

## Essay

# Samapatti, Dispassionate Observer & Creative Dying

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## Abstract

In this essay, I illustrate that life is an interactive process between the dispassionate observer, seer, and an individual life form, beginning with the first appearance of life. This is why the seer's sense of "knowing the subject" is a dispassionate and nevertheless a conscious observation, because the seer's awareness is at the level of the first appearance of conscious intelligence. The subject's awareness of the change is a conscious awareness, and we call that conscious awareness mind. A change of the mind observed by the dispassionate observer becomes a memory. I also describe the Samapatti sessions I had within a cancer patient – They were called "Creative Dying".

**Keywords:** Samapatti, dispassionate, observer, mind, awareness, memory, creative dying.

## Introduction

In the Vedic philosophies, there is an aphorism about the steps one might encounter in a course of study. The aphorism is: When the student is ready, the teacher appears. The aphorism does not necessarily relate to only a structured course or to a specific teacher. And it does not confine itself to persons who are actively seeking any specific knowledge. It obviously can also apply to those who, like me, are driven to understand what has always been beyond the reach of my mind so far as where my mind seems to be somewhat different. At the start of my journey, I didn't know what was different and I only had other people telling me it was so, even though they, like me, didn't know how or why I was different. Putting together what has started to assemble itself, I have found more than I thought possible.

## Starting Point

Throughout history, Western philosophers have sought to understand consciousness, and in recent times the general conclusion has been that consciousness arises in the brain. The questions of how it could arise in the brain, and why we are conscious, remaining unanswered. Eastern philosophers had addressed these questions many millennia ago and had developed answers, all of which are related to a whole reality, in the sense that consciousness is a fundamental of that reality. Our Western thinkers are reluctant to accept much of Eastern philosophy and its related science and beliefs. With that in mind as a starting point, the first point is not so much about these differing viewpoints but in recognising the obvious; whatever the viewpoint, it remains the same whole reality. For that reason I can only make parallels rather than contradictions.

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One of the oldest record of the Eastern philosophies is found in the Vedas of the Aryan people, who, according to some, lived around the area of the North pole at a time before glaciation. How accurate that story is not raised as an absolute fact; it has more to do with the relatively recent translations of the Vedas differing with those of earlier scholars. In particular, the aspects of astrological observations in the earlier sections differing from later parts of the Vedas. These different observations relate to rising of the constellation of Orion, taken as the start of the solar year. These different points correspond to what one would find in different regions of the globe, inferring a probable migration to their more recent location in the Indus Valley. Despite the inferred change of location, the philosophy itself has remained essentially unchanged.

The philosophy is found in the many Hindu schools of thought, and the essential message has to do with the basic understanding of a whole reality, centred on a trinity of belief which I have mentioned in earlier essays. These evolved through time, depending upon which particular school of thought one might study. These can be the trinities of Brahman (Creator), Vishnu (Sustainer), and Shiva (Dissolver), or Sat (Existence), Chit (Knower) and Ananda (Bliss), and from Patanjali's Yoga Sutras we have Purusha and Prakriti, in which we have the Gunas, which are Sattva, Tamas, and Rajas, all being the result of Purusha reflecting upon Prakriti. Purusha means the equivalent of the notion of God as Creator. Satchitananda, with its aspect of the knower, tells us that this composite term can be regarded as consciousness being a fundamental of reality.

In the Vedic description of the inferred interaction between Purusha, as Pure Consciousness and the material and non-material states of Prakriti, we find there is a specific kind of space called Akasha; not a physical space but a space in which matter becomes atomic and having the title of the Greatest Teacher. This same title of teacher is given to Mahat, which is the first point of the reflection of Purusha on Prakriti. The reflection introduces intelligence into the relationship. As this teacher first appears in the reflection of Purusha on Prakriti we are being told that Purusha, the Absolute Creator, is aware of its own reflection, which is to say it is conscious. The inference here is that this conscious awareness has been imparted to the whole reality. Patanjali also says that Purusha is without 'distinguishing mark,' inferring the reflection has no effect on Purusha and vice versa.

## **Akasha**

This word, meaning a special kind of space, the greatest teacher, and the state in which matter becomes atomic, is central to any understanding of consciousness, God, and prespacetime. From this common title I have assumed that the whole description is about a state prior to the evolution of matter, including the viewpoint of the individual, called Ahamkara, ego, or I AM. Science has a name for that space the Vedas have called Akasha, nonlocal space; and as the word infers there is no locality, which is why it would have to be devoid of space and time.

Patanjali says that the smallest particle is merely a point without mass, while the smallest space from the physicist's perspective is the Planck Length of  $10^{-33}$  cm. For Patanjali, this is the state in which matter becomes atomic, while its equivalent in physics would be the theoretical threshold between classical physics and the quantum state. My suggestion is that both are perspectives of the same state; it is just a matter of different terms from a different time in history.

The standard model of physics describes particles and fields as the precursors of atomic matter, which, for the purpose of this essay, I am saying is also what Akasha means. The difference being that Patanjali says there is consciousness or information there as well, hence the title of the Greatest Teacher. Physics notes that information also plays a part in measurements made of entangled particles at that quantum level. In that sense, I am suggesting it may be the same process by which information can be inferred to be passing between the seer and subject in Samapatti.

The Yoga Sutras also mention memory and Samapatti, which is really what we are examining, because Samapatti relates to both memory and consciousness. The main question people will have about Samapatti is: "How does information pass between the seer and the subject with no physical or sensory contact? If one can accept that transfer of information, then the same would be true of psychics and their access to information about a subject/client. I know from watching my wife, a Reiki practitioner, in a distant healing situation in which she has experienced information from her distant subject, that she has been operating in that same Samadhi state. This information she gained from the subject's mind is usually in the form of pain, discomfort, or some form of stress or even joy. And exactly as is the case of the seer in a Samapatti situation, she can differentiate between the client's pain and her own pain free state in that moment. This is Einstein's 'action at a distance'.

In respect of this nonlocal state, Akasha as the teacher obviously has access to information in that nonlocal state, otherwise how could Akasha possibly teach? If we add to that absence of locality the absence of time it begins to make a bit more sense. If Mahat represents the first appearance of consciousness as the result of Purusha's reflection, then this represents the first imbalance between the Gunas, and it is this imbalance which begins the transformation of particles and fields into real matter. Like a pebble dropped into a pond, the ripple effect is instantaneous; more specifically, it is simultaneous with every resulting ripple within Akasha because there is no time. In a state without time this transformation is simultaneous as an observation. I use the word, observation, because this state has the characteristic of knowing, and just like the ripples in my mythical pond, Chit is knowing by observation at every dimensionless point within real matter, in real space, and in every moment in real spacetime. There are three simultaneous observations; one prior to the reflection, one after the reflection, and one of the transformation into real matter. If one discounts the first observation, it is still memory. That discount would be more about whether there needs to be a God or not; in my opinion the fact of the evolving of matter from non-matter is a given in physics, and for the moment we can leave it at that.

In Samapatti, a seer is aware of (focused upon) the subject and will know how the subject feels in a physical and emotional sense. The subject becomes aware of the seer's stillness, and that awareness displaces the subject's previous state, which may have been elation, sadness, concern or pain. The seer will differentiate between his own stillness and the subject's initial state, as well as the change in the subject's state. It is important to point out here that the subject may not be necessarily visible to the seer. The concept of a distant healing is valid for a seer, a Reiki practitioner or a psychic. It is the same process. My understanding of Samapatti is that I believe it to be an entanglement, in exactly the same sense as a physicist would regard two entangled particles.

The state of the seer is what Patanjali would call Samadhi. There are two kinds of Samadhi, the first is called Samprajnata Samadhi, which is a Samadhi achieved through a focus on an object or sound. The second is called Asamprajnata, which is a Samadhi without an object. It is a permanent state synonymous with Mahat, and has the characteristic of knowing without an object to be known. It is the dispassionate observer, synonymous with that of Purusha in that what it knows does not have any effect on the knower.

This is why the seer's sense of 'knowing the subject' is a dispassionate and nevertheless a conscious observation, because the seer's awareness is at the level of the first appearance of conscious intelligence. The subject's awareness of the change is a conscious awareness, and we call that conscious awareness mind. A change of the mind is called a Samskara, and that change observed by the dispassionate observer becomes a memory. The memory, the conscious awareness of both the subject and the seer, all happen in that nonlocal state. To sort out that conundrum we need to remind ourselves of the nonlocal state, which is a common ground in the sense that all matter has within it the nonlocal information related to the particles within all matter and the immediate physical space. Physics recognises this process when it says that 'a measurement on one of two entangled particles will be evident on its unmeasured partner.'

Recently, I read Norman Doidge's book, "The Brain that changes itself"<sup>3</sup>, in which he talks about brain maps and the changes to those maps which is called brain plasticity. While Doidge is writing about brain plasticity in respect of medical and psychiatric research, the salient point for me is that of brain plasticity as I have applied it to thinking and the brain; to me it makes sense to use the term, brain map, rather than neural correlates, in the context of the process of Samapatti and of samskaras. The effect of the seer's focus on the subject does indeed make a change in the subject's brain when the subject becomes consciously aware that a pain has diminished, or whatever the effect has been. The simple fact is that the awareness of the effect indicates that the brain map has changed.

## Thinking

Doidge tells us that a brain map is a network of specific synapses in the brain which are involved in producing a physical action or mental state in the body. Thinking, as a process, is the sequential series of thoughts one is aware of moment by moment. A moment has no definite

duration and one seldom notices the time of each thought; it is the flow of the thoughts which gives the impression of a stream of consciousness. From Hari<sup>1</sup>'s analogy of a computer and the programmer, I was introduced to the idea of mind being the same as memory, with the content of mind being the moment by moment iterations of the information in memory. When I realised that a memory is a conscious observation, the idea of a conscious mind became an easier concept for me to understand.

To understand this reasoning one must realise the brain never has a blank slate. There would have been an initial brain map, I cannot guess what that moment would have been; but it would be certainly a real brain map at birth. From what Patanjali tells us, at any moment in time a person will have a brain map which gives us the conscious awareness of something. This is surely fundamental if we are to believe we are conscious. Taking that as a starting point, we have a thought which comes about because the dispassionate observer has made an observation about our previous thought. Remember, from Hari we found that mind is memory.

This dispassionate observer is in the nonlocal space of every particle of the brain matter, including the brain tissue of the synaptic network. A thought represents a change from the previous thought and relates to the specific samskara resulting from that change. Brain plasticity gives us the momentary brain map, allowing the conscious awareness of the map's change from the previous thought. Therefore, consciousness is a moment by moment Samapatti in which the dispassionate observer is the seer and the individual's brain map is the subject. To put it bluntly, all life is a kind of Samapatti, from a single cell through to every living form.

Returning for a moment to my assertion that a brain map would exist at birth, I can provide an explanation. During my time counselling my friend Emma, the lady with breast cancer mentioned in earlier essays, she had the firm view that her mother had never shown her any expression of love. I asked her "When was the first time you saw your mother?" Emma began to cry, and I asked "Why are you crying?" Emma said "I saw the love on my mother's face as the nurse passed me to my mother as I was born". We could say that Emma had her first 'out of body experience', although it was being out of her mother's body. What is important here is that at birth Emma's brain map would be relatively empty of any sensory input from her own eyes because our eyes lack that visual acuity. This means that the infant, Emma, was the seer in Samapatti.

## **The Teacher**

Patanjali tells us that all of the information at that level of the dispassionate observer is available to anyone in that state and I can illustrate this with one of my own Samapatti experiences. Going back to the question of how did Emma access the experience of seeing her mother? As someone lacking the faculty of visual imagery, I have found that in Samapatti a subject has 'seen' what I thought I would like to do for the subject, and at times I have 'seen' what the subject visually imagined.

Therefore, I can understand how Emma, the new born, with an ‘empty’ mind would naturally be in Samapatti in the role of the seer, and had recalled the nurse’s viewpoint of Emma’s mother receiving the child. I believe this is exactly what happens when patients report ‘near death experiences’ in which they see or hear people who had been near them while they were ‘near death’. Of course, the experience is remembered as being very real, just as Emma believed she had seen her mother’s first look at her. The point here is that when Emma had this experience she was ‘the seer’ in the Samapatti state. When I asked her that question she immediately had that experience. This was not an experience she had had at her birth. But if we remember that the dispassionate observer is in all of the nonlocal space; that would include the space in the hospital room. ‘The teacher appears’ is related to the question asked, not just a person; the space in that moment had an observation of the whole room. That whole room space would be the simultaneous observation of everyone in the room, and to that extent receiving every observation would give a confused picture. But when the question is specific it can yield information we didn’t know we ever had.

I still have no idea why I even asked the question. My first response to hearing myself ask it was one of surprise. Some time earlier we had decided to call these Samapatti sessions ‘Creative Dying’ and I can only guess we operated within that context.

In a broader context, I have the view that at birth, every child is in that Samapatti state and in the role of the seer. This is how an infant slowly learns about its world and develops its world view, most of the time centred on its mother as the primary care giver. This is where body language is the way the lessons are learned, and confirmed by the infant/seer. It is not exclusive to humans. Most mammals at least learn through this process, which is why motherhood is by far the most important period in a child’s life. The less obvious point is that life itself is the same interactive process between the dispassionate observer and an individual form, beginning with the first appearance of life.

## **Creative Dying**

A recent TV documentary on Channel 5 UK television explored people with extraordinary abilities, some of which could be seen as disabilities, such as the children from one family who were unable to experience pain. DNA analysis of one of the children may lead to the possibility of using the knowledge gained from that particular gene to provide a way to manage pain in a palliative care context. This approach to pain management reflects the idea that a change in a paradigm can originate from a situation unrelated to the ‘normal’ approach by researchers. It reminds me of something I had said to a breast cancer patient, Emma, who had asked me for some support. When she asked me how I would proceed I said I did not know, and that we would have to start with the result and work backwards from there to now.

When I asked what she wanted most of all she said it was certainty rather than faith. The most obvious certainty was that we all die at some point, so it could not possibly be the certainty that she wouldn’t die. Emma accepted my outrageous statement and we did all that I could provide,

and that was Samapatti every time I went to visit her. We called it creative dying for the want of a better name.

All in all I saw Emma for about eight years, beginning with meeting once a month, then more often depending on her chemotherapy treatment while that lasted. In her final year, I used to see Emma about twice a week, increasing to three or four times a week, depending on what time I had available after work. What we had found over those visits is that Samapatti provided a way for Emma to separate herself from her situation and just be still.

When Emma went into palliative care I would visit her every evening and sit beside her bed until morning. Initially I would find her sitting up in the bed, eyes fixed on the oxygen gauge; she was afraid to go to sleep. I had explained to Emma that the calmness in Samapatti was exactly what one feels like after dying. During these visits Emma gradually became calm, probably from many hours of Samapatti. Eventually, as soon as I walked into her room she would ask me to ‘zap her out of it.’ On what became my last visit Emma announced she was getting married; I asked who she was marrying and she said “I am going to marry Emma”. The following evening at work I had a call from the hospital telling me that Emma had died.

That particular experience has been the basis for my research into Samapatti. I always knew it was something I was not equipped to teach anyone because I had not been taught how to enter that state. All of what I have written over the years has been my way of coming to terms with this state as my natural state. From the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali was learned how others can attain that state by studying with an accredited master, and that gave me some understanding of that state. At the same time it reinforced the feeling that either I am a fraud or there must have been another way to be “I” that state, and that way must have been through something I did not seek. Patanjali even had an answer for that too, one can be ‘born that way.’

When I look at the question in terms of neural correlates there is another possibility. Around the age of three I suffered from febrile convulsions, a condition brought about through high body temperature. This was towards the end of the great depression, about 1938. My oldest brother told me that after I came home I was different. I could not understand anything they said unless they explained it by way of drawing a picture. Nothing has changed it seems; I have never (since then) been able to imagine anything. What this suggests to me is that imagining is a faculty of mind which, like any thought, requires access to memory. It is quite possible that the sustained high temperature during my convulsions has disabled whatever memory I had developed up to that point. This could include the method of processing information in a general sense, a method I had learned up to the time of the convulsions. Looking back on more recent times I can recall my many conversations with Bevan Reid, where he was convinced I understood his biophysics. I did understand during the conversation because I am always in Samapatti. This is why, when my brothers drew pictures, I could understand what it was they were explaining. And from my quirky memory process I retain a narrative of what they said as well as what I understood at the time.

The Thought Experiment is ‘to put you in God’s shoes.’

Most of what people call a religion has a remote superior being, a creator who is remote from this reality. And oddly enough, just about every one of those religions hold the belief there is only one God. Most say God is omnipotent, omnipresent and eternal. In a scientific sense this would probably mean that God is nonlocal. The Hindu schools of philosophy say that God is ‘without distinguishing mark, a position which is the next step away from Samadhi.

Be that as it may, let us have a slightly less rigorous experiment where you can just be yourself and have God be the way of being in a higher Samadhi.

And to make your task even easier, we can skip creation and just consider what follows the emergence of life through to the exponential point of evolution we enjoy today.

Every form of life, animal and vegetable, breathes to some extent, some breathe oxygen and some breathe carbon dioxide, at least on this planet.

So, if God is the first cause of all of this, just suppose that is so, and that you (God) sustain it all. If you can do that, consider that word, sustain; it is something you do for every form of life.

So how do you rationalise predator and prey?  
Sickness and health?  
War and peace?  
Rich and poor?

Of course, if you think about the Hindu concept of ‘without distinguishing mark’ it does make a lot of sense at that level of high Samadhi. It looks like God is on to a good thing here. But if our greatest goal is to be united with God one would have to have reached a similar position beyond rationalising.

Krishnamurti once said the problems of the world today all come from the way we think, to have any chance of resolving those problems cannot be found by continuing to think this way. We clearly have to think in an entirely different way.

You could be like Emma and try to think from the position of the result and work backwards to your now.

I recall one of my first poems. God's Game. The last lines of which are:

Having shed the comfort of fantasy, I am ready for the quest.

I have now shed the comfort of fantasy; I had to experience the confusion around and in me.

So, now I can say; There is only Purusha, which means there is only one conscious intelligence - non duality.



Samapatti is Purusha reflecting on Matter.

Matter exists only for conscious intelligence to have experience, which Purusha knows through Samapatti.

The first reflection creates matter from a nonlocal state, and as that nonlocal state is the state in which matter evolves, matter becomes known.

The confusion comes from the awareness in mind, which is matter, mistaking its awareness for conscious intelligence.

Bliss is the realisation of the difference.

It seems that what I have written is a demonstration of the confusion.

And I am now on the other side.

## References

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