

Sūtra 17 वितर्कविचारानन्दास्मितारूपानुगमात् सम्प्रज्ञातः ॥१७॥

Vitarka–vichār–ānand–āsmītā–rūpānugamāt samprajñātaḥ

Complete high consciousness (*samprajñāta samādhi*) is that which is accompanied by reasoning, reflection, ecstasy, and pure “I-sense.”

वितर्क	<i>vitarka</i>	reasoning	
विचार	<i>vichāra</i>	reflection	
आनन्द	<i>ānanda</i>	ecstasy, rapture, bliss	
अस्मिता	<i>asmitā</i>	pure “I-sense,” sense of individuality	
रूप	<i>rūpa</i>	form, nature	
अनुगमात्	<i>anugamāt</i>	accompanied	{ sam = balanced, well, deep } complete { pra = perfect, complete } high { jña = knowing } consciousness
सम्प्रज्ञातः	<i>samprajñātaḥ</i>	<i>samādhi</i> of wisdom	

Samprajñāta samādhi occurs in four levels as a result of *abhyāsa* (practice) and *vairāgya* (dispassion). The *rajasik* and *tamasik* mental modifications are brought under control by these practices. All four levels of *samādhi* are accompanied by some supportive factor:

Savitarka samādhi depends on gross thought.

Savichāra samādhi depends on the same gross thoughts turned subtle.

Sānanda samādhi depends on a more subtle support accompanied by ecstasy.

Sāsmītā samādhi depends solely on the pure “I-sense.”

At the completion of each stage, the subtle aspect of the object of concentration becomes the supportive factor for the next level of concentration.

<i>Samprajñāta Samādhi</i> in Four Levels			
<i>Samādhi</i>	Supportive Factor (<i>Ālambana</i>)	Accompany	Abandon
<i>Savitarka</i>	Gross thought	<i>Savitarka, Savichāra Sānanda, Sāsmītā</i>	—
<i>Savichāra</i>	Subtle thought	<i>Savichāra, Sānanda Sāsmītā</i>	<i>Savitarka</i>
<i>Sānanda</i>	Ecstasy	<i>Sānanda, Sāsmītā</i>	<i>Savitarka, Savichāra</i>
<i>Sāsmītā</i>	“I-amness”	<i>Sāsmītā</i>	<i>Savitarka, Savichāra, Sānanda</i>

Through the attainment of the four levels of *samādhi*, from the gross to subtlest level, wisdom is attained in its perfect expansion (*samprajñāta*).

Prajñā (realization of the true nature of an object) is achieved by concentrating persistently on an object in the mind without letting any other object enter or distract the mind from its concentration. As *dhāraṇā*

(concentration) on the object becomes reneled, *dhyāna* (meditation) is first achieved and then as concentration deepens, the mind becomes established in *samādhi* (super-consciousness). In *samādhi*, the whole mind is completely absorbed in the object of concentration. The mind thus realizes the true nature of the object in these four levels of *samprajñāta samādhi*. Each new level of knowledge causes dispassion for the previous false or limited conceptions. Each level is purer than its lower level because of the increased predominance of *sattva guṇa*.

In *samprajñāta samādhi* the mind needs an object for support in concentration. That object is called *ālambana* (supportive factor). The classification of *samprajñāta samādhi* is made according to the *ālambana* (supportive factor), the type of subtle mental process involved, and the associated knowledge and dispassion acquired from it.¹

The first level of *samādhi* is *vitarkānugamāta* or *savitarka* (with gross thought process, literally “argumentation” or “reasoning”). The object of concentration can be any spiritual gross object, such as the five gross elements, or any form made by the elements, or any object like the sun, moon, the gods, or the figures of high saints or prophets. The gross object is the mental image created by sense perception.

In every day consciousness, the three aspects of the object, *śhabda* (name), *artha* (form), and *jñāna* (meaning), appear as one. When the mind, through super-concentration, becomes completely absorbed in that object, the reality of the object as a function of *śhabda* (word), *artha* (form), and *jñāna* (meaning), is known. In *savitarka samādhi* the mind fluctuates among these three aspects without any obstructions.

The word (*śhabda*) is seen as separate from the actual form (*artha*), and the meaning (*jñāna*) is understood to be the knowledge about the object that is inferred from its name and form. The mind has become subtler and merged with the sense perception. In other words, when the sense perception, the object, and the mind all become one, *savitarka samādhi* is achieved. This whole process of recognizing and distinguishing the three gross aspects of an object is known as *vitarka*.²

When the fluctuation of *vitarka* is controlled (*nirodha*) by the repeated practice of *savitarka samādhi*, the word (*śhabda*) and meaning (*jñāna*) fall away, and the form (*artha*) of the object alone remains fixed in the mind. This is

1 The *ālambana* (supportive factor) for *samprajñāta samādhi* must be some aspect of manifest creation. The supreme or formless Self can never be a supportive factor of the *chitta* (mind) because the mind is an evolute of unconscious matter and has no ability to conceive of the pure conscious principle.

2 In concentration on a gross object, the thought modifications are *pramāṇa vṛitti* (valid proof), and the retaining of the perception in the mind is *smṛiti vṛitti* (memory). To attain *samādhi*, both *vṛittis* should be controlled.

pratyakṣha (direct perception) of the object without reference to word (*śhabda*) or knowledge (*jñāna*). The subtle essence of the gross object is intuited and the mental fluctuations themselves become subtle. The mind now fluctuates among the subtle characteristics of space (*deśha*), time (*kāla*), and causation (*nimitta*). This is called *vichāra*.

With the arising of *savichāra samādhi*, the mind leaves behind *vitarka* (reasoning concerning objects perceived by the senses). *Vichāra* is “reflection” and *savichāra* is “with reflection.” In *savichāra samādhi* the mind reflects on the subtle level of the reality made by the *ve tanmātras* (subtle elements) and the *ahaṅkāra* (ego). *Tanmātra* literally means “that measure” and refers to the energies of hearing, touching, seeing, tasting, and smelling. The mind creates its images by means of these energies. In *savichāra*, the mind reflects on the relationship of space (*deśha*), time (*kāla*), and the attributes (*dharma*) of the subtle object. The subtle aspect of the object is seen in its particular property, place, temporal transformation, and condition (see Sūtra III:13). The mind takes the form of the thought waves of concentration and becomes one with it. It awakens wisdom in which the realization of the true nature of the object occurs.³

Ahaṅkāra (ego-sense) is the cause (*nimitta*) of the *ve tanmātras*. When the subtle reflection of space, time, and attributes are brought under control (*nirodha*) by the repeated practice of *savichāra samādhi*, then *ahaṅkāra*, which is the causative principle underlying the subtle manifestation, becomes the object of concentration in *sānanda samādhi* (super-consciousness with bliss). The yogi enjoys a state of ecstasy. In this *samādhi*, the only *vr̥tti* is “I am in bliss.” The *sattvik* nature of *mahat* (cosmic intellect) is experienced through *ahaṅkāra*, as the mind has been purified of the gross and subtle objects of experience.⁴

3 *Vichāra* (analytical thought process) includes *anumāna pramāṇa* (inference as valid proof) and *svādhyāya* (scriptural study) because the subtle object is inferred from the gross object and the existence of the subtle *tanmātra* is revealed by the scriptures. Both are *vr̥ttis*, and are subject to removal in the perfection of *savichāra samādhi*, where the mind merges in their cause (*nimitta*), which is the *ahaṅkāra*.

4 In each *samādhi*, the object dissolves into its subtler cause. In *sānanda samādhi*, *manas* and the *indriyas* (mind and subtle senses) and the *tanmātras* (subtle elements) dissolve into *ahaṅkāra*. *Ahaṅkāra* is the cause of both the mind-senses (*manas* and the ten *indriyas*) and the subtle elements (*tanmātras*). *Manas* and the *indriyas* are the evolutes of *sattvik ahaṅkāra*, and the *tanmātras* are the evolutes of *tamasik ahaṅkāra*. Both are activated by *rajas guṇa*. After attaining *vitarka* and *vichāra* states, the influence of *rajas* and *tamas guṇas* is attenuated and *sattva guṇa* becomes predominant in *sānanda samādhi*. The gross and subtle worlds created by *manas*, the *indriyas*, and the *tanmātras* cannot arise in the mind. The yogi concentrates solely on the pleasure of *sattvik ahaṅkāra* and enjoys a state of ecstasy.

Mahat (universal mind principle) is the inner face of *buddhi* (intellect) in which *sattva guṇa* predominates.⁵ *Buddhi* is closest to the conscious principle because it receives the reection of consciousness. The evolution of creation, which arises out of the union of *puruṣha* and *prakṛiti* (consciousness and matter, respectively), is caused by this reection. The rays of *puruṣha* (conscious principle) reect on *buddhi* like the sun reects on a mirror.

The reection of *puruṣha* on *prakṛiti* is *mahat*, the rst manifest evolute, out of which comes the pure “I-sense.” This is the basis of *avidyā* (primal ignorance). The outward facing evolute of *mahat* is *ahaṁkāra* (ego). *Ahaṁkāra* produces *manas* (mind), the ten *indriyas* (senses), and the ve *tanmātras* (the subtle objects).

Ahaṁkāra is a product of *mahat* and therefore can have no direct contact with *puruṣha*. *Asmitā* (pure “I-sense”) is subtler than *ahaṁkāra* (“I-amness”). In *sānanda samādhi*, when *ahaṁkāra* is completely realized, the yogi’s dispassion also increases. The state of bliss (*ānanda*) is seen as inferior to its cause, the pure “I-sense” (*asmitā*). The concentration of the yogi moves to the higher level where *ahaṁkāra* dissolves into *mahat*. *Sāsmītā samādhi* is the highest level of *samprajñāta samādhi*, as *mahat* is the subtlest principle of manifestation that can be known. Through the practice and perfection of *sāsmītā samādhi*, *viveka khyāti* (discriminative wisdom, or the discrimination between *puruṣha* and *prakṛiti*) is developed. This awakens *paravairāgya* (supreme dispassion). *Viveka khyāti* and *paravairāgya* are the means of *asamprajñāta samādhi* (perfect consciousness beyond knowledge).

The progression from *savitarka* to *sāsmītā samādhi* is achieved in order to attain liberation. Gradually, knowledge of the “real” and dispassion for the “unreal” are attained. Only when dispassion develops for the experience and realization of one level can the step be taken toward a subtler object of concentration. Ultimately, the yogi develops dispassion for all manifestation, including the experiences of bliss and pure “I-sense.” When dispassion develops even for *viveka khyāti*, then *asamprajñāta samādhi* is attained.

The next *sūtra* tells about *asamprajñāta samādhi* (*samādhi* beyond all knowledge). In this *samādhi*, liberation is achieved when *asamprajñāta samādhi* is stabilized and the individual self merges into the nondual reality of the supreme Self.

5 The outer face of *buddhi* is *ahaṁkāra*. It receives the impressions from the mind and senses, whereas the inner face receives the reection of *puruṣha* (the conscious principle). These two reections working simultaneously create conscious awareness of experience (*bhoga*, see Sūtra 7). When *rajas* and *tamas guṇas* are controlled in the *chitta* (mind eld), the connection with “external” phenomena is weakened. The mind is withdrawn from the senses (through *pratyāhāra*) and nally removed by dispassion (*vaśīkāra vairāgya*). Then the *sattva buddhi* reects consciousness alone.

Samāpatti

In this *sūtra*, Patañjali gives the first exposition of *samprajñāta samādhi*. He introduces *samādhi* in terms of the subtle mental process involved: *vitarka* (reasoning), *vichāra* (reflection), *ānanda* (bliss), and *asmitā* (“I-sense”). Unlike ordinary mental states of perception and cognition, these *samādhis* are highly refined and subtle states of super-concentrated awareness. Later, in Sūtras 41–51, Patañjali describes the states of *samādhi* in greater detail, using the terms of the various *samāpattis* (engrossment in the object of concentration).⁶

The *samāpattis* are classified according to the nature of the object of engrossment. The classifications are *grāhya* (objective), *grahaṇa* (instrumental), and *grahītri* (subjective). These *samāpattis* come within *sabīja samādhi* (*samādhi* with seed, see Sūtra 1:46). The seed is the essence in which the mind becomes absorbed. The absorption is productive of *samskāras* (latencies) of knowledge, which are conducive to *nivṛitti* (the involution of the mind in *samādhi*).

The initial levels of *samāpatti*, *savitarka* (with reasoning) and *savichāra* (with reflection), are classified as *grāhya* (objective) and take respectively the gross and subtle objects as the supportive object of engrossment.⁷ The next state of *samāpatti*, *sānanda* (with bliss) is considered *grahaṇa* (instrumental) because the mind is absorbed in the instrument of cognition (*ahaṅkāra*). The highest level of *samāpatti*, *sāsmītā* (with “I-sense”), is considered *grahītri* (subjective) because the “I-sense” itself becomes the object in which the mind is engrossed.

Relationship of Samādhi, Samāpatti, & Ālambana			
Samādhi	Samāpatti	Ālambana	
<i>Savitarka</i>	<i>Grāhya</i>	<i>Viśheṣha</i>	1 <i>manas</i> 10 <i>indriyas</i> 5 gross elements
<i>Savichāra</i>	<i>Grāhya</i>	<i>Aviśheṣha</i>	5 <i>tanmātras</i>
<i>Sānanda</i>	<i>Grahaṇa</i>	<i>Aviśheṣha</i>	1 <i>ahaṅkāra</i>
<i>Sāsmītā</i>	<i>Grahītri</i>	<i>Liṅga mātra</i>	<i>mahat</i> or <i>buddhi</i>

The objects of engrossment for all levels of *samāpatti* are the same as the *ālambanā* (supportive factors) for the *samprajñāta samādhis*. The objects (*ālambanā*) are the twenty-three manifest *tattvas* (principles of matter) as described in Sāṅkhya philosophy. These *tattvas* are divided into three

- 6 The terms *samāpatti* and *samādhi* are very similar. The difference is that *samāpatti* must have an object, whereas *samādhi* may or may not have an object. The study of *samāpatti* provides an in-depth consideration of the lower stages of *samādhi*.
- 7 Each of these *samāpattis* has a corresponding state, called *nirvitarka* and *nirvichāra*, in which the subtle mental process of that stage becomes suspended (see Sūtras 1:43–44 for a detailed description).

categories: *viśheṣha* (particulars), *aviśheṣha* (general, or cause of *viśheṣha*), and *liṅga mātra* (indicator). A fourth category, *aliṅga* (without indicator) corresponds to the twenty-fourth *tattova*, which is *pradhāna* (unmanifest *prakṛiti*). This *aliṅga* does not produce a *samāpatti*, nor is it an *ālambana*, as there is no object in which the mind can be absorbed or supported.

A classification of the twenty-four *tattvas* (principles of existence) follows:

Viśheṣha (particulars), of which there are sixteen:

- 5 *mahābhūtas* (gross elements: earth, water, fire, air, and space)
- 5 *karmendriyas* (organs of action: hands, feet, and the organs of speech, elimination, and reproduction)
- 5 *jñānendriyas* (cognitive senses: smelling, tasting, seeing, touching, and hearing)
- 1 *manas* (lower mind that functions directly with the ten senses)

Aviśheṣha (general; causes of the viśheṣhas), of which there are six:

- 5 *tanmātras* (subtle elements that produce the *mahābhūtas*)
- 1 *ahamkāra* (ego or identifying principle)

Liṅga mātra (indicator), of which there is one:

- 1 *mahat* (the universal and individual *buddhi*, intellect), which is the subtlest evolute of *prakṛiti*, and in which the *puruṣha* reflects, giving rise to *asmitā* (pure “I-sense”)

Aliṅga (without indicator), of which there is one:

- 1 *pradhāna* (*mūla prakṛiti*, or *prakṛiti* in the state in which the three *guṇas* are in a state of perfect equilibrium)

Each state of *samāpatti* contains within it all the subtler levels. Within *savitarka samāpatti* (with reasoning) are the subtler or inner levels of *sabīja samādhi*: *savichāra*, *sānanda*, and *sāsmītā*. This is to say that the subtle, instrumental, and causal realities are imminent within the gross reality. When the mind becomes established in the truth of the gross reality, free from all projections and colorings of the ego, the entire creation is seen as a play of the five elements. Dispassion for this level of experience arises and the mind penetrates deeper in concentration. It first intuits and then becomes absorbed in the subtle level of reality, which is *savichāra samāpatti*.

The two next aspects of *sabīja samādhi*, *sānanda* and *sāsmītā samāpattis*, are contained within *savichāra*. When concentration is stabilized in *savichāra* absorption, the mind leaves its process of reflection on time and space. It merges into *ahamkāra* (ego principle), which is the causative principle of the *tanmātras* (subtle elements) and the *indriyas* (subtle senses).⁸ The *ahamkāra*, in its *sattvik* form, becomes the object of engrossment, and the mind is

⁸ The notions of time and space are created by the interplay of the subtle elements and senses, and thus they fall away when the mind is completely absorbed in the *ahamkāra*.

overcome by the feeling of ecstasy. This is *sānanda samāpatti* (*samāpatti* accompanied by bliss). The *ahaṅkāra* is the instrument of all experience (the experiencer). Therefore, this is classied as *grahaṇa samāpatti* (engrossment in the instrumental aspect of manifestation).

Levels of <i>Samāpatti</i>			
	<i>Grahītri</i> subject	<i>Grahaṇa</i> instrument	<i>Grāhya</i> object
Gross	<i>Jñānendriyas</i>	← <i>Manas</i> → <i>Karmendriyas</i>	<i>Mahābhūtas</i>
Subtle	<i>Buddhi</i>	<i>Ahaṅkāra</i>	<i>Tanmātras</i>
<i>Guṇas</i>	<i>Sattva</i>	<i>Rajas</i>	<i>Tamas</i>

Within *sānanda samādhi* is the causal aspect of *sabīja samādhi*, which is *asmitā* (pure “I-sense”). The *ahaṅkāra* itself is an evolute of *asmitā* (“I-sense”). With the perfection of *sānanda samāpatti*, the mind penetrates to the cause of bliss, the pure “I-sense,” and becomes absorbed in this causal principle. In *sāsmītā samāpatti*, *mahat* (the unqualified, universal “I-sense”), which is the causal substratum of all manifest creation, becomes the object in which the mind is engrossed. This is *grahītri samāpatti* (engrossment in the subjective principle). The eld of this *samāpatti* is the agent of all knowledge.

Mahat (*sattva buddhi*), the supportive factor of *sāsmītā*, is *liṅga mātra* (indicator only). *Puruṣha* (the conscious principle) is indicated by its rection in *sattva buddhi* (puried mind). With the perfection of *sāsmītā samādhi*, the separateness of *buddhi* and *puruṣha* is realized. Here *mahaṭ* nally dissolves in its cause, *aliṅga prakṛiti*. The dual purpose of experience (*bhoga*) and liberation (*apavarga*) is nished and the seer exists in his⁹ own true nature.

9 See footnote 1, page 9.

