

## Samadhi (40) Deep Contentment

**Gil Fronsdal**

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So, welcome to the continuation of this series of talks on *samādhi*. I think we're now in the 40th talk. And what I hope is that these guided meditations that go along with it and these talks, more than teaching you techniques, more than teaching you how to do *samādhi* practice, it's pointing you to feeling something meaningful and satisfying within. The normal state that people live in involves some kind of tension, some kind of stress. It might be a low level, and it might not be recognizable by people that they're living with stress and tension. Because it's become normalized, it's expected, it's just how it is to be in the world, how it is to be a human being.

And the person might have a reference point for something that calls stress or being tense, that's some kind of serious level or quantum leap above their normal state. But still, often people live in this normal state. And what that means is that the thinking that comes from tension also has become normalized, also seems just as this is what it is to be a human being. And we're supposed to do this, or it may even be almost invisible that we're constantly chattering, talking, having conversations, remembering, reviewing, planning. But to enter into *samādhi* is to drop into some place that's below any level of tension or stress that we can experience. And in a sense, we are now in *samādhi*, dropping below the stress level of our life, the tension level.

Sometimes the stress and tension kind of continues to be there in the body and heart or some place, but it's now moved a little bit to the periphery because we feel at the center or underneath it all, a place where there is no stress, there is no tension, there is no operating on clinging desires, pushing desires, needy desires, that are there without any kind of hostile aversion, pushing away, wanting it to be different. It's like we're dropping into a much more

of a natural state of who we are when there is no tension, when there is no stress at all in the system. And this gives rise to deep feelings of satisfaction, relief, well-being, joy. And each person is going to experience this differently. But sometimes it comes along with the kind of feelings you would have if you were peacefully creative. Maybe writing poetry or reading poetry.

Or maybe, you know, peacefully, quietly involved, absorbed in a very simple craft or very simple playing of music. Where there's some kind of almost emotional feeling that wells up or is there that feels suffusive and spread through the body. And it isn't that we can so much make this happen in *samādhi*. But it begins to show itself because it's there almost. It's almost like it's always there. It's underneath the tension, underneath the stress.

And it's kind of like a treasure house within that's waiting to be opened. And it's important not to think that the treasures are too, you know, fantastic. It's important not to look for peak experiences and dramatic feelings of *samādhi*. But it's actually better to have it be kind of very deep contentment, a deep satisfaction, a deep, aha, this is good to be here. Like you've gotten really cozy in bed, and now you're safe, now it's good. Nothing has to happen, nothing more has to be done, nothing has to be said.

And now, ah, this is good. And to be able to recognize that so we can move towards it or settle into it in meditation, so we can recognize that this is important and this is invaluable, it's a treasure. Because sometimes the orientation is so strongly towards thoughts and tension, stress, that often driven by the desire to be safe because we're afraid. The desire to want something because we feel like insufficient in some way or we just want more pleasure or something. And to no longer be attracted to that, no longer be hooked into it or to be mesmerized by desires and aversions and to settle quietly into a much more deeper sense of contentment, deeper sense of satisfaction.

And at some point, because we start seeing that having any, we start seeing that desire, or when we see that desires, aversions, thoughts, are actually agitating the mind, keeping us separated from this deeper place that's satisfying, deeper connection to breathing and the underlying kind of peace or this joy or well-being in which breathing occurs. We see that thoughts and desires are agitating it. Then it's easier to just let those go, let those become quieter, kind of let the mind become stiller and quieter, let the heart be more settled. But we might need to see that certain kinds of activities of the mind are not so satisfying, are maybe a little bit alienating, a little bit keeping us away from something deeper satisfaction, so that it's easier just to let it float away. There comes a time when the desire to not have

those desires is too much to have. And so it's almost like we just learn to leave it alone.

We have desires, we have aversions, we have thoughts. And there comes a time when there's a, just feels like the best thing to do is to just leave it completely alone. Don't be involved. It recedes the periphery. It's not being reinforced. Maybe it floats away.

Maybe it's kind of quietly in the background. But in the foreground is where the action is, the action of contentment, the actions of deep satisfaction, deep immersion in this lake of *samādhi*. And in this space of *samādhi*, there can be pleasures. There can be pleasantness. There can be joy. There can be strong sense of happiness.

Sometimes people feel rapture in these states. But the idea is to somehow be at ease in the middle of them, don't push for anything, don't try to pump anything up, just try to be at ease and make it space, allow it to be there, let each thing of these well-being kind of have space, breathing room to live the way it wants to live. Sometimes these states get stronger, sometimes they fade away. Don't have an agenda, but hold it steady, and what happens as we go through this approach stage, that steady staying here becomes stronger and stronger, or sometimes it feels almost like we're clicking in, and there's kind of a shift, boom, and now we've really arrived. Boy, are we ever here now with this experience. And it doesn't feel like there's any movement to get distracted or wander away.

Sometimes that is a very slow, steady movement that we slowly settle into. We don't see sometimes it almost coming until we find ourselves in a state where now we're really here. And, you know, if there's thoughts, it's only thoughts that are pleasant, nice, good thoughts about what's happening in meditation, about the experience here and now that supports us to be with it. And very, very quiet. And some people have the experience that we're locked in to this now. Sometimes it's just really like we're at rest.

We're now really rooted here right now. And so the fruition of this approach stage is because we're so patient, so willing to just stay here and be here as if forever, the desires to be anywhere else begin to fall away. And the familiarity with just staying here with the breath, staying one breath after the other, inhale, exhale, riding the breath, staying with it continuously in an easeful way. At some point we're rooted, we're there, we're not going away for a while. And then without exactly desire we're allowed to enjoy that and this is where the art of enjoyment is an art, it's the enjoyment, enjoy it in a way that helps the minds be quiet, without thoughts, with less thoughts, calm, and just stay there.

And you can feel that having thoughts takes you away from it. But you're allowed to be there

in that well-being of deep *samādhi*. It's actually part of what we become rooted in or connected in. It supports us to be right there in the practice. So whether you understand what I'm saying now, any reference point to your own experience or not, I think it's good just to hear these words, hear these descriptions, so that you can recognize it or appreciate it or be inspired by it.

So some characteristics, some qualities of this can actually be there all along in your practice, in your meditation, even times when you are much more restless and filled with thoughts. That this is the orientation, this is the simplicity of it. And so we'll continue on Monday. And on Monday, we're going to start going into some of the characteristics of when the *samādhi* really becomes clear, full *samādhi*, which in our tradition is called *jhāna*. And I'm not expecting you to be in *jhāna*, but some of the qualities, characteristics of it are useful to know, even when you're not in *jhāna*.

But in the meantime, if you feel like any kind of ongoing-ness, momentum that's happening from you from this *Samādhi* series, I would recommend that you be sure to meditate this weekend through the next two days, so that there's some continuity through the next two days that you can pick up with or continue into Monday when we start again. So thank you very much, and I appreciate your attention, your being part of this journey with *Samādhi*, and I look forward to continuing. Thank you. Thank you.