

# Ecstasy in the Heart of Creation

By Donalee Campbell

In the *Yoga Sutras*, Patanjali gives a full treatise on the mysticism of Yoga. Each word in Sanskrit is ripe with esoteric meaning. Obviously, yoga is much more than an exercise for flexibility and strength. Patanjali gives an exposition on life itself, and the means to God-realization. He describes the mountain, the path that leads us up, and the ultimate freedom that awaits us at the highest peak; what lies beyond all human imagining.

The *Yoga Sutras* are threads that together weave a tapestry. Like music, one word cannot convey the artistry of the song. Yet the first word sets the tone. *Atta*. Now. Yoga is the union of moment to moment awareness with the continuum that creates the present moment, the zero-point of time. And in the awareness of that moment of time we find that consciousness is the one true essence, and we are brought face-to-face with ourselves. We find consciousness to be that which has followed us through life, as witness to all the changes; the only thing about us that hasn't changed. And when awareness is clear enough to rest on that zero-point in perfect concentration, we reach a state of superconsciousness. We go beyond what is in consciousness to what is Consciousness. We go beyond time and space, and find that which is eternal. Not the feeling that's fleeting; not the thought that's passing; not the memory that's conjured. Beyond what words can describe, we find the divine truth, waiting to be discovered. We find the truth of the moment: love, joy, bliss, and ecstasy at the quantum level. The first chapter in the *Yoga Sutras* is all about the ecstasy that underlies all of creation, and how we can see things clearly enough to touch their true essence, the meaning behind the form. For all sing together as a choir, each a harmony in the song of creation; each a colour in the tapestry of God's eternal love.

In the second chapter, Patanjali explains how all pain and suffering is preventable, and is caused from one huge misunderstanding – about who we really are. Our everyday thoughts and feelings are a kaleidoscope of moving energies, fluctuations of nature, seen from a limited perspective in space and time through the lens of individuality or egotism. We grasp for these changing energies and their manifestations, using them to build our egos and make us different from others. We see ourselves based on how we look, what we think and feel, the possessions we acquire, and the actions we've taken. But all of these things are temporary, and in our desperation for permanency, we desire more and more. Caught up in a vicious cycle of destructive behaviour, the more we use to define ourselves, the more deluded we become, and the more we hurt ourselves and others in the process. Whether mostly dormant or active to the point of psychotic addiction, our desires become mental and physical restrictions which block the flow of higher consciousness, and the truth of who we really are. So how do we get to the point where clarity reigns and truth reveals itself? Re-train the mind to let go of its conditioned patterns of thought. Let go of desire, judgment, definition, and preoccupation with perception. In the space, the void of potential between thoughts, we allow room for truth to enter. Let the higher consciousness in, says Patanjali, and it will spark the light of wisdom within us, healing us from all misconception about who we are and what we need. Patanjali clearly outlines an eight-limbed path of yoga – a proven path that we can take to promote clarity and understanding. Starting with preliminary outer aspects, we can adopt constructive ethics and habits that counteract lower impulses and bring us into greater alignment with truth. Ethics (*yama*) includes non-violence (*ahimsa*), truth (*satya*), non-stealing (*asteya*), continence or self-restraint (*brahmacharya*), and non-coveting (*aparigraha*). Discipline (*niyama*) includes purity (*saucha*), contentment (*santosa*), austerity (*tapas*), study of the Self (*svadhyaya*), and dedication to the Lord (*Ishvara pranidhana*). Through ethics and discipline we can learn to use our powers of discernment and self-control. These help us to surrender the ego, have faith in a higher power, and keep our sights set on higher goals. Through posture (*asana*) and breath control and extension (*pranayama*), we can purify the body, mind, and nervous system, and allow higher consciousness to flow unrestricted. Grace enters and illuminates the way. Through sense withdrawal (*pratyahara*) we practice letting go of the things we use to define us, and in that mirror of pure awareness, we see joy, peace and abundance inside. Through concentration (*dharana*) we recondition the pathways of thought to separate form and meaning, and meaning becomes apparent. Through meditation (*dhyana*), we enter the classroom of silence where the light of true wisdom dawns, and we see things for what they really are. When we submerge ourselves in the ecstasy of

this peaceful state of being, we come to a state of perfect contemplation, and we merge in divine communion (*samadhi*).

In the third chapter, Patanjali explains abilities that can develop in different stages of meditation. This is an evolution in consciousness for which we see much evidence in the world right now. In the process, we may experience flashes of illuminated wisdom, or it may happen all at once. Most often, this knowledge comes gradually, with smaller steps of extra-sensory perception. We learn to let go of the body and the senses at will, and go beyond their limitations. We gain the ability to merge with those things we previously thought were apart from us, and come to know them in their true essence. Psychic powers can be developed such as telepathy, clairvoyance, telekinesis, levitation and awareness of past lives. We can learn to leave our body and travel through all dimensions. We come to know the subtle realms, the intelligence within and beyond. Through this flowering of wisdom, we gain mastery of form, space and even time. From the gross to the subtle realms, our mastery expands until we gain omniscience. Still these are movements within the realm of nature, and each new ability presents its' own trappings of desire. But each new perspective allows us to open to see an even larger picture, and can be used in the divine light of grace to burn off remaining restrictions to the flow of pure divine consciousness.

Eventually, through mastery of the manifest universe, its divine purpose unfolds and we gain understanding of life itself. In the final chapter on liberation, Patanjali describes how *karma* moves the cogs of the universe. *Samskaras* (thought forms, such as desires) are the activators of *karma*. Each desire activates a movement of consciousness, and creates a movement of energy in the world. They are like fuses that light creation, in all its myriad forms. Our desires activate the fluctuations, which in turn cause more desires. But although nature can trap us within its cycles, it can also be the mechanism that we use to break free. When we use the essence of form as an anchor for concentrated awareness in the moment, detached from any desire to define or possess, consciousness cuts through to the truth hidden within. We come to an infinite knowledge, beyond time and change, back to the source of all form. Here we find the truth of the love behind all creation. We find true love in every cell, every atom, and each sub-atomic interaction. We know that we have never been apart from the love of our Creator, and that we have never really been separate from each other. When all *samskaras* have been burned off, the ego dissolves and the mechanisms of nature are transcended. For in this world, everything changes, each entity lives and dies, and each life is met with both joy and suffering. To transcend is a transformation of being. The individual awareness merges with the eternal consciousness, transcending form, space, and time. We come to know as God knows, and we come to know God. We leave behind the perception of change, death, loss, and suffering, and to enter into pure, all-encompassing, all-loving consciousness, impervious to any fluctuation or end; eternal being in absolute bliss, absolute peace, and absolute love. We don't leave life behind, but rather encompass it, becoming it in its true essence. Everything is realized as existing in God, and God is realized in and as everything. This is the ultimate freedom, *kaivalya*, immersion in God.

While the world may sometimes seem dark and chaotic, Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras* show us a path of action to relieve all suffering. This path takes us through the unending realm of possibilities, on the one clear path of truth, illuminated by grace, to love, joy, peace and ultimate freedom. As our egos dissolve into the field from which we all are born, we find the bliss of eternal love, the spark that illuminates the universe. We understand the reason for the separation – to come back together again in ever growing, evolving love. And we come to know ourselves as divinity, doing just that. By transcending our conditioning, we merge into a union of translucent being; all-inclusive and untouched by time, condition or circumstance. All that remains is the truth of ecstasy: unlimited joy, endless bliss, and unconditional love, residing eternally within the heart of life itself. Sparked by the light of love, fanned by the breath of life, fueled by the longing for belonging; ecstasy in the heart of creation.

## Bibliography

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