



THE WISDOM OF  
PATAÑJALI'S  
YOGA SUTRAS

A New Translation and Guide

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tude.

*Without the relationship with higher energy, life has no meaning. The higher energy is the permanent Self, but you have no connection with that. For that connection, a fine substance needs to be generated. Otherwise, the energy of the body is too low to make contact with the very high energy which comes from above. Slowly, the desire of the mind for that relationship will become an organic need. You cannot force it. Higher energy cannot be forced. If you try to force it, it can lead to bad results. Gradually, you get more and more interested in it, and appalled by the lack when you are not in relationship. It may be too early to use the word, but that is love. You come to a state in which you realize that you cannot live without that relationship. Nothing has significance or meaning without it.*

—Madame de Salzmann

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## INTRODUCTION

*Om*

*tat savitur varenyam  
 bhargo devasya dhimahi  
 dhiyo yo nah prachodayat.*

Rig Veda (iii, 62, 10)

Let us bring our mind  
 to dwell in the radiance of Divine Truth.  
 May Truth inspire our reflections.

Throughout history, there has been only one serious concern of all spiritual searchers: How can our whole being be in harmony with universal Truth? This is not only a question for the mind; it is not a question of figuring out the Truth, but it is the central question of our life: How can we become a suitable instrument for the Truth to be expressed? This Truth has been variously labeled Brahman, Allah, God, the Holy Spirit, the Absolute, Ultimate Reality, the Sacred, or simply That. There are many other names, but none of these captures the Real, for as the Tao Te Ching says, "The Tao that can be named is not the Eternal Tao."

All spiritual traditions point to a reality which cannot be expressed. Each of these traditions speaks of this reality differently—they use different languages, different approaches, different metaphors to call us to

orient ourselves to this reality. Differences in expression are natural, for the traditions have arisen in different places and at different times. The language used and the metaphors which make sense will depend upon the context and upon our own background. It is useful to study different traditions in order to be free of attachment to any one way of expressing what is beyond expression. Different expressions can help us go beyond all expression.

Sages of every spiritual tradition have insisted that the subtle vibrations which constitute the level of reality we call the Real are always present and that they pervade all space. The place where each one of us is now, is filled with the Holy Spirit or the Buddha-mind. In general, we do not experience this, but if we had a properly tuned instrument, that is, if our organism were rightly aligned and truly sensitive, we would be in touch with the Absolute.

All spiritual traditions, whether of the East or of the West, recognize that God or Truth is radically different from anything we know or can know and other than anything we can project or imagine. However useful philosophical or theological discussions, or icons and idols, or dancing and chanting may be in focusing our attention and in pointing the way to the Truth, a glimpse of the Real far supersedes any idea, any image or any feeling. "There the mind recoils on itself in wonderment," says an Upanishad. In every spiritual tradition, God is Wholly Other, *Totaliter Aliter*. As Meister Eckhart said, "If there were a God of whom I had any idea, it would not be worth having him as God." Our idea of God is always a projection of our own mind and therefore limited. What we can truly say about God is that God is indescribable and unknowable. But although we cannot know God, we can be known by God and we can experience the Real.

Although the Real transcends all forms and is wholly other than anything that has been conceived or can be conceived, and it is radically different from myself as felt or known, the great mystery is that the Unknown and Unknowable God, Brahman, is also the Real I, the Atman or *Purusha*, which dwells deep within myself.

The outstanding feature of the Indic spiritual traditions is the

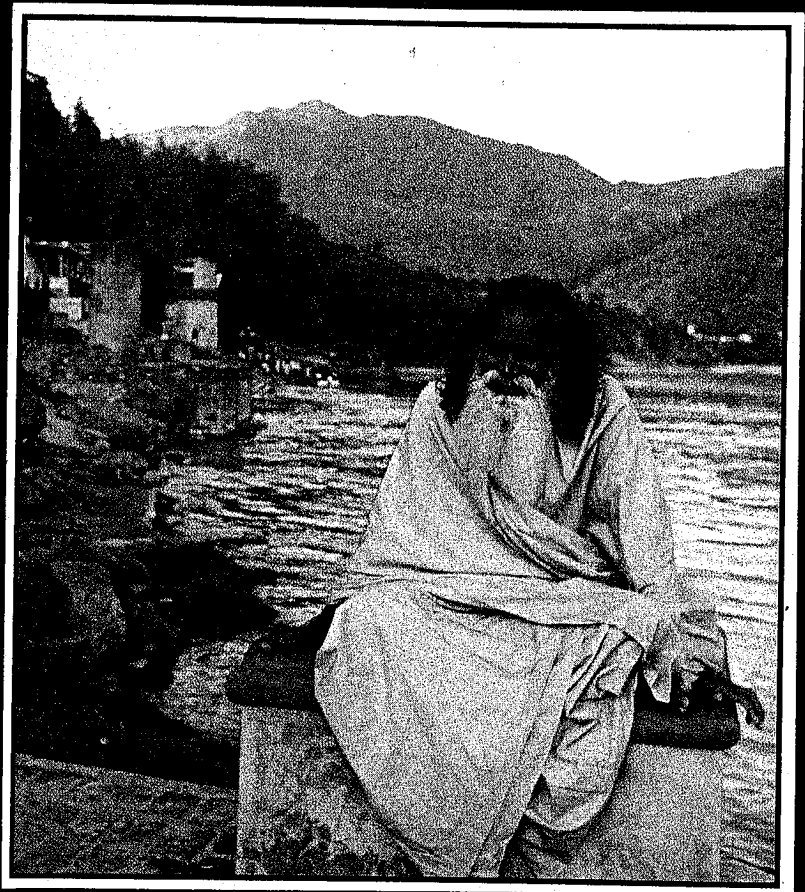
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*The* YOGA SUTRAS  
— of —  
PATANJALI



*Translation and Commentary*  
*by Sri Swami Satchidananda*

## PREFACE

Beloved Students,

It gives me great joy to witness the publication of this book. For many years these *Yoga Sutras* have been like a Bible to me. They have helped me in very many situations on my own path of Yoga and given me invaluable guidance at many points. I appreciate the clarity, simplicity and thoroughness with which Patanjali Maharishi has presented the entire Yoga. He has beautifully presented it as a rigorous and complete science with all its ramifications, from the most elementary to the highly advanced points. I feel it is a living scripture to illumine our spiritual path.

The *Yoga Sutras* are very concentrated and terse. Study them slowly and carefully and meditate on them. You can even learn some of the most important and useful ones by heart. This is not just a book to be quickly read and then tossed away like a popular novel. Nor is it a scholarly work to fill your mind with a lot of philosophy and theories. It is a practical handbook. Every time you pick it up you can absorb more for your growth. Let us slowly try to understand more; and, what little we understand, let us try to practice. Practice is the most important factor in Yoga.

Let us know that all these ideas and practices are there to help us forget our personal selfishness and broaden our minds more and more. As my Master Swami Sivanandaji used to say: "Just be good and do good." It's very simple. Be good and do good and the entire wisdom will be yours.

Every day let us check our progress and see that we grow a little better. Every day should elevate us a little, broaden our attitudes, reduce our selfishness and make us better masters over our own body, senses and mind. This is the kind of Yoga that will really help us. And let that highest goal toward which Patanjali's *Sutras* point be our goal: that one day we should all attain the highest *samadhi*, the totally

liberated state. This liberation is not for the remote future or for when we die; it is to be lived in the very midst of the world.

May all the holy sages and the founder of Yoga, Patanjali Maharishi, and all the gods bless us to achieve this goal with pure minds and deep meditation. May the sacred science of Yoga inspire us to become such masters, to find peace and joy within ourselves, and to share the same with all humanity.

OM Shanthi Shanthi Shanthi. May God bless you.

Ever yours in Yoga,

*Swami Satchidananda*

Swami Satchidananda

Yogaville  
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