Abstract

The meaning of the terminology employed within the Yoga Sutra provokes much academic debate. This dissertation aims to examine the meaning and use of the term dharmamegha samadhi within the Yoga Sutra of Patanjali. This new exploration of these terms is prompted by Ranganathan's (2008) idea that dharma acts as a synonym for morality throughout the text and that in the dharmamegha state the yogi has achieved moral perfection. A study of the use of dharma and dharmamegha samadhi in the Yoga Sutra will allow us to draw tentative conclusions about what Patanjali meant by these terms and how he employed them. This will involve a close textual examination of the Yoga Sutra and of the writings of various translators and exegeters, ancient and contemporary, including several scholarly articles that have, within the past 10 years, dealt exclusively with interpretations of dharma and dharmamegha samadhi within Patanjali. Further background to the historical usage of dharma and dharmamegha samadhi will be gained from studying the works of the other Indian philosophical traditions, via secondary sources. Ranganathan (2008) asserts that dharma/morality is at the very heart of the Yoga Sutra. The findings from this research suggest that whilst an ethical and moral component is found with the yama and niyama section of the Yoga Sutra (2.30ff), the terms dharma and dharmamegha samadhi are used in a specialised and highly specific manner, actually referring to the essential nature of something, rather than acting as a moral or ethical term. A close reading of Patanjali leads me to conclude that dharma and dharmamegha samadhi, when compared to other contemporaneous texts, appear to have specialised meanings and are used in specific ways.