

# ŚABDOPĀYA

Śabda Institute's long term study and practice program



Diamond Body. Crystal Mind. Golden Heart.

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## COURSE DESCRIPTION

*Śabdopāya* is Śabda Institute's long-term study and practice program. Śabda means word (here, referring to the primordial pulse of creation) and upāya is means or method. This program then refers to the means for arriving at the primordial pulse of creation.

Śabdopāya is a serious program for seekers who wish to deepen their commitment to the spiritual path via dedicated study and practice along with a community of like-minded practitioners.

The practices taught in Śabdopāya come predominantly from the non-dual Tāntrik traditions. While we will perform an in-depth study of the Tāntrik view (*darśana*) through various classical texts, the focus of this program is on the continuous *application* of these concepts and principles in the moment-to-moment unfolding of daily life.

Along with deep study, we will explore progressively refined and advanced practices, gradually and systematically building upon basic techniques. The key emphasis will be on developing *sattarka* or sound reasoning and *Īśvara praṇidhāna* or surrender that enable the shedding of layers of conditioning and contraction that keep us bound in limitedness. The three pillars of this program are:

1. Darśana (understanding the view of the path)
2. Abhyāsa (judicious practices)
3. Upādāna (application of the view and practice in fieldwork, i.e., life)

This program is structured with a mix of self-study (via Kavithaji's self-study courses), live classes and courses with Kavithaji and regular sessions with some of her senior student-practitioners. This program is different from all of Kavithaji's courses in



that it provides a solid framework for structured practice and study through directed reading, homework assignments and extensive support for individual journeys via a discussion forum, partner work and assignment of a mentor from among Kavithaji's senior students as well as 1:1 time with Kavithaji whenever it is required. This practice is also supported through yearly retreats. These retreats can be attended in-person or virtually; however, those wishing to become Śabdācāryas (teachers) will need to attend a given number of retreats in person (discussed in year 2).

There are no prerequisites for the first year of Śabdopāya, beyond a strong commitment and desire for progress on the spiritual path.

Starting in the second year of study, an exclusive commitment to this program and path is a requirement. In other words, this program cannot be undertaken as yet another course in addition to one you may already be following. If you are already committed to another path, the recommendation is to stick to the short courses or Śabda Saṅgha since they don't require exclusivity.

As we get into more advanced teachings in years three and beyond, there will be an application process and aspirants will have to demonstrate that they have applied the concepts learned in the first two years of study. While the focus is on your personal path and application, the program also serves for Śabdācārya (teacher) preparation with additional requirements as determined by Kavithaji.

### **Pūjopāsaka:**

In addition to the core program, starting in year 3, those aspirants who are so called may also study in Pūjopāsaka which focuses on deepening instruction on pūja and other sacred rituals. Note that some of these teachings must be in person so participants must be willing to travel. There will be an additional cost for this incremental field of study.



## Śabda Samaya (Year 1)

Cost: \$1500 (for those also in Śabdācāra, the cost is \$1,000)

What's Included:

- Exclusive practices
- 50% discount on recommended self-study courses (The Heart of Wellness, Foundations of Non-Dual Tantra, Anuśāsana: The Wisdom of the Yamas and the Niyamas, Shakti Rising)
- Saṅgha membership (which includes 25% discount on live courses)
- 1 live course – usually conducted during the spring Navarātra
- Monthly calls with Kavithaji and/or her senior students
- Mentoring and online engagement
- Workbook and evaluations

What's NOT included:

- Cost of required retreats
- Purchase of books for required readings (Shakti Rising, The Heart of Wellness, Glorious Alchemy or other)
- Discounts beyond the 25% Saṅgha discount on self-study courses that are not part of the yearly curriculum
- Prorating or refunds for courses already taken

Scholarships for all programs are considered via interview on a first-come, first-serve basis. There are limited scholarship spots for this program.



### **Important Information:**

Śabdopāya is for serious practitioners only and not for the casually curious. Even though each program is presented to span a year, evaluation is of both the absorption of the knowledge but also of readiness to proceed to the next level. Please note that progression to the next level is assessed by Kavithaji and is non-negotiable. The time frames are loose approximations for internalizing specific aspects of knowledge through their continuous application. This program requires a willingness to be disciplined with diet and lifestyle, work in groups, with a partner and mentors and with Kavithaji. If you are curious about the lifestyle requirements, please check out the Heart of Wellness Self-Study Course. If such a lifestyle does not appeal to you over the long-term, the short courses may be more appropriate and we offer a self-study guide (<https://sabda.institute/offerings/>) to help you structure your studies.

On the other hand, if you are tired of seeking and would like to hang up your hat and settle down on an authentic path for the long haul, you may be in the right place!

We note that although the bulk of teaching material is through supported study of Kavithaji's current and future public courses, what is exclusive to participants of this program is the directed and assisted application of the teachings in daily life, as well as elite and progressive Tāntrik practices of the oral practice tradition.

### **Structure, Course requirements and Evaluations:**

This is an intensive program and participants will be expected to engage actively in all aspects of the program. Requirements include:

- Maintenance of the lifestyle prescribed in The Heart of Wellness self-study course
- Daily incorporation of a sitting practice, which will be discussed upon enrollment



- Participation in the monthly live calls, as well as the Śabda Saṅgha monthly calls
- Active engagement in the discussion forum including daily journaling, as well as with a partner and mentor
- Completion of the self-study curriculum including evaluations.
- Participation (in-person or virtual) in the annual retreat
- In later years, live 1:1 instruction time with Kavithaji will be increased as we delve into the more advanced practices. This will increase commitment time, as will direct study with Kavithaji

### **Evaluations and progression:**

Continued progression in the program will be by invitation and based on successfully demonstrating the following:

Darśana: Aspirants will need to demonstrate that they have integrated the ‘View’ teachings from the self-study courses and monthly calls. This will be assessed through written evaluations which will contain a small number of short-answer questions and short essay questions.

Abhyāsa: Aspirants will be expected to participate in at least half the calls live (times will rotate to allow for participation from all time zones), participation in the retreat, partner and mentor engagement, and journaling on the discussion forum, contributing to meaningful discussion.

Upādāna: Aspirants will need to show that they have incorporated the lifestyle and sitting practices into their daily lives. This will be observed through the sharing of experience (discussion forum/ with mentor/ written feedback).



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **Will the study of texts also be offered publicly? What is exclusive to Śabdopāya?**

Apart from a deeper dive into specific topics during the monthly calls, the program will leverage current and future public courses on textual study. If this is the main area of interest, joining these as they are offered may be preferable. Within Śabdopāya, participants will be supported and guided through applying the concepts from these public courses in their lives. What will be exclusive to this program, and not taught elsewhere will be the practices. For these practices to be effective, it is important to have a committed and consistent practice and as such, they will not be taught outside of this structured format.

### **Do I have to maintain the lifestyle prescribed in The Heart of Wellness?**

Our spiritual path is greatly aided by bringing our body-minds back into balance, which begins with balancing our digestive fire. The digestive fire refers not only to our ability to digest what we eat but also how we process sense perceptions, memories, life experiences, stress and change. The Śabdopāya program follows our principle that we work on all aspects of our being on this path, cultivating a Diamond Body, Crystal Mind and Golden Heart. If intellectual study is what appeals to you, we invite you to consider instead the Śabda Saṅgha (where we get into deep study of classical texts including the Bhagavad Gītā and the Devī Mahātmayam) and the self-study courses. Our self-study guide can help you structure your studies: <https://sabda.institute/offerings/>

### **I do not live in the United States and do not know if I can make the calls live or attend the retreats in person. Is this a problem?**

The call times will be rotated to allow participants in all time zones to participate in at least some live calls. All calls will be recorded though and there will always be a chance to send in questions in advance. There will also be virtual options in all the retreats,



except for those in the Pūjopāsaka program. For those wishing to become a Śabdācārya, attendance in person to at least some retreats will be mandatory.

### **Will there be dīkṣa (initiation)?**

Yes. However, dīkṣa does not bear fruit if it is not appropriate to the student's needs and stage. As such, it cannot be dictated as a formal part of the program. Appropriate initiation, as determined by Kavithaji, will be provided at the appropriate time. Requests for specific mantras will not be entertained.

### **I am in the Śabdācāra (Women's Series) program. Can I participate in both? Which is right for me? Are they both the same?**

Yes, participants from Śabdācāra may concurrently participate in Śabdopāya. However, a full commitment is required and participation should only be undertaken if you feel you are able to take this on. Part of the objective is to ensure the spiritual path becomes central to your life. It is ideal for those wishing to deepen their study and contemplation of the View. Note that participants in both programs will be expected to maintain the stricter Śabdācāra dinacarya (lifestyle).

### **Can men participate?**

Yes! Men can participate in this program.

### **Will I get to study directly with Kavithaji?**

While Kavithaji will be teaching and offering many Q&A sessions, her senior students will be intimately involved in leading the monthly calls and mentoring. However, direct study with her increases exponentially over the years of study.



**I already study with another teacher or would like to study concurrently in another program. Is this ok?**

While Śabdopāya only requires exclusivity as of the second year, we do recommend that it is better to choose a single place of study generally, whether that is with Śabdopāya or with another teacher. This allows for greater integration and surrender. Further, Śabdopāya is an intensive program and it may be difficult to gain the full benefit of the teachings if you are spread too thin.

**Notes:**

- Here is the link to view the informational call with Kavithaji - [Sabdopaya Informational Call](#)
- For further queries and information please email us at [sabdopaya@sabdainstitute.com](mailto:sabdopaya@sabdainstitute.com)



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