



Svaroopaa® Vidya Ashram

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Spiritual Upliftment #10

## Diving Deep Within

By Swami Nirmalananda & Rukmini Abbruzzi

The culmination of Patanjali's eight limbs of yoga is samadhi, a deep inner absorption into Consciousness-itself, which is your own Self. Most Svaroopis experience samadhi in every class; it's a taste of enlightenment.

Svaroopaa® yoga's core opening poses give you the beginning levels of samadhi. Early on, you get it in Shavasana. You settle into the yoga blankets under your knees, leaning back into the floor, your teacher guides you through an inner awareness of your whole body, beginning with your toes, then through your legs, feet, hips, and so on. It's common to stop hearing your teacher's voice at some point, which is called pratyahara. Then you glide deeper within, beyond time, into the eternality of your own being...

Then you "bob" out. You figure you must have fallen asleep, but it wasn't really sleep. It was better. Somehow deeper. You're more refreshed than sleep can give you, even if your inner immersion lasted only minutes or seconds. And you want to you get back in there!

There's also that delicious moment after Seated Side Stretch. You linger in the easy stillness, especially after doing your second side. Your spine is easily upright, with your breath open and easy, yet something else is happening. You're diving deeper within. It's so easy.

The point of Patanjali's Yoga Sutras is that you can access your own innermost depths consciously. His eight limbs prepare you to apply your mind to Consciousness.

Outer limbs: yama and niyama (lifestyle practices), asana (poses), pranayama (breathing practices),

Transitional limb: pratyahara (turning your attention inward),

Inner limbs: contemplation (dharana), meditation (dhyana), inner immersion into Consciousness (samadhi).

Delving inward, dharana gives you the ability to choose your mental focus, progressively staying with it more and more. Learning to direct your attention in this way deepens into a delicious flow, dhyana. When your mind's flow toward Consciousness takes you beyond your mind, you experience samadhi, the inner immersion in your own Self.

Tad evaarth-maatra-nirbhaasa.m svaruupa-"shoonyam-iva samaadhi.h — Yoga Sutras 3.3

The object of meditation alone shines forth,  
free from the mind's processes; this is samadhi.<sup>1</sup>

In samadhi, you are no longer being the one doing the meditating. All that remains is the object of meditation, your own Self as Consciousness-Itself. Swami Nirmalananda says, "If we were meditating on a candle flame, you would become absorbed into the flame. But we are meditating on the Self, as my Baba taught me to teach you. Thus you don't disappear at all; your Divine essence is revealed!"

As a meditator, over time you develop the ability to rest in Consciousness for longer periods of time, as well as to go progressively deeper. Patanjali gives detailed descriptions of eleven levels for you to explore within, but says enlightenment lays beyond the last he describes. In meditation, you perceive these dimensions of your own existence by an inner knowing that is beyond your mind.

Your early experiences of samadhi can be like entering a room but the lights are off. In the dark, you can't tell how high the ceilings are, how wide the room is or if there is any furniture. As you rest in that inner level, it's like your eyes are getting used to the dark. You begin to perceive space and dimensionality. You can tell where you are while you're there. Once you become able to be conscious in that level of samadhi, then you'll go deeper, like you're in a brand-new room with the lights off again.

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<sup>1</sup> Rendered by Swami Nirmalananda

Rukmini says, "One morning while I was meditating, I began to be aware of a quiet, deep, expansive darkness. Then I was aware of shifting into another place inside, nearly as dark, but with a different quality to it. It's hard to describe the wonder and bliss of it because it was beyond wonder, beyond bliss. I was deeper than my mind. It was my own Self, experiencing a depth of my own Self."

Yoga's practices rarify your mind, building your ability to go deep within, exploring ever more subtle levels of samadhi. Patanjali's eight limbs detail a long and arduous path to enlightenment, though powerful and rewarding. We're in a Shaktipat tradition, which specializes in making the inner process faster and easier. Yet it's still valuable to understand what Patanjali describes. The Yoga Sutras is like a user's guide to using your mind for a spiritual purpose. Including detailed technical information, it also includes trouble-shooting for potential problems and to keep you on the path.

When you practice *Svaroopā*® Yoga and *Svaroopā*® Vidya meditation, you are part of a Shaktipat tradition, one of India's ancient tantric lineages. Your inner process is propelled by a Divine energy of revelation and upliftment; yoga calls it Guru's Grace. Shaktipat is the initiation that reveals your inherent Divinity to you, within you. Only a Shaktipat Master can give you this inner awakening, a blossoming forth of Consciousness within. It propels you into great, profound and mystical moments. While Patanjali's yogis had to work for decades to get to samadhi, Shaktipat gives it to most people right away. Therefore, even in Shavasana or Sukhasana, from the beginning, you spontaneously settle into samadhi, though you bob out fairly quickly. Some people say they've "passed out," but Swami Nirmalananda describes it as "passing in." You bypass all your crazy thoughts, diving into an inner immersion in Consciousness, though you're not yet able to be conscious of being there while you're there. It's only once you bob out that you know you were in. But then you're out, stuck in your mind again, with its endless parade of fears and desires blocking your ability to know your Self.

It's simple! Just return to mantra again. It will take you as deep as before, perhaps even deeper. And then you'll bob out again. This may happen several times in one meditation period. For a longer experience of samadhi, you must condition yourself to Consciousness. You must meditate regularly. Yet every time you experience samadhi, no matter how briefly, you are uplifted and transformed. To borrow Wordsworth's words, you emerge "trailing clouds of glory."<sup>2</sup>

The effects of your samadhi experiences build over time, clearing internal blockages that keep you from knowing your own Self. The light of Consciousness grows brighter within. Not merely exploring the innermost dimensions while you're meditation, you are increasingly able to bring your Self with you when you open your eyes.

You can consciously cooperate with the process that is blossoming forth once you've received Shaktipat. Poses, breathing practices, dharanas and yoga's other practices give you mastery of your mind. It becomes a luminous instrument of Consciousness, which you use to explore within as well as in the world, to pour the radiance of Consciousness through your life and into the world.

Ultimately, samadhi is not the goal. There's more. Patanjali explains that you must go beyond the eleventh level of samadhi to reach kaivalya. His name for the ultimate attainment, kaivalya is usually translated as liberation or freedom, often called enlightenment. Yet Muktananda described a state beyond kaivalya, called sahaja samadhi, describing it as the highest, most exalted attainment. Kaivalya comes from the Sanskrit root, "eka," meaning one. It is technically translated as "the great aloneness." Sahaja samadhi means "the natural state," meaning you rest in your own Divine essence, which is the essence of the universe and all that exists. Thus, you are the One, being all while being you, pervading outside and inside, all at the same time. In other words, it just keeps getting better. Do more *Svaroopā*® yoga.

THIS IS AN ARTICLE IN A YEAR-LONG SERIES ON "SPIRITUAL UPLIFTMENT," OUR THEME FOR 2018, CO-AUTHORED BY SWAMI NIRMALANANDA SARASWATI, VIDYADEVI STILLMAN & RUKMINI ABBRUZZI.

To reach our teachers or to learn more about *Svaroopā*® Yoga & Meditation, contact *Svaroopā*® Vidya Ashram ♦ [www.svaroopaa.org](http://www.svaroopaa.org) ♦ [info@svaroopayoga.org](mailto:info@svaroopayoga.org) ♦ 610.644.7555

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<sup>2</sup> William Wordsworth, Ode: Intimations of Immortality, [www.bartleby.com/101/536.html](http://www.bartleby.com/101/536.html) (accessed 9/24/2018)