

## Figure 10.1.5.2. Yoga

Database: Human Development

Link type: narrower concepts

Network nodes: 61

UIA database: <http://db.uia.org/scripts/sweb.dll/uiaf?DD=HU&DR=H0661>



As a technique, yoga seems to have commenced in India in antiquity, prior to the Brahminism of the Aryan invaders under whom it was sometimes tolerated, sometimes persecuted. It flourished in the period of the vedanta which followed that of the veda and is expounded in the upanishads and in the Bhagavad Gita. It incorporates the nonviolence and doctrines of karma and reincarnation of Jain teaching; and was spread beyond India through the various forms of Buddhism. Literally meaning "union" and "control", from the same root as the word "yoke", yoga is a system of methods of physical, mental, moral and spiritual development. Its premise is that through self-estrangement, alienation from existence, man has lost contact with the infinite ground of existence. Restless search for truth and happiness outside himself occurs because he has forgotten that these are only to be found at the inmost centre of his own being. The purpose of all forms of yoga is to unite finite man in full consciousness with the infinite, by whatever name this ultimate reality is known. The term is used to designate any ascetic technique and any method of meditation (Indian thought), although classical (systemic), popular (nonsystemic), and non-Brahmanic (Buddhist, Jainist) yogas are distinguished. Even the way of the Christian mystic, in that it is a path towards knowledge of and union with God, can be referred to as yoga. The fundamental goal of union with the spiritual world presupposes a preliminary detachment from the material world. Yoga therefore places emphasis on the self-discipline by virtue of which the individual can obtain the necessary concentration of spirit prior to any experience of true union. The exercises directed toward this end are extremely practical and guard against side-tracking into fanciful contemplation and dilettante exploration of profound ideas. In addition to being a system of methods, yoga is also a system of philosophy (although not in the Western sense) lived out through these methods. It is a system of coherent affirmations, coextensive with human experience (which it attempts to interpret in its entirety), with the aim of liberating man from ignorance and allowing him to experience the supra-conscious component of his personality. As such it is one of the six orthodox Indian systems of philosophy.