

# No Need for Samadhi

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**Edward:** Hi, James. Once again, thank you for your thoughts. ☺ I got a chuckle when you said that Buddhism was for “beginners”... I think that’s something I will probably have to keep to myself! I do find the audio/video presentations to be very helpful. As I said, I’ve been working through Swamini Prakashananda’s *Fundamentals* series, and being able to pause, rewind parts and take notes has been really useful. I was thinking about this last night – while I can’t ask a recording a question, I can replay something and that’s pretty close to asking a question. (I’ve got a birthday and wedding anniversary coming up in the next two months, so when my wife pesters me for gift ideas, I can point her to your website. Nothing says romance like a USB full of Vedantic teaching!)

This is something that has been rattling around my brain for a last few days owing to the listening/scribbling with the AVG (UK) material. I was having trouble with the “actionless” concept but had that cleared up. (Swaminiji’s example about the sun illuminating without doing and that the solar system is “activated” by its presence.)

I’ve been dwelling on the relationship of knower/knowledge/known. She said that the knower is consciousness but that consciousness is not the knower. (She often uses the wave/water analogy to explain that the wave’s existence is dependent on water, but the reverse isn’t true.) Is it fair to say that when an object (gross or subtle) is “known,” that knowledge and knower appear simultaneously and that this recognition is not an “action” but is simply natural manifestation? The trinity of knower/knowledge/known appear together instantaneously within consciousness.

**James:** Yes, indeed. The knower/known is *Isvara*, the essential structure of the apparent reality. The basic duality is eternal. When you wake up in the morning it becomes active and when you sleep at night it becomes dormant. This knower is an experiencing witness. It is called the subtle body, reflected awareness. It is apparently contaminated by what it knows/thinks and feels. You, the self, are the non-experiencing witness, the light (awareness) that reflects on the experiencing witness.

**Edward:** I am not sure if I am expressing this very well! When an object is not being illuminated naturally by consciousness then it isn’t known, so there’s neither knowledge nor knower. When an object is illumined by consciousness then the trinity arises immediately as a three-in-one.

**James:** Yes.

**Edward:** Although it was late last night after listening to the lecture, my brain was saying, “This is fun! No sleep until we work on this more!”... LOL... This leads to the whole hoopla about attaining “*samadhi*” which, as you have pointed out, is only an experience. The experientialists tells us to meditate until knower, knowledge and known are one. Am I right in thinking that Vedanta states that this “oneness” is

already a plain fact whether I experience it or not? (I've meditated for years though I'm not actually sure if I ever had a "*samadhi*" experience. If I have, I didn't know that's what it was and if I haven't, then I'm doubting if it's relevant or necessary anymore.)

**James:** Yes, indeed. The knower and the known are just thought structures appearing in the light of awareness, and knowledge is the result of the contact of the knower's reflected light illumining the particular *vritti* (thought/knowledge) arising at the time. You can't get them together because they are already together. They are projected by *Isvara/maya* and always present in the waking state, dormant in the sleep state.

**Edward:** This thought then leads me to the desire of many to practise meditation until their minds are still or mindless. If a person's mental activity slows so that one thought has ended and the next hasn't arisen they are still nevertheless, aware of the absence of verbal thoughts. While I can see that meditation is useful for getting *sattvic*, as you point out in your book, is noticing an absence of thoughts any more special or interesting than noticing them? There's been so much attention given to "stilling the mind" and "getting in the space between thoughts" but it seems that they are just more objects. Different objects, subtle objects, but objects all the same.

**James:** Yes, indeed. Thought in no way stands in the way of you, awareness. You are always present regardless of the condition of the mind. "I illumine the agitation, the dullness and the absence of both. I have nothing to do with the mind. It is me but I am not it, just as the wave is the ocean but the ocean is not the wave."

**Edward:** Is it a stretch to say everything is really ALL *samadhi* ALL the time regardless of whatever I believe I am doing?

**James:** It is not a stretch. Everything is *samadhi*, meaning has equal (*sama*) value. It is all just awareness - you - in a particular form. *Samadhi* is not something to be achieved, although there are a couple of states of mind that are called *samadhi*, but it is what you are. The view from the self, as the self, is that everything is the same substance, awareness. The "*dhi*" in *samadhi* is a contracted form of *buddhi*, intellect. It is an intellect that knows that, appearances notwithstanding, everything is only manufactured out of thoughts and thoughts are just me, awareness, arising and falling like waves in the ocean.

**Edward:** Okay, I'm rambling and in need of lunch!

**James:** It is a great ramble. It is perfect in every way. I had out my red pencil but failed to use it.

**Edward:** Many thanks and best wishes.

**James:** Appreciation is always appreciated.