The word Samadhi literally translates to equanimity (sama) and 'buddhi' or the intellect (dhi). The fundamental nature of the intellect is to discriminate – you are able to discriminate between a person and a tree only because your intellect is functioning. This discriminatory quality is very important for survival.

If you lose the discriminatory intellect, you are insane. In the Samadhi state, your discriminatory intellect is perfectly in shape, but at the same time you have transcended it. A state like this gives you an experience of the oneness of existence, the unification of everything that is. The entire aspect of spirituality is to go beyond that discrimination, beyond survival instincts, which is for the physical.

Science is proving to you that everything is the same energy. Religion has been telling you that God is everywhere. Fundamentally, it means that everything is the same stuff. So when this comes into your experience, the intellect still discriminates but it happens with the necessary discrimination. Indiscriminate discrimination does not happen. That is what Samadhi means – you are a separate entity right now but in your experience you have risen beyond limitations.

Samadhi is generally categorised into eight different types. It is improper to categorise Samadhi, but for the sake of our understanding they have been distinguished. When we say Mahasamadhi, we are talking about a dimension where you transcend discrimination not just experientially but also existentially – there is no such thing as you and the other. Right now, you are sitting here and there is you and the other; it is a certain level of reality. In the state of Samadhi, you go beyond that discrimination and in your experience you are able to see the oneness of existence. But Mahasamadhi means you not only see that way, you also become that way totally. Discrimination is finished. That means individual existence is finished. Who you are does not exist anymore. The life that is functioning as an individual life right now becomes absolutely universal or cosmic or boundless. To put it in traditional terms, you become one with God or one with everything.

When I say one with God, it does not mean going and joining somebody somewhere. It is just that your individual bubble is over. To use an analogy, right now your existence is like a bubble. A bubble that is floating around is very real, but if you burst it, where does the air inside the bubble go? It just becomes one with everything. It is completely dissolved. When we say one with everything, this is what it means – nothing will be there. You will not be there. So when we say mukti, this is what it means, you are free from existence. When I say you are free from existence, I am not talking about existence as a quantity which you are free from. You are free from your own existence – your existence is finished.

So when we say mukti or nirvana or moksha, this is what it means – freedom from the very burden of existence. That is ultimate freedom because as long as you exist, you are bound in one way or another. If you exist in a physical way, it is one kind of bondage. If you leave the physical body and exist in some other way, there is still another kind of bondage. Everything that exists is ruled by some law. Mukti means you have broken all laws, and all laws can be broken only when you cease to exist.

Nirvana is a more appropriate word because nirvana means non-existence. When there is no existence, you are even free from freedom because freedom is also a certain bondage. So you are free from your very existence. That is what Mahasamadhi means. All discrimination between what is you and what is not you is finished. This is the goal of every spiritual seeker. Ultimately, he wants to go beyond existence.

(Sadhguru is a prominent spiritual leader. www.ishafoundation.org)