṣads or ancient Sanskrit texts from India. If the term 'non-dual' is unfamiliar, its meaning will become clear in these pages. I have provided English translations for Sanskrit terms.

The most prominent exponent of Advaita Vedānta is considered to be Ādi Śaṅkarācārya, born in India around the 8th century. In addition to his own works, he commented on some of the Upaniṣads and other scriptures including the Bhagavad Gītā, and possibly the Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali. Ādi Śaṅkarācārya founded ten monastic orders, one of which was the Saraswati lineage.

Recently prominent in the Sarawasti lineage was Swami Sivananda (1887 to 1963), of Rishikesh, India, who devoted his life to the practice and propagation of Yoga and Vedānta*. For quotes in this book, I have drawn on the teachings of Swami Sivananda, in addition to others such as Śri Ramana Maharshi (1879 to 1950).

*Whenever I use the term 'Vedānta', I am always referring specifically to Advaita Vedānta and not to any of the other schools of Vedānta such as the Dvaita Vedānta (dualism school) of Madhvācārya or Viśiṣṭādvaita Vedānta (qualified non-dualism school) of Rāmānuja.

Śri Ramana Maharshi was an Indian Saint who recommended the use of Self-enquiry to achieve mokṣa (Self-realization or final liberation). Of Śri Ramana Maharshi, Swami Sivananda said:

"Ramana was a living example of the teaching of the Upanisads. His life was at once the message and the philosophy of his teachings. He spoke to the hearts of men.

The great Maharshi found Himself within himself and then gave out to the world the grand but simple message of his great life, 'Know Thyself.'" ~ In his book Lives of Saints

Last but by no means least, we have the Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali. The yoga sutras, compiled by the great sage Patañjali some 2000 or more years ago, provide us with the path of Rāja yoga — the science of concentration and meditation. The yoga sūtras were first introduced to the West by Swami Vivekananda in the late 19th century. We will be viewing the practice of yoga through the lens of Advaita Vedānta.

Now, as you are about to begin....

You are about to dive deep into Svādhyāya — the study or enquiry that leads to knowledge of the Self.

The first five chapters are at the very heart of Self-enquiry. You will discover later in Part 2, that Svādhyāya is not only one of the niyamas (self-disciplines) but designated by Patañjali as an 'act of yoga'. This is for the simple reason that without knowing the Self how can one become permanently established in the Self?

I strongly encourage you, therefore, to use the text and exercises in the forthcoming chapters as a practical means for direct and engaged observation. This is the 'direct observation' or 'looking within' referred to earlier in this section.

I also gently recommend that any notion you may have that

what is being described here is theory and not so relevant to your day-to-day practice of yoga be laid aside. The background theory given is there primarily to help your understanding. With this, I wish you good luck as you now proceed!

YOGA / SPIRITUALITY

"A valuable resource for anyone interested in deepening their exploration of spirituality and realization of the Self." ~ GARTH MCLEAN, Senior Iyengar Yoga Teacher

"A classic... I simply could not put this book down... an awe-inspiring contribution." ~ STEPHEN COPE, Bestselling Author, Kripalu Center

THIS practical guidebook is suitable for both beginners as well as more advanced practitioners of Yoga.

PART 1 focuses on the teachings of Self-enquiry as presented by Śri Ramana Maharshi and other luminaries in the field of Advaita Vedānta.

PART 2 summarizes the teachings of Yoga and details how a keen seeker can put into daily practice Patañjali's eight limbs of yoga to achieve their ultimate aim: Kaivalya or final liberation.

Providing much more than an introduction to Yoga and Vedānta, this book focuses on the higher-level teachings of these two spiritual practices, revealing their underlying unity and complementarity.



After a successful international career as a Chemical Engineer for nearly three decades, **LUCY E. JOHNSON** permanently traded her suits for yoga pants in 2019. As a long-term yoga practitioner, she eventually came to realize that both yoga and the knowledge gained through Self-enquiry (Svādhyāya) is necessary to manifest one's true nature. Originally from England, she and her husband share their home on the southeast coast of Norway, along with their two daughters and a lifetime collection of spiritual books.

