



## Origin of Yoga:

Sanskrit, the Indo-European language of the *Vedas*, India's ancient religious texts, gave birth to both the literature and the technique of yoga. One definition of the word Sanskrit, "well-formed, refined, perfect or polished," connotes substance and clarity, qualities exemplified in the practice of yoga.

The Sanskrit word yoga has several translations and can be interpreted in many ways. It comes from the root *yug* and originally meant "to hitch up," as in attaching horses to a vehicle. Another definition was "to put to active and purposeful use." Still other translations are "yoke, join, or concentrate." Essentially, yoga has come to describe a means of uniting, or a method of discipline. A male who practices this discipline is called a yogi or yogin; a female practitioner, a yogini.

Yoga comes out of an oral tradition in which the teaching was transmitted directly from teacher to student. The Indian sage Patanjali has been credited with the collation of this oral tradition into his classical work, the *Yoga Sutra*, a 2,000-year-old treatise on yogic philosophy. A collection of 195 statements, the *Sutra* provides a kind of philosophical guidebook for dealing with the challenges of being human.

Giving guidance on how to gain mastery over the mind and emotions and advice on spiritual growth, the *Yoga Sutra* provides the framework upon which all yoga practiced today is based. Literally meaning "thread," sutra has also been translated as "aphorism," which means a tersely phrased statement of truth. Another definition of sutra is "the condensation of the greatest amount of knowledge into the most concise description possible."

Keeping these meanings in the mind, we might think of the art and science of yoga as a kind of magnificent tapestry that is woven together by the threads of universal truths.

- Manali Haridas-

[www.zenforyou.ca](http://www.zenforyou.ca), [manali@zenforyou.ca](mailto:manali@zenforyou.ca) 613-276-3996

*Within each of us lies the power!*