

The Secret of the Yoga Sutra: Samadhi Pada

Pandit Rajmani Tigunait

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In *The Secret of the Yoga Sutra: Samadhi Pada*, Pandit Rajmani Tigunait presents an eloquent interpretation of the classical yogic philosophy of Pantajali. These sutras provide the foundation for physical yoga practice and meditative guidance toward ultimate peace of mind.

Tigunait has written numerous books about yoga and metaphysical thought and reveals a profound connection to his subject in this well-organized narrative. His explanation of the sutras adheres to the teachings of the ancient sages and describes the arduous attention required of those who seek eternal fulfillment.

The book's first chapter explains Pantajali's conviction that "a human being is an island of excellence." Although people possess many superior qualities, they face myriad diversions of the physical world that prevent them from realizing their full spiritual freedom. The sutras appear in order of progressive achievement, under chapter topics such as "Purifying the Mind," "The Mystery of Divine Grace," and "Rise of Inner Illumination."

Each sutra is introduced by its Sanskrit title, followed by an English transliteration, and a glossary explains other Sanskrit words. When the English translation is imprecise, Tigunait prefers using the Sanskrit term. As an example, the twofold technique of calming the roaming mind involves "abhyasa" and "vairagya," which translated literally mean "practice" and "nonattachment," inferring two separate practices. He explains, "Understanding how abhyasa and vairagya form a complete system of Yoga sadhana [structured method of spiritual practice] and how they infuse other systems of spirituality with life is crucial to understanding the essence of spirituality itself."

The yogi's inward journey begins by learning to free the mind of all thoughts. Tigunait explains that this difficult goal involves uniting mind with breath. He writes, "By using yogic tools and means, we remind the mind and breath of their loving and mutually supportive bond."

Tigunait succeeds admirably in his intent to present a straightforward explanation of yogic wisdom. The clarity of thought and expression he brings to *The Secret of the Yoga Sutra* offers English readers access to ancient but universal ideas that remain viable and vital in contemporary life. In addition to the glossary, the book concludes with five appendixes and two indexes.

Those who practice yoga will learn to deepen their practice of postures with meditation. Other spiritual seekers will find great value in this book as well.

MARGARET CULLISON (July 29, 2015)

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