



Svaroopaa® Vidya Ashram

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Deepening Inward

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“I lost my Shavasana,” a yogini complained to me. I was opening a weekend workshop, but she came to talk before I got started. “My teacher told me to explain that’s why I’ve come — so you can give me my Shavasana back.”

I responded, “You’re probably still going deep, but not unconscious. You’re being conscious in Consciousness.” I promised to check on her in our first yoga class, which I was starting in minutes. After an hour of spinal release poses, I led the Guided Awareness in Shavasana, also called Yoga Nidra. She was settled deeply within.

She came to me after class, “You’re right. I was deep, and I knew I was deep while I was deep.” This inner experience has a name in Sanskrit — samadhi. It is a deep immersion into the Consciousness that you are. In the beginning, you may go unconscious at this depth, but you expand into it as you return to it again and again.

Samadhi is the end-goal of the practices listed in the Yoga Sutras.

Yama-niyama-asana-pranayama-pratyahara-dhara.na-dhyana-samadhayo’shtavangani.¹ — Yoga Sutras 2.29

Impulse-control, choice-full action, posture, breathing practices, turning inward, contemplation, meditative flow and meditative absorption are the eight aspects.

This sutra acknowledges that you master things in stages. This is true of worldly skills as well as your inward exploration of your own Beingness. Yama and niyama free you from mental churning. Posture is not only health-giving, it uplifts your attitude. Breathing practices enliven your body while clearing your mind, like a good breeze clears the skies.

Beyond these preparatory practices, the real yoga begins when you turn your attention inward. When you begin with meditation, turning your attention inward is challenging because you haven’t cleared your mind first. It tends to regurgitate your life for you. You’re trying to look inward but all you get is an internalized version of the external world.

Tantra makes it easy. In Svaroopaa® Vidya meditation, we repeat mantra aloud, then you get it going internally and... bloop! You’re immersed within. You skipped through Patanjali’s three stages: contemplation (dharana) and meditative flow (dhyana), to land in meditative absorption (samadhi).

You are settled into your own Divine Essence. Ease of being, expansiveness, peace and bliss are qualities you bring with you when your awareness extends outward again. You took the shortcut to Self. It’s called Grace, as in “go with the flow.”

If you are kayaking on a river, it’s easier to go with the current. Paddling against the current is hard work and takes a lot of strategizing. Tantra’s specialty is the river of Grace, the blessing of the sages that carries you easily and deeply inward, deeper than your mind.

Your mind works like binoculars. They make small and distant things appear bigger. Similarly, your mind narrows your field of vision to focus on specific things, usually the ones you don’t like. If I paint a wall pure white and put a single black smudge on it, the smudge is all you see. Oh, mind!

My dad once let me look through his new binoculars. After a while, I turned them around and looked through the big end. I got a wide-angle view, a grand perspective. Meditation is similar. Instead of looking outward, focused on minutia, turn inward, expanding into the cosmic reality that is your own Self.

You begin by repeating our enlivened mantra. This is called dharana, contemplation. Using your mind, you choose to honor your own Divine Essence, the meaning of the mantra’s Sanskrit words. Speaking the mantra aloud makes it easier to focus on, a great starting point. Yet silent repetition is more powerful.

¹ Yama-niyama-aasana-praa.naayaama-pratyaaahaara-dhaara.naa-dhyaana-samaadhayo’.s.taava”ngaani.

Most meditators glide deep inside after a few mantra repetitions or maybe a few minutes. When I lead a group in out-loud mantra repetition, many cannot complete the full five-minute series. Yes, dive deep! Become absorbed in the inner dimensionality of your own being!

In the beginning, you may not recognize that you are deep while you are deep. When you bob out, you know you had been inside. You even want to dive back in again. But how do you get there? You do it the same way you did the first time, by repeating mantra. It worked the first time and it will work again.

If you're not diving deep, keep repeating the mantra through your whole meditation. You are actually deepening inward with each repetition. You're like a scuba diver but you're looking up at the waves and the bottoms of the boats. You can tell that it worked when you open your eyes at the end of your meditation period. Simply notice how you've changed. You are centered, expanded, calm and supported from within. Yes, you were meditating.

I was given our mantra by my Baba over 50 years ago. I haven't worn it out yet. It is more powerful now than in the beginning. Well, my ability to see its true value and power has improved. The mantra was always that powerful, imbued with the energy of my Guru. Baba explained:

The Guru has the power to infuse the mantra with Consciousness...²

— Swami Muktananda

The mantra works because it is enlivened by the Shaktipat masters who share their inner state with you. It works every time: you repeat mantra; it carries you inward. Your inner immersion is called samadhi, meditative absorption. While the classical texts say it takes years or decades to attain, but you are in a Shaktipat tradition, so it is deep and easy.

There are stages of samadhi, as experienced by the yogini in her Shavasana. Sitting up makes you progress faster, which is why meditation is done seated. Meditative energy flows upward. Align your spine like a rocket ship pointed in the direction you want to go. It's called upliftment!

When I began meditating, I treated samadhi as a "time-out" (technically a "time-in"). I used it to recover from a busy life. When my meditation timer went off, I leapt up and sprinted into my day. But my meditations changed me. I wasn't so speedy. I could linger, just like a tantric text recommends:

Samaadhi-sa.mskaaravati vyutthaane bhuuyo bhuuya"s-cid-aikyaamar"saan-nityodita-samaadhi-laabha.h.³ — Pratyabhij~nah.rdayam 19

At the end of meditation, while your mind is filled with Consciousness, contemplate again and again your oneness with Consciousness, so you may attain eternal samadhi.

K.semaraja is telling you how to live in samadhi, even when your eyes are open. While engaged in life, you know who you are, oh Shiva. You practice for this at the end of every meditation period, opening your eyes slowly while repeating mantra. You are reminding your mind that you are more than your mind. Living your life from an inner center, you are nourished by the ever-arising bliss of Consciousness.

There are two modes of this continuing experience, turiya and turiyatita. In turiya, you know your own Divine Essence while seeing others as separate. You move through life with an ease, supported by your wholeness, your holiness, in every moment.

In turiyatita, you see all as the forms of Shiva that they already are. While others may not yet know their own Shiva-ness, you do. Consciousness meets Consciousness, again and again.

THIS IS AN ARTICLE IN A YEAR-LONG SERIES, "SADHANA: PRACTICE & PROCESS"

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² Swami Muktananda, *The Perfect Relationship*, page 3

³ Samadhi-samskaravati vyutthane bhuuyo bhuuyash-chidaikyamarshan-nityodita-samadhi-laabha.h.