

Invocation to Patañjali

yogena cittasya padena vācāṁ
(yo-gay-nuh chih-tah-syuh pah-day-nuh vah-chahm)
malāṁ śarīrasya ca vaidyakena
(mah-lahm shah-ree-rah-syuh chuh vy-dyuh-kay-nuh)
yopakarottāṁ pravaraṁ munīnāṁ
(yo-pah kar-oh-tahm prah-vah-rahm moo-nee-nahm)
patañjaliṁ prañjalīnāto'smi
(pah-tahn-jah-lim prahn-jah-leer ah-nah-to-smee)
abāhu puruṣākaraṁ
(ah-bah-hoo poo-roo-shah-kar-ahm)
śaṅkha cakrāsi dhārinam
(shahn-kah chah-krah-see dar-ee-nahm)
sahasra śīrasāṁ śvetāṁ
(sah-hah-srah sheer-ah-sahm shvay-tahm)
pranamāmi patañjalim
(prah-nuh-mah-mee pah-tahn-jah-lim)



From *Light on the Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali* by B.K.S. Iyengar, with the addition of approximate pronunciation guides in parentheses. The translation in *Light on the Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali* is:

“Let us bow before the noblest of sages, Patañjali, who gave yoga for serenity and sanctity of mind, grammar for clarity and purity of speech, and medicine for perfection of health. Let us prostrate before Patañjali, an incarnation of } diśeṣa, whose upper body has a human form, whose arms hold a conch and a disc, and who is crowned by a thousand-headed cobra.”

Comments by Geeta Iyengar on chanting these verses before class or practice:

“We chant so that at the very beginning that feeling of sanctification comes from inside, with the feeling of surrendering oneself, because nothing can be learned in this world unless you have the humility to learn. So the moment you think of the Lord at the beginning of doing a practice, you know that you are very small in front of that greatest soul. Once that is understood then the other problems which always arise while practicing, mainly concerned with the ego, will be affected. You know that you are ‘coming down’ to learn something. And you can’t learn anything unless you come down; if you think you are on the top and you know everything, then you are not a learner at all. In that sense, the chanting helps.”