

Yoga, Samapatti & Me

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ABSTRACT

In this article I review Samapatti and the issues the experiences have brought for me personally [1-4]. First and foremost was the question of why I am able to enter this state without any preparation. The second was the obvious question of how does this work. Over some years people had asked to sit and talk with me about their problems, despite the fact that I have no training whatsoever in counselling or any other therapies. This was the early eighties and seminars on just about everything under the sun were on offer. I joined a ten day residential for Vipassana meditation and after sitting meditating for ten days I was no different and life continued as usual. It was obvious that most of those I listened to thought I was some kind of healer, others said I was a good listener, while some asked me to teach them to do what I did. My position was that I could not possibly, or ethically, teach something that I didn't know anything about. Not about how it worked, if it worked, why it worked and what was it that I did. At one point I was asked what I would do next, and to my surprise I said I would not do any more of this because I needed to find out how it worked. So began this long undirected journey into thinking and consciousness. In the Yoga tradition, buddhi is consciousness in its own right and has been defined by some writers as acognitive knowing. My view is that acognitive knowing means knowing without the mind, and of course that is what Samapatti provides to the seer. And what this means in our seeking to understand consciousness is precisely what I referred to. There are possibly a number of models we could posit to accommodate this position, all of which would be counterintuitive for science. I will simply offer one which arises from the acognitive model.

Key Words: Yoga, Samapatti, acognitive knowing, Consciousness, seer, science.

1. Acognitive Knowing through Samapatti

A recent article in New Scientist put forward an interesting view from recent research on the uncertainty around outcomes in quantum experiments [6]. Essentially, what the author said was that the uncertainty is due to our inability to have access to the whole information related to the experiment. This led me to think about my experiences in the state of Samapatti where two minds will coalesce [1-4]. I have had this happen often during counselling people, and scholars of the Hindu tradition have agreed that I was in that state of Samapatti.

Looking back on some of those events I can accept that this will happen in that state; what is not so straightforward is that there is obviously not just a coalescing of the mind of the seer and that of the subject. I do not imagine anything in the sense of having a mental picture or visual image, and yet with just a narrative of thought that I would like to remove the distress in bone marrow in

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the case of a person with a fracture, the subject reported 'seeing' me remove a dark blob of energy and replace it with a bright golden light.

In another case I was asked to help a 'disturbed' cat. I mentally saw the cat's dream, which was a garden scene in which the plants, although recognisable, were much larger than I see them and were not green but shades of yellow, brown and red. I was also aware that I did not know this particular garden. At that point I was aware of two different streams of information and was able to differentiate between them.

To return to my original theme, Samapatti is something that can happen only in the Samadhi state, and I am suggesting that in that state we see and know beyond our normal experience of seeing and knowing. A person established in Samapatti takes in a whole lot more information than we encounter in the normal everyday conscious state. Yoga says that in the Samapatti or Samadhi state we are not using the mind because the mind, by definition, is at rest, empty if you will, and what is conscious is buddhi. In the Yoga tradition buddhi is consciousness in its own right and has been defined by some writers as acognitive knowing.

Some researchers accept that the notion of using the mind to understand the mind is not a particularly scientific pursuit, but when the evidence from the conventional technology, such as fMRI and other cutting edge approaches, is accepted as proof that what we measure is activity of the mind, it is not surprising that most researchers would naturally assume the mind is all we have at our disposal. I admit that all of the images of brain structures responding to inputs such as speech and thinking make a pretty compelling case for the brain to be what produces consciousness. It might be more accurate to say it produces conscious awareness.

My view is that acognitive knowing means knowing without the mind, and of course that is what Samapatti provides to the seer. And what this means in our seeking to understand consciousness is precisely what I referred to earlier. There are possibly a number of models we could posit to accommodate this position, all of which would be counterintuitive for science. I will simply offer one which arises from the acognitive model.

Firstly, the information being communicated in Samapatti is not intentional because there is no defined sender or receiver, and I think intention is something we already assume to be driving the processes in the cognitive world. Second, since the seer is the one in the Samadhi state it would be reasonable to say that the seer, at least in my experiences, is a witness or detached observer without physical connection to the subject. From these two points I am inclined to say that what we call consciousness in living forms is really a conscious awareness, as distinct from consciousness, which is a property of the whole reality, very much akin to Bohm's Implicate Order.

Neuroscience has found that between a sensory external input to the brain and the corresponding signal to act there is a time gap of some tens or hundreds of milliseconds. This is time taken by the processes in the brain to decide the how, what, when and why of the response, and these categories of the response can be part of what becomes present in our conscious awareness. From a consciously aware perspective, we respond immediately when we recognise the input because we are unable to recognise intervals of less than 20 milliseconds or thereabouts. I believe it is

reasonable to suggest that what we would call consciousness during Samapatti is the observation by the higher level of consciousness Buddhi, observing this process of mentation.

From what I observe in Samapatti, particularly in the way a subject can have a visual image of my narrative thought, there is a process of interpretation of what I have thought within the mind/brain of the subject. If we accept the acognitive model then the information at the level of the detached observer is obviously available to the subject for that to happen, and so far as I can understand, the only way that can happen is if both seer and subject are in a common field, or a different level, of consciousness. And if both are operating within a common field/level of consciousness it is also likely that the brain responds to that common entity and that response is what we are aware of and we call that consciousness. I recall sitting beside my daughter who was in a coma. As I entered Samapatti I became established in an intense state of bliss. So perhaps what communicates to the brain elicits the same state of the subject as one would expect and there are times when that is a surprise as well as a gift. Perhaps, for the sake of clarity we may have to resort to having some name or category for this particular field or level.

In short, I believe this article does support the initial viewpoint in the New Scientist article that perhaps we do not always have the full spectrum of information involved in a particular experiment or experience [1]. It also supports the view from the Hindu traditions which appear to accept the position that there are a number of levels of consciousness and mind is one of the basic levels. We can say however, that on the subject of Samapatti, the flow of information is there for those who can expand their terms of reference to be able to see it. For my part, I know that more thoughts will arise about this issue and I will continue pursuing these questions. I find that I can know mostly by being asked to answer a question; for most of the time I am just waiting for the next question.

2. Consciousness Is External to Physical Reality

In an earlier time in my life [7], I was a Radio Technician (Air) in the Royal Australian Air Force. I was trained through an apprenticeship and spent much of my time having to rectify faults in the radio and radar equipment fitted to the propeller driven aircraft of that era. The repair equipment was primarily a test bench for each type of equipment, and the ubiquitous multimeter and oscilloscope. The apprentice training was spread over three years and covered valve theory and the principles of communication and pulse techniques. In the twelve years after graduation I rarely had need to use anything more than my mind. Most of the equipment faults involved the person using the equipment rather than the equipment itself. After leaving the service that need to use my mind rather than any theory remained the central method irrespective of the situation. At times I would be travelling to a country newspaper to repair a typesetting machine and would begin to think of the sounds it made as it set type for an article. When I arrived at the premises and sat down beside the machine, thinking about the sound it should make, it would inevitably work properly when I switched it on.

In other situations [7], I often met the need to explain what was happening in someone's life, particularly at the end of that life; the answer was always in my mind, even without thinking about the issues. In those circumstances I would enter Samapatti without even knowing it, much

less having ever heard the term. It must be obvious that I would eventually begin to ask my own questions; I have continued to ask these questions, particularly about mind and consciousness and through the knowledge from the Yoga Sutras I think I can answer them to my own satisfaction at least. I don't offer any specific explanation; I believe that is for the reader to find from the answers I provided myself, and perhaps even the questions I have not specifically asked. In the end, one really has to build his/her own version of reality. The only caution I would make is that the mind is not necessarily supportive of this quest.

In recent time consciousness has become defined by the Hard Problem of saying exactly what it is. Coupled with the difficulty is the task of finding an explanation of the difference between consciousness and awareness. These difficulties are increased by our determination to use consciousness to describe consciousness, a task akin to trying to use one's hands to lift both feet off the ground. A long time ago I read the TAO by Lao Tzu, and one thing I found to be relevant to most problems were his words about definition; "To define is to limit". Its relevance to the problem of consciousness might be in the need to define it in terms of science and philosophy.

In Part 1 above, I gave examples of the different states of awareness experienced during Samapatti. In effect, what I have written are objective descriptions of what were subjective experiences; in fact they are experiential observations. The fact that I am able to report these experiences confirms that consciousness is a validation of both consciousness itself and the omnijjective descriptions obtained through using my conscious awareness and conscious memory of those events. I believe everyone can accept that consciousness, in the context I have used that word, is real in that it has a real role; some would say an essential role, in the life of living entities. In a poem I wrote while counselling a cancer patient, I wrote "each cell has a mind/ linking one to another/ that mind can be bent/ by parent or other". Hindu philosophy tells us that mind is the product of matter; if each cell is in communication with every other one of my cells, possibly through the central nervous system, then it is reasonable to conclude this can become a mind of the whole.

Science has made great strides in imagining brain activity through a number of technologies, and has been able to draw some conclusions of how discrete inputs can generate definite activities in specific parts of the brain. It follows that theories about how information is processed in the brain abound, but none are able to say with any certainty how consciousness can be the result of the processes observed in the brain through assuming these observations are indeed where consciousness arises.

Part of this assumption comes from an equally dogmatic assumption that the mind is a function of the brain and that it operates through dedicated processes to produce our thoughts and feelings. I have no dispute with neuroscience; I just think that the discussion might be moved forward if we take into account what happens outside of the general frame of scientific reference so far as consciousness is concerned. I accept that experience is one of the accepted avenues being explored by the scientists and philosophers because what we become conscious of is mostly our experience, whether that is from learning, imagination, discussions or dreams. For a distinction between consciousness and awareness I would say that awareness is what we have in our mind, both awake and during sleep. One can be aware of an emotion or for the moment, unaware of it, while the emotion itself can have a significant effect on both what we think and

what we do in that moment. Consciousness is what drives the whole process of knowing, and we know it through being aware of it in the mind. What I believe might have been examined less are the experiences outside of the norm; certainly different but still able to be replicated to fit the scientific method.

For this discussion I will cite my own personal experiences in the Samadhi state which led me into Samapatti and its experience of my mind coalescing with the subject of my mind's focus. Samapatti is definitely outside of the normal experiences but can be replicated with sufficient practice. One of the first differences in any discussion of Samadhi, as described by Pandit Ushar Buddh Arya in his book, *The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali* [5], is the term, mind field. This term puts the reader on notice that in this discussion of the Yoga Sutras the mind is just an aspect of consciousness within matter. In other papers I have given the Yoga diagram of Consciousness descending into matter and for the moment I will leave that for a later time.

What the Yoga Sutras [5] are saying is that consciousness is distinct from physical reality, although its entry into matter also is part of the creation of matter, which comes into being for the purpose of an avenue for consciousness to have experience that it may know itself. My question about mind being a part of matter is one that takes note of the fact of the coalescence of two minds in Samapatti when there is clearly no physical contact between the seer and the subject. In that respect, consciousness will sometimes appear to be different from awareness. I think it is fair to say we can be conscious of a memory because we can relate it to a time, place or event. We are aware of our thoughts because they will not always be held in the context of a past experience. Sometimes they are just a realisation or insight that appears unbidden in one's awareness. But rather than going into what is a very deep conversation about reality I will confine myself to the task of dissecting my Samapatti experiences to demonstrate the many aspects of that state which will challenge the normal view.

Essentially a person in the Samadhi state is able to experience Samapatti when the object of his Samadhi is another person, or even an animal. At the level of mind, when we use that word, we generally infer that part of our conscious awareness we use to think and to know. The question we have to ask arises from the fact that some information in the subject's mind is shared with the seer's mind. There is no physical connection between these two minds and yet this coalescing of the minds, or more correctly, the information in those minds, can clearly be shared. Furthermore, there must be some processing of that information to translate a thought in the seer's mind into a visual image in the mind of the subject and vice versa. This is an aspect of consciousness that has not been considered by the philosophers pondering the Hard Problem.

I could reiterate my experienced described in the previous essay but I don't believe that is necessary. What we have to make a note of is the central issue of the Hard Problem, and that is the attachment to the notion that consciousness can be assumed to be an artefact of the brain because, by association this also must assume that mind is a closely related property of the brain. It is clear to me that the fact of the seer's mind being coalesced with the mind of the subject would present a serious difficulty for any resolution being found within the current evidence based views from both science and philosophy. And in view of the article from *New Scientist* mentioned in my earlier essay, the difficulty might just be that we have insufficient information about the whole examination of consciousness thus far because we limit what we can know by

defining what kind of answer we can accept, and within which discipline that answer, or answers must arise.

In asking myself much the same questions I sought some help from David Bohm's colleague, theoretical physicist Basil Hiley, and asked him to explain how, from a theoretical physics point of view, I could see the content of the cat's dream mentioned in my essay. He said the only scientific term that would come close to making an explanation was entanglement. That answer was taken to be helpful; it certainly set me on a different track, one which may have actually lead to some answers acceptable to science, provided I could muddle my way through what science I could find and understand. My limited knowledge of physics and biophysics has probably hindered my personal research and for me the reference to entanglement could infer that the information in the two minds in the state of Samapatti had to be in the realm of quantum mechanics. To make a consensus with Yoga, I offer the Yoga diagram Fig.1 to describe Yoga's model of the entry of consciousness into physical reality with the hope the two disciplines may be seen as two forms of science in different ages.

The numbers down the left hand side of the diagram are the evolutes of consciousness as it descends into physical matter and spacetime.

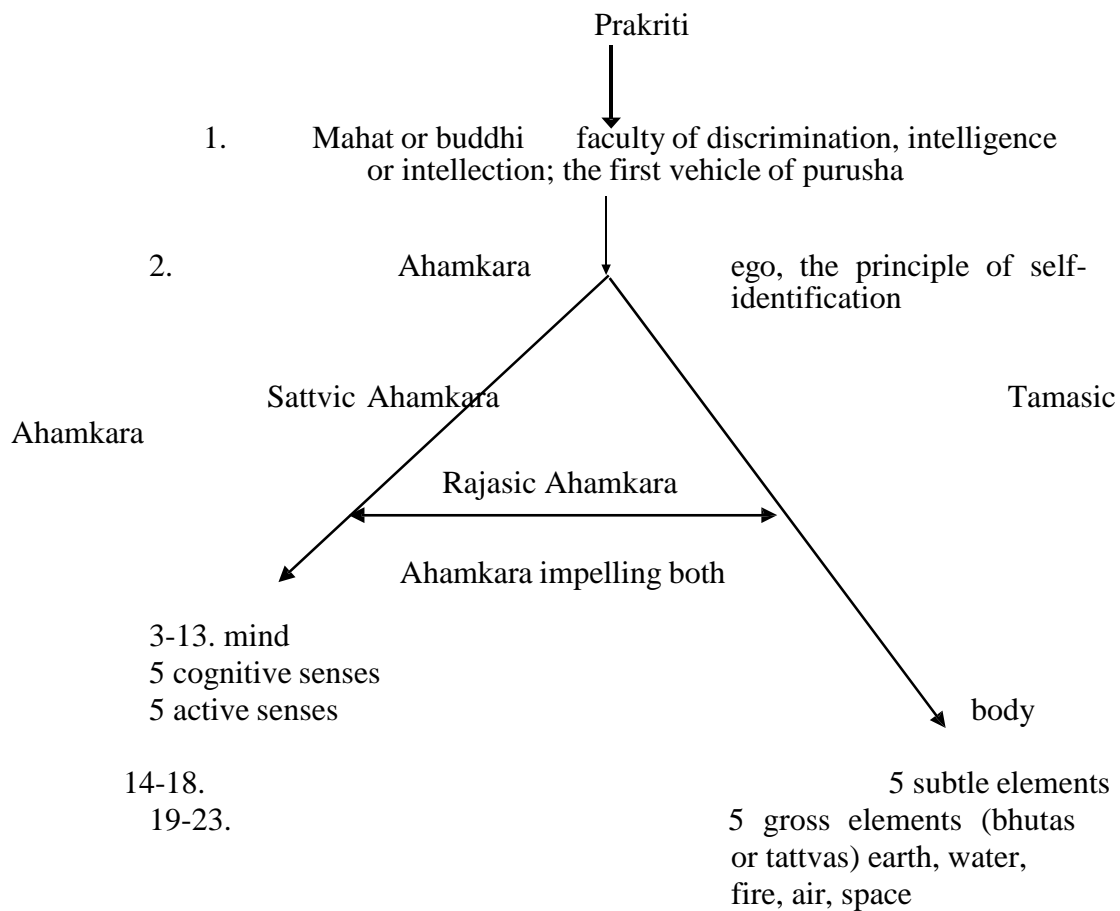


Fig.1

First of all I will provide some definitions of what is described by the diagram. Prakriti is the principal, not yet evolved, primordial matter where the three gunas, Sattva, Rajas and Tamas are in a state of equilibrium, and as yet unmanifested. The gunas are qualities of Prakriti. Sattva is an attribute of Prakriti, and in its highest form Sattva is the excellence of being and the excellence of knowing. For this reason it is the most useful of the three gunas in our search for experience in order to know Purusha. Upon disequilibrium the gunas combine in endless ways to create the manifested nature of matter. Rajas is the attribute of Prakriti which produces activity and impels Sattva and Tamas to overcome stagnation. Tamas, the final attribute of Prakriti which has the qualities of stability, inertia and stupor. The light of unmanifested consciousness reflects of Prakriti and it is this reflected consciousness which we call self. Technically, this is really non-self because the true self is Purusha, pure consciousness, which is ever free, having no distinguishing mark and this means that it is undisturbed by the experiences within the reality we call Prakriti in this diagram. Therefore, according to Yoga, the purpose of our reality is to have experience which Purusha can observe; our purpose is to also become the observer and to realise that the absolute observer is Purusha.

From our personal viewpoint, the diagram shows a sequence of the different levels of knowing available to those who undertake this conscious journey with the goal of union with the absolute conscious principle, Purusha. Yoga does not proselytise; it is a science in the very real sense and is a method of gaining knowledge about reality and about self. In my view it is a valid scientific method because anyone who enters Samadhi can experience Samapatti to obtain the same experiences I have described in my essay.

The entire diagram comprises the three gunas while the highest part is Sattva, from which the first evolute of Mahat or buddhi (acognitive knowing) arises, providing the faculty of discrimination, intelligence and intellection. It is the first vehicle of Purusha and therefore is the first level of consciousness in this reality. The second is Ahamkara is ego, the principle of self-identification, I AM.

Ahamkara then diverges to become a dynamic information set influenced by Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, with Rajas impelling both Sattva and Tamas. Here we need to remember that this activity within any information involved becomes a working state and that is the mind. In the definitions given above we can see that any experience, whether that is a physical action or thought, will be happening within a context of ego (I AM) and the mindset underpinning that experience will be framed by whichever of these three gunas is dominant at that time. In saying that I note that all three are active to a greater or lesser degree and in a very real sense this mixture is the basis of one's personality.

To get a better of understanding of Ahamkara (ego) and its central role in how we experience our conscious awareness I turn briefly to Yoga Sutra 1.11 which deals with memory. To paraphrase the detailed description of that Sutra, it is sufficient for our current purpose to say that there are two kinds of memory. The first kind is the one most of us are familiar with; what needs to be noted however is the explanation of how memory functions; "when the object of memory, together with the process and instrument of apprehension are primary we call that a memory". The explanation of the second kind of memory makes a distinction which helps the understanding sought through this discussion. "When the process and instrument of apprehension

are primary, that is called intelligence". Reading further in the passage in the Yoga book to follow this thread we find that the process and instrument of apprehension is buddhi. Most would have expected the answer to be mind.

Returning to the earlier question of how two minds can coalesce in Samapatti I will put forward a possible answer, but not before taking a closer look at buddhi because I think there is more to this level of consciousness than what we might assume from the diagram. First, we need to remember that the dominant awareness in Samapatti is that of the seer. It is the seer's mind which coalesces with that of the subject, and what comes out of that coalescence is very different for the subject. Second is the fact that the effect of the seer's mind on that of the subject is capable of being physically tangible in the mind of the subject. The important point to take so far as the seer's mind is concerned is that in Samapatti the instrument of apprehension, buddhi, is what informs the seer's mind and from that higher level it also informs the subject's mind. The resultant effect for the subject is the Samskaras related to this coalescence imprints the subjects memory in a very real sense, while the seer does not have a Samskara created. Instead we find buddhi merely retains the observation of the coalescence. For the seer there can be a tangible awareness of the subject's pain for example and the seer can discriminate to the point of knowing "this is not my pain" as an observation. In the case of the cat mentioned in my essay I was aware that the garden seen as a visual mental image was both familiar (to the cat) and not a garden I had ever seen before.

Moving back to my thoughts about Ahamkara I note we have not addressed the principle of self-identification and the role that has to play in Samapatti. At the level of buddhi the seer's self-identification during Samapatti is dormant and thus buddhi is applied to the subject's mind and knows the pain therein. As we have seen in the preceding paragraph the seer is able to use its state of buddhi to discriminate between the content of both minds. This suggests to me that the self-identity of an individual's information is used by the seer at the buddhi level on the diagram to have the experience of the subject's mind. This model of examples of consciousness as information is what led me to the view that consciousness is not confined to the mind/brain, not because the Yoga teaching says so but because I have experienced a subject's mind while in the Samapatti state. Through many instances of Samapatti I have found that two minds can indeed coalesce without any physical contact, and some other means of the information being shared must be involved.

What that tells me is that the seer's consciousness is at the level of buddhi on the diagram, and just as the consciousness of Purusha illuminates buddhi, the consciousness of buddhi illuminates Ahamkara, which, as ego, has become identified with the body and operates through the mind. Therefore Ahamkara's self-identification becomes that of her/his body/mind. All of this leads us back to the issue of coalescence of the minds and the processes which can translate a thought in the seer's mind into a visual image into the mind of the subject. Here I can use what I have found in the coalescence of two minds to make a distinction between the mind of the seer and that of the subject, which might assist in making an overview of how we all think as a process.

The information in the mind of the subject is formed and categorised by the proportions of Sattva, Rajas and Tamas present within the self-identity of the subject. This information is formed through the memory of the experience related to a particular event and categorised by

one's personal history that has been categorised in terms of pleasure or pain, fear or joy, and through ignorance of what the event really was. This is true for everybody in a general sense and I believe the process of apprehension of an object, referred to above in the part about memory, is the mental process related to the senses in 3-13 and the instrument of apprehension, in the case of the mind, is the physical sensory structures at 14-18 of Fig.1 from any experience of thought or physical sensory information, which produces detectable activity within the brain. This activity is recognised by Ahamkara as conscious or unconscious awareness. The function of the heart and lungs are relatively unconscious so far as the mind is concerned in a general sense, whereas conversation, movement and other sensory information would register in our awareness.

An analogy of the relationship between Ahamkara then and our body/mind has been some recent research where the particular parts of the brain have been linked to particular thoughts through brain imaging technology. The long term aim of this research is to be able to read the subject's thoughts. A closer parallel with what has been done can be the RFID systems used to track merchandise in a store, and that means there is a long way to go. The primary difference is that, unlike the RFID scanner, Ahamkara has attitude. Having said that, what this research shows is that the brain activity, through some future technological development, may be able to read what the subject's experience is present as awareness. This poses the possibility that this is what Ahamkara does now. Higher up the scale proposed by Fig. 1 attitude decreases as the conscious point of the ego expressed as I AM of Ahamkara gives way to something closer to the observer buddhi. There one finds there is no grief for example at the loss of a child or parent and that is closer to the consciousness of Purusha which is "without distinguishing mark" as the Yoga Sutras tell us of that state. I don't believe Ahamkara actually scans the brain activity related to an experience in the sense of something entering into or leaving from the brain tissue. As the diagram shows, the consciousness is already within the whole reality all of the way down to the finest particle and for that reason all of the activity in the brain is, in effect, taking place within Ahamkara. Most of the life support functions in the body are controlled by the nervous system and are not necessarily part of this discussion. The understanding of the brain activity that becomes our awareness is both learned from birth and before as well as our accumulated experience from there forward.

My personal conclusion about what I have found through Samapatti is that it confirms what has been taught for millennia by the Yogis that, rather than consciousness being an artefact of brain activity, consciousness can be understood as being external to the physical reality. Or to put it in a more definite way, consciousness does not exist as a part of reality; reality exists as part of consciousness. Of course this does not help for reaching a practical understanding of consciousness at all. In the terminology of science we might say that consciousness is in superposition with the whole potential and therefore, through the process we know as Samapatti, Purusha will know the experience of the potential and its evolutes while being detached from that experience (as does one who is in Samapatti). And at the level of the individual life form that same superposition of consciousness applies because it was in superposition with the whole potential.

For the individual, each experience creates a Samskara/memory at the level of Ahamkara, and the self-identification of Ahamkara is why we do not intrude into another's memory. Perhaps a better word than superposition would be Praxis³ which means an activity which contains the

reason for the activity. Therefore consciousness is both the activity, whether in the brain or elsewhere, which is the cognition of knowledge and the awareness that one actually knows the object of cognition. Of course this is my interpretation of the meaning of praxis in the context of trying to understand consciousness. It could also mean being conscious as well as the reason for being conscious. I would also canvas the notion that the whole reality is created through the agency of consciousness, which operates through simple global rules and additional flexible adaptive rules⁴ which give rise to a myriad of forms of matter, including living matter with another adaptive rule we call awareness.

I cannot leave this subject without addressing the process we call thought. Our Tamasic Ahamkara is what drives our thinking process through input from our concept of who we are. This concept develops throughout life from the start, built upon the modifications of the mind. Modifications of the mind are called Samskaras in Yoga, and include memories of events and other experiences such as those from relationships. Essentially, we are driven unconsciously by fear of death including the death of who we think we are in our culture, what attracts us, what repulses us, misperceptions about self and ignorance about reality. All of these modifications of the mind come into play in our conversations, and in our decision making. The brain's inner processes of that decision making process, even in answering a simple question, interpret the question against these biases and when the answer has been reached we become aware of it. The process itself exists outside of our awareness.

In respect of the Samadhi state I can only speak from experience, and concede this is not a state of awareness most will readily fall into. Yoga tells us that for most it is reached through a long process of meditation and study with a valid teacher. In a recent article in *New Scientist*, May 16, 2015, the writer gave some downsides of meditation; hallucinations and depression were given as examples of the dark side of meditation. If we consider for a moment what the purpose of meditation is, it is to overcome the modifications of the mind. Given what those might be it should be no surprise to encounter these mental states as one beginning to practise meditation. After all, they are what stand in the way of attaining Samadhi and one would be aware that that particular path to enlightenment requires the seeker to have a very strong commitment.

And since this whole information is the primary source of creation it is reasonable to say this is what is meant by the term God, and I add the caveat that when considering the concept of God we need to be aware that meaning in its most fundamental sense is supplied by the brain/mind and take note of where brain/mind sits on the Yoga diagram. I concede that if one can say that this higher order of consciousness is not measureable currently, it may be said to exist in the quantum state. If so, then that information is beyond time and would always be available to those who seek it.

Finally, the level of consciousness sought through Samadhi is the reflection of Pure Consciousness, a state which contains all information. In that state this reflection of Pure Consciousness is said to have "no distinguishing mark" which, in the case of a human means the seer's consciousness is not defined in any way as I. Without any definition, the seer's mind, being focused on the subject, gives way to buddhi's observation of the subject and becomes coalesced with the subject's mind and the experiences I have provided become available. The process of this coalescence of the two minds suggest to me that this could be regarded as one of

those adaptive rules embedded within consciousness, with part of the necessary adaptation being that the seer's mind must be without any modifications.

From all of this I take the view that to describe the Samapatti experiences one will have to resort to paradox which, in this discussion, has to be that consciousness is both monistic, in the sense of knowing something from the position of buddhi on the Yoga diagram, and dualistic in the sense of knowing the subject's mind which must be regarded as dualistic.

I have been told since writing this article that the eDAM framework or *Dvi-Pakṣa Advaita* (both monism and dual-aspect together) has the least number of problems and hence it must be considered as preferred view to interpret the data of *Samadhi/ Samapatti*. I take that as a compliment.

I have not sought to present this essay with an intention to redraft human understanding about consciousness. In the first part of the essay I drew attention to the New Scientist article from Anil Ananthaswamy in which was raised the likelihood that the uncertainty in quantum events might be due to lacking all of the information surrounding those events. I took that to possibly include ignorance of the information we are unable at this point in time to measure and confirm. What conclusions I have made about consciousness, indeed, this whole second part, will most certainly fall into the same context; a lack of a complete understanding of both consciousness and the Yoga Sutra. The term from yoga is avidya, ignorance in the English language. From my perspective there are many schools of thought within science, philosophy and the Hindu arena and about all they have in common is a conviction that theirs is the only valid viewpoint. I am sure each can find where their position fits on the Yoga diagram.

I remember a telephone conversation I had with David Bohm in around about 1987, when he said the only thing he was certain of knowing was that he did not know anything. In that case I am in good company.

3. Samapatti & Nature of Memory

First I sought a way to define what I had been doing, if anything, with these people who were in fact subjects in this process of Samapatti although I didn't know that at the time. I found reference to the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali by Ushar Buddh Arya [5] while shifting some books in a management training institute where I worked as the person who set up classrooms for lectures. I began attending some lessons on the Yoga Sutras by a yoga teacher and he had never mentioned Samapatti in any of his lessons. It was over this time I had the experience with the cat and told my teacher; he gave no indication of what the experience could be within the context of the Yoga Sutras, and with hindsight he most likely recognised exactly what was happening and left me to work it out. I sent away for the book and gradually got a better grasp on what Patanjali was saying in the Sutras. I didn't read that entire book for some years because my free time was taken up looking after people needing a listener.

After reaching that point of stopping 'healing' to try and find my answers I returned to the book and there I had the answer to my question of how does this work. The first difficulty was that

Samapatti was related to the Samadhi state and whenever I tried to meditate nothing seemed to change at all.

I remembered that the sutra about memory having two different kinds of memory rang a bell and I must have filed that away for future reference, and this Part 3 of the article is my attempt to bring both Samapatti and this different kind of memory into some form of perspective.

For those readers who are a bit mystified by the Yoga diagram I will try to add some clues. If you were fortunate enough to read the article by Hari [8] the final evolutes at the bottom of the figure are those subtle elements which nowadays are called subatomic particles. If you are even vaguely like me when reading diagrams or any other descriptions about any theories from the Vedanta, or how to use a TV remote, just bear with it and maybe the penny will drop. All of those theories from the Hindu schools of philosophy are written (originally spoken) by masters who understood very clearly what they knew. But they were writing for or speaking to students who were deeply committed to attaining Samadhi and beyond, not for Western novices.

You, the reader, needs to understand that thinking is what the mind does and most of its input to that process comes from memory. That is our point of departure from the norm for a very good reason. Memory is built from our experiences, and from the Sutras an experience becomes a memory after the event has 'modified the mind'. These modifications are called Samskaras and they cause the memory and every attendant opinion, emotion, like, dislike, where, when, why, how, and so on related to that experience. For me a memory is simply a mental statement that this or that happened. Any further information needs its specific question to provide the pieces of the answer to become known. Anyone with a reasonable understanding of the Sutras, irrespective of which school of thought their version of the Sutras has been drawn, will note this departure from the norm insofar as memory is concerned because what is really required of me at that moment is to just remember an experience. What is less obvious is the very unlikely absence of Samskaras in anyone, let alone one who is barely a novice in the study of the Sutras.

So, logically one must accept that with an absence of Samskaras I am in some level of Samadhi since the central part of being in the state of Samapatti one must be in a Samadhi state. And since this is the way my memory works in its natural mode, then I must be established in that state/level of Samadhi. In his book mentioned above Arya refers to acognitive knowing; this means knowing without the mind and this confirms for me that consciousness does not originate in the mind, and surely that would also mean consciousness does not originate in the brain. Of course I already held that view for the obvious reason that in the Samapatti state the mind of the seer and that of the subject will coalesce and information will pass in both directions.

In Samapatti the seer is aware of what the subject feels and vice versa, and part of what is required is for the seer to set aside her/his identity (sense of self). This point is called Buddhi or Mahat on the Yoga diagram and, for the sake of an understandable explanation we could say the seer has become a detached observer. Whether this is understandable is for the reader to address; suffice to say that I don't consciously set aside my identity (Ahamkara on the diagram) because I suspect that has been missing for most/all of my life. I couldn't possibly teach anyone how to be 'born this way'.

In the article by Hari [8] referred to above there is reference in Vedanta to some of our conscious observed experiences being retained after death. I can accept this viewpoint because I have used it in a practical way. One of my ‘subjects’ was a lady called Emma, who had breast cancer. Over some years I worked with Emma to help her come to terms with whatever the outcome might be. Her favourite session was when I went into my stillness and she became quite used to becoming still through the Samapatti. In the last two months of her life she entered a hospice and I would sit with her through the night. What she sought was to find an alternative to faith; in the stillness she had found certainty as she had connected that certainty within stillness to a mind state after death. On my last visit she announced “Alan, I am going to marry”. When I asked who she replied “I’m going to marry Emma!” Next evening before I was leaving work I had a call to say Emma had died.

In the twenty-five years since Emma’s death I have been trying to continue this journey into this uncharted territory. In writing this article I have become aware of what has skewed the way my memory works and how it has made life with me difficult for many people. Fortunately, I have had some patient friends, and more specifically an extremely caring and patient wife, and that has made all of what I written in this article possible. I hope it is also understandable.

Afterthought

A logical observation related to a lack of Samskaras is the likely reason why, in traditional cultures the elders of the community were regarded as wise ones. As we age our life experience gives us a more detached view; there is little or no need for competition with our peers and this can explain why our awareness moves away from earlier mind sets (Samskaras). Most importantly, this can explain why the older amongst us have very good memories of our earlier life in contrast to memory of our recent past.

Now I turn finally to what may be an obvious question to arise in respect of the Yoga diagram, and that question is why have I chosen to constantly refer to buddhi as the observer when most students of Yoga would have expected me to call that point Atman? My reason is that the diagram really presents a model of consciousness entering matter, not just mankind. So rather than present the anthropocentric viewpoint I stick with Bohm’s concept of wholeness, where I can accept that this diagram is valid for all life, be that animal or vegetable, from amoeba to blue whales and fungi. This may give support to the value of diversity and why we should give all of creation the respect we currently give to whatever or whomsoever we find personally valuable.

Additional Thoughts

From my own personal viewpoint, I believe there is quite a lot to be drawn, probably through discussion of some obvious lines of thought.

First, there is the demonstration of the level of awareness called Buddhi, Mahat and Atman as a real aspect of consciousness. Second, there is the realisation that there is only one consciousness at that level, which leaves open a discussion of what the experiences in Samadhi can tell us about

mind, individuality and ego. The Buddhist view that there is no absolute being (God) is essentially a scientific view of the one consciousness principle. Third, there is a further realisation that monotheism as a basis for religious belief is valid, with the caveat that this could mean that all monotheistic religions are valid, but only in regards that monotheistic principle. Fourth, there is the need for a serious discussion at a philosophical level to be undertaken by all religious leaders on this principle, preferably in the context of this one God and from God's viewpoint.

A serious person could possibly see that if all beliefs are the same at the most fundamental level, it is not particularly logical or sane even, to maintain the present belief in difference between religious beliefs. I would suggest that for many disposed to a belief in differences, the purpose of that position is like football crowds, simply a reason to be belligerent and anti-social. The same can be said of fundamentalism in any field of human society. I can only suggest that the starting point in addressing this issue lies with the individual. Sadly the individual cannot do very much in an active sense when faced with unreasonable force.

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