

Essay

On the Subject of Consciousness in Samapatti

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ABSTRACT

Here I report my recollections of my experiences of Samapatti. These experiences led me to the view that consciousness is not necessarily confined to an event arising from electrochemical interactions in the brain. It is equally likely that the electrochemical processes in the brain arise from consciousness. My reading of the Yoga Sutras lends substance to view that there is a distinction between Mind and another level of conscious awareness called Buddhi. When we speak of Mind we are talking about our normal awareness, which is involved with sensory inputs, memory and imagination. Buddhi on the other hand is the observer of the Mind.

Key Words: consciousness, Samapatti, Yoga Sutras, Buddhi.

All I have to go on are my recollections of my experiences of Samapatti [1-4]. I have to bear in mind that, as one who was ‘born that way’ rather than one who enters Samapatti through meditation, my experiences may not necessarily be the same as those of the latter. Indeed, I have never noticed any difference between what I experienced in meditation and my normal everyday state. Similarly, I do not feel more relaxed in meditation or in the Samadhi state. What I do know about my Samadhi, which is what facilitates Samapatti, is that I am aware of two different viewpoints, and am able to say which one is my own.

In some of those experiences I do have an awareness of what the subject feels. More significantly is what that person’s interpretation of what I had thought at the time. For example, in the case of the lady with the fractured leg, I began the session by asking her to sit quietly with her eyes closed. With my eyes closed I thought about her leg and had ‘known/felt’ that her tibia was in a state of shock around the area of the fracture. I thought I would like to remove the information related to the experience of shock and replace it with some fresh energy. I thought the shock would be like a black energy, and that I would like to replace it with some bright energy which would be a bright golden colour.

As I opened my eyes I found she had opened hers and was obviously very excited; she said I had removed this black stuff from her leg and replaced it with some bright golden energy. Given that I have no visual imagery, it is clear that with the two minds coalesced, she had experienced my thoughts and had, through her own imagination, visualised them.

I find it interesting that when I recall one of these experiences I can only have it as a narrative; there is never the actual object or event as an experience which reactivates any visceral or visual response. When I sat beside my daughter as she lay in a coma I went into an intense state of

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bliss. If I was in the Samadhi state, then I would have to say I was experiencing her state. She died some hours later and I have never had any grief about her death. In fact, I never have grief about any death. The bliss remained for some days afterwards. And as always, my memory of that event is just a narrative. I would dearly love to feel that bliss again but it never happens.

Many of the people I know have expressed a degree of envy of my 'empty' mind and I believe this stems from what they have learned from a teacher/guru or from books about meditation. I doubt if my empty mind is the same as one who attains that state through meditation. I have no fixed position on things and find it almost impossible to plan anything. Most of what I can contribute to a conversation comes either from knowing what interests the other person or is an answer to a question. Even then my answer often is a surprise to me because it can be something I have not even thought about. I would have to say their question evokes the answer.

For many years I had conversations with Dr. Bevan Reid, a medical doctor and cancer researcher who I regarded as a mentor. Our friendship came from a common interest in consciousness as information in virtual space. Much of what he said was related in terms of biophysics, and as I listened intently I was able to carry on the conversation sensibly. He came to the view that I understood everything he said, and in retrospect I can say that it was just Samapatti in action. My Samapatti had me feel as comfortable with the subject as he did; for his part, he felt that I was comfortable with it and was a colleague. I would notice afterwards that most of what he had said was way beyond me so far as the physics was concerned, and yet I could understand it anyway. Nevertheless, it left me with his certainty that it all made sense and I am grateful for that relationship, however undeserved on my part.

The Samapatti experiences had started when someone was referred to me to take a look at her disturbed cat. It had been knocked around like any stray cat and was relatively antisocial. She said it would only sit on her lap for a minute or two and had not washed itself in the two years she had known it. I placed this smelly cat on my lap and placed my hand over its head. It went to sleep immediately. At the same time I had mental images of flashing lights like a number of computer games playing simultaneously. In retrospect I would say the lights were more like a stream of migraine or some similar condition. After some time these lights gave way to a quiet but unusual garden scene. The view seemed to be at cat eye level and the plants were very large although recognisable. The main surprise was the absence of green and blue colours; everything was in shades of red, yellow and brown. The scene lasted for about twenty minutes and then I thought the cat should wake up. It woke immediately and began washing itself. Its owner was very impressed, but not as surprised as I was.

During the Samapatti I was aware that the garden was familiar and, at the same time that I **knew** I had never seen it before. Since I have no visual imagery it is obvious that I had watched the cat's dream. My thought that the cat should wake up was my mind's awareness of the cat's waking processes.

So this is the opposite situation to the one with the lady with the fractured leg. In that case the lady interpreted by thought as a visual event, while in the cat's case I was able to experience visually the cat's dream. This flow of information *from* the subject's mind and *to* the subject's mind indicates a true coalescence of two minds, validating the state as Samapatti.

It was experiences such as these that led me to the view that consciousness is not necessarily confined to an event arising from electrochemical interactions in the brain. It is equally likely that the electrochemical processes in the brain arise from consciousness. My reading of the Yoga Sutras lends substance to view that there is a distinction between Mind and another level of conscious awareness called *Buddhi* [5]. When we speak of Mind we are talking about our normal awareness, which is involved with sensory inputs, memory and imagination. *Buddhi* on the other hand is the observer of the Mind. This explains the different viewpoints one can experience/know in *Samapatti*, and also explains the absence of an object of memory. In my experience of memory, a narrative of the original observation of the Mind's experience of the event or object is all that remains.

Sadly, Bevan Reid has passed away; if he was here now we would probably be discussing whether what Yoga calls *Buddhi* is similar to the Higgs field of particle physics or Bohm's Implicate Order. In Yoga there are evolutionary levels beginning before or from *Buddhi* and extending to a state prior to matter becoming atomic. In my earlier contributions to *JCER* I gave a diagram of the various levels encountered in the descent of consciousness into matter. I have often speculated that the vertical axis of that diagram could be considered as a spectrum of wavelength beyond the Plank Length. These levels are described as subtle energies, and it is entirely probable that the ancient writers were describing electrons, protons, leptons, neutrons, fermions, bosons and quarks etc. of modern physics. The presence of *Buddhi* can also be the so-called effect of an observer on an experiment in quantum mechanics.

In respect of consciousness and *Samapatti*, it seems to me that *Buddhi* is the common thread, be that as a field or something else, it is certainly quite distinct from matter. This distinction really infers that *Buddhi* exists independently of matter. When it encounters matter, or vice versa, it imbues that matter with a degree of consciousness which, in living matter, we call Mind. There are clearly many minds, and a common ground of intellection observing these minds. Thus, the state of *Samapatti* allows the two minds to apparently coalesce. I would say that what really happens is that when one is in the state of *Buddhi* it is able to observe the subject's mind as well as that of the seer. To that extent it would be true to say that there is only one observer, *Buddhi*. Whatever is observed at the level of *Buddhi* is known by both minds, but is mostly known just by the seer's mind because the subject's mind is not active at that same level. For example, in a healing situation the seer will experience the subjects' pain or distress and will know it is not her/his pain or distress. The subject will experience the seer's calmness and feel the same calmness, interpreting this as a change in her/his pain or distress. In the case of a man suffering from Huntington's chorea his shaking would stop for periods of up to 45 minutes. I assume that, since he did not shake during sleep, his experience of my calmness produced a state which was for him similar to sleep during the time of being in *Samapatti*.

The most satisfying experience was the couple of years of intensive *Samapatti* with my friend Emma, who suffered with breast cancer. The calmness she experienced during that period reduced the worry of having cancer to quite a degree. During the last two months she was in a hospice and I would sit in *Samapatti* beside her bed throughout the night. The *Samapatti*, coupled with her morphine medication had her be relatively comfortable over what would have been a painful time. I had suggested that the bliss she said she felt is what one feels after death. On the

last night she welcomed me with the announcement that she was getting married; she said she was going to marry Emma. She died peacefully the following evening.

I stopped doing this form of healing because I wanted to understand how it worked. Part of my concern was that I had no idea of what was happening, and wondered if it was valid. I also know that it was not something I could teach anyone. Now I know how it works and am satisfied with that knowledge.

I have read quite a number of articles in which scientists present theories of consciousness through the medium of mathematics. Perhaps one of these days they will crack the code, although what comes to mind is something from Jung in an introduction to "*The secret of the golden flower*," by Richard Wilhelm. In a passage on Chinese Yoga he said "The right man will always produce right action, even with the wrong method. The wrong man will never produce right action, not even with the right method. This is because there is no method."

It just might be the case that, so far as consciousness is concerned, here again, there is no method.

References

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