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Video Transcriptions

Samadhi 2 - It's not what you think

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2

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Video Transcript - English

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The world's greatest spiritual teachers from ancient to modern times have shared the view that the deepest truth of our being is not the property of one particular religion or spiritual tradition but can be found within the heart of each person. The poet Rumi said "where is that moon that never rises or sets? Where is that soul that is neither with nor without us? Don't say it is here or there.

All creation is "That", but for the eyes that can see. In the story of the Tower of Babel humanity fragmented into countless languages, beliefs, cultures and interests. Babel means literally "the gate of God". The gate is our thinking mind - our conditioned structures. For those who come to realize their true nature, their essence beyond name and form, they are initiated into the great mystery of what lies beyond the gate.

An ancient parable, the elephant parable, has been used to describe how various traditions are actually all pointing to one great truth. A group of blind people are each touching a different part of an elephant, getting a certain impression of what an elephant is. The person standing at the elephant's leg describes the elephant as being like a tree. The person at the tail says the elephant is like a rope. The elephant is like a spear, says the one standing at the tusk. If one touches the ear, it seems the elephant is like a fan. The person touching the side is adamant that the elephant is like a wall. The problem is we touch our piece of the elephant and we believe our experience is the only truth. We don't acknowledge or appreciate that each person's experience is a different facet of the same animal. The perennial philosophy is an understanding that all spiritual and religious traditions share a single universal truth. A mystical or transcendent reality upon which foundation all spiritual knowledge and doctrine has grown.

Swami Vivekananda summed up the perennial teaching when he said "the end of all religions is the realizing of God in the soul. That is the one universal religion." In this film when we use the word God it is simply a metaphor for the transcendent, pointing to the great mystery beyond the limited egoic mind. To realize one's true self or immanent Self is to realize one's divine nature. Every soul has the potential to manifest a new higher level of consciousness. To awaken from its slumber and its identification with form. The writer and visionary Aldous Huxley, known for his book "Brave New World", also wrote a book which he entitled "The Perennial Philosophy" in which he writes about the one teaching that comes back over and over in history, taking the form of the culture in which it is realized. He writes, "The perennial philosophy is expressed most succinctly in the sanskrit formula "Tat Tvam Asi"; "That Thou Art." The Atman or immanent eternal self is one with Brahman, the absolute principle of all existence, and the last end of every human being is to discover the fact for himself.

To find out who he or she really is. Each tradition is like a facet of a jewel reflecting a unique perspective of the same truth, while at the same time echoing and illuminating each other. Whatever the language and conceptual framework used, all religions that reflect the perennial teaching have some notion that there is a union with something greater, something beyond us. It is possible to learn from and integrate the teachings from one or many sources without identifying a sense of self with them. It is said that all true spiritual teachings are simply fingers pointing to the transcendent truth. If we hold on to the dogma the teaching for comfort we will be stunted in our spiritual evolution. To realize truth beyond any concept is letting go of all clinging and attachment, letting go of all religious concepts. From the ego's perspective the finger pointing you to Samadhi is pointing straight toward the abyss. Saint John of the Cross said "If one wishes to be sure of the road they tread, one must close their eyes and walk in the dark."

Samadhi begins with a leap into the unknown. In the ancient traditions in order to realize Samadhi it was said that one must ultimately turn consciousness away from all known objects; from all external phenomena, conditioned thoughts and sensations, toward consciousness itself. Toward the inner source; the heart or essence of one's being. In this film when we use the word Samadhi we are pointing to the transcendent. To the highest Samadhi which has been named Nirvikalpa Samadhi. In Nirvikalpa Samadhi there's a cessation of self activity, of all seeking and doing. We can only speak about what falls away as we approach it and what reappears when we return from it. There is neither perception nor non-perception, neither "thing" nor "no thing", neither consciousness nor unconsciousness. It is absolute, unfathomable, and inscrutable to the mind. When the self returns to activity there's a not knowing; a kind of rebirth, and everything becomes new again. We are left with the perfume of the divine, which lingers longer as one evolves on the path.

There are numerous types of Samadhi described in the ancient traditions and language has created much confusion over the years. We are choosing to use the word Samadhi to point to the transcendent union, but we could have used a word from another tradition just as easily. Samadhi is an ancient Sanskrit term common to the Vedic yogic and Samkhya traditions of India, and has permeated many other spiritual traditions. Samadhi is the eighth limb of Patanjali's eight limbs of the yoga, and the eighth part of the Buddha's Noble Eightfold Path. The Buddha used the word "Nirvana", the cessation of "vana" or the cessation of self activity. Patanjali described yoga or Samadhi as "chitta vritti nirodha", the Sanskrit meaning "cessation of the whirlpool or spiral of mind." It is a disentangling of consciousness from the entire matrix or creatrix of mind. Samadhi does not signify any concept because to realize it requires a dropping of the conceptual mind.

Different religions have used various words to describe the divine union. In fact the word religion itself means something similar. In Latin "religare" means to re-bind or reconnect. It's a similar meaning to the word yoga which means to yoke, to unite the worldly with the transcendent. In Islam it is reflected in the ancient Arabic meaning of the word Islam itself which means submission or supplication to God. It signifies a total humbling or surrender of the self structure.

Christian mystics such as Saint Francis of Assisi, Saint Teresa of Ávila and Saint John of the Cross describe a divine union with God, the kingdom of God within. In the Gospel of Thomas, Christ said "the kingdom is not here or there. Rather the kingdom of the Father is spread out upon the earth and men do not see it." The works of the Greek philosophers Plato, Plotinus, Parmenides, and Heraclitus when seen through the lens of the perennial teaching point towards the same wisdom. Plotinus teaches that the greatest human endeavor is to guide the human soul towards the supreme state of perfection and union with the One.

The Lakota medicine and holy man Black Elk said "The first peace, which is the most important, is that which comes within the souls of men when they realize their relationship, their oneness with the universe and all its powers. And when they realize that at the center of the universe dwells Great Spirit and that this Center is really everywhere. It is within each of us.

On the path to awakening unless we are in Samadhi there are always two polarities, two doorways one can enter. Two dimensions: one towards pure consciousness the other towards the phenomenal world. The upward current toward the absolute, and the downward current toward Maya and all that is manifested, both seen and unseen.

The relationship between relative and absolute could be summed up in the following quote by Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj: "Wisdom is knowing I am nothing, love is knowing I am everything, and between the two my life moves." What is born of this union is a new divine consciousness. Something is born out of the marriage or union of these polarities or the collapse of dualistic identification, yet what is born is not a thing and it was never born. Consciousness flowers creating something new, creating what you could call a perennial Trinity. God the Father, the transcendent, unknowable and changeless, is united with the Divine Feminine, which is everything that changes. This union brings about an alchemical transformation; a kind of death and rebirth.

In the Vedic teachings the divine union is represented by two fundamental forces Shiva and Shakti. The names and faces of the various gods change throughout history but their fundamental attributes remain. What is born out of this union is a new divine consciousness, a new way of being in the world. Two polarities inseparably one. A universal energy that is without center, free of limitation. It is pure love. There's nothing to be gained or lost because it is utterly empty but absolutely full.

Whether it is the mystery schools of Mesopotamia, the spiritual traditions of the Babylonians and Assyrians, religions of ancient Egypt, Nubian and Kemetic cultures of ancient Africa, the shamanic and native traditions around the world, the mysticism of ancient Greece, the Gnostics the Non-dualists the Buddhists the Taoists, Jews, Zoroastrians, Jain's, Muslims, or Christians one finds that their common link is their highest spiritual insights have allowed their adherents to realize Samadhi.

The actual word Samadhi means something like to realize the sameness or oneness in all things. It means Union. It is uniting all aspects of yourself. But do not mistake intellectual understanding for the actual realization of Samadhi. It is your stillness, your emptiness that unites all levels of the spiral of life It is through the ancient teaching of Samadhi that humanity can begin to understand the common source of all religions and come into alignment once again with the spiral of life, Great Spirit, Dhamma or the Tao.

The spiral is the bridge that extends from the microcosm to the macrocosm. From your DNA to the inner Lotus of energy that extends through the chakras, to the spiral arms of galaxies. Every level of soul is expressed through the spiral as ever-evolving branches, living, exploring. True Samadhi is realizing the emptiness of all levels of self. All sheaths of the soul. The spiral is the endless play of duality and the cycle of life and death. At times we forget our connection to the source. The lens we look through is very small and we identify with being a limited creature creeping upon the Earth, only to once again complete the journey back to the source; to the center that is everywhere.

Chuang Tzu said "When there is no more separation between this and that, it is called the still point of the Tao. At the still point in the center of the spiral one can see the infinite in all things." The ancient mantra "om mani padme hum" has a poetic meaning. One awakens or realizes the jewel within the lotus. Your true nature awakens within the soul, within the world AS the world. Using the Hermetic principle "As above so below, as below so above", we can use analogies to begin to understand the relationship between mind and stillness, relative and absolute.

A way to begin to grasp the non-conceptual nature of Samadhi is to use the analogy of the black hole. A black hole is traditionally described as a region of space with a massive gravitational field so powerful that no light or matter can escape. New theories postulate that all objects from the tiniest microscopic particles to macrocosmic formations like galaxies have a black hole or mysterious singularity at their center. In this analogy we're going to use this new definition of a black hole as "the center that is everywhere". In Zen

there are many poems and koans that bring us face to face with the gateless gate. One must pass the gateless gate to realize Samadhi.

An event horizon is a boundary in space-time beyond which events cannot affect an outside observer, which means that whatever is happening beyond the event horizon is unknowable to you. You could say that the event horizon of a black hole is analogous to the gateless gate. It is the threshold between the self and no self. There is no "me" that passes the event horizon. In the center of a black hole is the one-dimensional singularity containing the mass of billions of Suns in an unimaginably small space. Effectively an infinite mass. Literally a universe in something infinitesimally smaller than a grain of sand. The singularity is something unfathomable beyond time and space. According to physics movement is impossible, the existence of things is impossible.

Whatever it is, it does not belong to the world of perception, yet it cannot be described as merely stillness. It is beyond stillness and movement. When you realize the center that is everywhere and nowhere, duality breaks down, form and emptiness time and the timeless. One could call it a dynamic stillness or a pregnant emptiness, within the center of absolute darkness. The Taoist teacher Lao Tse said "Darkness within darkness the gateway to all understanding." The writer and comparative mythologist Joseph Campbell describes a recurring symbol, part of the perennial philosophy which he calls the Axis Mundi; the central point or the highest mountain. The pole around which all revolves. The point where stillness and movement are together. From this Center a mighty flowering tree is realized.

A Bodhi tree that joins all worlds. Just as a Sun gets sucked into a black hole, when you approach the great reality, your life starts to revolve around it and you begin to disappear. As you approach the immanent self, it can be terrifying to the ego structure. The guardians of the gate are there to test those on their journey. One must be willing to face one's greatest fears and at the same time accept one's inherent power. To bring light to the unconscious terrors and the hidden beauty within. If your mind is not moved, if there's no self reacting, then all phenomena produced by the unconscious arises and passes away. This is the point in the spiritual journey where faith is most needed.

What do we mean by faith? Faith is not the same as belief. Belief is accepting something on the level of mind to bring comfort and assurance. Belief is the mind's way of labeling or controlling experience. Faith is actually the opposite. Faith is staying in the place of complete not knowing, accepting whatever arises from the unconscious. Faith is surrendering to the pull of the singularity, to the dissolving or dismantling of the self in order to pass the gateless gate. The evolution and structure of a galaxy is closely tied to the scale of its black hole just as your evolution is tied to the presence of the immanent Self, the singularity that is your true nature.

We can't see the black hole but we can know about it by the way things move around it, by how it interacts with physical reality. In the same way we cannot see our true nature. The immanent self is not a thing, but we can observe enlightened action. As the Zen master Suzuki said, "There are, strictly speaking, no enlightened people. There is only enlightened activity." We can't see it just as the eye cannot see itself. We can't see it because it is that by which seeing is possible. Like the black hole Samadhi is not nothingness, and neither is it a thing. It is the collapse of the duality of thing and no thing. There is no gate to enter the great reality, but there are infinite paths.

The paths the Dharma's are like an endless spiral with no beginning and no end. No one can pass the gateless gate. No one's mind has ever figured out how and none ever will. No one can pass the gateless gate, so be no one. Samadhi is the pathless path, the golden key. It is the end of our identification with the self structures that separate our inner and outer worlds. There are many developmental models which describe the layers or levels of the self structure. We will use an example which is very ancient. In the Upanishads, the sheaths which cover the Atman or soul are called koshas. Each kosha is like a mirror. A

layer of the self structure; a veil or level of maya which distracts us from realizing our true nature if we are identified with it.

Most people see the reflections and believe that that is who they are. One mirror reflects the animal layer, the physical body. Another mirror reflects your mind, your thoughts your instincts, and perceptions. Another your inner energy or prana which you can observe when you turn inward. Another mirror reflects on the level of the Imaginal which is the higher mind or wisdom layer, and there are layers of transcendental or non dual bliss that are experienced as one approaches Samadhi. There are potentially countless mirrors or aspects of self that one can differentiate, and they are constantly changing.

Most people have yet to discover the pranic, higher mind, and non dual bliss layers. They don't even know they exist. These layers are informing your life but you do not see them. The hidden mirrors actually inform our lives more than the ones that are visible. They are unseen because for most people they are not fully illuminated by consciousness. Like Indra's net of jewels, the mirrors all reflect each other and the reflections reflect every other reflection infinitely. A change on one level simultaneously affects all levels. Some of these mirrors may be left in the shadows unless we are fortunate enough to have a competent guide to help us shine light upon them.

The truth is we don't know what we don't know. Now imagine that you shatter all the mirrors. There's nothing reflecting you back to yourself. Where are you? When the mind becomes still the mirrors cease to reflect. There is no more subject and object. But do not mistake the primordial state for nothingness or oblivion. The immanent self is not something but neither is it nothing. The source is not a thing it is emptiness or stillness itself. It is an emptiness that is the source of all things. Form is realized as exactly emptiness, emptiness is realized as exactly form. This source is the great womb of creation, pregnant with all possibilities.

Samadhi is the awakening of impersonal consciousness. Just as when you are having a dream, upon awakening you realize that everything in the dream was just in your mind. Upon realizing Samadhi it is realized that everything in this world is happening within levels upon levels of energy and consciousness. It is all mirrors within mirrors, dreams within dreams. The you that you think you are is both the dream and the dreamer. Whatever we say in this film let it go don't capture it with the mind. The soul is dreaming, dreaming the dream of you. The dream is everything that is changing, but it is possible to realize the changeless. This realization cannot be understood with the limited individual mind.

When we return from Nirvikalpa Samadhi the mirrors begin to reflect again and it is realized that the world you now think you are living in is actually you. Not the limited you which is only a temporary reflection, but you are aware of your true nature as the source of all that IS. This dawning of higher wisdom, the embryo, "prajna" or gnosis is what is born out of Samadhi. According to the book of Job Chokhmah or wisdom comes from nothingness. This point of wisdom is both infinitely small and yet encompasses the whole of being, but it remains incomprehensible until it has given shape and form in the palace of mirrors, called "binah", the womb carved out by higher wisdom which gives shape to the embryonic Spirit of God.

The existence of the mirrors or the minds existence is not a problem. On the contrary, the error or aberration of human perception is that we identify ourselves with it. This illusion, that we are the limited self, is Maya. The yogic teachings say that to realize Samadhi one must observe the meditation object until it disappears until you disappear into it or it into you. Although the language in the various traditions is dissimilar at their root they all point towards a cessation of self-identification and self-centered activity. The Buddha always taught in negative terms. He taught to investigate directly into the working of the self structure. He didn't say what Samadhi was except that it was the end of suffering.

In Advaita Vedanta there's a term "neti neti" which means "not this not that." People on the path to self-realization inquire into their true nature, or the nature of Brahman by first discovering what they are not.

Similarly in Christianity St. Teresa of Avila described an approach to prayer based on the negative path, or via negativa. A prayer of quiet, surrender and union, which is the only way to approach the absolute. Through this gradual process of stripping away one drops anything that is not permanent, anything that is changing. The mind the ego construct and all phenomena, including the hidden layers of self. The unconscious must become transparent in order to reflect the one source. If there is some deep knowing or some self operating in the unconscious then our lives remain locked into a labyrinth of hidden patterns that comprise the undiscovered self.

When all layers of self are revealed as empty then one becomes free from the self. Free from all concepts A turning point in your evolution is when you realize you don't know who you are. Who experiences the breath? Who experiences the taste? Who experiences the chant, the ritual, the dance, the mountain? Witness the witness, observe the observer. At first when you observe the observer you will only see the false self, but if you are persistent it will give way. Inquire directly into who or what experiences. Unblinkingly, piercingly, penetratingly, with the full force of your being.

There is no self that awakens. There is no YOU that awakens. What you are awakening from is the illusion of the separate self. From the dream of a limited "you". To talk about it is meaningless. There must be an actual cessation of the self to realize directly what it is, and once it is realized there is nothing that can be said about it. As soon as you say something you are back in the mind. I have already said too much. We normally have three states of consciousness: waking, dreaming, and deep sleep. Samadhi is sometimes referred to as the fourth state, the ground state of consciousness.

A primordial awakens that can become present continuously and in parallel with the other consciousness states. In Vedanta this is called Turiya Other terms for Turiya are Christ consciousness, Krishna consciousness, Buddha nature or Sahaja Samadhi. In Sahaja Samadhi the immanent Self stays present along with the full use of all human functions. The stillness is unmoving at the center of the spiral of changing phenomena. Thoughts, feelings, sensations and energy revolve around it at the circumference but the degree of stillness or I-am-ness remains during outer activity exactly as in meditation. It is possible that the immanent self will remain present even during deep sleep; that your awareness of I am does not come and go even as states of consciousness change.

This is yogic sleep. In the Song of Songs, or the Song of Solomon from the Hebrew Bible or Old Testament, it reads "I sleep but my heart waketh". This realization of the eternal impersonal consciousness is reflected in the words of Christ when he said "Before Abraham was, I AM." One consciousness that shines through countless faces, countless forms. At first it's like a fragile flame born out of the polarities within you. Masculine penetrating consciousness with a surrender or opening of feminine energy. It is delicate, and easily lost, and one must take great care to protect it and keep it alive until it is mature. Samadhi is simultaneously a timeless state of consciousness and a stage in an unfolding development process. Something organic and growing in time. As one spends more and more time in Samadhi, in the now, in the timeless, one takes more and more direction from the heart, the soul or Atman, and less from the conditioned structure.

This is how one becomes free of the lower mind. Free of pathological thinking. The inner wiring changes. Energy no longer flows unconsciously in the old conditioned structures, which is another way of saying one is no longer identified with the self structure, with the outer world of form. To realize Samadhi requires an effort so great that it becomes a total surrender of oneself, and a surrender so encompassing that it is a complete effort of one's being; all of one's energy. It is a balance of effort and surrender, yin and yang. A sort of effortless effort.

The Indian mystic and yogi Paramahansa Ramakrishna said "do not seek illumination unless you seek it as one whose hair is on fire seeks a pond" You seek it with your whole being. During one's ego transcending practice it takes great courage, vigilance and perseverance to keep the embryo alive. To not fall back into

the patterns of the world. It takes a willingness to go against the current, against the inexorable crush of the matrix, and the grinding wheels of samsara. Every breath every thought, every action must be for realizing the Source. Samadhi is not realized by effort nor is it effortless. Let go of effort and non effort; it's a duality that only exists in the mind.

The actual realization of Samadhi is so simple so undifferentiated that it is always misconstrued through language which is inherently dualistic. There is only one primordial consciousness that awakens as the world but it has been obscured by many layers of mind. Like the Sun hidden behind the clouds as each layer of mind is dropped one's essence is revealed. As each layer of mind is dropped, people call it a different Samadhi. They give names to different experiences or different types of phenomena but Samadhi is so simple that when you are told what it is and how to realize it your mind will always miss it. Actually Samadhi is not simple or difficult; it is only the mind that makes it so. When there is no mind there's no problem, because the mind is what needs to stop before it is realized. It is not a happening at all. The most concise teaching of Samadhi is perhaps found in this phrase: "Be still and know."

How can we use words and images to convey stillness? How can we convey silence by making noise? Rather than talking about Samadhi as an intellectual concept, this film is a radical call to inaction. A call to meditation, inner silence and inner prayer. A call to STOP. Stop everything that is driven by the pathological egoic mind. Be still and know. No one can tell you what will emerge from the stillness. It is a call to act from the spiritual heart. It's like remembering something ancient. The soul wakes up and remembers itself. It has been a sleeping passenger but now the emptiness awakens and realizes itself as all things. You can't imagine what Samadhi is with the limited egoic mind just as you can't describe to a blind person what color is. Your mind can't know. It can't manufacture it. To realize Samadhi is to see in a different way, not to see separate things but to recognize the seer.

St. Francis of Assisi said "what you are looking for is what is looking." Once you have seen the moon you can recognize it in every reflection. The true self has always been there, it is in everything, but you have not realized its presence. When you learn to recognize and abide as the true self beyond the mind and senses it is possible to experience awe at the most mundane. We become AWE. Do not try to be free of desires because wanting to be free of desires is a desire. You can't try to be still because your very effort is movement. Realize the stillness that is always already present. Be the stillness and know When all preferences are dropped the source will be revealed, but do not cling even to the source.

The great reality, Tao is not one not two. Ramana Maharshi said "The self is only one. If it is limited it is the ego, if unlimited it is infinite and the great reality." If you believe what is being said you've missed it. If you disbelieve you've also missed it. Belief and disbelief operate on the level of mind. They require a knowing, but if you enter into your own investigation examining all of the aspects of your own being, finding out who is doing the investigating, if you're willing to live by the principle "not my will but higher will be done," if you're willing to travel beyond all-knowing then you may realize what I've attempted to point towards. Only then will you taste for yourself the profound mystery and beauty of simply existing. There is another possibility for life.

There is something sacred, unfathomable that can be discovered in the still depths of your being, beyond concepts, beyond dogmas, beyond conditioned activity and all preferences. It is not acquired by techniques, rituals or practices. There is no "how" to get it. There's no system. There's no way to The Way. As they say in Zen it is discovering your original face before you were born. It is not about adding more to yourself. It is becoming a light unto oneself; a light that dispels the illusion of the self. Life will always remain unfulfilled and the heart will always remain restless until it comes to rest in that mystery beyond name and form.