

Definitions of Yoga

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Pre-tantric

- “Yoga is the state in which mental-emotional churning has settled into stillness.” OR “Yoga is the [temporary] cessation of thoughts and emotions.” – Yoga-sūtra 1.2
- “Yoga is union of the self with God.” (*ātmeśvara-saṃyogaḥ yogaḥ*) – Pāśupata-sūtra
- “Yoga is the direct means to perceive Reality.” – anonymous ancient sūtra, cited in Brahma-sūtra-bhāṣya 2.1.3 (Vedānta work)
- “When the mind is dissolved into the Self, there is neither pleasure nor pain for the embodied one. This is yoga.” – Vaiśeṣika-sūtra 5.2.17
- “Yoga is said to be equanimity.” (*samatvam yoga ucyate, 2.48*) / “Yoga is skill in action.” (*yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam, 2.50*) / “Yoga is severance of union with pain.” (*duḥkha-saṃyoga-viyogaḥ yoga-saṃjñitam*) – three definitions from the Bhagavad-Gītā

Tantrik

- “The word ‘yoga’ denotes nirvāṇa, the level of Śiva.” – Lingapurāṇa 1.8.5
- “Yoga is said to be the **oneness** of one entity with another.” – Mālinīvijayottara-tantra 4.4
- “Yoga is the attainment of **identity** with That.” – Svachanda-tantra-uddiyota 6.45
- “To have **self-mastery** is to be a Yogi.” Mṛgendra-tantra YP 2a
- “The term Yogi means ‘one who is necessarily **conjoined** with the manifestation of his [true] nature,’ in other words, the Śiva-state . . . which is the invariable concomitant of self-mastery.” Mṛgendra-tantra-vṛtti Yoga-pāda 2a
- “Yoga arises [spontaneously] from **connection** with Śakti, or Yoga arises from the attainment of **samādhi**, or Yoga is the **immersion** [*samāveśa*] into God arising from the contemplation of His nature.” – Parākhya-tantra 14.98-99
- “Yoga is defined as the **unification** of the many pairs of opposites, [such as] the unification of in-breath and out-breath, of the sun and the moon, [or] of the individual self with the Supreme Self.” Gorakṣa Nātha’s Yogabīja 89-90
- “A Yogi is one who has attained the mutual unification of the in-breath [*prāṇa*] and out-breath [*apāna*].” Raviśrijñāna’s Guṇabharaṇī (Tantric Buddhist)
- “Yoga is the ascertainment of Śiva and the self as non-different.” – Śāradā-tilaka 25.2
- “Yoga is the knowledge of the primordial Being.” – Śāradā-tilaka 25.3

Five different meanings are given in the ancient Sanskrit dictionary called *Amarakośa* 3.3.371: *yogaḥ saṃnahanopāya-dhyāna-saṃgati-yuktiṣu*. 1. preparation for war (yoking horses to chariots), 2. means/method, 3. meditation (*dhyāna*), 4. union, 5. reasoning / application of technique.

Some more are added in the *Śabda-ratna-pradīpa* 1.51: *yogo jātir viśeṣaś ca saṃyogo yoga ityapi / yogaś cāgāmilābhaḥ syāt samādhir yoga ucyate*. 1. a particular type of birth, 2. union, 3. future

attainment, and 4. Meditative absorption (*samādhi*).