

Walking the Path of Samādhi

“Walking the Path of Samādhi” explores the culminating stages of Patañjali’s Eight Limbs of Yoga—Dharana (concentration), Dhyana (meditation), and Samādhi (absorption)—guiding practitioners on the journey toward ultimate liberation, Kaivalya.

Introduction to Samādhi

- Samādhi is the culmination of yoga practice, where the mind becomes still and reflects the true Self (puruṣa).
- Meditation begins with focusing on external objects, gradually moving inward toward subtle awareness.
- **Dharana, Dhyana, and Samādhi** form the final three limbs of Patañjali’s Eight Limbs of Yoga:
 - **Dharana**: Concentration on a single object to steady the mind. (YS 3.1)
 - **Dhyana**: Continuous meditation, turning awareness inward and refining focus. (YS 3.2)
 - **Samādhi**: Absorption, where the mind becomes fully still and awareness rests in its pure essence. (YS 3.3)

Two main types of samādhi:

Samprajñāta Samādhi (“with seed”):

Object-based absorption, progressing through four stages that refine awareness (YS1.17):

- **Savitaraka** → **Nirvitarka**: Absorption with gross objects. (YS 1.42, 1.43)
- **Savicāra** → **Nirvicāra**: Absorption with subtle objects. (YS1.44)
- **Sānanda**: Absorption in bliss. (YS 1.17)
- **Sāsmitā**: Absorption in the sense of pure “I-am.” (YS 1.17)

Asamprajñāta Samādhi (“without seed”):

Objectless absorption where the mind rests in pure consciousness, free from all impressions (saṃskāras). (YS 1.18)

Kaivalya – Ultimate Freedom

- The culmination of samādhi, Kaivalya, is the liberation of pure consciousness independent of mind, body, or nature. (YS 4.34)
- Living in this state naturally in daily life is known as **sahaja samādhi**.

Jīvanmukta – The Liberated Being

- A jīvanmukta abides in freedom while embodied, free from karmic impressions, acting without attachment (Yoga Sūtra 4.30–4.31).
- When the body falls away, the liberated being becomes a **videhamukta**, fully free from rebirth.

Practical Insight

- The journey from **Dharana** → **Dhyana** → **Samādhi** → **Kaivalya** guides practitioners from effortful concentration to effortless awareness, leading to selfless being, enduring inner freedom, and the realization of pure consciousness.