

Samadhi Explained Clearly: Dropping the Masks, Leaving the Game, and Resting in What Is

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Samadhi often sounds mysterious—something abstract, distant, or reserved for monks and mystics. For many readers, it can feel philosophical or impractical. Yet Samadhi is not exotic at all. It is deeply familiar. Most people have brushed against it in ordinary moments—when the mind goes quiet, when time seems to disappear, when attention is so complete that there is no inner voice narrating the experience.

Samadhi is not a place you enter. It is what reveals itself when mental interference relaxes.

To understand this clearly, it helps to see how the mind usually operates—and why it so effortlessly creates a sense of struggle without our noticing.

Living One Step Away from Life

Most of us do not experience life directly. We experience life *through commentary*.

Imagine watching a movie while someone sits beside you describing every scene: commenting on the characters, predicting outcomes, judging what should or should not happen. Before long, you realize you are no longer watching the movie itself, you are listening to opinions *about* the movie.

This is how the mind functions much of the time. It narrates, evaluates, compares, and anticipates. Samadhi begins when this narration quiets and life is encountered directly—without the constant mental overlay.

The “I”-Thought: A Voice Mistaken for Identity

At the center of this commentary is what many contemplative traditions call the **“I”-thought**. It shows up as:

I am stressed.

I need to fix this.

I should be further along.

I am failing.

I am doing this meditation wrong.

This voice feels personal and authoritative, as though it speaks *for* us. But a crucial insight shifts everything:

The I-thought is not who you are. It is something that happens.

A useful analogy is a GPS voice in a car. It can be helpful at times, but it is not the vehicle—and certainly not the driver. Difficulty arises when we confuse the voice with the one moving through life.

Meditation does not initially try to silence the I-thought. Instead, it teaches us to notice it. The moment a thought is noticed, rather than believed, a quiet separation has already occurred. Awareness is present *before* the thought and remains *after* it fades. This simple noticing is the first opening toward Samadhi.

Masks: Roles That Once Protected Us

Over time, the I-thought organizes itself into identities; masks we wear so consistently they feel like who we are. These masks might include being the strong one, the responsible one, the achiever, the healer, the peacemaker, or even the spiritual seeker.

These roles are not mistakes. They formed intelligently, often as responses to family dynamics, social expectations, or emotional survival. But each mask requires energy to maintain. It must be upheld, defended, and protected. This creates a subtle but chronic tension in the nervous system.

Meditation gently exposes these masks. Not by tearing them away, but by illuminating them. When seen clearly, a mask is no longer an identity, it is simply a pattern that arises in certain situations. The realization "*this is something I do, not something I am*" brings immediate relief.

Letting go, in this sense, is not rejection. It is recognition.

Life as a Game: From Player to Observer

Another helpful analogy is to think of life as a game. When fully absorbed in a game, you identify with the character. You react emotionally to wins and losses. You forget the screen, the controller, and the person holding it.

This is how most people live—completely immersed in the storyline of their thoughts, roles, and reactions.

Awakening begins the moment you realize you are *in* the game.

Meditation creates a little distance. Instead of being consumed by thoughts and emotions, you begin to observe them. Stress decreases. Perspective increases. Life feels less overwhelming. You have shifted from player to observer.

This is meaningful progress—but it is not yet Samadhi.

The Subtle Trap of the Observer

At this stage, many people become comfortable identifying as “the witness.” They say, *I am watching my thoughts. I am observing my emotions.* While this is far healthier than being lost in them, it still implies separation: a watcher here, something watched there.

This, too, is duality.

The deeper insight comes when it is seen that the observer itself can be observed. The sense of “*I am watching*” is just another experience arising in awareness. When this is recognized—not intellectually, but directly—the final layer of separation softens.

There is no watcher. There is no watched.

There is simply what is—aware of itself. This is Samadhi.

Superposition: Letting Experience Remain Open

To make this even clearer, consider the idea of superposition as a metaphor. Imagine spinning a coin in the air and refusing to let it land. Heads and tails both remain possible. Nothing collapses into a conclusion.

Ordinary consciousness collapses experience immediately. Every moment becomes labeled: good or bad, right or wrong, success or failure, me or not-me.

As awareness deepens, this compulsion relaxes. Experience is allowed to remain open. Sadness and peace can coexist. Uncertainty and clarity can appear together. Movement and stillness are no longer opposites.

Nothing needs to be resolved for awareness to remain whole.

This openness is not detachment. It is intimacy without ownership.

WHEN THE KNOWER BECOMES THE KNOWN

Non-Dual Awareness in Daily Life



Why the Present Moment Matters So Much

The present moment is not a spiritual idea—it is a lived reality. The past exists only as memory. The future exists only as imagination. The sense of a separate self depends on constantly referencing both.

Samadhi happens only now.

Not because the present moment is special, but because it is the only place where thoughts can be seen instead of believed. When attention rests fully in

immediate sensation—breath, sound, touch—the I-thought loses momentum. It cannot survive without time.

This is why all genuine contemplative paths eventually point back to presence.

A Practical Path, Step by Step

Level One: Training Attention

Beginning with daily meditation, twenty to thirty minutes. Use breath or bodily sensations as an anchor. When attention wanders, gently return. There is no failure here—only noticing. You are learning how attention behaves.

Level Two: Noticing the I-Thought

Start to recognize thoughts that revolve around “I.” Do not argue with them. Simply notice them as thoughts and feel their effect on the body. You are learning that thoughts are events, not identity.

Level Three: Seeing the Masks

Notice which roles appear in different situations—at work, with family, when alone. Quietly ask, *who am I trying to be right now?* You are learning that identity is constructed and conditional.

Level Four: Resting as the Observer

Allow thoughts and emotions to arise without interference. Let awareness be the space they move through. You are learning that you are not your experience.

Level Five: Letting the Observer Dissolve

Soften effort further. Stop trying to watch. Let awareness rest in itself. If effort appears, notice that too. You are learning that separation was never real.

Level Six: Living Samadhi

Bring this openness into daily life—into conversations, decisions, uncertainty. Let actions arise naturally. You learn that life is not something you manage; it is something that moves.

In Simple Terms

Samadhi is what remains when the commentary quiets, the masks loosen, the observer dissolves, and the present moment is fully inhabited.

Nothing mystical is added. Nothing human is lost.

Only the unnecessary effort of pretending to be someone falls away.

References & Further Exploration

- *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*
- Ramana Maharshi, *Who Am I?*
- Rupert Spira, *Being Aware of Being Aware*
- Evan Thompson, *Waking, Dreaming, Being*
- Judson Brewer, *Unwinding Anxiety*
- Francisco Varela, Evan Thompson & Eleanor Rosch, *The Embodied Mind*

Educational video:

<https://youtu.be/70joViWXqeo>