



WHAT IS SAMADHI?

By Paramhansa Yogananda

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Through Oneness in samadhi, the dualities of human experience disappear. Everything is perceived to change into Spirit. In this state, the man in samadhi can perceive the spiritual ocean, with its waves of creation; or see the same spiritual ocean, transcendently calm, existing without the waves of creation.

In the first state of samadhi, the yogi (one who unites his soul with Spirit by right meditation) is so absorbed in Spirit that he is oblivious of the material and created universe. A somewhat similar experience on a lower plane is experienced when one is so absorbed in books or thoughts that he is unaware of what is happening around him. This state is not unconscious, for unconsciousness implies lack of awareness, both inwardly and outwardly. Such unconsciousness is easily brought about by the use of drugs, anesthetics and other outward means. The full spiritual consciousness of samadhi, however, can be attained only through the regular, continuous, right discipline of meditation, and has nothing in common with unconsciousness.

The first state of samadhi, in which the yogi finds everything withdrawn and absorbed into Spirit, is called *sabikalpa samadhi*. The higher and greater state of samadhi is *nirbikalpa*, in which the yogi, after realizing the Spirit alone without creation perceives it also, simultaneously, both as *above* creation, and as *manifested in* all creation. Here his consciousness becomes the cosmic consciousness. The domain of his consciousness now extends from his body to include the whole universe. He becomes the Ocean of Spirit, and watches the bubble of his body floating in it. His consciousness perceives all motion and change of life, from the circling of the stars to the fall of a sparrow and the whirling of the smallest electron.

The yogi who has entered into these two states of samadhi finds that solids melt into liquids, liquids into gaseous states, these into energy, and energy into cosmic consciousness. He lifts the four veils of solids, liquids, gases and energy, and finds the Spirit, face to face. He sees the objective universe and subjective universe meet in Spirit. His expanded material self mixes with the greater spiritual Self and knows their unity. The spiritual Self, being the first cause, and capable of existing without material manifestation, is therefore greater than the material self.

Thus, the negative conception of God is removed. The yogi, instead of finding cessation of life and joy, becomes the fountain-head of eternal bliss and life. The tiny bubble of laughter becomes the sea of mirth itself. By knowing God, one does not lose anything, but gains everything.