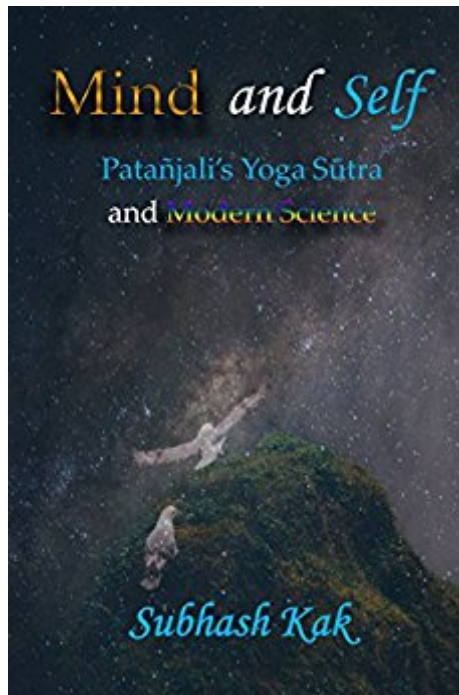




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Mind And Self: Patanjali's Yoga Sutra And Modern Science



Synopsis

Mind and Self is a new translation and commentary on Patajali's Yoga Sūtra... framed by new findings from neuroscience and physics that throw light on the counterintuitive workings of the mind. It brings in evidence from other early Yoga classics such as the Bhagavad Gītā, the Yoga Vāsishṭha, and Tantra to place the text in context and explain some of its most esoteric ideas.

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Customer Reviews

Subhash Kak is a distinguished Vedic scholar and academic who has written extensively on Vedic topics and issues. His publications are always interesting, if not sometimes controversial, because he has the courage to think outside the box when interpreting the Vedas or other Vedic subjects.

Kak's interpretations and writings are almost always taken from the standpoint of modern scientific theory and observation, and so indicates the subtitle of this new translation and commentary of the Yoga Sutras. Thus, Prof. Kak's translation and commentary of

the Yoga Sūtras is a highly anticipated and is a welcome addition to the numerous commentaries on the Yoga Sūtras. Kak's interpretation is somewhat of a disappointment. The subtitle of the book is that the sūtras are interpreted from the standpoint of modern science. While there is certainly elements of science in his interpretation and commentary, there appears not enough to support the representation of the subtitle. Roughly one half of the book consists of a lengthy introduction of the six dharsanas, or schools of Vedic thought. Kak intersperses scientific topics in that introduction. It is, otherwise, a good introduction for the readers not familiar with Indian philosophy. But again not enough to be strictly from a scientific approach. If anything, the emphasis of the treatment is more psychological rather than "scientific." In the same manner, the interpretation of the sūtras are more or less conventional, again, with intermittent references to science, but not enough to be "scientific." In what should have been the most interesting portion of the sūtras from a scientific point of view – the siddhis, or supranatural powers obtained through the austerities of concentration and meditation – is given remarkable short shrift. It is there in the greatest connection between science and the sūtras occur. Kak makes a brief referenced of this connection. Through samyama, which is the combined fusing of the processes of dharana, dhyana, and samadhi, Kak notes in 3.20 that the adherent "takes control over material processes." While Kak mentions in several portions of the book that these extraordinary processes are easily abused, the siddhis, at least to me, from a scientific approach, should lie at the heart of ultimate liberation. Having said all that, though, the quality of Kak's translation of the sūtras is outstanding. Of all the translations I have encountered, Kak's translation is the most intelligible and accessible to the modern reader. The translations are clear, and not, as in so many other translations, either antiquated or overly idiosyncratic. The translations certainly correspond more closely to the scientific approach Kak is attempting to make in this translation. Based on the quality of Kak's translation alone, this Yoga Sūtra justifies five stars and is highly recommended.

I love it.

This is an excellent translation and commentary on the Yog Sūtra from a learned scholar who easily spans both the Vedic tradition as well as modern computer and other sciences. Translating a book of the singular importance of Patanjali's Yoga Sūtra (or Bhagavad Gita for that matter) is a monumental milestone, and one that cannot be undertaken casually. It signifies a

coming together of a deep and holistic wisdom in the life of the author him/herself. I congratulate Dr. Kak, a dear friend, on writing an excellent translation and commentary. The translations of the verses are short, to-the-point, and informative. The commentary preceding the translations brings together a holistic assemblage of various points of view on life, through Dr. Kak's unique and well-honed sense of the Vedic and modern life. I highly recommend this book which can be read in one sitting, or can be a reference resource for a long time. This book will resonate especially with those who follow the path of gyan or knowledge or intellect. If the reader is more into the transcendental or other traditions, there are a select few other nice translations and commentaries on Yoga Sutra. I have been reading several commentaries on Yoga Sutra lately, and find each one very fascinating and enlightening in terms of the author's own wisdom and tradition.

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