Yoga is a word with many connotations in different contexts. The simple, etymological meaning of it is "union". Whatever be the specialized meanings in different situations in different Śāstras, all those are dependent on this underlying idea. In Vedānta there is the Yoga of the Self which in the absolute sense is the dissolution of the individual self in the Universal Self (Brahman). This happens when a man who has realized the identity of the individual Self and the universal Self dies. This is an irrevoocable
union. A similar situation is the state of deep sleep (Suṣupti) in which there is no duality of the individual Self and the Universal Self. However, a person who gets Suṣupti is not aware of the identification of the two. By turning the sharpened intellect towards the inner Self (Pratyagatman) a person shall have the temporary experience of the identification. This process is also called Yoga which is nothing else than Samādhi.

In Yogasāstra

In the Yogasūtra of Patanjali, Yoga is defined as the cessation of the activities of the mind\(^1\). Mind (Manas) has the qualities of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. Enlightenment is the effect of

\[^1\text{Yogaścittavṛttiniruddhaḥ, Yogasūtra 1.2.}\]
Sattva; activity of Rajas; and inertia, of Tamas. When Tamas predominates, the mind is in a state of lassitude as we find in drunkards and highly depressed persons. The predomination of Rajas leads to a state of arrogance which, is the characteristic of those who hanker after money and power. When Sattva begins to dominate the mind of a person, he gets into the realm of spirituality, though with doubts. This stage is marked by the tendency of a person to have faith in God, to indulge in charitable activities, etc. When the other two qualities wane away, the Sattvika quality emerges stronger and this leads easily to Yoga.

The activities of the mind prompted by Tamas and Rajas lead to miseries. Controlling them, one gets into the first stage of Samādhi.
called Samprajñāta. In this the mind has actions directed by Sattva. The second and final stage of Samādhi is Asamprajñāta. In this state all activities of the mind cease. According to Yogaśāstra, Puruṣa, the Yogic counterpart of Vedāntic Ātman, remains fixed in his own true nature: 

\[ \text{tadā draṣṭuḥ svarūpe’vasthānam}^2 \]

The Yogaśāstra instructs eight steps before Puruṣa attains Kaivalya. Samādhi is the eighth step, the others being Yama\(^3\), Niyama\(^4\), Āsana\(^5\),

\begin{align*}
2. & \text{Yogasūtra I.3.} \\
3. & tatraahinīsāatyāsteyabrahmacaryāparigrahā \\
& \text{yamāḥ- Yogasūtra II.30} \\
4. & Saucasantoṣatapassvādhyāyeśvarapraṇidhānāni \\
& \text{niyamāḥ} \\
5. & sthirasukhamāsanam. Yogasūtra II.46
\end{align*}
Prāṇāyāma⁶, Pratyāhāra⁷, Dhāraṇā⁸ and Dhyāna⁹. Taking into account all these, the practice leading to the full control of the mind is termed Āstāṅgayoga.

Both the Sāṅkhya and Yoga philosophies have their roots in the Upaniṣads, especially in the Kaṭhopaniṣad. The progressive subtle nature of

6.…..ṣvāsaprāśvāsavyorgativicchedaḥ
prāṇāyāmaḥ—Yogasūtra II.49
7.svaviṣayāsamprayoge cittasvarūpānukāra
ivendriyānāṃ pratyāhāraḥ—Yogasūtra II 54.
8.desabandhascittasya dhāraṇā—Yogasūtra III.1
Indriya, Viṣaya, Manas, Buddhi, Mahat, Avyakta and Puruṣa and the control of speech and mind described in the Kathopanishad are ample evidence for this. Samādhi of the Yogasūtra is what the Kathopanishad puts forth as the right means of Self-realisation. Though the Upanishad does not give any details of the earlier steps, viz Yama, Niyama, etc., they have been later developed from the Upanishadic ideas in the Yogasūtra of Patañjali.

Steps in Mind Control

The Kathopanishad teaches that a wise man

10. KU.I.iii.10,11
11. KU.I.iii.13
endowed with the power of discrimination should merge his speech (vāk) in mind (manas)\textsuperscript{12}. Hereby speech is meant the organ of speech which again implies all the sense organs. All sense organs should be brought under the control of the mind. This means that the mind should not be allowed, to be carried away by the sense organs allured by the objects of pleasures. Once the mind has gained control over the sense organs, it should be merged in the intellect (buddhi) which is a manifestation of the internal Self\textsuperscript{13}. The English word mind denotes an abstract entity which is characterized by a group of faculties like reception of ideas, doubting, reasoning and

\textsuperscript{12} KU. I. iii.13

\textsuperscript{13} \textit{buddhirhi mana ādikaraṇānyapnotiti ātma pratyak tēśam} KUSB I .iii.13
determining. In Vedānta buddhi (intellect) is the faculty of reasoning which, well-cultivated, exercises an influence over manas (mind) directing it into good actions only. Under the right control of the mind, the sense organs will not go astray. Buddhi, like manas, is only a faculty of the internal organ (antahkarana) and it is called Jñānātmā in the Upaniṣadic terminology. This Buddhi is to be merged in the great Ātman (ātmā mahati). Śaṅkara interprets Mahān ātmā as Prathamaṇya, which in the Sāṅkhya evolution is the first conscious principle. Merger of the intellect is, in fact, the withdrawing of even

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14. *tad yacche jñāna ātmāni* KU. I. iii.13
see also Śaṅkara’s commentary there on.
15. KUSB.I.iii.13
the reasoning faculty to experience only the innermost consciousness. The final step of this control is the dissolution of the afore-said Mahān Ātmā in the calm Self (tad yacchet śānta ātmāni). By Calm Self is meant the chief (mukhya) Self which is in everything, free from all changes and a witness of all conceptions of the intellect and which is devoid of all distinctions. It is verily the Absolute Self.

Great Preceptors are the Guides

The illusory world is made of the fancied nāman (name), rūpa (form) and Karman (action). When only the real thing (the Self) is realized, a person becomes free from the cares of worldly life and attains peace of mind. Parallels from worldly experience are presented by Śaṅkara to make this
point clear\textsuperscript{16}. One may mistake a mirage for water in a desert. One may mistake a rope for a snake in dim light. Similarly, one may think that the sky is besmeared with impurities. But when one understands the real nature of the mirage, rope or sky, one realizes the truth. Then one will not seek water in a mirage, will not be afraid of the rope-snake and will no more try to get rid of the impurities from the sky which is in reality a void only. But how will a person get rid of his illusion and engage himself in Yoga. Here the \textit{Kathopanishad} gives a stirring call to the human beings as a whole.

\textsuperscript{16}KUSB.I.iii.14
Arise! Awake! Approaching the great (preceptors) you understand well\textsuperscript{17}.

The \textit{Upaniṣad} is addressing all those beings who are in a sleep created by the beginningless ignorance. They are asked to get up from that sleep of ignorance, which is terrible and which causes all the worldly miseries. Here Śaṅkara says that the Śruti, like a mother, advises with sympathy. One shall approach a good preceptor. Good preceptors know very well to guide us to get rid of our ignorance by instructing properly each one of us to realise that “I am the Self in all beings”.

\footnotesize{17.KU.I.iii.14}
The path of the knowledge of the reality which leads to Self-realisation is very difficult to tread. It is like the very sharp edge of a blade on which one cannot walk. The wise say so because they understand well the obstacles in the worldly life which prevents us from pursuing the way to reality. If one has to attain the reality, he has to pursue Yoga. To embark on the course of Yoga and continue in it, one should get the guidance of an able teacher.

Swami Vivekananda was highly impressed by the call of the *Kāṭhopaniṣad* and so he adopted the words “Arise! Awake!” as the motto of his mission.
Obstacle to Yoga

Yoga is the means to realize the Self with the help of a sharp intellect. The main obstacle in the path of Yoga is the natural position of the sense organs. The One who was born by Himself, viz. the God of Creation, made the sense organs with a tendency to go outward. They are always engaged in pursuing their objects, which exist outside. For instance, the ear is listening to whatever sound produced outside and the eye views whatever comes in its way. It is not usual that one turns his sense organs towards the inside to seek in the Hṛdaya some object. All sense organs ever keep on galloping outwards towards

18. paraṇei khāṇi vyatṛnat svayambhūḥ. KU.II.i.1
their objects, but never can they be turned inward to listen, see, smell, taste, or touch what is happening within the body\textsuperscript{19}. Śaṅkara comments that the Creator “beat” the sense organs, which is equal to say that He cursed them. Chinmayananda explains that to those who are practising the higher Yoga of meditation, the sense organs are a curse, inasmuch as they refuse to be easily turned within. Without taking an inward plunge it is impossible for the Indriyas to cognize the Divinity which is the substratum everywhere for all objects\textsuperscript{20}. The ordinary human beings and animals do not find the soul which is there within their own body because they do not turn their sense organs towards the inner side. Like the flow

\textsuperscript{19} Chinmayananda, Op.Cit., p. 150.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid.
of water in a river, the course of the sense organs is only in one direction, i.e., outwards. It requires a firm intention and extraordinary courage on the part of a person to turn his senses inwards. But there have been some persons though very very rarely, who desired to achieve immortality, turned their sense organs backwards to the inside and perceived the inner Self\textsuperscript{21}. A great effort on the part of the person practising Yoga is essential for refining the sense organs and the mind. The training which makes the sense organs to give up their habitual outward course is the refinement of the sense organs. The mind is usually led by the sense organs. When the mind is trained not to be drawn by the sense organs to external objects.

\textsuperscript{21}KU.II.i.1
to find pleasure in them, there is the refinement of the mind.

Śrī Nārāyana Guru makes the idea of the Upaniṣad clear when he says that Saṅkalpa is creating the difficulty to Self-realisation. Saṅkalpa is the activity of the mind in response to the persuasion by the sense organs to take the apparent pleasures from their external objects like sound, colour, etc. Vāsanā, the acquired and retained impression of earlier experience, is responsible for the pleasure-seeking nature of Saṅkalpa.

Identification

Yoga leads to the identification of the Self. The *Upāniṣad* uses the word *Aditi* to describe the Self in the body\(^{24}\). That word is derived from the root *ad* (to eat) and means the enjoyer of the worldly pleasures. The Self inhabiting the cave (*Guhā*) with the life-force characterised by the airs (*Prāṇa*) and the sense organs, described as goddesses in connection with *Aditi* in the *Kaṭhopaniṣad*, is the doer of actions and enjoys the fruits of action. By turning the sense organs inwards and controlling the mind, a person is able to identify the Self.

24.KU.II.i.7
Fire is hidden in the two Aranis (fire-sticks). A ritualistic man churns the Aranis everyday to produce fire for sacrifices. Foetus is borne by a pregnant woman and is protected well with proper food and water. The diligence of the priest in producing fire and that of the pregnant woman in safeguarding the foetus in the womb should be adopted by a man in the case of the fire (Agni) burning in his heart, viz. the Self. He should worship that fire everyday with meditation and without any lapses. This worship advised by the Upanishad\textsuperscript{25} is verily Yoga.

The Upanishad deolares that the sun rises from the Ātman and sets in it\textsuperscript{26}. All the five

\textsuperscript{25} KU.II.i.8

\textsuperscript{26} KU.II.i.9
elements depend entirely upon the Supreme Reality, the Pure Consciousness, as the spokes of a wheel upon the hub. Whatever is here in this world, the same is there in the invisible world, that is the Self. One who does not realise this fact and so views all these as different (nāma) entities, shall repeatedly fall into the whirl of births and deaths. He who has come to experience the state of oneness, which is the Self, shall never slip into the whirl of births and deaths. This identification of the Self is to be achieved by the mind alone.

Yoga is the process by which the mind

27.Space, air, fire, water and earth.
29.KU.II.i.10
30.KU.II.i.11
soaring over the summit of spiritual enquiries comes to the calm conclusion and ends its activities after having realised the Self. This Yoga helps a man to understand that the Puruṣa (the Self manifested in the body as life) remains more or less like a thumb (anguṣṭamātraḥ) in the middle as the Lord of the past and the future. The obvious reference is to the genital organ through which the life principle is propagated to a new body and which thus serves as a link between the past and the future.

**Self-realisation dispels sorrow**

A man with strong will and discriminating

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31.KU.II.i.12.
ability (dhīra) understands that the sense organs are separately produced and are distinct from the Self. He knows how they come into existence and how they are dissolved. They are each different, not only in themselves, but in their very original causes, the five fundamental elements. They are eternally changing as they react from moment to moment differently with the different objects that come in contact with them. In the waking state they are all quite receptive and available for their individual expressions. While the moment a person is asleep, the capacity of his sense organs to react with their objects folds itself into a state of dormancy and the folded up capacity seems to manifest itself, the moment he wakes up

32.KU.II.iii.6
from his sleep\textsuperscript{33}. A wise man, differentiating between the eternal Self and the everchanging play of the passing expressions in his sense organs, grieves no more\textsuperscript{34}. All our sorrows in life are due to our lending ourselves to the misunderstanding that we are the ego-centres and thereby becoming ourselves victims to all our mental demands, intellectual assertions and sense appetites. In the right knowledge of our total independence from the chains of these limitations, we shall reach a state of existence where sorrow has no locus standi\textsuperscript{35}. \textit{Chāndogyopaniṣad} also states: The knower of the Self overcomes

\textsuperscript{34}KU.II.iii.6
Self - realisation leads to Immortality

The mind is beyond the senses, beyond the mind is the intellect and beyond the intellect is the great Ātman (Mahān Ātmā). The unmanifest (Avyakta) is superior to the great Ātman. Beyond the unmanifest is the all-pervading Puruṣa devoid of all distinguishing marks, knowing whom, every person is emancipated and attains immortality.

36.CU.VII.i.3
37.KU.II.iii.7 also see. KU. I.iii.10
38.KU.II.iii.8.
Yoga is the Means

Using the terminology of Yogaśāstra, the Self has been called as Puruṣa above and described as devoid of distinguishing marks. A question arises then as to how it can be perceived. It is not available to the sight, as it has no form. No one beholds the Self with the eyes. It is revealed by the intellect by controlling the mind through meditation. Those who know Brahman thus become immortal. 39.

When the five sense organs are at rest along with the mind (manas) and when the intellect (Buddhi) ceases functioning, there is the highest

39.KU.II. iii.9.
The firm control of the sense organs is Yoga, the *Upaniṣad* quotes from tradition. A person who has controlled his senses becomes free from all vagaries. The *Upaniṣad* adds a word of caution: *Yoga hi prabhava pyayau*, i.e. Yoga

40.KU.II.iii.10
42.*tām yogamiti manyante*

*sthirāmindriyadhiharaṇām* KU.II.iii.11.
is the source of achievements as well as a cause of harm. Well practised, Yoga will lead to the highest good of Self-realisation. Wrongly practised for personal gains, it will lead to ruins.

The Self cannot be reached by speech, by mind, or by the eye. It is to be understood from those who say that there is the Self. After hearing from a learned person about the existence of the Self, a person should engage himself in Yoga. When all the desires that exist in the mind are given up, then the mortal becomes immortal and he attains Brahman here itself.

43. KU.II.iii.12
44. KU.II. iii.14.
The bonds of ignorance (Avidyā), desire (Kāma), and action (Karman) are called the knots of the heart. When all the knots of the heart are severed here on earth, the mortal becomes immortal. Brahadāranyaka Upaniṣad states that his Soul does not wander to suffer the cycle of births and deaths, but he assumes the form of Brahman and dissolves in it.

Final Release

There are a hundred and one nerves of the heart. Of them, one passes through the upper part of the head. It is called Suṣumnā. A person should bring his inner Self to Suṣumnā at the time of

45.KU. II. iii.15.
46.BU.IV. iv. 6.
death by means of Yoga. If the Self is released through that nerve, that Self attains immortality. All other nerves lead differently to various kinds of rebirths. The Puruśa, the inner Self, which exists in the heart in a cavity having the size of a thumb, should be drawn steadily towards Suṣumnā and sent out of the body through that nerve as one draws the stalk from a reed. One should know this (the soul released through Suṣumnā) as the deathless (amṛta) seed (śukra). The use of the word Śukra is to be noted. Though Śaṅkara interprets this word as Śuddha (pure), here it is taken in its well known usual meaning. Śukra in the seed of a man which is the cause of

47. KU.II.iii.16

48. KU.II.iii.17
procreation. The *Upaniṣadic* idea seems that when the inner Self comes out of the body through the organ of creation as seed, it becomes subject to mortality whereas released through *Suṣumnā* the Self attains deathlessness as it is not reborn.

**Gītā on Yoga**

Yoga is associated in the Bhagavad Gītā with Karma, *Jñāna* and *Samyāsa*. In the ultimate analysis it seems that whatever leads to the identification of the individual Self with the Universal Self is termed Yoga in the Gītā. Even when one leads the life of a householder one is able to get Self-realization by giving up attachment to worldly objects and pleasures. In this view it is not necessary that one should practise the Yoga as detailed in *Yogasūtra*. Right
knowledge which is steadfastly held can lead to Self-realization without any rigid practices. However, it is difficult to most people to be convinced of the Self as it is not directly perceived. That is why Kathopanishad strongly advocates practice of Yoga which later found detailed exposition in Yogasūtra. In the Gītā also we get a very good description of this type of Yoga and there is no doubt that Gītā recognizes it as an important means to Self-realization.

He who does his duty without expecting the results of actions is a Sarīnyāsin and a Karmayogin both. Just by giving up rituals and activities one does not become a Sarīnyāsin or Yōgin\(^\text{49}\). No one becomes a Yōgin without giving

\(^{49}\text{BG. VI. 1}\)
up thoughts of the world. Unattached action is spoken of as the first step to a contemplative man who desires to climb the heights of Yoga. Having climbed to the high path of Yoga, he is held firm there by the control of the mind. When a man does not get attached to objects or senses or to actions and has given up all thoughts of the world, he has climbed the heights of Yoga. One should redeem oneself with one’s own efforts and should not degrade oneself. A person himself is his friend and enemy. A person who has conquered his mind and senses is his own friend. If he allows his mind and senses to remain in the grip of pleasures and other objects of the sense

50. B.G. VI. 3
51. B.G. VI. 4
52. B.G. VI. 5
organs, he is his own enemy.\textsuperscript{53} The Supreme Self is concentrated upon in meditation by a person who has controlled his mind and who is calm in the midst of pairs of opposites such as cold and heat, joy and sorrow, and honour and disgrace.\textsuperscript{54}

A \textit{Yogin} whose mind is satisfied with \textit{jñāna} (knowledge of the Supreme Self) and \textit{vijñāna} (knowledge of the manifested individual Self), who is unaffected in all circumstances, and whose senses are completely under control, is said to be united with the Self (\textit{yukta}). To him, a lump of mud, stone and gold are all alike\textsuperscript{55}. He is

\textsuperscript{53}B.G. VI. 6
\textsuperscript{54}B.G. VI.7
\textsuperscript{55} B.G. VI.8
distinct as having the same consideration for a well-wisher (suhrā), friend (mitra), enemy (ari), the indifferent (udāsīna), the neutral (madhyastha), the hated (dvesya), a relative, the good people and the sinners.56

Living in a secluded place, the Yogn, who has controlled his mind and body and who is free from desires and devoid of possessions, should constantly engage his mind on the Self in meditation.57 For this purpose, he should have a firm posture at a clean place on a seat not very high or very low. The seat should be made up of cloth, deerskin and Kuśa grass.58 Seated thus,

56. B.G. VI. 9
57. B.G. VI.10
58. B.G. VI.11
concentrating the mind and controlling the thoughts and preventing the functions of the sense organs, he should practise Yoga for Self-purification\(^59\). He should hold his trunk, head and neck straight and steady, look at the tip of the nose. He should not allow his eyes to turn to other directions\(^60\). Keeping himself calm, free from fear, firm in the view of continence and controlling his mind, the \textit{Yogin} should meditate on the Self and be absorbed in it\(^61\). Thus constantly meditating on the Self, he with his disciplined mind attains peace which leads ultimately to the supreme Bliss \textit{(nirvāṇa)}\(^62\).

59. B.G. VI.12
60. B.G. VI. 13
61. B.G. VI.14
62. B.G. VI.15
The Yoga is not for him who overeats or for him who observes a complete fast. It is also not for him who is in the habit of excessive sleep, nor for him who is excessively awake. For a person who has proper food, proper recreation, proper activities, proper sleep and proper wakefulness, Yoga is an eliminator of woes. When the mind which is disciplined well remains fixed on the Self, then the practicant who is free from desires and enjoyment of pleasures is said to be established in Yoga. As the flame of a lamp does not flicker in a windless place, a Yogin does not get distracted when he practises meditation.

63. B.G. VI.16
64. B.G. VI.17
65. B.G. VI.18
on the Self with controlled mind\textsuperscript{66}. In that state the mind controlled by Yoga becomes still and the Self rejoices by realizing itself\textsuperscript{67}. Then the Yogin experiences the eternal and supersensuous joy through the subtle intellect and does not move from the Truth on any account\textsuperscript{68}. Having attained that state he does not consider any other gain greater than that and he is not shaken even by the heaviest of sorrows\textsuperscript{69}. One should know that this state free from the contact of misery is really called Yoga. This Yoga should be practised with an unwearied mind\textsuperscript{70}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{66} B.G. VI.19
\item \textsuperscript{67} B.G. VI. 20
\item \textsuperscript{68} B.G. VI.21
\item \textsuperscript{69} B.G. VI.22
\item \textsuperscript{70} B.G. VI.23
\end{itemize}
Completely giving up all desires arising from thoughts and restraining well the whole pack of the sense organs from all sides, a Yogan should attain tranquillity through gradual practice. Fixing his mind on the Self through the intellect seized by steadfastness, he should not think of anything else. Drawing back the restless and fidgety mind from whatever objects to which it wanders, he should bring it under control to concentrate on the Self. To a Yogan whose mind is perfectly tranquil, whose passion is subdued, who is free from sins, and who is identified with Brahman, supreme bliss comes as a matter of course. The Yogan who is united in identity with

71. B.G. VI.24-25.
73. B.G. VI. 27
the Universal Self, recognizes the Self present in all beings and sees all beings in the Self. He who looks on all as one, on the analogy of his own self, and views the joy and sorrow of all with a similar eye, is deemed the best of all Yogins.

The mind is very unsteady, turbulent, tenacious and powerful and it is as difficult as the wind to control. It can be brought under control by repeated practice and by the exercise of dispassion. Arjuna asks Kṛṣṇa what happens to a person whose mind is diverted from Yoga and therefore who does not reach perfection in Yoga.

74. B.G. VI. 28
75. B.G. VI. 32
76. B.G. VI. 34
77. B.G. VI. 35
in the present life\textsuperscript{78}. Krishna's reply is that no harm comes to him because his intention is good\textsuperscript{79}. He is reborn in the family of pious men or of Yogins\textsuperscript{80}. He inherits in that birth the spiritual insight of his previous birth. With the help of that he strives still harder for fulfilment i.e. Self-realization\textsuperscript{81}.

\textit{Brahma-sūtra} on Yoga

\textit{Brahmasūtra} refutes Yoga on a par with Sāṁkhya\textsuperscript{82}. Śaṅkara explains that the refutation is

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{78} B.G. VI. 37
\item \textsuperscript{79} B.G. VI. 41
\item \textsuperscript{80} B.G. VI. 41-42
\item \textsuperscript{81} B.G. VI. 43.
\item \textsuperscript{82} B.S. II. 3
\end{itemize}
caused by the fact that Sāṁkhya and Yoga cannot lead to the ultimate good without the help of Veda. Since Upaniṣads and Bhagavad gītā advocate Yoga for Self-realization, the refutation by Brahmasūtra cannot be taken too seriously. As Śaṅkara states, what Brahmasūtra intends is that the cognition of the absolute principle (the Self) is possible from Vedāntic statements only. Mere rationalistic views not based on Upaniṣadic statements alone are to be avoided.

The Upaniṣadic seers did not rest satisfied with an objective direction of the mind, as is usual in the path of devotion and duty, or subjective withdrawal, as is done in Yoga. They combined the two processes and reaped the highest benefit

83.BSSB.II.3
84.Ibid
in the form of Aparokṣānubhūti (immediate realization) of the Self as Brahman, of the microcosm as the macrocosm.

Yogaśātra was evolved probably from the ideas contained in the earliest Upaniṣads, like the Kāṭhopaniṣad. The rigid Yogic practices were developed over a long period by sages who were seeking efficient methods to control the wandering mind. Later Yoga was used for materialistic gains in life also. The Kāṭhopaniṣad advocates Yoga as an efficient means of Self-realization only.