

Sūtra 18 विरामप्रत्ययाभ्यासपूर्वः संस्कारशेषोऽन्यः ॥१८॥

Virāma-pratyaya-ābhyāsa-pūrvaḥ saṁskāra-śheṣo-'nyaḥ

Persistent practice of the highest non-attachment (*paravairāgya*) brings cessation of all thought waves, leaving only remnant impressions (*saṁskāras*) [of cessation] in the mind. This is the other kind of higher consciousness (*asamprajñāta samādhi*).

विराम	<i>virāma</i>	cessation
प्रत्यय	<i>pratyaya</i>	cognition principle, content of the mind
अभ्यास	<i>abhyāsa</i>	practice
पूर्वः	<i>pūrvaḥ</i>	preceded by
संस्कारशेषः	<i>saṁskāraśheṣaḥ</i>	leaving the remnant <i>saṁskāra</i> (impression)
अन्यः	<i>anyaḥ</i>	the other

When all the *vṛittis* (thought waves) in the mind field are stopped, only the *saṁskāras* (impressions) of *nirodha* (control) remain as a residue in *asamprajñāta samādhi* (super-consciousness beyond knowledge).

Virāma is the absence of all *vṛittis* (thought waves). The cause of *asamprajñāta samādhi* is a special awareness known as *virāma pratyaya* (cessation of content in the mind). It is also called *paravairāgya* (highest non-attachment). When this awareness of the absence of all *vṛittis* is constantly practiced, it is called *virāma pratyaya abhyāsa*.

In *asmitā*, the highest *vṛitti* is "I am." In *asamprajñāta samādhi*, even this *vṛitti* is removed. The mind rejects any *vṛitti* that arises in the *chitta* (mind field), and the remnant *saṁskāras* (impressions) of *vṛittis* are blocked and attenuated by *nirodha* (restraint or control). This process of *nirodha* in *samprajñāta samādhi* continues until only the *saṁskāra* of *nirodha* remains in the *chitta* (mind field). The perfection of *nirodha* (control) is *asamprajñāta samādhi*.

In *samprajñāta samādhi*, the highest *vṛitti* of discrimination (*viveka khyāti*) exists in the *chitta* (mind field). In *asamprajñāta samādhi*, there is no mind field, only the Self dwelling in the Self.

In Sūtra I:6, the five kinds of *vṛittis* (thought waves) are listed. In their dormant stage, those *vṛittis* are called *saṁskāras*. When *saṁskāras* get active, they become *vṛittis*. When the *vṛittis* are completely controlled, then their cause, *saṁskāra*, stops becoming active and remains in a dormant stage. All the *vṛittis* are in the *mūḍha* (dull), *kṣhipta* (restless), and *vikṣhipta* (distracted) minds. In *ekāgra* (one-pointedness), the mind is absorbed in the object of concentration, and in *niruddha* (restrained mind), all the *vṛittis* are completely controlled. In *asamprajñāta samādhi*, when total *nirodha* (control) takes place, *paravairāgya* produces no *saṁskāras* in the mind other than its own *saṁskāras* of dispassion. No other *saṁskāras* can replace these *nirodha saṁskāras* because there is no higher stage.

Virāma pratyaya, which means *paravairāgya*, is practiced in two ways: in *samādhi*, and during all worldly activities. In performing actions in the world, one keeps in mind that worldly phenomena and relationships are not conducive to *samādhi*. The mind is removed by the practice of “*neti neti*” (“not this, not this”), and a yogi turns awareness continually to the Self. This practice weakens the *saṃskāra* of the world so much that even the *saṃskāra* of *ekāgratā* (one-pointedness) is removed, and *asamprajñāta samādhi* is attained. This is also called *nirbīja samādhi* (seedless *samādhi*).

Between *samprajñāta* and *asamprajñāta samādhis*, *dharma megha samādhi* takes place. This is the *samādhi* of a rain cloud of virtues. *Dharma megha samādhi* is supportless, and in this respect it is *asamprajñāta samādhi*. In *samprajñāta samādhi*, when *rajas* and *tamas* become totally inactive in the *buddhi* and the *buddhi* itself as an object of concentration is transcended, the yogi perceives worldly objects as so worthless that all objects are abandoned. The yogi dwells only in the essential nature of the Self. Thus all supports are removed.

Concentration with an object is not always *samprajñāta samādhi*. *Samprajñāta* means constant awareness of the knowledge achieved through concentration in the one-pointed state of mind (*ekāgra vṛitti*). The ultimate knowledge gained by this one-pointed concentration is the distinction between the Self (*puruṣha*) and its reflection in the mind (*buddhi sattva*). This highest form of knowledge brings dispassion for the manifestations of the *guṇas* and for knowledge itself. This dispassion is *paravairāgya* (supreme dispassion). This *paravairāgya* itself brings *asamprajñāta samādhi*.

Asamprajñāta samādhi is that *samādhi* in which concentration develops in a controlled state of mind (*niruddha*). The mind dwells in an arrested state and non-receptivity to worldly phenomena becomes the habit of the mind.

In melting gold, lead powder is put into molten gold. It burns away both the dross and itself. Similarly, the *saṃskāras* of *nirodha* burn all away both the *saṃskāras* of *ekāgratā* and themselves. In this way the remnant *saṃskāras* (*saṃskāra-śheṣhaḥ*) are completely removed and a state of *kaivalya* is achieved.

This process of burning away all remnant *saṃskāras* occurs in *dharma megha samādhi*. In *asamprajñāta samādhi*, there is no content in the mind (*virāma pratyaya*), and thus nothing to burn away. The final stage, or say the result, of *asamprajñāta samādhi* is *kaivalya* (complete isolation or freedom).¹

Nirbīja samādhi is not always *asamprajñāta samādhi* as the next *sūtra* explains. *Asamprajñāta samādhi* always leads to *kaivalya* (liberation), whereas *nirbīja samādhi* does not necessarily lead to liberation.

1 *Dharma megha samādhi* is a bridge from *samprajñāta samādhi* to *asamprajñāta samādhi*. Some commentators classify it as *samprajñāta* and some as *asamprajñāta*. Patañjali does not use this term in the first book of the *Sūtras*. Therefore, in this *sūtra*, the term *asamprajñāta* encompasses all three stages from *dharma megha* through *kaivalya*.