

# Samādhi (40) Deep Contentment

March 21, 2025

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

Stress, tension, satisfaction, joy, relief, desires, pleasure, aversion, thoughts, rapture, *jhana*, full *samādhi*,

**Gil Fronsdal**

Welcome to the continuation of this series of talks on *samādhi*. We are now on the 40th talk.

I hope that the guided meditations complement these talks. More than teaching you techniques or how to practice *samādhi*, they are pointing you to feeling something meaningful and satisfying within.

The normal state that people live in involves some kind of tension and stress. It might be a low level. It might not be recognizable to most people that they are living with stress and tension. It has become normalized. It is expected. It's just how it is to be in the world, and to be a human being. A person might have a reference point for what they call stress or being tense. This is usually a serious level or quantum leap above their normal state of stress. Most often people live in this normal state of low-level stress.

This means that the thinking that comes from tension has also become normalized. It seems this is what it is to be human. We are supposed to do this. It may even feel almost invisible that we are constantly chattering, talking, having conversations, remembering, reviewing, and planning. To enter into *samādhi* is to drop into some place that is below any level of tension or stress that we can experience. In a sense, in *samādhi*, we are dropping below the stress or tension level of our lives.

Sometimes the stress and tension continue to be in the body and heart. It might move a little to the periphery because we feel at the center or underneath it all, we are experiencing a place where there is no stress. There is no tension. There is no operating on clinging, pushing, or needy desires. We are there without any kind of hostile aversion, pushing away, or wanting it to be different. It's like we are dropping into a much more natural state of who we are when there is no tension or stress in the system.

This gives rise to deep feelings of satisfaction, relief, well-being, and joy. Each person will experience this differently. Sometimes this comes along with the kind of feelings we would have if we were peacefully creative, maybe writing or reading poetry. Maybe we are quietly involved or absorbed in a very simple craft or playing music. There are emotional feelings that well up and spread through the body.

It isn't that we can make this happen in *samādhi*, but it begins to show itself because it is there. It's almost like it's always there. It's underneath the tension, underneath the stress. It is like a treasure house that's waiting to be opened from within. It is important not to think that the treasures are too fantastic. It's important not to look for peak experiences and dramatic feelings of *samādhi*. It is actually better to experience a very deep contentment, or satisfaction – a deep, aha, this is good to be here. It is like we have gotten really cozy in bed, and now we are safe. Now it's good. Nothing has to happen. Nothing more has to be done. Nothing must be said. This is good.

We want to be able to recognize this so we can move towards it and settle into it in meditation. We can recognize that this is important. This is invaluable. This is a treasure because sometimes our orientation is so strongly towards thoughts, tension, and stress. These are often driven by the desire to be safe because we're afraid, the desire to want something because we feel insufficient in some way, or we just want more pleasure.

We are no longer attracted to that, hooked into it, or mesmerized by desires and aversions. We begin to settle quietly into a much deeper sense of contentment, or satisfaction. At some point, we start seeing that having any desires, aversions, or thoughts are actually agitating the mind. They keep us separated from this deeper place that is satisfying. They separate us from a deeper connection to breathing and the underlying peace, joy, or well-being in which breathing occurs.

We see that thoughts and desires are agitating the mind. We see that it is easier to just let those go. Let them become quieter. Let the mind become stiller and quieter. Let the heart be more settled. We see that certain kinds of activities of the mind are not so satisfying. They are a bit alienating and keep us from getting some deeper satisfaction. Then it is easier to let them float away.

There comes a time when the desire to not have those desires is too much to bear. It is almost like we just learn to leave them alone. We have desires. We have aversions. We have thoughts. There comes a time when it just feels like the best thing to do is to leave them completely alone. Don't be involved. They recede into the periphery. They are not being reinforced. Maybe they float away. Maybe they are quietly in the background. The foreground is where the action is, the action of contentment, deep satisfaction, and deep immersion in this lake of *samādhi*.

In this space of *samādhi*, there can be pleasures, pleasantness, and joy. There can be a strong sense of happiness. Sometimes people feel rapture in these states. 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 create space. Allow it to be there. Let this well-being have space, or the breathing room to live the way it wants to live.

Sometimes these states get stronger. Sometimes they fade away. Don't have an agenda. Just hold it steady. As we go through this approach stage, the steady staying here becomes stronger and stronger. It can be almost like we are clicking in. There is a kind of shift, boom, and now we have really arrived. Boy, are we ever here now with this experience. It doesn't feel like there's any movement to get distracted or wander away.

Sometimes there is a very slow, steady movement that we slowly settle into. Sometimes, we don't see it coming until we find ourselves in a state where now we're really here. If there are thoughts, it's only thoughts that are pleasant, nice, good thoughts about what's happening in meditation. There may be thoughts about the experience here, and now that supports us to be with it. It is very, very quiet. Some people have the experience of being locked into this now. Sometimes it's like we are at rest. We are really rooted here, right now.

The fruition of this approach stage is because we are so patient. We are so willing to just stay here and be here forever. The desire to be anywhere else begins to fall away. There is a deep familiarity with just staying here with the breath. We stay with one breath after another. We are riding the breath, inhaling and exhaling, staying with it continuously in an easy way. At some point, we are rooted; we are here. We are not going away for a while.

Without desire, we are allowed to enjoy this. This is where the act of enjoyment is an art. It's an enjoyment in a way that helps the mind be quiet, calm, and without thoughts, or with fewer thoughts. We just stay here, ahhh. We can feel that having thoughts takes us away from this. We are allowed to be here in the well-being of deep *samādhii*. It is part of what we become rooted in or connected to, and it supports us to be right here in practice.

It is good to just hear these words, whether you understand what I'm saying or have any reference point to your own experience. Hear these words, these descriptions, so that you can recognize, appreciate, and be inspired. Some of these characteristics and qualities can actually be there all along in your practice and meditation. They can be there even at times when you are more restless and filled with thoughts.

This is the orientation, or the simplicity of *samādhi*. On Monday, we will start going into some of the characteristics of when *samādhi* really becomes clear, full *samādhi*. In our tradition, this is called *jhana*. I am not expecting you to be in *jhana*, but some of the qualities and characteristics of it are useful to know even when you're not in *jhana*. In the meantime, if you feel any forward momentum is happening from this *samādhi* series, I recommend that you be sure to meditate this weekend through the next two days. This will provide some continuity through the next two days that can continue into Monday when we start again.

So, thank you very much. I appreciate your attention, and you're being part of this journey with *samādhi*. I look forward to continuing. Thank you.