

## Article

# Samapatti & Knowing without Mind: Explanation by Vedanta

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## ABSTRACT

Sampatti is a state of consciousness without or beyond the mind. In earlier articles, Sampatti experience was explained based on the philosophy of Patanjali written in Yoga Sutras dealing with Consciousness and mind. By getting into the Sampatti state one of the authors of this article (Oliver) could heal physical and psychological afflictions of some people and animals. The experiences of the healer and the healed subjects in such Sampatti sessions are ‘anomalies’ and make one wonder whether consciousness is what we usually think it is. In this article, we analyze some of the questions about consciousness, which arise because of the anomalous nature of Sampatti experiences of both the healer/seer and the subjects. In the analysis, we use an analogy between a living being (with a body and mind) and a computer (with hardware and stored software) to describe some fundamental concepts common to different branches of Vedanta. We find that the Sampatti experiences are consistent with and can be explained by Vedanta in general, as well as by the Yoga philosophy of Patanjali.

**Keywords:** Samapatti, Consciousness, Vedanta, Indian philosophy, Yoga Sutra, knowing without mind, factual and psychological memories.

## 1. Introduction

In the ancient Indian philosophy known as Vedanta, many approaches are described to attain a state of consciousness called Samadhi, which is a state of “knowing without the mind”(Kw/oM). It is reasonable to assume that Samadhi is not a state that many of us experience in our normal lives. Quite interestingly, it happens that one of the authors (Oliver) of this article had several such Kw/oM experiences (before he ever heard of the name Samadhi), during some of which he healed people from physical and psychological ailments. Psychologists and philosophers he talked to classified these experiences as ‘anomalies’. Naturally, a strong desire arose in him to find a rational explanation for these anomalous experiences and led him to read the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, one of the founders of the ancient Hindu philosophy. He found that the conscious state in which his mind is still but in which he is able to see the troubled mental state of the person or animal to be healed, corresponds to a state called Sampatti, described in Yoga Sutra 1.41. In that Sutra he found that Samapatti is a kind of Samadhi (there being many kinds of Samadhi described in Vedanta) and that Samadhi is a state of enlightenment which many Hindu spiritual seekers strive hard to attain through meditation and disciplined study with a teacher.

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One can also be born that way. To enter Samadhi one needs to bring the mind under control, which really means to stop all thought flow<sup>1</sup>.

Earlier (for example, Oliver 2006, 2010, 2015), Oliver described some of his Sampatti experiences and explained them using the terminology of Patanjali, based in particular on the translation and commentary of Vyasa's exposition of The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, by Pandit Ushar Buddh Arya. About the same time as Oliver has been writing about his Sampatti experiences and his understanding of mind and Consciousness<sup>2</sup>, Hari (2010, 2015) has been writing about how Vedanta answers various questions which today's scientists come across in their attempts to explain conscious behaviors seen in living beings (known as the hard problem of consciousness). While Oliver matched his experience of thoughtless awareness with Patanjali's philosophy, Hari quoted Bhagavad Gita in her theory of mind-body interaction. In spite of approaching the questions associated with consciousness from entirely different angles, there are many common aspects in their understanding of interactions among body, mind, and Consciousness such as the possibility of knowing when the mind is still (in other words Kw/oM), and that there are two kinds of memory: the first one contains merely facts; the second one contains modifications of facts i.e., facts with one's emotions attached to them. The coincidence is not surprising because although there are many schools of Vedanta varying in their approaches and in the terminologies they use for expression, they all agree that the mind is a memory and that it is not conscious and that there is an absolute unborn and imperishable Consciousness, without which no body or mind can function and no universe can exist.

Among those who had healing benefits from Oliver's Sampatti sessions were ordinary people; one with breast cancer, one with a disturbed cat, one with a fracture of the tibia, one with Huntington's chorea and one with a visiting poltergeist. In this article, we will briefly narrate some of the Sampatti events and bring up the questions which naturally arise when one tries to understand the seemingly anomalous nature of the experiences of the healer and those of the healed subjects. In Indian philosophical literature, often, simple events observed in our daily lives are used as analogies to explain complex concepts. Following this practice, by means of an analogy between a living being (with a body and mind) and a computer (with hardware and stored software), an instrument frequently used in our modern daily lives, Hari described in earlier articles, some fundamental concepts common to different branches of Vedanta. In this article, we will use the same analogy to explain away the apparent anomalies and find that Sampatti experiences are indeed consistent with the descriptions of the functions and interactions of Consciousness, mind, and body as given in Patanjali Yoga Sutras as well as other branches of Indian philosophy known as Vedanta.

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<sup>1</sup> Oliver's quest for understanding his own experiences led him to a branch of the Hindu philosophy because most Western philosophies do not see a distinction between the mind and Consciousness whereas in Hindu and Buddhist philosophies, the mind is said to be not conscious just like lifeless matter and mind is not the same as Consciousness! Individual consciousness perceived in living beings differs from Universal Consciousness (we call this Consciousness with a big C in front) in that the former is fragmented. An individual's consciousness exists only in wakeful and dreaming sleep states and knows only one thing at a time and in general, one individual does not know the conscious experience of another whereas Consciousness knows everything everywhere all the time!

<sup>2</sup> See footnote 1 for the meaning of Consciousness with big C.

## 2. Brief summary of Vedanta's characterization of Consciousness, mind, body, and their relations

There exists Universal Consciousness (briefly called Consciousness hereafter), which is omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent:

- Every living being is associated with its own soul (*jiva*) which is a part of that infinite Consciousness, who draws to itself the senses and the mind that are part of Nature (Bhagavad Gita Chapter 15, verse 7). Being part of the eternal Consciousness, the soul is eternal also and survives the death of the physical body.
- Nature (called Prakriti in Sanskrit) is dumb. Although it seems to carry on many processes all by itself, it does not "know" what it is doing and needs initiation. Consciousness gives that initiation of its own will; it is free will. It can look into one subject or two subjects or more subjects at the same time or look into none; It can initiate Prakriti to do things or not initiate. Nobody can tell Consciousness to do anything. It is above all rules and logic.
- The Self (Atma) is Consciousness seated in the hearts of all beings (Bhagavad Gita chapter 10, verse 20). Kenopanishad (Swami, 1920) says that the mind and senses are able to perform their respective functions willed and initiated by Consciousness and without It, the senses and the mind cannot function.
- The mind is an accumulation of thoughts or information. It consists of a memory of experiences, desires, aversion, emotions, etc. (*chitta*), ability to think (*manas*), intellect (*buddhi*) which includes the ability to make decisions based on memory, and the sense of 'I' or ego (*ahankara*). The mind is subtle unlike the body but it is also part of Nature, in other words, it is not conscious but as dumb as lifeless matter.
- The five elements are the earth, water, fire, air and the space. The five senses are hearing, touching, seeing, tasting and smelling; objects of the senses are sound, touch, form and color, taste and smell.
- Bhagavadgita describes the distinctions between the body mind complex and the one who 'knows' them (*shetrajna*). The Field (*shetra*) consists of the body, the senses and sense objects, the body's environment (Nature), and the mind.
- All contents of the Field, namely, the body, its environment, and the mind are part of Nature and therefore not conscious (Bhagavad Gita, 7:4).
- The knower of the Field (*shetrajna*) is Consciousness Himself and His infinitesimal projection, *jiva* who assumed this function within this body.
- As to the interaction of the body and the mind, in the chapter called *Karma Yoga*, Gita says that the senses influence the body, and *manas* and *chitta* influence the senses; *buddhi* influences the *manas* and *chitta*, and *jiva* influences *buddhi*.

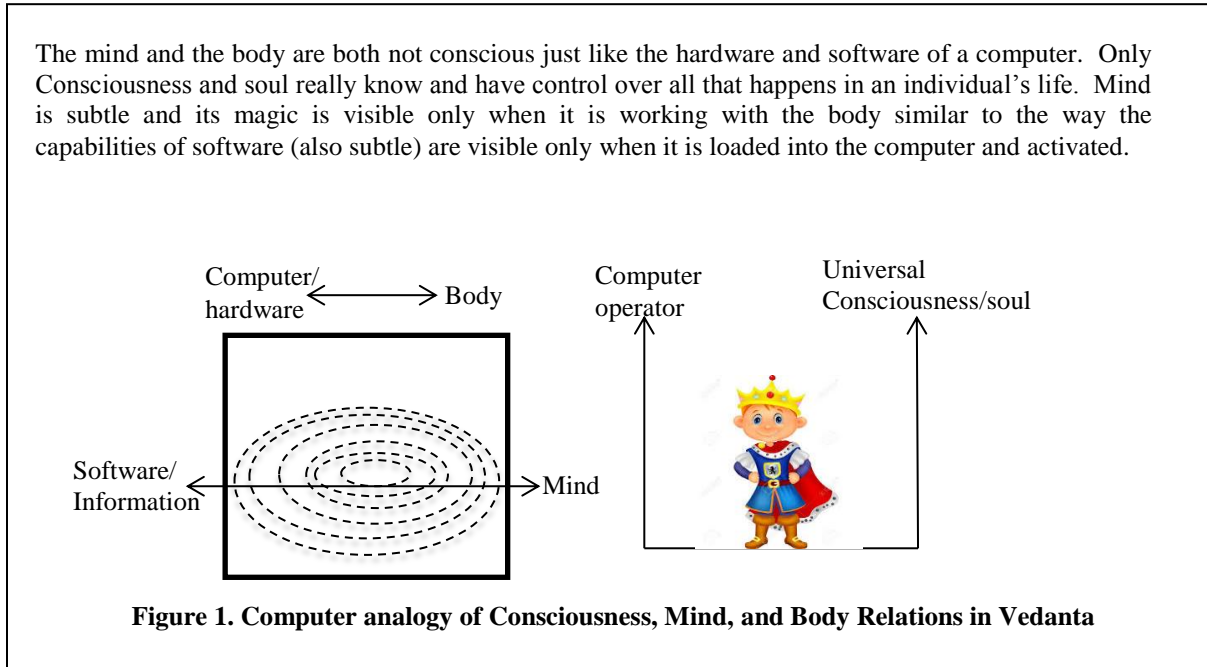
As said before, all schools of Indian philosophy emphasize the distinction between what we usually perceive in living beings and call consciousness, and Consciousness itself. The difference is that the former is fragmented. An individual's consciousness exists only in wakeful and dreaming sleep states and knows only one thing at a time, and in general one individual does not know the conscious experience of another whereas Consciousness knows everything everywhere

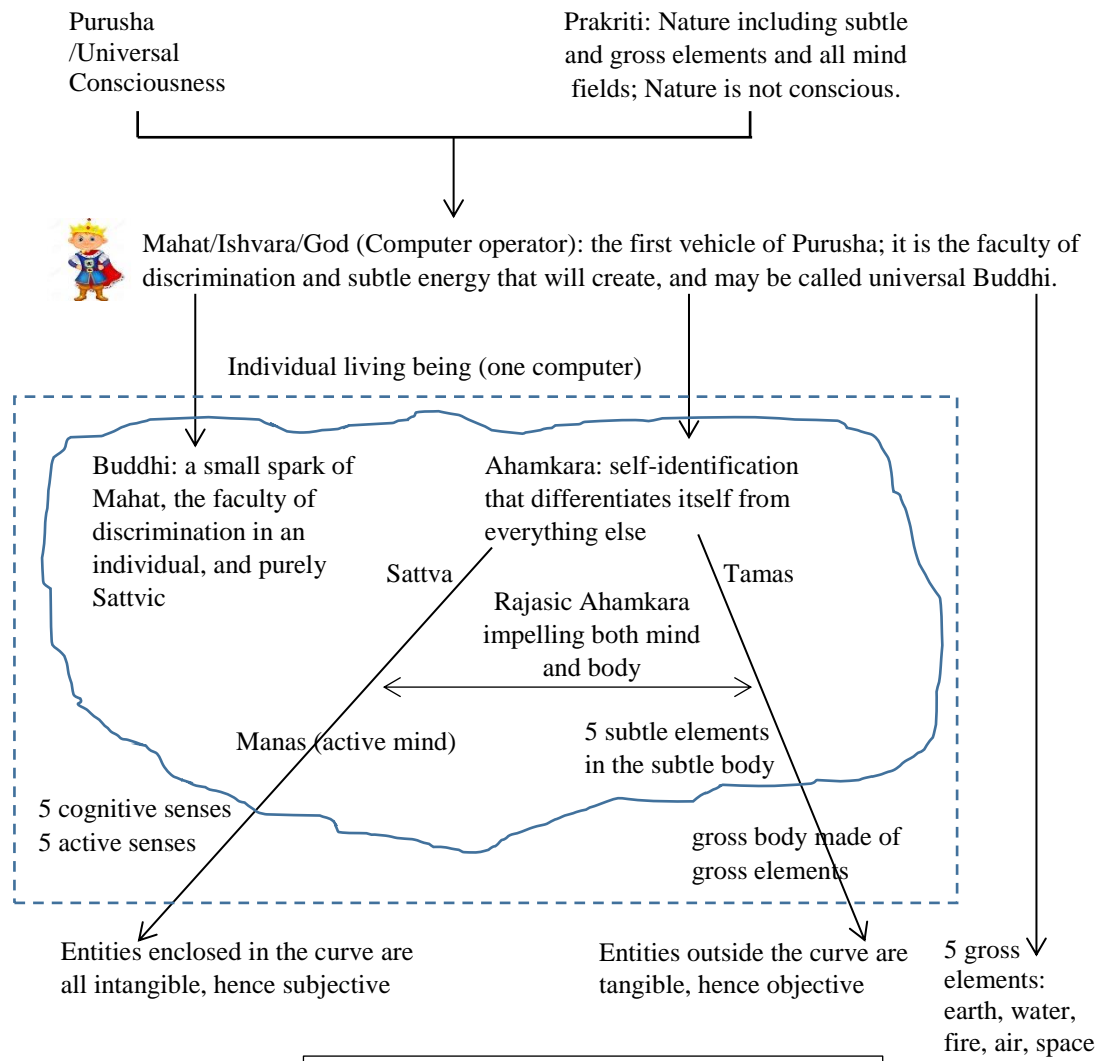
all the time. How the all- pervading Consciousness gives rise to the fragmented consciousness in each of so many individual living beings is also explained in Vedanta and we will show a pictorial description of it later in the article.

### Vedanta and computer analogy

The above descriptions of Consciousness, mind, and body, suggest the following analogy:

- A living being is similar to a computer whose hardware is the physical body. The body is made up of matter. The living being has an accumulation of experiences, desires, etc. i.e., an accumulation of information in a memory which we call the mind in this paper. The mind is like a computer memory containing data and programs.
- Just like a computer's hardware and software do not know what they are doing, their own existence, and the meaning of their memory contents, both the body and the mind of a living being also do not "really know" anything but there is a certain Consciousness (apart from the mind mentioned above) that "knows". Consciousness is like the computer operator, as it were, and the one who "really knows" everything that is going on in the living being's life.
- Similar to the computer software, the mind being an instrument, cannot act as an agent all by itself and needs initiation from an external agent, which is often, a desire/purpose (thoughts), or sensory inputs; the soul being a part of the omnipotent Consciousness can also intervene just like a computer operator can intervene in the operations of the computer. Mind and body act on each other according to Vedanta.





**Figure 2. The Yoga perspective of creation**

Oliver was showing a diagram summarising the Yoga philosophy of Patanjali in his earlier writings. To be able to see the consistency of the main themes in Yoga, Sankhya, and Vedanta schools of Indian philosophy and the applicability of the computer analogy to describe these themes, in Figure 2, we illustrate the Yoga perspective<sup>3</sup> of creation of the universe from Consciousness:

<sup>3</sup> In Figure 2, we followed the interpretation of Patanjali’s Yoga Sutras by Swami Krishnananda (see web link in References). “The substantial super-substantial ideation seems to be the beginning of all things. This potency, latency, or the hidden condition of a future universe is, according to Sankhya, called *mahat*, the great being filled with the idea of the universe, cosmically aware. For all practical purposes, this is the God we are thinking of in religion.... What Sankhya calls *mahat* is cosmic existence, which assumes an intensive self-awareness of its own universal being .....but it is not egoism of man or any kind of individuality.... . Creation is not complete in the

### 3. Examples of healing by Oliver by getting into the Sampatti state

Let us now recall some of Oliver's Sampatti experiences as a healer (Oliver 2010) in order to provide the necessary background for the intriguing questions they raise about Consciousness, mind, body, and their interactions.

In one instance, a woman asked him to help her disturbed cat; it was antisocial and hadn't washed itself for a year. It did smell a bit. Oliver sat the cat on his lap and focused his mind on it with closed eyes. As he focused, his mind became still, that is, empty of all thoughts. He became aware of the cat's mind as it were; he could see (with closed eyes) that the cat went to sleep and had chaotic visual images, a bit like multiple auras of migraine. He then saw the chaos cleared to become a garden scene viewed from cat eye-level. The plants appeared to be very large and the colors were just shades of brown, yellow and red. He was aware of the presence of the garden but at the same time he knew he had never seen it before. He knew they are not images in his own mind and that he had watched the cat's dream. After a while, Oliver, (the seer) felt that the cat would wake up. Indeed, it woke and began to wash itself, suggesting that his thought that the cat should wake up was his awareness of the cat's waking processes. The cat's response of washing itself suggests that the cat also experienced calming down of disturbances and anxieties in its mind while Oliver was enjoying stillness of his mind.

In all Sampatti experiences of Oliver, while he was in the state of stillness, those anxieties, disturbances, perturbations, etc., that were there earlier in his subject's mind gradually cleared and the subject's mind also became still. For instance, he worked over some years with a lady

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sense we understand creation, even at this level. Something else takes place. There is a further descent into special forms of particularities or we may call them individualities.... A threefold split takes place, as it were, in this supreme body of a universal nature, which is indivisible in itself in its pristine purity. A section of this universality is thrown out as the objective universe and a section is struck off as the individual percipients.... the threefold creation mentioned is on the one hand, the vast universe, so called, which has its own internal constituent diversity, and, on the other hand, the individual percipient; midway between the world that you see outside you and yourself there is something which nobody can see. That is the central intelligence of God operating. According to modern science, when we speak of the universe, we are not expected to discount our own existence as an observer, who is part and parcel, perhaps organically connected to this so called universe of perception.

We have five senses or five sensations. The corresponding objects of these five sensations are the *tanmatras*. These are objective counterparts of the subjective reactions set up by our senses, sound, touch, color, taste, smell. The objective principles or the substantial basis of these sensations lie behind the manifestation of these gross elements, called mahabhutas: earth, water, fire, air, space. The objective universe manifest from this Virat, Mahat, or the Supreme Being, became a sudden spatial expanse. There was only space in the beginning, or we may say space-time. Here our ancient doctrine seems to be telling us the same thing which modern science tells us again: there is only space-time, nothing more, nothing less. That there appears to be something very valuable in this nothing is due to another reason. That reason again, to come to the point, is the presence of the third divine element, a substance, a reality appearing behind this presentation of the phenomena. Even appearance cannot be without reality behind it. There is a reality behind the sensation of tangibility, the cause of our feeling that there is some hard world in front of us. This physical universe of five elements, therefore, is a product of what is called the quintuplication, a peculiar fivefold permutation and combination of these *tanmatras* – *shabda, sparsha, rupa, rasa, gandha*, which means the principles of sound, touch, etc., mentioned already. Thus, the physical universe is created. These five elements and *tanmatras* all coming from the Supreme Being in some way. Now from the widespread cosmological study of an objective universe, we have to turn our attention to the study of individual psychological entities called persons, human beings, animals, this and that. So from the objective side we turn to the subjective side.”

called Emma, who had breast cancer and helped her to come to terms with whatever the outcome might be. Samapatti sessions were her favourites because when he went into stillness she too became still and thereby peaceful<sup>4</sup>. Another person who suffered from Huntington's chorea was helped by Oliver using Samapatti. His uncontrollable movements ceased for the duration of the session, typically around 45 minutes. Probably, it would have been possible for some medical instrumentation to chart the stopping of these random brain events and relate that to the Samapatti, and to show that when the Samapatti was ended that the random firing started again. Nevertheless, what is known as a fact is that the random movements cease in sleep. Hence it is entirely likely that during the Sampatti session, when Oliver was in the state of stillness his subject's mind and brain also became still similar enough to sleep for the effect to abate in the waking state.

In another instance, Oliver helped a lady whose fractured leg refused to knit. The fracture site had been supported by a steel pin, and since the bone had not shown any sign of knitting, the pin had been removed; at the time of our healing session she was waiting for a bone graft. Oliver asked her to close her eyes as he had closed his, and fixed his mind on her leg. Once again his mind attained stillness and in a little while he became aware of a sense of physical distress within the bone. He thought he would like to remove this distress and replace it with something more comfortable. He thought the distress was a very dark color and that he would like to replace it with something bright and vibrant like gold. He did this silently and without any movement. He did not visualize this happening. At that point, he thought he should open his eyes. As he opened them he was surprised to see her obviously very excited, and she told him that he had removed this black stuff from the bone marrow and replaced it with a bright gold energy. The interesting point here is that she saw something he mentally narrated; he did not share the same image because he didn't have an image in my mind. A week later she had the leg x-rayed in preparation for a bone graft; the x-ray showed new bone growth at the fracture site.

From experiences such as above, it is obvious that mind can be brought to rest and yet one remains conscious; in the Samapatti state, although the mind has stopped its usual wandering and is at rest, the seer could see and know beyond our normal experience of seeing and knowing. In these experiences the seer is a witness or detached observer without a physical connection to the subject. These two points make one wonder whether real consciousness is distinct from what we usually see and call consciousness in living forms. Oliver sought an explanation for whether these seemingly impossible events could actually exist within the boundaries of science. His thought was that if one can consciously experience another's experience, then consciousness must be something quite distinct from the brain. Obviously, his thought is confirmed by the brief summary of Vedanta in the previous section.

Another noteworthy point of Oliver's Sampatti experiences is that the seer only observes that the subject has pain but does not feel the pain; his memory of the event is simply a narrative of the observation that it happened. In other words, if the seer is aware of, say, the subject's pain or

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<sup>4</sup> In earlier writings, Oliver interpreted this phenomenon as conveying of his stillness to the subject. Hari's interpretation is different; in her interpretation, stillness means lack of thought, that is, lack of information; hence stillness is not conveyed. Stillness occurs in the subject's mind just like it occurs in the seer's mind, by stopping the flow of thoughts. Why the subject was not able to stop the flow of thoughts by himself/herself/itself before the seer focused on the subject will be explained later in the article. The reason Oliver did not visualize in any of these examples is that he is unable to mentally visualize anything. It is only when in Samapatti that he can see whatever the subject may visualize, as in the case of the cat's dream.

emotion, then at the same time, he/she is also aware that it is not his/her pain or emotion. As for the subject that is healed, his/her mind also becomes still and for the time it remains still, he/she is also unaware of the pain or emotion. While the seer experiences stillness, the subject is aware that something has changed, and may call that change healing. Oliver notes a distinction between his recalling of the Sampatti events and that of any healed subject. He calls it two kinds of memory. Just as he simply observes the physical pain or anxiety of the subject but does not feel it, he also notices that healing has taken place but does not feel the excitement neither during Sampatti nor afterwards; for example, he knows that the cat will wake up now or that he has removed the black stuff from the bone marrow but without any accompanying excitement which the subject in the latter example exhibited. In Yoga Sutra Patanjali describes two kinds of memory. In one kind of memory the object of apprehension is primary. In the other kind of memory, the instrument and process of apprehension are primary. Krishnamurti (1953) agrees with this notion of two kinds of memory. He called them psychological memory and factual memory<sup>5</sup>; the latter is what one may call just observations; the former is facts with one's values emotions attached to them (then they become Samskaras). In the former, the object has formed a Samaskara which is recorded in the memory along with the object while in the second the mind does not record a modified perception of the object but only an observation that such and such happened. This is why Oliver can experience the subject's visualisation while it is happening in the subject's mind but afterwards the memory is just a narrative.

#### **4. Pictorial representation of Sampatti using the computer analogy of Consciousness, mind, and body Relations in Vedanta**

Having found consistency of his Sampatti experiences with the Yoga philosophy of Patanjali and explained them in earlier articles (for example, Oliver 2006, 2010, 2015) based on that philosophy, Oliver asked Hari a few questions and whether they could be answered using the computer analogy of Consciousness, mind, and body Relations in Vedanta described and illustrated pictorially in the previous section. We will present these questions and answers in what follows.

##### **Samapatti begins:**

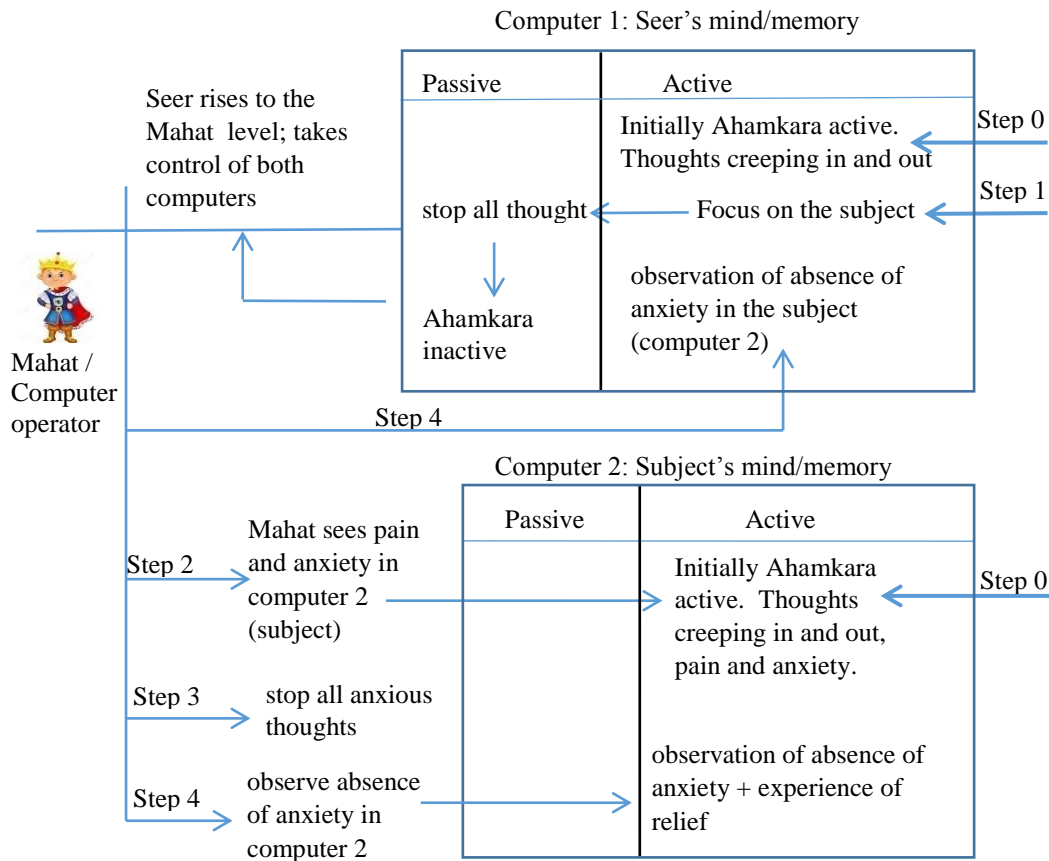
1. Seer is focused on the Subject and becomes aware of the Subject's Mind and knows it is not his own pain, anxiety etc.
2. Subject becomes aware of stillness replacing his pain and anxiety. This is a real experience (includes joy, excitement, etc.) for the subject and the experience creates a Samskara and therefore creates a memory type 1. For the seer the experience is retained as a type 2 memory, which means it does not evoke the seer's experience, just the observation that this experience happened.

The sequence of events/experiences of the seer and the subject are depicted in Figure 3.

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<sup>5</sup> Psychological memory corresponds to the memory in which the instrument and process of apprehension overwhelm the object of apprehension as mentioned in Yoga Sutras. Factual memory corresponds to the first kind of memory in Yoga Sutras, i.e., where the object of apprehension is clear.





**Figure 3. A pictorial representation of sequence of events in Samapatti**

So the following questions arise:

1. What can explain these different types of memory?

Answer. Vedanta describes a concept called “identification” (*tadatmya* or *sarupya* in Sanskrit). The infinite, limitless, and immortal Consciousness identifies itself with the living beings having limited capacities for knowing and action. A living being has birth and death. When Consciousness identifies itself with finite beings it becomes many. Identification with any one finite being called soul or *jiva* loses its freedom, thinks that finite being is “I” as different from other finite beings in the universe; this is *Ahamkara* which knows only what is happening to the one particular being and does not (usually or directly without the use of senses) know what is happening to others or elsewhere. The soul forgets that it is immortal and begins to fear death. So, the intense urge for survival, and selfishness, that is, preference for the welfare of that one “I” over that of other beings arise. Consequently, Ahamkara attaches a value to every observation: is it good for me? Or bad for me? Then there can be various levels of how good or bad an event is from the point of view of Ahamkara.

**Now comes the model of the living being as a computer with a body and a mind and Consciousness as the operator of computers:** The mind is a memory; it is an accumulation of information, the content of observations of the external world, acquired by means of senses and thoughts about the observations. Both the body and the mind are not conscious. The feeling of “awareness of an external object or thought” arises in the living being whenever a physical record carrying some information is created or retrieved in the living being’s body; this awareness is a reflection of the underlying Consciousness /soul in the mind interacting with the body. The reflection is Ahamkara. The process of record creation and retrieval of one record after another usually goes on in living beings relentlessly when they are awake or in dream sleep. Although the creation of thoughts (information records) takes place seemingly without interruption at least when awake, this awareness is fragmented because it is a process of creating a series of records one after another, although very fast. It is unlike the pure awareness of Consciousness which is independent of any object of awareness, which does not need a body with senses to know anything, and which knows everything everywhere all the time and therefore is independent of space and time.

How do two types of memory come about? The one who “really observes” is Consciousness; the body and the mind together create records whenever they receive inputs either from outside via senses or from the already recorded information in the mind. We usually think that such record creation is an observation. Just like a computer, each living being creates in its memory, records of only those inputs that it receives; it cannot create a record of what another living being (computer) receives. So one living being usually does not know what is in another living being’s mind. As said before, whenever the living being creates an information record, the being also attaches a value to it such as good, bad, pleasing, painful, happy, sad, and so on. These values are exclusively about “me”, that is, whether beneficial or not to that one particular individual. When two living beings observe an event, they may judge the event as good or bad differently; it may be good for one but not the other. So, the living being’s memory has two aspects: facts and their associated values. Consciousness or Mahat does not attach values to its observations. It has nothing to gain or lose no matter what happens. It has no pleasure and pain; like sunlight it is simply observing everything everywhere without interruption. It knows all past and future without requiring a memory. The seer observes the contents of the subject’s memory only when the seer is at the Mahat level. At that level, the seer’s observation of the subject’s stillness or anxiety does not create any emotion (as distinct from observation of a fact) in the seer’s memory.

As shown in Figure 3 the computer’s memory has two components: one is passive; it is a database, of static records. The other component is software and active; it is a set of instructions. When turned on, the software becomes dynamic and creates new records in the database using input data. Heuristics are software entities that the computer operator can turn on or off; s/he can enter a pattern directly into the database instead of seeking assistance from the software if s/he so chooses. (Of course, a computer user does not want to do so under ordinary circumstances.) On the other hand, a paper, although it is also a memory device, has no software, the active component; the paper is similar to the computer’s database. The brain/mind is more like a computer than a paper in that the brain/mind’s memory has both passive and active components. Ahamkara is an active aspect of the memory. But it is possible for Consciousness to create records in the brain’s memory without involving Ahamkara just like a computer user can enter

and save data in the database without invoking the software. Recording of facts does not depend upon any contents already existing in the memory; it is similar to a person's writing the observed facts on a clean paper directly; the paper has no influence on what is being written on it. Recording of what is attentively observed is unlike a computer's recognition of patterns, where the pattern perceived by the computer depends upon the heuristics which were already contents of the memory; here, the already existing contents influence what is being written at present. Thus one may say that a perception colored by judgement is what is recorded in the memory when Ahamkara participates in the act of recording whereas factual knowledge is what is directly recorded by Consciousness without the participation of Ahamkara (Hari 2011).

2. How can the seer differentiate between his experience of the subject's pain and know it is not his own pain?

Answer: As shown in the Figure 3, once the seer disconnects his/her identification with his/her body by focusing on the subject, he/she raises to the level of Mahat, the operator of all computers. Mahat sees the memory contents of both computers; Mahat knows that anxiety and pain are in the subject's memory but not in the seer's memory and may enter (like the computer operator) this fact into the seer's memory. The computers (ordinary living beings who cannot break their identification with the body/mind) cannot exchange their memory contents without using senses.

One may ask "if Mahat enters into the seer's mind its observation: the pain is in the subject's mind and not in the seer's mind, why does He not enter the same observation into the subject's mind?" Recall that the seer is able to still his/her mind and get into the state of Sampatti but the subject does not know how to still his/her mind by himself/herself. The explanation is that all living beings are not at the same level when it comes to stopping the relentless thought flow and shaking off the "identification" mentioned earlier. Hence some are not able to connect with Mahat and receive knowledge directly from Mahat without the use of senses; they are also not able to see what is in another mind because information in another's mind is not accessible by senses or by any physical means.

3. How can it be that the subject does not know his experience of the seer's stillness is not his own stillness?

Answer: First of all, the subject does not experience the seer's stillness; what he/she experiences are his/her own stillness because stillness is lack of thought flow; stillness is not information that can be perceived by senses, nor an emotion to be experienced. Information can be passed from one mind to another normally by means of senses (normal communication means), and directly in extra-sensory phenomena but stillness has no information content. So it is not passed from one mind to another. The subject attains stillness because the seer in the Mahat state turns off the thought flow. All thoughts that were in the subject's mind before the Sampatti session happened are still there in the subject's memory because he/she (probably not the cat) can remember those thoughts after Sampatti ended. After Sampatti, anxiety does not continue because there is no more physical pain and anxiety which is a result of anticipation of the pain but there is still the memory of experiencing the pain and anxiety earlier. When thoughts do not flow, there remains peace and calm which is the nature of pure existence. All other thoughts not related to the pain

are still there in the subject's memory and he/she is aware of them just as he/she does before Sampatti happened. It is the same phenomenon that happens in sleep. During sleep we do not have many of the thoughts which we have when awake. Where have they gone? Nowhere; they are still there in the memory; they are simply not active; they are in a passive state.

As shown in Figure 3 above, there are two kinds of stored information: passive and active. For example, a violinist has the ability to play violin but he/she does not play violin all the time. The ability to play violin is stored in the musician's memory in a passive state and he/she activates it to perform. He/she enjoys the music while playing violin and remembers the experience even afterwards. After the performance is done, the ability to play violin is still there and no one else knows about the musician's talent unless he/she performs. In computer terminology, information is of two kinds, data and programs. The former is passive; the latter remains passive until it is activated. The active state is of a finite duration. At the end of the active state, a program remains passive in the memory and can be activated again.

4. Is it possible that everyone is still within and that stillness is not experienced because the mind is always on alert, and therefore will always be occupied with Samskaras and their memories?

Answer: It was answered above. Stillness is not experienced because thoughts are turned on one after another relentlessly. Stillness is not lack of alertness; that is why there is awareness of stillness. As soon as thoughts stop flowing, there is calm, peace, and alertness which are all qualities of pure existence.

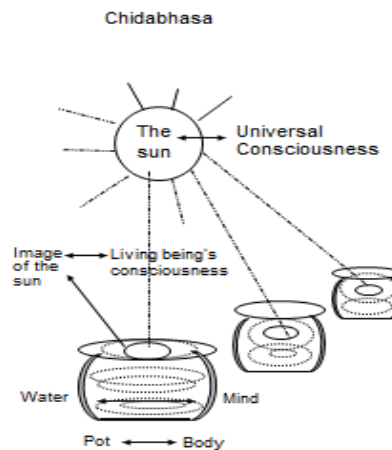
It is worthwhile to note the difference between deep sleep and Samadhi here. Ramana Maharshi explained this difference well (see web link in References). In deep sleep, although there is no conscious thought flow, the thoughts are there in a passive state; in other words, the mind is merged and not destroyed. That which merges reappears. It may happen in meditation also. But the mind which is destroyed cannot reappear. Samadhi alone can reveal the real stillness. Thoughts cast a veil over reality, and so it is not realized as such in states other than Samadhi. In Samadhi there is only the awareness of 'I am' (Self not Ahamkara) and no thoughts. The experience of 'I am' is 'being still'. The 'I am' awareness is there in Samadhi but not in deep sleep.

5. Is Ahamkara the equivalent of a personal algorithm which attempts to relate sensory inputs against memory and Samskaras (preferences)?

Answer: The answer is already included in the answer to the first question about two kinds of memory. Yes. Ahamkara paints as it were, the received sensory inputs with already existing contents of the memory while recording the experiences. Ahamkara is a property of the memory of living beings. Ahamkara is the "I" thought that separates itself from everything else in the universe. Indeed, our computers do so. We need and use communications in the world that we live in. Communication, whether verbal or otherwise, involves at least two distinct entities, living or non-living, and therefore the act of communication depends upon the participating entities' ability to distinguish themselves from one another. A computer also distinguishes itself from everything else in the universe. That is why we are able to develop and use computer

communications. If the programmer gives the name “I” to a robot, it will thereafter say “I know this”, “I did this”, and so on. But of course, it does not have what we call self-awareness or any awareness in fact. On the other hand, Ahamkara not only distinguishes itself from everything else in the universe but it “appears” to do so consciously. One may ask “how or why does Ahamkara appear to be conscious when it is also part of the mind and therefore not conscious?” Or alternatively one may ask, “If the mind is not conscious, how is it that we have conscious experiences in our lives?” The answer is that “appearance of consciousness” (called Chidabhasa in Sanskrit) happens because of the underlying Consciousness which produces a reflection in the mind, the memory of the living being.

Vedanta explains “appearance of consciousness” by means of the following analogy: When sun light falls in a pot containing water, the light is reflected by the water creating an image of the sun. The image has some brightness but its origin is in the sun light and not in the pot nor in the water. If the pot is broken, water is scattered, the reflection is gone but the sun and his rays are all still there. In this analogy, a living being is a body with a mind and similar to a pot containing water; the mind is like water and the body is like the pot. The consciousness appearing in a living being is like the image of the sun in water. If there is more than one pot with water, images of the sun appear in all the different pots.



**Figure 4.** Living beings appear to be conscious because of Consciousness reflection in their minds. There is no reflection in lifeless matter because it does not have a mind.

The Supreme knower, Consciousness, who manifests Himself as consciousness of each individual living being is like the sun light; there are no distinctions in sun light, it is all one but the reflections are many and distinct. The quality of reflection varies with the quality of water, for example, if the water moves the reflection shakes; if the water is muddy then the reflection is not as bright. Just as there is no reflection in an empty pot, there is no appearance of consciousness in lifeless matter but only in living beings because they have minds. Again, just as the water needs a pot to hold it, and the reflection is gone if the pot is broken, the mind cannot

exhibit the apparently conscious behavior after the death of the physical body although some of the subtler contents of the mind may still survive and do not simply vanish. Sankhyakarika (Swami 1995) states that the world can only be experienced when both *sthula sarira* (the gross body) and *sukshma sarira* (the subtle body same as the mind) are present together (interacting). In other words, life is the interaction of mind with matter and experiences in life appear to be conscious because of the underlying all-pervading Consciousness.

The chidabhasa explanation in Vedanta is described here because it seems to justify the following view expressed by Oliver (2006) “My view is that consciousness, mind and memory are NOT phenomena that arise from the chemical and electrical activity within biological processes of the brain. I believe the opposite is true; that these processes arise from the presence of information in the virtual state in superposition with matter. ... In this context it is possible to say that the presence of this information produces what we call life, and that what we call consciousness arises from the dialogue between the virtual state and living matter”.

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