CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION
The term "Yoga" comes from the Sanskrit root "yuj" which means "to go to trance" or "to meditate". The term is also derived from another root "Yujir" which means "to join" or "to connect". Both the roots are feasible for the practice of Yoga. In the case of the former Yoga is attaining a state of Samādhi by controlling the fluctuations of the mind. And in the case of the latter Yoga means the method of joining the individual soul with the universal Soul. The term "Yoga" is an equivalent of the English term "Yoke". It also has its roots in such words as the German "joch", Anglo-Saxon "geoc" and Latin "iugum".

The term "Yoga" occurs in the Rg-Veda in several senses like yoking, harnessing, achieving and connecting. It is said that there the term has been used less in the sense of yoking and connecting, and more in the sense of harnessing and achieving. In English, the term
“Yoke” has a double meaning. It means joining as well as restricting. In the older Upaniṣads like the Chandogya, Brhadāranyaka and Taittiriya we find the term “Yoga” being used in the sense of restricting or controlling. These Upaniṣads have regarded self-mortification (tapas) as the best means of attaining the ultimate freedom. Mortification is achieved by restricting or controlling of the senses and their passions. So these Upaniṣads have used the term “Yoga” in the sense of yoking the senses. Here yoking means controlling, not joining or connecting. It means holding the senses back for the attainment of mokṣa. The term “Yoke” in the sense of restriction was originally used to refer to controlling of the spirited steeds.

Purpose

Yoga may be described as the conscious and determined effort of an individual for a supersensory experience. It brings about the spiritual state of mind which transcends our everyday experience. Not all states of mind are Yoga. Fainting, fit or hysteria should not be mistaken for Yoga. Yoga is the ability to stop at will the fluctuations of the mind through the practice of the eightfold path. It opens up a new field of vision which gives deeper understanding of oneself, one’s life and the world. Yogic intuition of the truth transforms our personality and enables us to function in a new dimension. The insight deepens and widens our knowledge of the Infinite. It brings about a direct communion with the essence of all things and the universe as a whole. A Yogi regards his life as being extremely fulfilling and
satisfying, since Yoga uncovers for him a creative source of life. Yoga prepares the individual for a direct experience of the ultimate reality. It is a systematic and sure method of attaining the state of Samādhi, the union of the individual soul (jīvātma) with the universal Soul (Brahman). Samādhi is the crown of the Yoga system. In it the Yogi's vision unifies him with the heart of the reality in its totality. Samādhi liberates the Yogi from the bondage of samsara, the round of births and deaths.

Kinds of Yoga

In the Indian tradition there are five important systems of Yoga. They are: (1) Jñāna Yoga, (2) Bhakti Yoga, (3) Karma Yoga, (4) Buddhist Yoga, and (5) Aṣṭānga Yoga. Jñāna Yoga is the path of knowledge. It is advocated by the Upaniṣads and the Advaita Vedānta as the means of attaining mukti. Liberation lies in the knowledge of discriminating between the Self and the not-self, the Brahman and the world. Bhakti Yoga is the path of devotion to God. Surrendering oneself to Isvara without a motive and an end in view leads to liberation. Sri Kṛṣṇa in Bhagavat Gita says that the devotees who take refuse in and meditate on Him with extreme faith are the most blessed. Swami Vivekananda says that one single moment of the madness of extreme love of the Lord brings us eternal freedom. Karma Yoga is the path of action. Performing action by renouncing its fruits is Karma Yoga. In the Bhāgavad Gita Sri Kṛṣṇa says that performing our duties for His satisfaction keeps us free from bondage. Swami
Vivekananda says that just as water cannot wet the lotus leaf, so also selfless action does not bind the person.

The Buddhist Yoga is the path of morality (sīla), concentration (samādhi) and wisdom (prajñā). It consists of eight steps, viz., (1) right view, (2) right thought, (3) right speech, (4) right action, (5) right livelihood, (6) right effort, (7) right mindfulness, and (8) right concentration. The first two steps constitute wisdom. The third, fourth and fifth constitute morality. And the sixth, seventh and eighth constitute concentration. The Buddha held that the practice of the Eightfold path liberates the seeker from samsara and leads him to nirvana. The Eightfold path is also known as the middle path. It steers clear of the extremes of eternalism and annihilationism, self-indulgence and self-mortification.

Aṣṭāṅga Yoga is the most important and popular system of the Hindu tradition. Its sustenance from the Vedic period to the present times speaks volumes of its efficacy. Aṣṭāṅga Yoga is otherwise known as Dhyāna Yoga, since Dhyāna or meditation forms an important part of it. It is also called as Raja Yoga, the king of all other Yogas, since Dhyāna forms part of all of them. Patanjali has expounded his system of Yoga in his magnum opus, Yoga Sūtras. The identity and the time of Patanjali, the author of Yoga Sūtras, are uncertain. No full agreement has been reached by the scholars and
historians about him. There is a lack of decisive evidence and reliable material on the life of Patanjali. Not even a legendary data about him is available. However, the Patanjali of Yoga Sūtras is said to be the same Patanjali who also wrote the famous commentary on Panini's grammar, under the title Mahābhāṣya. A great work on medicine has also been attributed to him. In this sense, Patanjali was not only a great Yogi, but also a great grammarian and a great physician. He contributed immensely to the body, the mind and the spirit of the human being. This is the view held by Rai Bahadur Chandra Vasu in his Introduction to Patanjali's Yoga Sūtras with the Commentary of Vyāsa and the Gloss of Vacaspati Miśra.

But James Haughton Woods, in the Introduction to his work The Yoga-System of Patanjali, says that identity between the Patanjali of Yoga Sūtras and the Patanjali of Mahābhāṣya is not yet proved decisively. He is of the view that there is not a single statement in Yoga-Sūtras about the author of the Mahābhāṣya. And conversely there is no reference in the Mahābhāṣya to the author of the Yoga-Sūtras. Another factor he cites as a counter-proof is that conflicting definitions of the same concepts are given in these texts. Patanjali's time also cannot be determined with any degree of accuracy. The age of Patanjali is generally fixed around three centuries before or after Christ. And the composition of the Yoga Sūtras is said to have taken place any time between 300 B.C. and 300 A.D. But in view of Yoga-
Sūtras attack on the idealism of Vijñāana-Vāda, James Haughton Woods determines the date of the composition of Yoga-Sūtras between 300 A.D. and 500 A.D.

Patanjali was not the founder of the Yoga system. He was only a codifier of what was available in the name of Yoga in his times. The material the Yoga-Sūtras contain dates back to ancient times of the Vedas and Upanisads. Patanjali edited the material and presented the best in a systematic way. He did not put anything new into the text. He did not aim at saying anything that had not been known before. Patanjali's ingenuity lies in writing a succinct treatise on Yoga with great thoroughness and completeness. He ably presented the Yogic lore of his times in a condensed form.

Patanjali's Yoga-Sūtras is a concise text consisting of four parts or books. First part is called Samādhipāda or the book on Concentration. It consists of 51 aphorisms. The second part is Sadhanāpāda or the book on the Means of Attainment of Concentration. It contains 55 aphorisms. The third part is Vibhutipāda or the book on the Attainment of Supernormal Powers. It comprises 55 aphorisms. And, the last part is called Kaivalyapāda or the book on Absolute Independence or Isolation. It is consists of 34 aphorisms. Thus the whole text embodies 195 aphorisms only.
Patanjali defines Yoga as the restriction of the mental modifications. He says, *Yogācittavṛttinirūdha* (Book-I: Aphorism-2). He gives right cognition (*pramāṇa*), indiscrimination (*viśayāya*), verbal delusion (*vikalpa*), sleep (*nāda*), and memory (*smṛti*) as the five kinds of *Chittavṛttis* (I: 6). He identifies ignorance, attachment, aversion, egoism and clinging to life as obstructions to Yoga (II: 3). These hindrances are caused by the subtle impressions (*saṃskāras*) which are the source of the *Chittavṛttis*. They have to be destroyed by resolving them into their causal state. The junction between the Seer and the seen has to be destroyed with the full knowledge of the Seer (II: 25). Ignorance of mistaking the seen for the Seer has to be destroyed by the unbroken practice of discrimination (II: 26). Independence of the Seer (*Kaivalya*) is attained with the complete ending of ignorance and realization of Omniscience (II: 27).

Besides these measures Patanjali advocates the Eightfold Path *Aṣṭāṅga Yoga* as the means of the cessation of the mental fluctuations. Analytical exposition of the eight steps reveals the nature and purpose of Yoga which is the attainment of the ultimate liberation (*Kaivalya*) by restricting the modifications of the mind. The eight steps are: (1) *Yama*, (2) *Niyama*, (3) *Āsana*, (4) *Prāṇāyāma*, (5) *Pṛatyāhāra*, (6) *Dhāraṇa*, (7) *Dhyāna*, and (8) *Samādhi* (II: 29).
The first step, namely, *Yama* consists of five abstentions. They are: (1) *Ahimsa*, (2) *Satya*, (3) *Asteya*, (4) *Brahmacarya*, (5) *Aparigraha* (II: 30). *Ahimsa* means non-killing. It is non-injury by thought, word and deed. The practitioner must love the sentient as well as the insentient beings. He should abstain from malice to all creatures in every way and at all times. *Satya* means abstinence from falsehood. It means correspondence of speech and mind in communicating what is seen, heard or inferred. Speech of a Yogi should never be deceitful or mistaken. It should not also be a barren talk. One should always speak with the sincere intention of transferring one's knowledge and information to the other. Speech should be used for the service and not for the destruction of others. Words with bad intentions are the worst of all evils. *Asteya* means abstinence from unauthorized appropriation of things. It is the refusal to covet or steal things of value from others. *Brahmacarya* means continence. It is the control of the hidden organ of generation. One should not entertain the thoughts of desire and lust. And, *Aparigraha* means abstinence from accepting gifts from others, since it involves the burden of acquiring, protecting and losing the objects. It is a source of distraction.

The second step, *Niyama* comprises five observations. They are (1) *Soucha*, (2) *Santoṣa*, (3) *Tapas*, (4) *Śvādhyāya*, and (5) Īśvarapraṇidhāna (II: 32). *Soucha* means cleanliness of both the body and mind. Cleanliness of one's body and surroundings is essential for
the practice of Yoga. So also cleanliness means removing the blemishes of the mind. One should maintain purity in thought, word and deed. *Santoṣa* means contentment. It is expecting not more than what one deserves. It is coveting not more than the means at hand. It arises out of detachment from worldly objects. Contentment is essential for concentration on the supreme good. *Tapas* means austerity. It is the power to bear the extremes of hunger and thirst, cold and heat, standing and sitting. It includes self-mortification by rigid penances and fasting. *Svādhyāya* means self study. It is studying and reciting the sacred books dealing with the final release of the human being from sorrow. It includes the repetition of the sacred syllable *Om*. And, *Īśararapaṇidāna* means devotion to *Īśvara* or to the God of one's liking. It also means offering up one's actions to the Supreme. Patanjali says that the *Yamas* and *Niyamas* have to be followed always by all irrespective of time, place, class or caste. They are of universal value and application. They have to be followed sequentially, one after another.

The third step is *Āsana*. Patanjali defines it as the posture which is firm and comfortable (II: 46, 47). The posture should be such that we do not feel the burden of our body at all. It should not cause disturbance or discomfort but be conducive to sit for long hours in contemplation. Posture should be such that it gives complete control over the body. Selecting a suitable place is essential for a right
posture. Padmāsana, Bhadrāsana, Svastikāsana and Sukhāsana are some of the postures generally adopted by the Yogis.

The fourth step is Prāṇayāmā which means controlling of the prāna, the breath (II: 48-52). It consists of three stages, namely, exhalation (rechaka), restraining (kumbhaka), and inhalation (pūraka). Prāna is not merely the breath but also the cosmic energy that manifests in the body as the motion of the lungs. The rigorous practice of Prāṇayāmā makes the mind śāttvic. It attenuates the coverings over the chitta and makes it shine with its own effulgent light of knowledge. The ultimate goal of Prāṇayāmā is the Udghata, which means the awakening of the Kundalini. Constant practice of Prāṇayāmā raises the Kundalini from Mūladhāra to Sahasrāra through the nerve called Śuṣumna.

The fifth step is Pratyāhāra which means withdrawal of the sense organs by giving up their respective objects (II: 54-55). It is restraining the mind-stuff from taking the form of the objects through the senses. It is making the chitta clam by disconnecting it from the senses and their objects. Pratyāhāra gives perfect control of the mind over the senses, the body, feelings and actions. With this the mind becomes perfectly fit for Dhāraṇa.

The sixth step is Dhāraṇa which means concentration. Dhāraṇa is holding the mind on to a particular object (III. 1). It is focusing of
the mind on a particular spot in the body or on an object outside the body.

Dhyāna is the seventh step. It is meditation on a particular object for a prolonged time (III: 2). It is a continuous flow of knowledge relating to the object of meditation. In Dhāraṇā, the flow of concentration is like the succession of similar drops of water. But in Dhyāna, the flow of concentration is continuous like the flow of oil or honey.

And Samādhi is the final step. It begins in reflecting on the meaning of the object of meditation by giving up its form (III: 3). Samādhi progresses by several stages. Fundamentally it is of two kinds—Saṁprajñātā Samādhi and Asaṁprajñātā Samādhi. Saṁprajñātā Samādhi means the conscious concentration on an object. It is conceptual in nature and associated with reasoning, discrimination and unqualified egoism (I: 17). It proceeds through the following stages, namely, (1) Savitarka, (2) Nirvitarka, (3) Savicāra and (4) Nirvicāra. Savitarka Samādhi is concentration on the external gross elements in space and time (I: 42). It means meditating on a particular element by questioning it so that it may reveal its truth and transfer its power to the Yogi. Nirvitarka Samādhi is concentration without a question. It is meditating on the gross elements by taking them out of space and time. It is thinking of them as they are (I: 43). Nirvitarka Samādhi will lead to two other kinds of Samādhi namely, Savicāra and Nirvicāra (I: 44). Savicāra Samādhi is concentration on
the subtle elements (*tañmātras*) as they are in space and time. It is meditation with discrimination and ideational unification. And *Nirvicāra Samādhi* is without discrimination and ideation. It is concentration on the subtle elements by taking them out of space and time, and thinking of them as they actually are (*I*: 47).

There are two more stages before reaching the *Asmāpraṇāta Samādhi*. They are *Sānanda* and *Sāsmita*. *Ānanda* means bliss. *Sānanda* means with bliss. *Sānanda Samādhi* is a blissful state of *Samādhi*. Here both the gross and subtle elements are given up. Only the interior organ, namely, *Chitta* is thought of as an object of meditation. *Chitta* is meditated upon as devoid of its qualities of activity and dullness. Here the Yogi experiences a subtle and highly spiritual kind of bliss. It may be comparable to the emotional experiences of joy that accompany the creative intellectual achievements such as the discovery of a new scientific theory.

And when the *Sānanda Samādhi* is concentrated and fully ripe it becomes the *Sāsmita Samadhi*. Here the Ego in its pure Sattvic state alone remains to be. The Yogi becomes fully aware of his *Selfhood (Asmita)*. He penetrates to the centre of his essence and the whole objective reality. His mind gets elated, purified and united in the process of directly knowing the inner most nature of the objective and the subjective reality. He attains the power of all knowledge (*Sarvajñātva*) and experiences the universality of the whole of reality. That is why *Sāsmita Samādhi* is also called *Dharma Megha Samādhi*.
Megha means the wholeness and dharma means reality. Here, the Yogi sheds his gross body and thinks of himself as having a fine body only.

Patanjali says that at this stage the Yogi acquires the energy called Samyama. And he attains several kinds of Powers (Siddhis) by applying Samyama to various kinds of the objects of concentration (III: 16). By making Samyama on the changes in the sahskaras, he attains the knowledge of the past and future. Samyama on word and meaning gives him the knowledge of all animal sounds. Samyama on the signs in others' body gives the knowledge of their mind. Samyama on his own body gives him the power of disappearing at will. Samyama on the elephant gives him the strength of the elephant. Samyama on the Sun gives him the power of knowing the world, and on the Moon and the Pole-Star gives the knowledge the stars and their motions. Depending on the kinds of the objects the Yogi attains several other powers of conquering thirst and hunger and seeing the Siddhas. He attains the extra sensory perceptions like supernatural hearing, seeing, tasting, smelling and knowing. However, Patanjali says that these powers are obstructions to the attainment of final freedom, the knowledge of the highest Self (III: 38). The Yogi should not be tempted to exercise these powers. Although he meets them on the path of Yoga he has to reject them for further progress. Those who succumb to these powers get merged in Nature itself. Patanjali calls them the Prakrilayas.
Although appears to be the final vision of the truth, Sasmitha Samādhi is still within the realm of Nature. There are the seeds of the subtle elements (tanmātras) in it. They may again sprout as the fluctuations and actions of the Chitta. That is why Patanjali calls it the Samādhi with seed (Sabīja Samādhi) (I: 46). The Yogi has to transcend it and attain the Asāṁprajñāta Samādhi which is the cessation of all mental activity. Here the Chitta retains only the unmanifest impressions (I: 18). Entire mind is made a vacuum. There is neither knowledge nor ideation in it. There is no object of meditation here. There is no division as the knower and the known. Only the real Self (Puruṣa) shines forth in the mind. All the tendencies (seeds) of the mental modifications are destroyed. So it is called Nirbija Samādhi (I: 51). It marks the cessation of the cycle of births and deaths. With this, the Yogi attains the complete Isolation (Kaivalya) from Prakṛti.

The above exposition shows that the nature and purpose of Patanjali Yoga is not limited to physical and psychological well-being. Yoga is not confined to rectification of psycho-somatic disorders. It is not a system of physical and mental health. It is not a bunch of exercises for gaining physical strength and mental power. Although Yoga has all these features its real nature and purpose are far nobler and subtler. The true nature of Yoga is to attain the final freedom, namely, Kaivalya. Samādhi is the essence of Yoga. Isolating the Puruṣa from the Prakṛti with discriminative wisdom is the real purpose
of Yoga. Patanjali Yoga has an eternal relevance. It has an important role to play even in the present times. It remains to be significant as long as the human being is a victim of the three kinds of sorrow, namely, (1) sorrow arising within oneself (Ādhyātmika), (2) sorrow inflicted by some other creature (Ādh ībhartika), and sorrow caused by natural calamity (Ādhīdāivika).

It is with the objective of making a detailed exposition of Patanjali Yoga that I have taken up this study. The thesis aims at explaining the nature and purpose of Yoga in a systematic way. It proposes to deal with Rāja Yoga in all its dimensions. The study involves a detailed analysis of almost all the aphorisms of Patanjali's Yoga Sūtras. The whole discussion of the theme of the thesis is embedded in five chapters.

Chapter One: Introduction

This chapter explains in brief the root meaning, the true nature and purpose of Yoga in general. It elucidates in brief the nature and purpose of Patanjali's Rāja Yoga. Besides specifying the objective of the present thesis, an outline of its contents has been given in this chapter.

Chapter Two: The Origin and the Schools of Yoga

This chapter is devoted to a detailed discussion of the origin and development of Yoga since the Vedic times. It also deals with an explanation of the different schools of Yoga such as Jñāna Yoga,


*Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga* and the *Aṣṭānga Marga* of Buddhism. It also elucidates in brief Patanjali Yoga and the other minor forms of Yoga like the *Hatha Yoga*, the *Vipassana Yoga* and the *Tantra Yoga*.

**Chapter Three: Yoga and the Human Destiny**

This chapter discusses the topics like the essence of man and the concept of salvation in Indian philosophy. It elucidates the fact that Patanjali Yoga is not only theoretical but also practical. It shows that the real purpose of Yoga is the attainment of *Samādhi*, the real nature and destiny of man.

**Chapter Four: Aṣṭānga Yoga - Its Nature and Purpose**

This chapter is devoted exclusively to a systematic study of Rāja-Yoga as it has been explained by Patanjali in his text, *The Yoga Sūtrās*. The nature and purpose of Rāja Yoga is brought out in a detailed manner. An analysis of almost all the aphorisms has been made. A lucid explanation of the four books of *The Yoga Sūtrās* has been given in this chapter.

**Chapter Five: Conclusion**

This chapter gives a review of the themes of the preceding four chapters. It also makes some critical comments on the nature and purpose of Rāja Yoga. The main observation is that Patanjali Yoga is meant for the nobler purpose of ending sorrow and attaining bliss by the cessation of the mental modifications. The objective of Yoga should not be limited to acquiring physical and mental health. This may be
achieved by several other kinds of exercises. The modern man's approach to Yoga is narrow and blind to its spiritual dimension. The true nature and purpose of Aṣṭānga Yoga is to unveil the true nature and destiny of man. It aims at creating a liberated human being whose essence and destiny is the same as Divinity. This aspect of Yoga should not be lost sight of us.

Another comment is that the nature and the purpose of Aṣṭānga Yoga are not distinct from each other. The nature of Yoga is the redemption of man from sorrow which is the same as the purpose of Yoga. In the case of Yoga, the two terms, "nature" and "purpose" may be treated as synonymous.

Another remark to make is that it is wrong to think that Yoga in its profound sense is meant only for a few people like saints and sages. Yoga is meant for all. It is by practicing Yoga that one becomes a saint or a sage. Praramapuruṣārtha is the birth right and the final destiny of every human being.

Patanjali's Yoga is more a method of separation than joining or connecting. It is a process of isolating (vīyoga) the Puruṣa from Prakṛti, and not uniting the individual self with the universal Self. In the Yoga Sutras we hardly find an aphorism that speaks of Kaivalya as the union of the Jivātma with the Paramātma.