

4

Anupada Sutta

The Step by Step Discourse | M 111

Theme: The Buddha's full account of Sāriputta's awakening process

Translated & annotated by Piya Tan ©2008, 2020

SD 56.4 Contents on introductory notes

§§		§§	
1	Sutta highlights	3.5.5	<i>Upekkhā</i>
1.1	SĀRIPUTTA'S AWAKENING PROCESS	3.5.6	<i>Manasikāra</i>
1.2	THE 9 PROGRESSIVE ABODES (BRIEF)	3.5.7	A basic list
1.3	RISE AND FALL; FURTHER ESCAPE	3.6	SĀRIPUTTA'S SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT
2	Meanings and significance of <i>anupada</i>	3.6.1	Observing the mental states
2.1	Meanings	3.6.2	The nature of knowing.
2.0	EARLY BUDDHIST TEXTS ON THE GRADUAL WAY	3.6.3	Early Buddhist concept of time
2.2.1	<i>Anupada</i> in suttas and Commentaries	3.6.4	The perception of impermanence
2.2.2	<i>Anupada, dhamma, vipassanā</i>	3.7	WISE ATTENTION AND ITS BENEFITS
2.2.3	<i>Anupada, vavatthitā</i>	3.7.1	Sāriputta's mind is purified and free
3	Key teachings	3.7.2	The 7 hindrances
3.1	THE 9 PROGRESSIVE ABODES	3.8	REMOVING THE DEFILEMENTS
3.1.1	The stages of meditative mastery	3.8.1	Destroying the mental influxes
3.1.2	"A further escape": Table 3	3.8.2	Sāriputta's cessation and arhathood
3.2	SĀRIPUTTA'S PRACTICE	3.8.3	The 4 influxes and the 10 fetters: Table 3.8
3.2.1	Practice summary	3.9	SĀRIPUTTA'S SPIRITUAL MASTERY
3.2.2	Table 3 explanation	3.9.1	Sāriputta's mastery of the path
3.3	THE DHYANAS, DHYANA-FACTORS AND STATES	3.9.2	Sāriputta's heritage
3.3.1	The 1 st dhyana	3.10	SĀRIPUTTA'S WISDOM
3.3.2	The 2 nd dhyana	3.10.1	How Sāriputta won his wisdoms
3.3.3	The 3 rd dhyana	3.10.2	The wisdoms explained
3.3.4	The 4 th dhyana	4	Related suttas
3.3.5	The formless attainments	4.1	(NAVAKA) JHĀNA SUTTA (A 9.36)
3.3.6	The Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta (M 26)	4.2	(NAVAKA) NANDA SUTTA (A 9.37)
3.3.7	Philosophy parallel: Descartes & Ryle	4.3	ANUPUBBA NIRODHA SUTTA (A 9.31)
3.3.8	Sāriputta's awakening	4.4	RAHO, GATA SUTTA (S 36.11)
3.4	THE BARE AGGREGATES	4.5	OTHER RELATED SUTTAS
3.4.1	The 5 aggregates	4.6	A FEW TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES
3.4.2	The arhat	4.7	CONCLUSION
3.4.3	The 4 th formless base and cessation		
3.5	THE MENTAL FACTORS		
3.5.1	<i>Chanda</i>		
3.5.2	<i>Adhimokkha</i>		
3.5.3	<i>Viriya</i>		
3.5.4	<i>Sati</i>		

1 Sutta highlights

1.1 While Moggallāna’s awakening process is described in a series of 9 suttas, preserved in **the Moggallāna Saṃyutta** (S 40.1-9),¹ Sāriputta’s awakening progress, detailed by the Buddha himself, is recorded as **the Anupada Sutta** (M 111). The Sutta opens with the Buddha praising **Sāriputta**, his right-hand monk, as being “wise” (*paṇḍita*) in 6 ways, that is, to be fully wise, second only to the Buddha himself [§2].

1.2 The Buddha then describes Sāriputta’s awakening progress by way of **the 9 progressive abodes** (*nava anupubba, vihāra*) [3.1], that is, the 4 form dhyanas [§§3-10], the 4 formless attainments [§§11-18] and cessation² [§§19-20]. Noticing **impermanence** in each of the 4 form-dhyanas, Sāriputta finds “further escape” (*uttari nissaraṇa*) from each of them.

1.3 Similarly, Sāriputta sees **the rise and fall** of each of the 4 formless attainments, and finds *further escape* from each of them. Finally, reports the Buddha, Sāriputta, having attained cessation, emerges from it and gains arhathood, which is *the final escape* since he has attained the total freedom that is nirvana [§20].

2 Meanings and significance of anupada

2.1 MEANINGS

2.2.1 Anupada as used in the suttas and Commentaries

The word **anupada**—a tatsama (the word is the same both in Pali and in Sanskrit)—is the adjective and the adverb forms of **anu-patipāṭi** (fem), meaning “regular order, succession.” **Anupada** is found in the following senses in the suttas:

- (1) word by word; step by step—applied to words or verses;³
- (2) close behind; in one’s footsteps; in (hot) pursuit; on one’s track—“went close behind him” (*tassā-nupadaṃ agamāsi*, J 2:230; J 6:422; frequently in combination with *padānupadaṃ* (adv) “foot after foot,” that is, in the footsteps, immediately behind;⁴ following close behind (*padenānupadaṃ yanto*, Ap 140,6).⁵
- (3) one by one, individually, successively, uninterruptedly; in accordance (with)—“gained insight into the mental states one by one (as they arose)” (*anupada, dhamma, vipassana vipassī* [*vipassatī*], M 3:25, -11) [2.2.2]; “discerned one by one” (successively) (*anupada, vavatthita*, M 3:25, 19 f) [2.2.3]; in accordance with (“conducting himself in accordance with awakening knowledge” (*bodhi, ñāṇassa anupadaṃ caramānā*, J 3:497,4).

2.2.2 Anupada, dhamma, vipassana [§2.2]

2.2.2.1 The word **anupada** can be used as either an adjective, meaning (either literally or figuratively), “(following) on foot, at every step, continuous(ly), progressive(ly), repeated(ly),” as in the Sutta com-

¹ See **Paṭhama Jhāna Pañha S** (S 40.1/4:262 f) = SD 24.11 Intro (1) for list of related suttas.

² The cessation of perception and feeling (*saññā, vedayita, nirodha*) is often referred to by its short-form as simply “cessation” (*nirodha*). On *saññā, vedayita, nirodha* or *nirodha samāpatti*, see SD 48.7 (3.2); SD 50.7 (1.2).

³ Vv 53.9; UA 336,28 + *an-avasesato*; DhA 15,36.

⁴ MA 2:199,8; J 3:504; 6:555; DhA 1:69, 2:38.

⁵ Also Ap 206,15; A 1:113,4, 2:230,4.

pound, *anupada,dhamma,vipassanā*, “progressive insight into mental states” or “insight into (his) mental states one by one (as they arose)” [§2.2], which appears twice in the same paragraph.

2.2.2.2 The full sentence (with a verb) reads: *anupada,dhamma,vipassanā vipassi* (Ee Se; Be Ce *vi-passati*), “(he) gained insight into (his) mental states one by one (as they arose)” [§2.2], which is an amplified translation: *anupada* here means “one by one (as they arose)” [2.2.1(3)]: the “amplified” part is “(as they arose).” Although lexically, *anupada* means “one by one,” it is pregnant with the nuance, “as they arose.” Even when the amplified parenthesis is omitted, the Sutta context demands that we insert its implicit sense. This is a grammatical case of “implicit reading” (*neyy’attha*), where the sense has to be fully teased out.⁶

2.2.2.3 The phrase, *-vipassanā vipassati* or *-vipassanā vipassi*, is a typically Pali structure. The noun, *vipassanā* (n)—“that which is clearly seen”—is, of course, “(clear) insight.” The verb *vi-passati*—“to see in an analytical manner”—translates idiomatically as “(he) clearly sees with insight.” The phrase *vi-passana vi-passati* not only has a euphonic ring to it (which makes Pali aesthetically fit and easy for recital), but also gives us a very clear idea of what is seen (*-passati*), how it is seen (*vī-*).

The prefix *vi-* is a Pali indeclinable connoting *duality* (cf English “bi-,” as in “bicycle”) and *separation* (cf “bisection,” cutting into two).⁷ It gives the sense of “asunder, apart, in parts” which, when prefixed to *passati*, “to see,” modifies it to mean “to see (something) in parts,” that is, observes analytically. Specifically (or technically), it means to see impermanence in whatever we experience or that exists; and we may also add to see things in terms of the 3 characteristics—as being impermanent, suffering, non-self. In short, to see things, not as they appear, but in accordance with *true reality*. This is, of course, the goal and fruit of the perception of impermanence (*anicca,saññā*), which brings streamwinning in this life itself.⁸

2.2.2.4 The Pali manuscripts we have--those of the Burmese (Be), the Sinhalese (Ce), the Siamese (Se), and the Pali Text Society (Ee)—give us 2 readings: *vipassanā vipassati* and *vipassana vipassi*. *Vipassanā* is the abstract noun of *vipassati*, “he sees clearly with insight” [2.2.1.3]. In fact, we have the same translation with the complete sentence, *vipassanā vipassati*; but is shorter in idiomatic English: “he gains insight (into).”

Hence, the Sutta sentence, *anupada,dhamma,vipassanā vipassati* [2.2.1.2], translates idiomatically as “he gains insight into the mental states one by one.” Now, there is a PTS and Siamese variant reading *vipassi* for *vipassati* [2.2.1.2]. Now, *vipassi* is a rare and late form (AA 2:63,14),⁹ by way of a haplology or syllable loss, for *vipassasi*, “you gain insight (into).”¹⁰

But this is a 2nd person singular, while *vipassi* in the Sutta (in reference to Sāriputta) is in the 3rd person singular. It is likely, then, that the variant reading *vipassi* at §2.2 is an arist (past tense) of *vipassati* like *akāsi*, “he did,” *cintesi*, “he thought.”¹¹ The Pali tenses are often contextual, and not strictly time-

⁶ On “implicit” (*neyy’attha*) and “explicit” (*nīṭ’attha*) readings, see **Neyy’attha Nīṭ’attha S** (A 2.3.5+6), SD 2.6b; SD 47.20 (1.3); SD 89.10 (1).

⁷ On the prefix *vi-* as an indecl: PED (611) *vi-*.

⁸ See **(Anicca) Cakkhu S** (S 25,1), SD 16.7.

⁹ *Kammaṭṭhānaṃ anuloma,paṭilomaṃ vipassi*, “he gained insight into the meditation in (both) the direct and reverse ways” (AA 2:63,14). **Amba,pālī Thī** (Thī 271a) has this as a Se vl, but clearly this is not the original reading since it does not fit the verse context (Thī:N 119 n271).

¹⁰ Geiger, *A Pāli Grammar*, 2000:§65.2.

¹¹ See Geiger op cit §§165.2, 168.3.

bound as in English.¹² In either case—whether we adopt the reading *vipassati* or *vipassi*—we have the same English translation: “he gained insight into (his) mental states one by one (as they arose).” [§2.2]

2.2.3 Anupada, vavatthitā [§4.3 etc]

2.2.3.1 Another key verbal phrase is ***anupada, vavatthitā***, “discerned one by one” [§4.3] in the sentence: ***tyāssa [te assa] dhamma anupada, vavatthitā honti***, “these states were discerned progressively by him one by one (as they arose)” [§4.3]. The Sutta Commentary explains that it is on account of the elder Sāriputta’s “gaining insight into the mental states in successive order (one by one) (*anupatipāṭiyā*) by way of the dhyana-factors and attainments, that he took a fortnight to attain arhathood, while the elder Mahā Moggallāna took only a week. Such being the case, the elder Sāriputta is also the wiser (of the two). (MA 4:86).¹³

2.2.3.2 The word ***vavatthitā*** means “(was) fixed, discerned, analysed, determined.”¹⁴ It is the past participle of *vivaṭṭhapeti* (the causative of *vi + ava + √STHĀ*, to stand), “to be determined, fixed, designated, defined, pointed out.” In dhyana, knowing, in the normal sense, ceases, but there is **perception** that is very subtle but superclear. The knowing is not mediated but a direct experience. The meditator does not “analyse” or “value-add” the states (which implies sense-based knowing),¹⁵ but directly **discerns** these states without need of mental analysis.¹⁶ To discern means “to distinguish (one thing or fact) by the intellect; to recognize or perceive distinctly” (OED).

Vavatthitā appears in the Anupada Sutta as ***anupada, vavatthitā*** (mfn) [2.2.3.1], with which the Buddha describes Sāriputta’s direct discerning of his mental states “one by one (as they arise)” [§4.3]. A timely reminder: in order to understand the nature of early Buddhist meditation, it is best to experience it for ourself. A good Dharma-spirited meditator will understand how words (like all conditioned things) have no essence of their own: the word is not the thing;¹⁷ *the statement is not the state*.¹⁸ [3.6.2]

2.2.3.3 Although we speak of “(mental) states” (*dhamma*), we should not take them to be fixed “states”: they are really events or processes, a conditioned series of interdependent changes. The only window we have on them is **the present**. When we really see into this true reality, it is called insight (*vipassanā*). The Buddha describes to us how Sāriputta directs his present-moment awareness or observation into **the 3 phases of reality**: arising, presence, cessation [§4.4]. [3.6.3]

¹² On present and past in Pali tenses being contextual: SD 33.1b (6.2.2).

¹³ ***Anupada, dhamma, vipassanan*** *ti samāpatti, vasena vā jhān’āṅga, vasena vā anupatipāṭiyā dhamma, vipassanaṃ vipassati, evaṃ vipassanto addha, māsenā arahattaṃ patto. Mahā, moggallāna-t, thero pana sattahi divasehi. Evaṃ sante pi sāriputta, thero va mahā, paññavanta, taro* (MA 4:86,8-11 on M 111,2.2/3:25,11)

¹⁴ M 3:25,18 f; DhsA 36; “separated” (opp *sambhinna*) (V 2:67 f).

¹⁵ On the nature of sense-based experience or “feeling,” SD 3.7 (6.2).

¹⁶ On the dhyana meditator’s state as being “percipient but not sensing,” see **(Navaka) Ānanda S** (A 9.37) + SD 55.19 (1.2.2); also **(Dasaka) Samādhi S** (A 10.6), SD 53.18; also SD 36.1 (1.6.0.2).

¹⁷ The word is not the thing: SD 26.3 (5.1.2.5); SD 44.1 (5.4).

¹⁸ The statement is not the state: SD 10.16 (1.3.2.3); SD 49.5b (4.6.4.2).

3 Key teachings [Table 3]

3.1 THE 9 PROGRESSIVE ABODES

3.1.1 The stages of meditation mastery

3.1.1.1 The Anupada Sutta (M 111) is a record of the Buddha’s comprehensive description of the awakening progress of **Sāriputta**, his right-hand monk and the wisest of them [3.11]. In summary, the Buddha tells us how Sāriputta first attains the 4 form dhyanas, then the 4 formless attainments, and finally, the cessation of perception and feeling. These are called **the 9 progressive abodes** (*anupubba, vi-hāra*).¹⁹

They are called “**abodes**” (*vi-hāra*) partly because they are meditative *dwelling*s, that is, mental practices for keeping the mind free from worldliness and defilements; and partly because the meditator can get into them and remain blissfully therein for as long as they like. The duration, however, does not go beyond a full week, mainly because of the body’s physical needs.

The 9 progressive abodes are also called **the 9 progressive cessations** (*anupubba, nirodha*)²⁰ since at each of these stages there is the cessation (*nirodha*) of mental factors [3.3.2], that is, they are transcended which allows the meditator to attain a deeper and subtler level of mental liberation. The 9th and last abode or cessation is where both perception and feeling—the two commonest aspects of knowing—are transcended, so that the mind is free from worldly engagement which fetters our mind to the samsaric world, the cycle of rebirth and redeath.

3.1.1.2 The Anupada Sutta recounts how Sāriputta is able to skillfully master each **dhyana** and each **attainment**. This is how he knows the true nature of his mind, so that he is able to shape it. Upon reaching **cessation**, when all worldly knowing ceases, Sāriputta, his mind fully free, awakens as **an arhat**, just like the Buddha. In this sense, it is said that **meditation** is how *we know the mind, shape the mind, free the mind*.

3.1.2 “A further escape”

3.1.2.1 Theoretically, a meditator who properly cultivates up to any level of **the first 7 attainments** (*samāpatti*)—the 4 form dhyanas and the first 3 formless attainments—as described by the Buddha in the Anupada Sutta, will be able to attain any of the 4 stages of the path, that is, streamwinning, once-returning, non-returning or arhathood. However, any such path-attaining (or sainthood) earlier than the 4th dhyana, will not bring any mundane superknowledge (*abhiññā*)²¹ of superhuman or psychic powers.

Two points should be noted here. The first is that only the first 3 of the 4 formless attainments are mentioned, and second, that the Buddha often encourages us that there is “something more to be done” in the path cultivation, that is, to complete its stages up to that of attaining arhathood. We will look at the second aspect first. [3.1.2.2]

¹⁹ On the 9 progressive abodes (*anupubba, vi-hāra*): **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 26,34.2-42), SD 1.11; **Jhānābhiññā S** (S 16.9), SD 50.7 (1.2.1.2); (**Navaka**) **Jhāna S** (A 9.36), SD 33.8; SD 1.8 (2.2.3) (3)n; SD 33.8 (2).

²⁰ On the 9 progressive cessations (*anupubba, nirodha*), see 3.1.1.1.

²¹ The full set comprises the 6 superknowledges (*cha-!-abhiññā*): (1) psychic powers (*iddhi, vidha*); (2) the divine ear (*dibba, sota*); (3) mind-reading (*ceto, pariya, ñāṇa*); (4) retrocognition (*pubbe, nivāsānussati, ñāṇa*); (5) the divine eye (*cutūoaoāta, ñāṇa*); (6) knowledge of the destruction of influxes (*āsava-k, khaya, ñāṇa*). See **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2,89-99), SD 8.10; **Kevaddha S** (D 11,55-66), SD 1.7; SD 27.5a (5).

Table 3. Summary of the <i>anupada teachings</i> (M 111) The 9 progressive stages→		dhyana (<i>jhāna</i>) §§				attainment (<i>samāpatti</i>) §§				cessation (<i>nirodha</i>)
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		9
1	(a) <u>dhyana</u> (<i>jhāna</i>) and dhyana-factors (<i>jhān'āṅga</i>) (b) <u>attainment</u> (<i>samāpatti</i>) and factors (c) cessation	3	5	7	9	11	13	15	17	19
2	(a) <u>states</u> (<i>dhamma</i>) in the dhyanas and the attainments	4.1	6.1	8.1	10.1	12.1	14.1	16.1	18.1	—
	(b) the 5 <i>aggregates</i> : “ contact, feeling, perception, volition, mind ”	4.2a	6.2a	8.2a	10.2a	12.2a	14.2a	16.2a	—	—
	(c) wholesome mental factors: “ will, decision, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, attention ”	4.2b	6.2b	8.2b	10.2b	12.2b	14.2b	16.2b	—	—
3	“ discernment ” (<i>vavatthita</i>): perception of impermanence	4.3	6.3	8.3	10.3	12.3	14.3	16.3	—	—
4	true reality: impermanence	4.4	6.4	8.4	10.4	12.4	14.4	16.4	18.2	20.2
5	the nature of the meditator's mind: non-identification	4.5	6.5	8.5	10.5	12.5	14.5	16.5	18.3	20.3
6	“ further escape ” (<i>uttari nissaraṇa</i>)	4.6	6.6	8.6	10.6	12.6	14.6	16.6	18.4	
7	“ no further escape ” (<i>n'atthi uttari nissaraṇa</i>)									20.4

APPENDIX: Related teachings

On the 5 dhyana-factors, see SD 8.4 (6).

(1) The 4 “dhyanas” (*jhāna*) and “dhyana-factors” (*jhān'āṅga*):

	<u>initial</u> <u>application</u>	<u>sustained</u> <u>application</u>	<u>zest</u>	<u>joy</u>	<u>one-pointed-</u> <u>ness of mind</u>
1 st dhyana	<i>vitakka</i>	<i>vicāra</i>	<i>pīti</i>	<i>sukha</i>	(<i>ek'aggatā</i>) ²²
2 nd dhyana	...	...	<i>pīti</i>	<i>sukha</i>	<i>ek'aggatā</i>
3 rd dhyana	...	...	...	<i>sukha</i>	<i>ek'aggatā</i>
4 th dhyana	...	...	...	...	<i>ek'aggatā</i>

(2) The 4 “attainments” (*samāpatti*) & cessation (*nirodha*):

- (5) the base of infinite space (*ākāsānañcāyatana*);
(6) the base of infinite consciousness (*viññānañcāyatana*);
(7) the base of nothingness (*ākīñcaññāyatana*);
(8) the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception (*n'eva,saññā,-nāsaññāyatana*).
(9) the cessation of perception and feeling (*saññā,vedayita,nirodha*).

²² On *ek'aggatā* in the 1st dhyana, see (§4.1); also SD 8.4 (5.1.2).

3.1.2.2 Sāriputta—as recorded in the Anupada Sutta—completed the gamut of the 8 attainments and ending up in the 9th attainment, that is, cessation; thus completing **the 9 progressive abodes** [3.1.1.1]. This, too, is exactly what the Buddha himself did, that is, to fulfill all the stages of the path until all the “escapes” (*nissaraṇa*) or “cessations” (*nirodha*) have been accomplished.

For this reason, Sāriputta’s wisdom and mental powers are almost as complete and good as those of the Buddha himself. In terms of **awakening** itself—the destruction of the influxes—that is, arhathood, his awakening (like that of *any* arhat) is identical to that of the Buddha, as stated in **the Sambuddha Sutta** (S 22.58). The only difference is that the Buddha is the first arhat to arise in the world.²³

3.1.2.3 Only the first 3 of the 4 formless attainments are mentioned as suitable for the attaining of the path of noble sainthood. In other words, the 4th formless attainment—the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception (*ne’va,saññā,nāsaññāyatana*) and cessation (*nirodha*)—is, as a rule, unsuitable for the attaining of the path. In the case of cessation—as its name suggests—all perception and feeling, too, cease. [§19]

While we are in the 4th formless base, our **perception** is *supersubtle* (it cannot be said to exist or not exist), and during cessation, it is completely *absent*. The reason for this is stated in **the (Navaka) Jhāna Sutta** (A 9.36):

“Thus, indeed, bhikshus, to the extent there is **attainment with perception**, to that extent there is the penetration into true knowledge.” (A 9.36,16.2/4:426,9 f) + SD 33.8 (3.5)²⁴

The absence of perception in the attainment of **cessation** means that neither perception of that base nor any path-attainment is possible therein. The supersubtle perception of the 4th formless dhyana prevents us from perceiving any state; hence (as stated in the (Navaka) Jhāna Sutta), no breakthrough into direct knowledge, no awakening, is possible. [3.1.2.5]

3.1.2.4 In the case of **Sāriputta**, as reported in the Anupada Sutta, he is said to seek a “**further escape**” (*uttari nissaraṇa*) from each of the dhyana and the attainment he has attained. There are at least 2 important reasons for this development in his awakening process.

The 1st reason for Sāriputta transcending all the dhyanas and the attainments is simply because he is able to do so—that is, on account of all his **5 spiritual faculties** (*pañc’indriya*): faith, effort, mindfulness, samadhi and wisdom.²⁵ In fact, even before meeting the Buddha, Sāriputta is already a streamwinner (*sotāpanna*), when he hears the first 2 lines of the *ye dhamma hetu-p,pābhavā* quatrain uttered by the arhat Assajī.²⁶ [3.6.4]

In other words, from that moment on, his spiritual faculties (*indriya*) have become **the 5 powers** (*pañca bala*):²⁷ his faith, effort, mindfulness, samadhi and wisdom (especially the last) are all geared up to help him attain awakening in just a matter of time. Understandably, he is able to master all dhyanas and attainments, even attain cessation and arhathood within a fortnight.

3.1.2.5 **The 2nd reason** is implicitly recorded in the Anupada Sutta. Notice from **Table 3** that items (2)+(3), recording Sāriputta “discerning” the various mental factors that arise in his meditations, and that

²³ S 22.58,11/3:65 (SD 49.10).

²⁴ On the necessity of perception for awakening, see **(Navaka) Jhāna S** (A 9.36,16.2), SD 33.8. On the absence of thinking and knowing during dhyana, see SD 36.1b (6.2).

²⁵ These are, respectively: *saddh’indriya*, *viriy’indriya*, *sat’indriya*, *samadh’indriya* and *paññ’indriya*: see **Pañc’indriya**, SD 10.4; SD 3.6 (3); SD 54.3h (3.1).

²⁶ On Sāriputta’s meeting with Assajī, see SD 42.8 (1.2).

²⁷ See **Pañca Bala**, SD 10.5.

are present in all the 4 form dhyanas and the first 3 of the formless attainments (that is, items 1-7 on the horizontal header). All the mental factors and his “discerning” are present in the first 7 “attainments” (a common term for the form dhyanas and formless attainments); but are absent from attainments (8) and (9): the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception (the 4th formless base) and of cessation, respectively.

The basic idea behind this has already been mentioned [3.1.2.3]: the perception of the meditator in the 4th formless base is so supersubtle that he is unable to perceive any of the mental factors. While in cessation, the meditator’s perception is suspended, so that he is unable to perceive these mental factors. The question now is why are these 2 meditation-bases (*āyatana*) even listed at all here.

Ānanda, in his explanation of perception during dhyana—as recorded in **the (Navaka) Ānanda Sutta** (A 9.37)—for example, omits any mention of the 4th formless dhyana and of cessation. While it is true that, as a streamwinner, he may not have attained either of them, it is very clear that he understands, at least theoretically, the nature of these 2 attainments, that no perception as we know them occurs therein.

In the case of Sāriputta, the Buddha mentions both the 4th formless base and cessation because Sāriputta has fully mastered his mind and meditation, and knows exactly what they are [§§17-20]. In fact, **the (Navaka) Jhāna Sutta** (A 9.36), the Buddha explains just this very point:

“Bhikshus, as regards these two spheres—the **sphere of the attainment of neither-perception-nor-non-perception**²⁸ and **the cessation of perception and feeling**²⁹—those monks who are meditators, skilled in the attainments and skilled in emerging from the attainments, and having attained them and having emerged from them, should rightly point them out [declare them], I say.”³⁰
(A 9.36,17), SD 33.8

3.1.2.6 In summary then, Sāriputta understands that in his meditations, there is “**further escape**” (*uttari nissaraṇa*), whenever there are conditioned mental factors to be perceived, even supersubtly, as in the 4th and last of the formless attainments. However, in the case of cessation, he is only able to dwell in it, and then emerge from it at the right time.

The Anupada Sutta records Sāriputta’s attaining cessation (as reported by the Buddha), thus:

“Having emerged mindful from that attainment,
he reflected on the states that had passed, ceased, changed, thus:
‘So indeed, these states, not having been, come into being; having been, they pass away.’ ...
20.3 He understood:
‘There is no further escape (necessary),’ and, having well cultivated that (attainment), he confirmed that there is *none*.” [§20]

Sāriputta reflects on **cessation** as having been conditioned, that is, mind-made, and so it is subject to passing away. This is, in fact, an experience of nirvana here and now as a meditation state by an arhat or a non-returner. It is an impermanent experience of a timeless state, just like a person, having happily taken his drink of water is fully quenched.

²⁸ *N’eva,saññā,nāsaññāyatana* [§§17-18].

²⁹ *Saññā,vedayita,nirodha* [§§19-20].

³⁰ *Yāni ca kho imāni, bhikkhave, nissāya dve āyatanāni—n’eva,saññā,nāsaññā’āyatana,samāpatti ca saññā,vedayita,nirodho ca, jhāyī h’ete, bhikkhave, samāpatti,kusalehi samāpatti,vuṭṭhāna,kusalehi samāpajjitvā vuṭṭhahitvā sammā akkhātābānīti vadāmi ti.* See SD 56.4 (3.6).

3.2 SĀRIPUTTA’S PRACTICE

3.2.1 Practice summary

In terms of meditation practice, **the Anupada Sutta** (M 111) can be summarized as follows, with the sections on his practice highlighted in **bold**:

- §§1-2 The Buddha praises Sāriputta’s great wisdom.
§§3-10 His mastery of the 4 form dhyanas.
§§11-18 His mastery of the 4 formless attainments.
§§19-20 His mastery of the cessation attainment.
 §§21-23 The Buddha’s declarations: Sāriputta’s attainment of the noble eightfold path and noble freedom; a true “Dharma-heir”; he keeps the Dharma-wheel turning.

3.2.2 Table 3 explanation

Table 3 is a summary of the *anupada* (step by step) account on Sāriputta’s awakening process, which also significantly describes, basically, the Buddha’s own awakening process. Of course, the Buddha’s awakening process is even more elaborate, as laid out in **the Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta** (M 26), which, in fact, ends with an account of the same 9 progressive abodes³¹ [3.1], which Table 3 summarizes, too.

Panel 1 of Table 3 shows the distribution of each of the 9 progressive abodes: (a) the 4 form dhyanas, (b) the 4 formless attainments, and (c) cessation.

Panel 2 lists (a) the bare 5 aggregates and (b) other wholesome “states” or mental factors.

Panel 3 lists Sāriputta’s **discernment** of the various constituent “states” or mental factors mentioned, by way of the perception of impermanence. Note that here, Sāriputta is recorded as discerning only the 1st 7 abodes, that is, excluding the 4th and last formless attainment and cessation [3.6.1]

Panel 4, “true reality” refers to the nature of impermanence itself characterizing all the 9 abodes.

Panel 5 lists a note on the meditator’s detached attitude to what he perceives. This attitude is that of “**non-identification**” (*atam, mayatā*).³²

Panel 6 lists the possibility of “further escape” (*uttari nissaraṇa*) from that abode for the following one. This hints that further growth is possible: the highest (arhathood and nirvana) still can and needs to be attained (just as the Buddha has done). In short, all the first 8 abodes can and need to be transcended.

Panel 7 refers to the 9th and last abode, that of **cessation**, which is simply the non-occurrence of all the preceding abodes. This is where all physical being and mental states cease. Technically, we can say (though unstated) that Sāriputta enters cessation as a non-returner³³ and therein becomes an arhat.

3.3 THE DHYANAS, DHYANA-FACTORS AND STATES [§3 etc]

3.3.1 The 1st dhyana [§§3-4]

3.3.1.1 The teaching section—which is practically most of the Sutta—starts with the 4 form dhyanas (*rūpa jhāna*), each of which is defined in the traditional manner, that is, in terms of **their dhyana-factors** (*jhān’āṅga*) [§§3, 5, 7, 9]. Those of the 1st dhyana are: “initial application (*vitakka*), sustained application (*vicāra*), zest (*pīti*) and joy (*sukha*)” [§3], without any mention of one-pointedness of mind (*citt’ek’aggatā*), but which is mentioned at §4.1 (we will return to this point later).

³¹ M 26,34.2-42 (D 1.11).

³² **Atam,maya S** (A 6.104), SD 19.13(2.4); **Atam,mayatā**, SD 19.13.

³³ On the non-returner (*anāgāmī*), see SD 10.16 (13); SD 23.16 (1.1) n.

Briefly, here are the commentarial glosses on these **dhyana-factors** [3.3.1.2-3.3.1.7].

3.3.1.2 By **vitakka** is meant that the meditator knows by examining (the state) through the mind's characteristic of mental application (*olokento abhiniropana, lakkhaṇo*) (that is, directing the mind to the mental object or keeping it focused). It should be recalled that since all the mental fetters [3.7] have been overcome, sense-based knowing has been suspended. Hence, this apparently active aspect of dhyana refers to a purely mind-based process.

3.3.1.3 **Vicāra** is the mind's characteristic of pondering over that (*tathā anumajjana, lakkhaṇo*), which is taken in a purely mental (suprasensual) sense. This is a mental effort to sustain that attention so that they mind remains focused. Even without the full presence of one-pointedness of mind, this guided focus is still able to generate zest (*pīti*).

3.3.1.4 **Pīti** or zest is the mind's characteristic of suffusing (*pharaṇa, lakkhaṇa*), meaning that since we are clearly aware of *only* mental states, this *nowness* simply floods our mind, actively rapturing us, flooding us with an overpowering joy. The "**suffusing**" here means that this is purely a mental experience of boundless and total unity with, as it were, all things. In mundane terms, we may compare this to that consuming "rush" a speed-driver feels when he is zooming at superspeed. It may even be said to be a purely mental (non-sexual) ecstasy, free of the body.³⁴

3.3.1.5 **Sukha** or "joy" is the mind's characteristic of being pleased (*sāta, lakkhaṇam*), that is, a supra-sensual pleasure, a purely mental ease.³⁵ It's like being fully satiated with our favourite food and we are just quietly sitting in total contentment. In the 1st dhyana, this calm pleasure contrasts with the exuberant pervasive zest. This is like a child safely experiencing a merry-go-round revolving at full speed, which gives him a deep sense of inner joy suffused by the movement.

3.3.1.6 **Citt'ek'aggatā** (the oneness of mind), the mind's characteristic of being undistracted (*avikkhepa*), of being undistracted (*avikkhepa, lakkhaṇā*), of being inwardly calm [§4.1] (MA 4:87,20-25). Its presence is hinted at by the phrase "born of solitude" (*viveka, ja*), that is, it arises from the mind's freedom from the body ("sensual objects," a synecdoche for the mental fetters) and from the negative aspects of the mind ("unwholesome states"): hence, it is said to be "quite secluded from sensual objects (*vivicc'eva kāmehi*), secluded from unwholesome states (*vivicca akusalehi*)" [§3].

3.3.1.7 In other words, the oneness of mind is present but unnoticed on account of the activity of zest.³⁶ Hence, the Sutta describes that, in the 1st dhyana, **these states** are present: initial application, sustained application, zest, joy and one-pointedness of mind [§4.1b]. The joyfully focused mind (free of all sensual distractions) keeps directing itself to the blissful peace of that dhyana. At this stage, there is still a bit of subtle "separation" between subject and object, as it were: the mind subtly works to keep itself *with* it—self, so to speak. But that's all it does undistractedly.

³⁴ This idea is famously depicted by Bernini (1598-1680) in his sculpture of "Ecstasy of Saint Teresa," depicting a woman in religious ecstasy contemplating on her religious communion with Christ. We also have the Tibetan *yab-yum* ("father-mother") depiction of the ecstatic union between wisdom and compassion. Such symbolism clearly has its limits which should be clearly respected, so that we do not fall prey to the notion that the finger *is* the moon. See SD 38.4 (3.2.3.2); SD 53.18 (2.2.3.3).

³⁵ See Vbh §567/257,22-27.

³⁶ On the terms here and in foll para: Dhs §§7-11, 84-88, 283-287, 371-375. For helpful (but dated) discussions: Dhs:RD 5-18 nn. On the 5 dhyana-factors, see Dhs §§2-6, 278-282, 366-370: [3.3]; also SD 8.4 (5).

3.3.2 The 2nd dhyana [§§5-6]

3.3.2.1 At this stage, it is beneficial to remind oneself that the Buddha’s teaching is historically and spiritually characterized by **renunciation** (*nekkhamma*), of letting go, of the less that liberates—this is the spirit of the teaching as “an opening (*okāsa*) in the confined” (*sambādh’okāsa*).³⁷ The mind, as it were, renounces itself: it does not see itself as being “separate” from its object—the idea of subject and object, is transcended: this is the ceasing of all initial application and sustained application (*vitakka, vicāra*). We now see the theme of the dhyanic mind transcending or “renouncing” itself: we ascend the dhyanas by the lessening of **the dhyana-factors** (*jhān’āṅga*) of the preceding dhyana.

3.3.2.2 The 2nd dhyana, in its “dhyana” passage, says that it is attained “with the stilling of initial application and sustained application” (*vitakka, vicārānaṃ vūpasamā*) [§5]. In renouncing, letting go, of directing and sustaining our mind—our attention needs no more guidance: it is fixed on its object—so that we fully embrace the zest and joy born of samadhi that is, the 2nd dhyana. [§Table 3(1)]

3.3.2.3 The Anupada Sutta adds a valuable note for us here, on how zest and joy (*pīti, sukha*) become even more refined. It says that the 2nd dhyana “**has serene faith in oneself and single-mindedness**” (*ajjhataṃ sampasādanam cetaso ekodi, bhāvaṃ*) [§5]. The meditator has truly become an island unto himself (*atta, dīpa*), dwelling “with the Dharma as an island ... as refuge, with no other refuge,” as declared by the Buddha.³⁸ Psychologically, this is the fulfilment of our individuation process, of becoming a true individual, who is morally virtuous, with wise faith in the Buddha Dharma, a truly free individual, free from the crowd.

3.3.2.4 The phrase—*ajjhataṃ sampasādanam cetaso ekodi, bhāvaṃ*—is found in the definition of the 2nd dhyana throughout the Pali canon.³⁹ Clearly, these twin qualities—serene faith and single-mindedness—reflect a sublimation, a refinement,⁴⁰ of the heart and head, feeling and thinking, in dhyana. In fact, we see here that the zest (*pīti*) is now more refined, becoming “**serene faith in oneself**,” a calmer sense of “self-confidence,” while joy (*sukha*), too, is more refined, becoming “single-mindedness.”

³⁷ See **Sambādh’okāsa S** (A 6.26,2), SD 15.6; SD 56.19 (1.1.2).

³⁸ **Mahā, parinibbāna S** (D 16,2.26/2:100), SD 9.1 = **Cakka, vatti Sīha, nāda S** (D 26,1/3:58 = 27/3:77), SD 36.10; **Atta, dīpa S** (S 22.43/3:42), SD 93.8; (**Bhagavā**) **Gilāna S** (S 47.9/5:154); (**Saripatṭhāna**) **Cunda S** (S 47.13/5:163); **Ukka, celā S** (S 47.14/5:164 f).

³⁹ *Ajjhataṃ sampasādanam cetaso ekodi, bhāvaṃ*: **D** 1,96/1:37 (SD 25.2), **2,79/1:74** (SD 8.10), **3,2.2/1:100** (SD 21.3), **9,7/1:182** (SD 7.14), **10,2.18/1:207** (SD 40a.13), **17,2.3/2:186** (SD 36.12), **22,21/2:313** (SD 13.2), **33,1.11-(4)/3:222**; **M** **4,24/1:21** (SD 44.3), **8,5/1:41** (SD 51.8), 1:62, **19,15/1:117** (SD 61.1), **25,13/1:159** (SD 61.2), **26,35/-1:174** (SD 1.11), **27,20/1:181** (SD 40a.5), **30,14/1:203** (SD 53.9), **31,12/1:208** (SD 44.11), **36,36/1:247** (SD 49.4), **38,-39/1:270** (SD 7.10), **39,16/1:276** (SD 10.13), **45,7/1:309** (SD 32.4), **51,21/1:347** (SD 32.9), **52,5/1:350** (SD 41.2), **53,-18/1:356** (SD 21.14), **60,45/1:412** (SD 35.5), **65,17/1:441** (SD 56.2), **77,26/2:15** (SD 49.5), **94,23/2:162** (SD 96.7), **100,39/2:212** (SD 10.9), **101,39/2:226** (SD 18.4), **107,10/3:4** (SD 56.3), **108,27/3:14** (SD 33.5), **111,6/3:26** (SD 56.4), **112,20/3:36** (SD 59.7), **113,22/3:43** (SD 23.7), **125,25/3:136** (SD 46.3), **138,13/3:226** (SD 33.13), **139,9/3:233** (SD 7.8), **141,31/3:252** (SD 11.11); **S** **16.9/2:211**, **21.1/2:273x3**, **28.2/3:236**, **36.19/4:226** (SD 30.1), **36.31/4:236** (SD 55.4), **40.2/4:264x2** (SD 24.12a); **45.8/5:10** (SD 3.3), **48.10/5:198** (SD 74.7b), **48.39/5:214**, **53.1/5:307**, **53.54/5:309**, **54.8/5:318** (SD 62.2); **A** **2.13/1:53**, **3.58/1:163** (SD 94.5), **3.63/1:182** (SD 21.1), **3.74/1:221**, **4.123/2:127** (SD 23.8a), **4.162/2:151**, **5.14/3:11**, **7.50/4:66** (SD 102.3), **8.11/4:176**, **8.30/4:230** (SD 19.5), **9.35/4:418 f x2** (SD 24.3), **11.17/-5:344** (SD 1.2); **Pm** 1:41; **V** 3:4; **Dhs** 31; **Vbh** 105, 236, 245, 269; **Pug** 59.

⁴⁰ U Thittila, in his Vbh tr, in fact, tr *sampasādana* as “refinement” (Vbh:T §574/336).

3.3.2.5 In other words, the meditator is imbued with subtler forms of zest and joy as a profounder inner peace that suffuses him, that is, by way of serene faith in oneself and single-mindedness. Hence, the Sutta describes that, in the 2nd dhyana, **these states** are present: serene faith⁴¹ in oneself, zest, joy and mental oneness. [§6.1b]

3.3.3 The 3rd dhyana [§§7-8]

3.3.3.1 The 3rd dhyana opens with “**the fading away of zest,**” on account of which the meditator dwells “**in equanimity, and mindful and clearly knowing, still feeling pleasure with the body**” [§7]. The active aspect of zest disappears, leaving a greater sense of equanimity, and yet a clear mind that fully feels joyful. Worldly language has broken down here: we are using meditative lingo. Although we use familiar words, they have broader, profounder senses that often overlap or envelop the senses so that they need to be teased out and relived with our Dharma-inspired meditation.

3.3.3.2 These are not technical terms (since they do not refer to fixed or known processes): this is sometimes called “**intentional language.**”⁴² This is the language of direct experience of profound mental states, and they are words that do not freeze the meaning, but rather free us from preconceptions. It prepares us to taste the experience first, and then speak of it in some helpful way. In other words, this is the language of Dharma-spirited meditators speaking of their profound meditative experiences.

3.3.3.3 Hence, we speak of equanimity (*upekkhā*) and also speak of enjoying “pleasure with the body” (*sukhañ ca kāyena*). By “**equanimity**” is meant “mental balance” (*majjhataṭṭā cittassa*):⁴³ the mind is neither thinking nor feeling in the sense-based manner; there is neither liking nor disliking; there is no knowing in the worldly sense.⁴⁴

In other words, there is no mediation in the perception (*saññā*), which is *direct*—we are, as it were, what we experience. There is neither subject nor object. A simple example is when a musical performer plays some really good music, and “loses” himself in it: there is no more musician and instrument—the musician *is* the music; the music *is* the musician. In fact, we can even say: there is only the music.

3.3.3.4 It is this “centredness of the mind” (*majjhataṭṭā citassa*) that is equanimity we are able to fully and directly experience as **pleasure** (*sukha*) with the totality of our being: this is the meaning of “**with the body**” (*kāyena*). Our experience is purely mental: it seems to be a timeless experience. Indeed, we are beyond space and time (as we know them) in dhyana. Only on emerging from dhyana, we will notice that a long time has actually passed; but the meditation moment is always, as it were, an eternal “one”—this is the “**mental oneness**” (*citt’ek’aggatā*).

3.3.3.5 In musical experience Mozart writes in a familiar manner: “... provided I am not disturbed, my subject enlarged itself, becomes methodized and defined, and the whole, though it be long, stands almost finished and complete in my mind, so that I can survey it, like a fine picture or a beautiful statue, at a glance. Nor do I hear in my imagination the parts successively, but I hear them, as it were, all at once. ...

⁴¹ In **Sampasādaniya S** (D 28), Sāriputta speaks of his serene faith in the Buddha’s 16 unsurpassable qualities (SD 14.14).

⁴² SD 26.11 (6.5); **Dh 97** SD 10.6 esp (5).

⁴³ Vbh §589/259,42.

⁴⁴ On a higher level, the absence of feeling is said to be true happiness: by the very fact that “here ... there is no feeling!” (*ettha n’atthi vedayitam*), as stated by Sāriputta in (**Navaka**) **Nibbāna S** (A 9.34,2.2) SD 55.1.

When I proceed to write down my ideas, I take out of the bag of my memory, if I may use that phrase, what has previously been collected into it in the way I have mentioned. For this reason, the committing to paper is done quickly enough, for everything is, as I said before, already finished”⁴⁵

3.3.3.6 Hence, the 3rd dhyana is said to have **these states**: joy, mindfulness, clear knowing and mental oneness [§8.1b]. On account of this equanimity (the absence of the opposition of feelings), the mind is joyfully focused and crystal clear.

3.3.4 The 4th dhyana [§§9-10]

3.3.4.1 The 4th dhyana is characterized by “**the abandoning of pleasure and pain**” (*sukhassa pahānā dukkhassa ca pahānā*), that is, physical feelings, and “**the previous disappearance of joy and grief**” (*pubbe’va somanassa, domanassānaṃ atthagamā*), that is, mental feelings. The meditation language here is “intentional.” The *physical* feelings are “abandoned” (*pahāna*), that is, consciously pushed away. The *mental* feelings are not so easily removed, but subside only when the mind is calmed. In this sense, they have “previously” or “earlier” (*pubbe*) “disappeared” (*atthagama*). The meaning here is that since all mental feelings have subsided, there are also no physical feelings.⁴⁶

3.3.4.2 Hence, the 4th dhyana has only “**neither-pain-nor-pleasure**” (the absence of liking and disliking) and “**the purity of mindfulness due to equanimity**” (*upekkhā, sati, parisuddhi*) [§9]. “This mindfulness, because of that equanimity, is unobstructed, very pure, very clear. Therefore, it is called ‘purity of mindfulness due to equanimity’.”⁴⁷

3.3.4.3 The states (*dhammā*) present in the 4th dhyana are: equanimity (that is) a neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling, mental unconcern due to tranquility, purity of mindfulness, and **mental oneness** [§10.1b]. Of special significance is “mental oneness” (*citt’ek’aggattā*), which is the only state that is present in all the 4 formless attainments, and implicitly in the 4th formless attainment since perception is absent therein. In other words, the 4 formless attainments are each a more refined form of the 4th dhyana.

3.3.5 The formless attainments [§§11-18]

3.3.5.1 We have already noted that the 4 formless attainments are each *a more refined form of the 4th dhyana* [3.3.5.1]. The differences between each of these attainments depend on its meditation-object. In fact, each of the opening passages on the 4 formless attainments [§§11, 13, 15, 17] states how that attainment arises.

3.3.5.2 All physical sense-impacts (sensings) have already ceased within the 1st dhyana. Only mental impact (“mind-sensing”) continues in the dhyanas, where the mind becomes increasingly calmer and clearer. In the 1st formless attainment, we are undistracted by even the mind. We then direct our atten-

⁴⁵ Mozart, undated letter (prob written in Berlin, 1789, not Prague, 1783). Edward Holmes, *The Life of Mozart, including his correspondence*, London: Chapman & Hall, 1845:317 f (digital ed Cambridge, CUP, 2009). Published as “Letter of Mozart to a friend,” in *The Boston Musical Gazette* 2, 19, 11 Oct 1847:146.

⁴⁶ On the nature of being “percipient but not sensing,” see SD 55.19.

⁴⁷ *Ayaṃ sati imāya upekkhāya vivaṭṭā hoti parisuddhā pariyodātā, tena vuccati upekkhā, sati, parisuddhin’ti*, Vbh §597/261, 15 f).

tion to empty space, taking its **infinity** as the object—this is the 1st formless attainment, that of **infinite space** [§11].

3.3.5.3 Having mastered this very subtle formless meditation, in due course, we direct our mind away from the infinity of space and watch the “observing” of that infinity itself. In ordinary language, we may say: we now turn to watching the “watcher,” but at this level, with right view, we know that there is no watcher at all, only the watching, that is, the mind itself, here called “**consciousness**,” *viññāṇa*, which is noticed to be infinite (with neither beginning nor end, all pervasive). This is the selfless and free mind of pure consciousness. This is the 2nd formless attainment, that of **infinite consciousness** [§13].

3.3.5.4 In due course, we readily transcend even this mind that sees its own infinity. Now, upon attaining the form dhyanas, we have already renounced all our senses and sensing, and celebrate the super-calm-and-clear **mind**, represented by the term “mental oneness” (*citt’ek’aggatā*) [3.3.3.6]. With **the formless attainments**, even this mind is progressively “renounced.”

In the 1st attainment, the narrowness of the mind is transcended: the mind is infinitely spacious. In the 2nd attainment, the mind itself is infinite, with neither beginning nor end, pervasive. Now in the 3rd attainment, we renounce even this conditioned awareness: we let go of even the mind itself, and we are left with “nothing,” as it were. This is where, ironically, we can refer back to “ourselves” then as being really nothing. For, to *have nothing*, to *be* nothing (*ākiñcana*), we must first renounce what we have and what we are, our having and being.

This is the 3rd formless attainment, that of **nothingness** [§15].

3.3.5.5 At this stage (the 3rd formless attainment), the mind is still aware of itself as “nothingness.” When we let go of this awareness—when we renounce even the perception of nothingness—we are, ironically, left with “less than nothing,” so to speak. At this supersubtle stage of meditation, the meditating is what it meditates on: *the meditator is the meditating*. Where there is no meditation-object at all (not even “nothing”), we are left with “neither” mind nor its absence. Hence, the 4th and last of the attainments is called that of “**neither-perception-nor-non-perception**” (*n’eva,saññānāsaññāyatana*).

3.3.5.6 Perception (*saññā*) is the “recognizing” aspect of consciousness (*viññāṇa*). For simplicity, we can say here that this is the “superconscious” mind, our mind at the highest level of meditation known to man. Historically, the suttas tell us that the Buddha, before his awakening, used the late recluse Rāma’s method, which he learned from Rāma’s son, Uddaka (*uddaka rāma,putta*), and reached this 4th and last formless attainment.⁴⁸

This is the 4th formless attainment, that of **neither-perception-nor-non-perception** [§17].

3.3.6 THE ARIYA PARIYESANĀ SUTTA (M 26)

3.3.6.1 The Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta tells us that the Bodhisattva, having mastered the 4th formless attainment, and realizing that it does not lead to nirvana, “but only to rebirth in the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception,” gives up Rāma’s teaching and community. In due course, returning to the breath meditation, a method he was already familiar with even as a child,⁴⁹ the Buddha broke through into full awakening.

⁴⁸ On the Bodhisattva’s mastery of the 4th formless attainment by using Rāma’s method, see **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 26,16), SD 1.11.

⁴⁹ On the 7-year-old Siddhattha meditating in the 1st dhyana, see SD 52.1 (5.2).

3.3.6.2 The interesting question we must ask here is: what was really wrong with **Rāma’s teaching and meditation** on the 4th formless attainment? While it brought the Bodhisattva to the pinnacle of spiritual achievement of the times, it was unable to bring about awakening (*bodhi*). While dhyana frees the mind from the body, the attainments, especially the highest, are clogged and polluted by a peculiarly insidious idea: an ancient relic, some kind of mental debris, an invisible but virtual reality (like an addictive role-playing game or RPG of our time) that prevents even the highest of the pre-Buddhist meditators from progressing further. What is this “mental debris,” this virtual shackle, that freezes up the base of *neither-perception-nor-non-perception*, so that it becomes a wall holding us back in the world?

3.3.7 Philosophy parallel

3.3.7.1 There is a parallel problem in Western philosophy which will help us better understand this vital doctrinal issue in early Buddhism (but we must remain respectful of the fact that parallels never meet, except in perspective). That “mental debris” [3.3.6.2] we speak of is theoretically very similar to what the British philosopher, **Gilbert Ryle** (1900-1976), labels as “the myth of **the ghost in the machine**” in *The Concept of Mind* (1949).⁵⁰ He invented this label to once and for all debunk Descartes’ view⁵¹ that while the human body may be regarded as an enormously subtle and complicated machine, it only becomes a person when it is joined by an incorporeal **soul**.

3.3.7.2 **Descartes** views that mental acts determine physical acts and that volitional acts of the body must be caused by volitional acts of the mind. This theory, according to Ryle, is “the myth of the ghost in the machine.” Ryle’s philosophy—famously stated in *The Concept of Mind*—formally debunks Descartes’ idea of an individual soul that inhabits the human body (in keeping with the dominant religious ideas of his times).

Ryle rejects the view that a mental act could be and is distinct from a physical act, or even that a mental world can be and is distinct from the physical world. He describes this notion of the separability of mind and body as “**the dogma of the ghost in the machine**.” However, he also rejects any entity called “**mind**,” and what mental activity that seems to control the body is neither an independent nor a distinct mechanism, but merely the actions of the body.

Such ideas are, sadly, against those of early Buddhism, but Ryle’s debunking of Descartes’ view of a soul-infested body is an important and welcome fact that brings us closer to the heart of the Buddha’s teaching of awakening.

3.3.7.3 Another helpful philosophical lesson from Ryle is his explanation of **the category mistake**.⁵² He gives a humorous anecdote to illustrate this important idea. A foreigner visiting Oxford University is shown some of its colleges, libraries, playing-fields, departments, offices and so on. The foreigner finally asks, “But where is the University?” His mistake is to think that the University is itself a separate building, like what he has been shown, rather than understanding that it is the institution to which all these belonged. (1949:6)

How is the idea of **an eternal soul** a category mistake? In early Buddhism, we accept that we are composed basically of 2 essential aspects: body (which are the 5 physical senses, that are in turn under-

⁵⁰ On the “ghost in the machine” see Ryle, 1949: 5-13, 21-24, 37-39, 98, 141-143, 202,204, 291.

⁵¹ René Descartes (1596-1650), French mathematician, scientist and philosopher, has been called the father of modern Western philosophy. On Descartes and the self/soul: SD 2.16 (18.2, 3.1.1)

⁵² *The Concept of Mind*, 1949 ch 1 is the first and often last word on the category mistake. For a very charming “category mistake” (which is non-philosophical), see W H Auden’s poem, “Some say that love’s a little boy” (*The English Auden. Poems, Essays and Dramatic Writings 1927-1939*, ed E Mendelson), London: Faber, 1977:230 f).

stood as the 4 primary elements, earth, water, fire and wind)⁵³ and of mind (basically comprising feeling, perception, formations and consciousness).

Both body and mind (and their constituents) are impermanent; hence, they do not have any kind of essence or permanence that can be empirically verified. To say that either or both these categories have an eternal “soul” or any kind of abiding entity would be assuming that an impermanent category has a permanent quality—this is clearly a category mistake.

3.3.8 Sāriputta’s awakening

3.3.8.1 Sāriputta, in his meditation practice, progresses smoothly through all the 4 form dhyanas and the 4 formless attainments. We are then told that, “by completely surmounting the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception,” he attains and dwells in **the cessation of perception and feeling**, “and his influxes were destroyed by his seeing wisdom” [§19]. He becomes an arhat.

This shows that Sāriputta personally (*kāyena*, “with the body”) experiences the whole of the 9 progressive abodes [3.1]. He is a master of meditation. In fact, on account of this ability and achievement that he is the wisest of the monks [3.10], second only to the Buddha himself.

3.3.8.2 Two weeks after meeting Assaji, and becoming a streamwinner [3.1.2.4], Sāriputta—says **the Dīgha,nakha Sutta** (M 74)—is reported as standing behind the Buddha fanning him, and listening to the Buddha’s exhortation to Dīgha,nakha on the nature of feelings. As he stands there listening and reflecting thus, he awakens to arhathood:

“The Blessed One, indeed, speaks to us of the abandoning of these things (the various kinds of feelings) through direct knowledge. The Sugata [the well-farer], indeed, speaks to us of the relinquishing of these things through direct knowledge.”

As the venerable Sāriputta reflected thus, through not clinging, his mind was freed from the mental influxes. (M 74,14), SD 16.1

3.3.8.3 Now, we apparently have 2 different accounts of Sāriputta’s awakening. The first, given in **the Dīgha,nakha Sutta** (M 74), says that he attains arhathood while he stands fanning the Buddha and listening to him teach the wanderer Dīgha,nakha on the nature of feelings.⁵⁴ Almost all the Commentaries say the same thing.

On the 15th day of the fortnight, a fullmoon day,⁵⁵ while the Teacher was residing at Sūkara,khata (boar-dug) cave, on the side of Mount Vulture Peak, outside Rājagaha, Sāriputta stood behind the Buddha, fanning him, and listening to the Buddha teaching Sāriputta’s own sister’s son, the wanderer, Dīgha,nakha, the “discourse on the full grasping of feelings” (*vedanā,pariggaha sutta*). Just like one who eats boiled rice served to another, he attains the knowledge of the disciple’s perfection (*sāvaka,pāramī,ñāṇa*), that is, arhathood.⁵⁶

⁵³ On the early Buddhist idea of the 4 elements, see **Mahā Rāhu’ovāda S** (M 11,8-11, with §12 on “space”), SD 3.11; **Mahā Hatthi,pādōpama S** (M 28,6), SD 6.16.

⁵⁴ M 74/1:497-501 (SD 16.1).

⁵⁵ MA 4:87,5-11.

⁵⁶ ThaA 3:102,33-38; DhA 1:96,6-12.

3.3.8.4 The second account of Sāriputta’s awakening is that found in the **Anupada Sutta** (M 111):

Again, bhikshus, by *completely surmounting* the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception, Sāriputta attained and dwelled in **the cessation of perception and feeling**.⁵⁷

And **his influxes were destroyed** by his seeing with wisdom. [§19]

The Majjhima Commentary quotes “the elders of ancient India” (*jambudīpa, vāsī therā*): “The elder Sāriputta cultivated the twin practice of calm and insight (*samatha, vipassanaṃ yuganaddhamṃ*), and realised the fruit of non-returning. Then, he entered the attainment of cessation, and after emerging from it he attained arhathood.” (MA 4:90,22-91,10)

3.3.8.5 Putting all this textual evidence together, giving priority to the sutta accounts, we may retell **Sāriputta’s awakening** in this manner.

On the 15th day of the fortnight, a fullmoon day, the Buddha was residing at the Sūkara, khata (boardug) cave. While he was giving a comprehensive teaching on feelings to the wanderer, Dīgha, nakha, the son of Sāriputta’s sister, Sāriputta himself stood behind the Buddha, fanning him, and mindfully listening to the teaching, as if having a share of a meal served to another.

Just as the wanderer Sāriputta attains streamwinning by listening only to the first 2 lines of the ye *dhammā hetu-p, pabhavā* quatrain uttered by the elder Assaji [3.1.2.4], by the end of the teaching to Dīgha, nakha, Sāriputta himself fully understood it.⁵⁸ He was already a **non-returner** by then. He entered **cessation** and emerged an **arhat**.⁵⁹

3.4 THE 5 BARE AGGREGATES [§4.2a +n]

3.4.1 The 5 aggregates

3.4.1.1 The 5 aggregates (*pañca-k, khandha*)—form, feeling, perception, formations and consciousness—are the interdependent constituents of our body-mind being. Our body is “**form**” (*rūpa*), functionally active as the physical faculties (*indriya*),⁶⁰ that is, the senses of eye, ear, nose, tongue and body. Each of these senses experiences essentially one or other of the 4 primary elements: earth⁶¹ (solidity, resistance, etc), water (fluidity and cohesiveness), fire (heat, decay etc) and wind (air, movement, etc).

The 4 remaining aggregates constitute the mind. **Feeling** (*vedanā*) is our *affective* reaction to experiences, depending on how we define and project our hedonic biases. **Perception** (*saññā*) is our *cognitive* process that seeks and “recognizes” (or grades) those experiences in terms of their hedonic biases. **Formations** (*saṅkhārā*) are the motivational or karmic aspects of our mind (including our emotions),⁶² moving us (or not) to act or react, conditioned by our feelings and perceptions; hence, they can be said to be our emotions as experience and potential.

⁵⁷ *Saññā, vedayita, nirodha*: see **Sappurisa S** (M 113), SD 23.7 (2); SD 48.7 (3.2); SD 50.7 (1.2).

⁵⁸ Notice how close in spirit **M 74,11** (SD 16.1) is to the teaching of the *hetu-p, pabhavā* verse [3.1.2.4].

⁵⁹ See §19+20.1. Since “nothing” happens during cessation, we must understand that his arhathood arose just as he regains his normal perception upon emerging from cessation.

⁶⁰ The same term is used for the 5 “spiritual faculties” (*pañc’indriya*), but they should not be confounded.

⁶¹ “Earth” covers not only solid states, but also any kind of “form” (*rūpa*), incl light, energy (such as the food that sustains us).

⁶² On the early Buddhist conception of emotion, see SD 17.3 (1.3).

3.4.1.2 The above description is, as a rule, true of an unawakened worldling, one who is ruled by the 3 unwholesome motivational roots (*akusala,mūla*) of greed, hate and delusion,⁶³ and the 4 biases (*agati*) of greed, hate, delusion and fear.⁶⁴ The worldling's aggregates [3.4.1] are technically called "**the 5 aggregates of clinging**" (*pañc'upādāna-k,khandha*), since they incite wanting and clinging (*upādāna*) in us, and are, in turn, their own fuel (*upādāna*), keeping us in a looped rut of self-created "selfhood" of *sensual lust, existence and ignorance* (including views) (the 3 or 4 "influxes").⁶⁵ [3.8.1]

The arhat has destroyed these influxes, ending their flowing and flooding into his being. Hence, the arhat, as long as he lives, only has the "5 aggregates" *without clinging*, purely functional aspects of his psychophysical being. To a significant extent, too, the learners (streamwinners, once-returners and non-returners) have removed the clinging from their 5 aggregates.

3.4.2 The arhat

Hence, throughout **the Anupada Sutta** (M 111), we read of "**contact, feeling, perception, volition, mind**" (*phasso vedanā saññā cetanā cittam*) [§4.2a]. This pentad, in fact, consists of the bare 5 aggregates, the clinging-free aggregates of the saints. The Commentary glosses them as an arhat's "characteristics" (*lakkhaṇa*), as follows:

3.4.2.1 Phassa (contact) is the mind's characteristic of touching (attaining) (*phusana,lakkhaṇo*)⁶⁶ [that is, sense-impact, representing form (*rūpa*), our bare sense-experience, which, in an arhat, is unmotivated and unbiased] (MA 4:87,25). **The Dhamma,saṅgaṇī** defines it as "the contact which at that time is touching, brought into contact, being in touch with (an object)" (*tasmim samaye phasso phusanā samphusanā samphusitattam*; Dhs §2/9,25-27). In modern terms, this is "sense-impact," "sense-stimulus," or simply "sensing."

3.4.2.2 Vedanā (feeling) is the mind's characteristic of feeling (*vedayita,lakkhaṇā*)⁶⁷ [even an arhat feels joy and pain, heat and cold, appreciates beauty and peace of nature, and so on, but he remains calmly mindful of them] (MA 4:87,25 f). **The Dhamma,saṅgaṇī** defines feeling as "the mental pleasure, mental ease, which, at that time, is born of contact with the mind-consciousness-element that has arisen therein; the pleasurable easing sensation arising from contact with thought; the pleasurable, easeful feeling arising from contact with thought" (*yam tasmim samaye tadjā mano,viññāṇa,dhatu samphassa,-jam cetasikam sukham ceto,samphassa,jam sātā sukham vedayitam ceto,samphassa,jā sātā sukhā vedanā*, Dhs §3/9,28-10,2).

3.4.2.3 Saññā (perception) is the mind's characteristic of perceiving (*sañjanana,lakkhaṇa*)⁶⁸ [an arhat recognizes his feelings related to sense-experiences for what they are: conditioned and impermanent] (MA 4:87,26). **The Dhamma,saṅgaṇī** defines it as "the perception, the perceiving, that having perceived that arises at that time from contact with the mind-consciousness-element therein" (*yā tasmim samaye tadjā mano,viññāṇa,dhatu samphassa,jā saññā sañjananā sañjanitattam*, Dhs §4/10,3-6).

⁶³ **Mūla S** (A 3.69) SD 18.2; SD 4.14 (1.5); SD 50.20 (3.1.3).

⁶⁴ Also called the 4 "motives" (*tḥāna*): **Sigal'ovāda S** (D 31,4+5), SD 4.1; **Āgati S 1** (A 4.17), SD 89.7; **Saṅgaha Bala S** (A 9.5,6.4) n, SD 2.21; SD 31.12 (6.4.1.3); SD 53.5 (2.2.1.1).

⁶⁵ SD 30.3 (1.4.2 n); **Ogha Pañha S** (S 38.11), SD 30.3(1.4) + (1.4.2).

⁶⁶ *Phassa*: Dhs §2/9,25-27 :: Dhs:RD 5. Comy: DhsA 136,21-139,16 :: DhsA:P 180-183.

⁶⁷ *Vedanā*: Dhs §3/9,28-10,2 :: Dhs:RD 6. DhsA 139,17-140,10 :: DhsA:P 183 f.

⁶⁸ *Saññā*: Dhs §4/10,3-6 :: Dhs:RD 6 f. DhsA 140,5-9 :: DhsA:P 184 f.

3.4.2.4 Cetanā (volition) is the mind’s characteristic of intending (*cetayita, lakkhaṇa*)⁶⁹ [unmotivated by unwholesome roots or biases, an arhat naturally and appropriately responds to an external situation when there is a need to] (MA 4:87,26). **The Dhamma,saṅgaṇī** defines *cetanā* as “the intention, volition, purposefulness, that arises at that time from contact with the mind-consciousness-element therein” (*yā tasmim̐ samaye tadjā mano, viññāṇa, dhatu samphassa, jā cetanā sañcetanā sañcetaṇitattam̐*, Dhs §5/10,7-10)

3.4.2.5 Viññāṇa (consciousness; the Commentary lemma reads *cittam̐*) is the mind’s characteristic of knowing (*vijānana, lakkhaṇa*)⁷⁰ [an arhat’s consciousness is simply a reflection of present reality, without any “footing” for karma or rebirth] (MA 4:88,1). **The Dhamma,saṅgaṇī** defines *viññāṇa* (= *citta*), thus: “That which at that time is ideation, thought, the mind, mentation, the heart, pure radiance [*paṇḍara*, PmA 2:521], the mind, mind-base, mental faculty, consciousness, consciousness-aggregate, that arises from the mind-consciousness element” (*yam tam̐ samaye cittam̐ mano manasam̐ hadayam̐ paṇḍaram̐ mano man’āyatanam̐ man’indriyam viññāṇam̐ viññāṇa-k, khandho tadjā mano, viññāṇa, dhatu*, Dhs 6/10,11-15).

3.4.3 Now, when we look at **Table 3** (2b), we will see that the 5 bare aggregates (*phassa* etc) are listed in all the first 7 abodes [§§4.2a, 6.2a, 8.2a 10.2a, 12.2a, 14.2a, 16.2a]. But, they are neither listed under the 4th and last formless attainment, nor under cessation. The reason for their absence should be properly understood. The 5 bare aggregates are absent from the 4th formless base—that of neither-perception-nor-non-perception [3.3.5.5]—because our perception there is too subtle to notice them. However, this is only temporary, lasting only as long as we are in that base. Once we emerge from it, these aggregates will be seen again (except, of course, in the case of an arhat).

Cessation [1.2 n], attainable only by a non-returner or an arhat, has no perception at all. The non-returner and the arhat, upon emerging from cessation, will each continue to experience the 5 bare aggregates at their own spiritual level. In the case of the arhat, he has no clinging at all.

3.5 THE MENTAL FACTORS [§4.2b etc]

3.5.0 Following the passage listing the “bare aggregates” [3.4] is a list of 6 “states” (*dhammā*)—**will, decision, energy [effort], mindfulness, equanimity, attention**—which, in Pali, are *chando adhimokkho vīriyam̐ sati upekkhā manasikāro* [§4.2b], respectively. These are mental factors (also called *dhamma*), which the Commentary refers to as “characteristics” (*lakkhaṇa*) of an arhat.

These 6 states are briefly defined as follows:⁷¹

3.5.1 CHANDA

3.5.1.1 Chanda (will) is the mind’s characteristic of “volition,” the desire to act (*kattu, kamyatā lakkhaṇa*, MA 4:88,2), that is, to avoid bad, or do good (Vbh §433).⁷² In this usage, *chanda* is distinct from greed (*lobha*) and lust (*rāga*), which are invariably unwholesome. When *chanda* is associated with wholesome concomitants, it is the desire for a wholesome goal.

⁶⁹ *Cetanā*: Dhs §5/10,7-10 :: Dhs:RD 7 f. DhsA 140,10-141,17 :: DhsA:P 185 f.

⁷⁰ *Viññāṇa*: Dhs §/10,11-15 :: Dhs:RD 8. Dhs:RD 7 f. DhsA 141,70-142,2 :: DhsA:P 186 f.

⁷¹ Comy glosses of these terms are found at MA 4:88,1-5.

⁷² Vbh §433/216,28 f; MA 4:88,1 f.

3.5.1.2 Following the Commentarial 4 “**defining devices**” (*naya*),⁷³ *chanda* is described in the following manner.

- (1) its characteristic (*lakkhaṇa*) or salient quality is to act;
 - (2) its property or function (*rasa*), performing a task (*kicca*) or attaining a goal (*sampatti*), is searching for an object;
 - (3) its manifestation (*paccupaṭṭhāna*), how it presents itself in experience, is the need for an object; and
 - (4) its proximate cause (*padaṭṭhāna*) or principal condition is that same object.
- Simply, then, it is the wholesome mind stretching forth towards the object.⁷⁴

3.5.2 ADHIMOKKHA (decision) is the mind’s characteristic [3.5.1.2] of determination (*adhimokkha, lakkhaṇa*, MA 4:88,2). It means “faith, conviction, firm resolve, decision.” Besides the characteristic of determination, its function is that of “not groping around,” and the manifestation of decisiveness or conviction. Its proximate cause is something to be convinced about or committed to. It is compared to a well sunk stone pillar that is unmovable.

3.5.3 VĪRIYA (energy or effort) is the mind’s characteristic of exertion (*paggaha, lakkhaṇam*, MA 4:88,3). It has the senses of striving, advancing, exertion, endeavour, zeal, ardour, vigour, fortitude; the state of unrelenting effort of sustained desire, of unflinching endurance, and a firm grip of the burden; energy, the faculty of energy, the power of energy, right effort (Dhs §13/11).

Its characteristic [3.5.1.2] is that of supporting, exertion and mustering (strength). Its function is to support its associated states. Its manifestation is non-failure. Its proximate cause is a sense of urgency (*saṁvega*), ground for arousing energy, whatever that stirs up vigorous action. Just as new timbers added to an old house prevent it from collapsing, or just as a powerful reinforcement enables the king’s army to defeat the enemy, even so, energy relentlessly holds up and supports all associated states.

3.5.4 SATI (mindfulness) is the mind’s characteristic of attending (*upaṭṭhāna, lakkhaṇā*, MA 4:88,3). It means recollecting, recalling, memory, remembering, bearing in mind, not forgetting, not losing one’s memory, mindfulness, faculty of mindfulness, power of mindfulness, the awakening-factor of right concentration, the path-factor accomplishing the path (Dhs §290/62, §332/67).

3.5.5 UPEKKHĀ (equanimity) is the mind’s characteristic of balance (*majjhatta, lakkhaṇa*, MA 4:88,3 f). **The Dhamma, saṅgaṇī** defines it as “the mental factor that is neither pleasurable nor unpleasurable born of mind-contact, what is felt as neither pleasant nor painful born of mind-contact, neutral feeling” (*yaṃ tasmiṃ samaye cetasikaṃ n’eva sātaraṃ nāsātaraṃ ceto, samphassa, jaṃ adukkha-m-asukhaṃ vedayitaraṃ ceto, samphassa, jā adukkha-m-asukhā vedanā*, Dhs §153/28).

3.5.6 MANASIKĀRA

3.5.6.1 Manasikāra (attention) literally means “making in the mind.” It is the characteristic of mental inclination (*anunaya, manasikāra, lakkhaṇa*, MA 4:88,4). Hence, it is the mental factor responsible for the mind’s advertence to the object, by which that object is presented to consciousness.

Its characteristic [3.5.1.2] is conducting (*sāraṇa*) of the associated mental states towards the object. Its function is to yoke the associated states to the object. It is manifested as confronting an object, and its

⁷³ PmA 1:14,13-16; DhsA 63,18-30. Cf ItA 2:10,33-11,12.

⁷⁴ *Chanda* is often used in the suttas as a synonym for greed or lust, but it also is used in a potentially good sense, such as when one speaks of arousing the desire for abandoning the unwholesome, and for the building up of the wholesome: see, eg, the def of right effort: D 22,21.2(vi)/2:312 (SD 13.2) = M 141,29(2)/3:251 f (SD 11.11).

proximate cause in the object itself. Attention is like a ship's rudder, which keeps it on course; or, like a charioteer who keeps the well-trained horses (the associated states) towards his destination (the object).

3.5.6.2 We should understand the difference between *attention* and initial application (*vitakka*). While **attention** adverts its concomitants towards the object, **initial application** applies them to the object. Attention is a necessary cognitive factor in all states of consciousness, while initial application is a specialized factor, not an indispensable part of cognition.

3.5.7 A basic list

3.5.7.1 This list of states [§§4.1-4,3, etc] discussed above are additional components, each performing their individual (but subtle) functions within dhyana. It is vital to note that these terms do *not* refer to the normal extra-dhyana mental processes. Such terms are later adopted in or expanded in various Abhidhamma sets, such as those listed in **the Abhidhamm'attha Saṅgaha** (Abhs).⁷⁵

3.5.7.2 Like the list of "5 bare aggregates" [3.4], the list of **6 states** [§4.2c] is also a refrain; it recurs at §§4.2, 6.2, 8.2, 10.2, 12.2, 14.2, 16.2. However, it is *absent* from the 4th and last formless base, that of neither-perception-nor-non-perception [§18.2], where perception is supersubtle, and from cessation [§20.2], where there is *no* perception at all. Yet, after emerging from it, its effect on the meditator is profound and pervasive, to say the least. After all, it is an experience of nirvana here and now for the living arhat and non-returner.⁷⁶

3.6 SĀRIPUTTA'S SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT [§4.3-4.5 etc]

3.6.1 Observing the mental states

3.6.1.1 We have thus far examined what Sāriputta experienced in his meditation leading to his awakening. We will now study **how** he does this, beginning with his experience of the 1st dhyana [§§4.3-4.5]. We will first examine **§4.3**, which records how Sāriputta watches the impermanence of all that happens before him. This passage—as shown in **Table 3**—recurs in all the first 7 of the 9 progressive abodes, as we have already noted [3.2.2]. Hence, what we learn here applies to every one of the first 7 progressive abodes [§§4.3, 6.3, 8.3, 10.3, 12.3, 14.3, 16.3].

3.6.1.2 Let us first look at **§4.3a** (the first line of section 4.3 in the Sutta):

4.3 these states were discerned progressively by him (one by one). a

These states arose, **known** to him; they were present, *known* (to him); they disappeared, *known* (to him). b

⁷⁵ In Abhs, we see these states included amongst the 13 "ethically variable factors" (*añña, samāna cetasika*) of the 52 mental factors (*cetasika*) (Abhs ch 2). The 13 comprise **the 7 universals** (*sabba, citta, sādāraṇa*): (1) contact (*phassa*); (2) feeling (*vedanā*); (3) perception (*saññā*); (4) volition (*cetanā*); (5) one-pointedness (of mind) (*ek'aggatā*); (6) life-faculty (*jīvit'indriya*); (7) attention (*manasikāra*): present in all consciousness, performing basic and essential functions; and **the 5 occasionals** (*pakiṇṇaka*): (1) initial application (*vitakka*); (2) sustained application (*vicāra*); (3) decision (*adhimokkha*); (4) energy (*virīya*); (5) zest (*pīti*); (6) will (*chanda*): they are like the universals, but are present only in certain types of wholesome consciousness. See Abhs:BRS:76-83.

⁷⁶ The non-returner, although not yet an arhat, is able to "see" nirvana and feel its profound bliss (like a traveller who is able to see a beautiful city as he approaches from the distance).

Tyāssa dhammā anupada,vavatthitā honti, tyāssa dhammā viditā uppajjanti, viditā upaṭṭhahanti, viditā abbattham gacchanti

We have already examined the key phrase, “**were discerned progressively by him (one by one)**” (*anupada,vavatthitā*). [2.2.3: *Read this again if you are not sure what it is about.*]

The cycle of detailed analysis of mental states into their components here [§§4.1-4.3 and their parallel passages below] is the basis for later Abhidhamma methodology, whose rise was understandably attributed to Sāriputta.⁷⁷

3.6.1.3 §4.3b (the 2nd line of section 4.3 in the Sutta) is very important in terms of meditation practice since it is about how Sāriputta applies insight to his meditation. This stock passage on **the 3-phase “moment” cycle of impermanence** [3.6.3] recurs at §§6.2, 8.2, 10.2, 12.2, 14.2, 16.2; but is omitted in reference to the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception [§20] and of cessation [§20].

[*If you have not done so, carefully read the explanation for the omission of §4.3b from the last 2 progressive abodes [3.1.2.3], and return here to continue your study.*]

3.6.1.4 GRAMMAR. Let us examine the grammar of this important sentence: “**These states arose, known to him; they were present, known (to him); they disappeared, known (to him)**” [§4.3b]. This long sentence is very interesting since it gives us some clues regarding what kind of knowing occurs during dhyana and the attainments, that is, how Sāriputta understands his experience so that it brings him awakening.

Firstly, we must correct any misconception that Sāriputta or anyone “*analyses,*” much less “*defines*” “these states one by one as they occurred.” “Analyse” suggests some intellectual process, “Define” means to “state precisely,” or “determine the limits” of something: this, too, reflects intellectualizing which is absent during dhyana. Simply put, all “knowing” in dhyana is a passive experience, and which must be ratified as “review knowledge” (*pacca,vekkha,ñāṇa*).

3.6.1.5 In human sense-experience, when our functional sense-faculties sense an external “form” (sense-object) within range, and “there is an appropriate conscious engagement” (attention), there is “an appearance of that class of consciousness. Then, there is seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting or feeling (a touch).⁷⁸

The also happens with the mind, but its “range” (unlike in physical sensing) is more immediate when the mind attends to an object. Such an apprehension brings us **knowledge**, arising from any of the 5 physical sensings or from the mind itself.

Clearly, the mind’s apprehension of physical experiences takes slightly more time than conceiving an idea. In either case, it takes at least a moment or two (so to speak). The point is that we can only know an event or an aspect of an event after it has happened: knowing is always *after* the fact.

⁷⁷ Monastic specialists of Buddhist texts in the early times tend to take the early disciples as their authorities. Buddhaghosa tells us that after the 1st council, the Vinaya was entrusted to Upāli and his pupils; Dīgha, Majjhima-, Saṃyutta- and Aṅguttara-nikāyas to Ānanda, Sāriputta, Mahā Kassapa and Anuruddha, respectively, and their pupils (DA 13,23 f, 15,2-13). The Abhidhamma was not mentioned during the 1st council since it was yet composed. See Norman, *Pali Literature*, 1983:8 f.

⁷⁸ On this “triangle of experience,” see **Madhu,piṇḍika S** (M 18,16), SD 6.14; **Mahā Hatthi,padōpama S** (M 28,27-38), SD 6.16; SD 17.8a (1.3).

3.6.2 Nature of knowing

3.6.2.1 EPISTEMOLOGY. We have already noted that the Sutta’s key phrase, *anupada,vavatthitā* [§4.3 etc] means “discerned one by one” [2.2.3]. Here and below, we will further examine **what** it is that is discerned, and **how** it is *discerned*.

In the sentence, “**these states arose, known to him,**” (*tyāssa dhamma viditā uppajjanti*), note that *viditā* (“had known”) is a past participle of *vindati*, “to know, find (out).” *Vindati* functions here like an *adverb of time* to the verb *uppajjanti*. In other words, this main verb, *uppajjanti*, occurs first. We can thus paraphrase the sentence as follows: “These states arose, and then he knew them.” *Uppajjanti* is the 2nd person plural of *uppajjati*, “arise, come into being; appear, are produced; become available.”⁷⁹

3.6.2.2 The same is said of the phrase, “**they were present, known (to him)**” (*viditā upaṭṭhahanti*). *Upaṭṭhahanti* is the 2nd person plural of *upaṭṭhahati*,⁸⁰ “stands near, stands by; places oneself by; presents oneself; is present, appears; stands near (in order to serve), serves, attends (to); tends; worship.” We see here a case where a Pali word has a wide range of meanings, and we need to ascertain which one applies best to the context. The relevant senses have been underscored.

3.6.2.3 The phrase “**they disappeared, known (to him)**” (*viditā abbattham gacchanti*), too, should be read in a similar way: first the event, then the knowledge of it. The Pali phrase for “disappeared” is *abbattham gacchanti* (pl), whose singular form is *abbattham* (*abhi + attha*³),⁸¹ “towards home, towards setting (of the sun); disappears, comes to an end,” + *gacchati*, “to go.” The 2 words often combine to form its past participle and adjective: *abbattham,gata* (or *abbattham gata*), “had disappeared.”

3.6.3 Early Buddhist concept of time

3.6.3.1 ONTOLOGY OF TIME. The sentence, “**these states arose, known to him; they were present, known (to him); they disappeared, known (to him)**” [§4.3b]—in terms of being and existence—gives us the 3 sub-moments of a mental event,⁸² that is, arising, presence and absence. This 3-submoment sequence is applied to all the 16 or so “states” (*dhamma*): the dhyana-factors, the attainment-factors, the 5 bare aggregates and the 6 mental factors [§4.1 f etc]—all this is listed in Panel 2 of **Table 3**. They are all of the nature to arise, exist, then pass away.⁸³

In fact, there are really *neither* moments *nor* submoments of time the way they are stated here:⁸⁴ it is simply our perception of change, alteration, becoming other—applying our mind to them, examining them, turning away from them. **Impermanence** is not about “time,”⁸⁵ but about what we notice when our mind is rightly attentive to what is going on before us⁸⁶—such as that stated in **the Bhadd’eka,ratta**

⁷⁹ See CPD, PED or DP, svv. Also note that in the PTS Pali editions, *uppajjati* is often confused with its near-synonym, *upapajjati*, which includes the sense, “to be reborn.”

⁸⁰ Usually *upaṭṭhahati*; also as *upaṭṭhaheti*, *upaṭṭhāti*, *upaṭṭheti* (Skt *upaṭiṣṭhati*).

⁸¹ See Cone’s Dictionary of Pali (DP): *abhattham*; *attha*³.

⁸² A “mental moment” (*citta-k,khaṇa*) of such an event comprises 3 “submoments.” The latter is an English neologism and has no Pali counterpart.

⁸³ On the duration of a mind-moment (*citta-k,khaṇa*), see Abhs:BRS 154-157.

⁸⁴ On the possibility of scientifically measuring mental moments, see SD 7.7 (12.1).

⁸⁵ On the unreality of time: [3.6.3.6].

⁸⁶ See J E McTaggart, “The unreality of time,” 1908. Cf Whitrow: “... the idea that time is ultimate and irreducible does not commit us to the unnecessary hypothesis that it is absolute, for moments do not exist in their own right but are merely classes of co-existent events” (*The Natural Philosophy of Time*, 1961:183)

Suttas (M 131-134): “ ... the past is gone, | and the future has not yet come. || Only this present state ... let one be sure of it.”⁸⁷

3.6.3.2 It helps to reflect on the Sutta-teaching about **time** in the broader context of its early Buddhist conception. While all the major theistic religions conceive of time “historically” as being linear (with world-creation at the starting-point and world-ending at the impending other), early Buddhism (and ancient Indian religions) see time “existentially” cyclic, that is, it has neither beginning nor end (*anamat’-agga*),⁸⁸ except in between world cycles when the pulsating universe is in stasis before it resumes its cycle of expanding, expanded, then contracting and a “crunched” stasis. This is called *sarṁsāra* (cyclic existence), which also refers to the endless cycle of redeaths and rebirths. This may be said to be “cosmic” time.

With the re-evolution of the universe, its constellations, stars, planets, heavenly bodies, including the earth, “historical” or “physical” time (*kāla*) restarts. This is the “linear” sequence of time which can be assigned numbers, which are often astronomically huge. The best known of such numbers is the “aeon” (*kappa*), a term that refers to the fourfold **cycle** of expansion, steady-state, contraction and stasis, as well as to the average **lifespan** of a being (usually called *āyu,kappa*).

These lifespans are **relative** to the existential planes, totaling 31: 4 subhuman suffering states, the human realm, and 6 heavens (comprising the 11 sense-worlds); 16 form-worlds; 4 formless worlds. For example, a night and a day in the heaven of the 33 (*tāvātimsa*) is 100 human years (our average lifespan). The lifespan of the beings in the highest of the formless worlds (that of the brahmas of the realm of neither-perception-nor-non-perception) is 84,000 aeons!⁸⁹ Such descriptions of relative durations and lifespans refer to what we today call “**time dilation**.”

3.6.3.3 The time we live by daily is said to be **physical, clock or “ticktock” time**, measured in years, months, weeks, days, hours, minutes, seconds and fractions of seconds. This is a “scientifically or “socially” objective or *conventional* time, which appears to be the same for everyone, or by when we are able to measure time for our common purposes.

Then, there is a personal “mind-dependent” subjective, **psychological** time.⁹⁰ This is the kind of time we experience in meditation and in rebirth in existential states, which vary in length and quality. We can also call this “**karmic**” time, since how unwholesome (painful time) or wholesome (pleasant time) it depends on our own mind. Either way, karma is our experience of time: we literally *do* time. When our time is *done*, we are “dead” (*kāla,kiriya*).⁹¹

Most often, the early Buddhist concept of time is commonly understood in **mind-based** or *psychological* terms. In such a time-system, the past no longer exists, the future does not yet exist, only **the present** exists⁹² as an endless series of instances or moments (*khana*) in which a host of mental and physical constituents arise and cease instantaneously, like lightning or faster.⁹³

The less we notice this, ironically, the slower time seems to move. Our notion of time slows down even more so with thought or desire (such as when we are waiting for a bus that seems to be late). This apparent **slowing down** of time arises from directing our mind from the present (natural time) into the

⁸⁷ M 131,3/3:187 + SD 8.9 (5); also S 1.10/1:5 (SD 8.9 (5.4)); Dh 348, 421.

⁸⁸ **Gaddul,baddha S 1 + 2** (S 22.99+100/3:149 f), SD 28.7a; **Anamat’agga Saṁy** (S 15.1-10/2:178-186); Thī 496; SA 2:156 *anamat’agga avidit’agga*; SD 28.7a (2); SD 48.3 (1.2.3).

⁸⁹ For the 31 planes, see SD 1.7 (Appendix).

⁹⁰ See Dowden 2012 ch 2; Weinert 2013:7-84.

⁹¹ This is past part of *kālaṁ karoti* (S 1:187; Sn 516).

⁹² For a full def of the 3 times (past, future and present): **Nirutti,patha S** (S 22.62), SD 68.1.

⁹³ Cf A 3.25/1:124 f; SD 19.14 (5.1.1).

past (which is gone and does not exist) or into the future (which has not yet arisen and will never come). However, when we are enjoying our meditation, time just seems to fly, and we emerge from it to discover that we have blissfully sat for a few hours! This is an experience of **natural time**, also called “organic time.”

3.6.3.4 The Anupada Sutta (M 111) reports how Sāriputta, observes the cycle of arising-presence-disappearance of the states “**understood thus: ‘So indeed, these states, *not having been*, come into being; having been, they pass away’**” [§4.4]. Note that the key phrases are in the present tense. Moreover, it is said that Sāriputta “understood” all this—this is cognitive (thinking) **knowledge**. A past state is recalled; we note how it is present; and then how it passes away.

This is mind-based cognitive knowledge, based on *thinking*. A similar process applies to affective knowing, the experience of *feelings*. They are both mind-based processes (although we may poetically speak of the former as the “head” and the latter as the “heart”). In either case, they are both conditioned: *not having been, they come into being; having been, they pass away*. All this happens *after* the fact: it is subject to time, dependent on consciousness. This knowledge arises *in* time, which is relative to our perception of the world through our senses; and recalled, even inferred, by the mind. In short, they are mind-made.⁹⁴

3.6.3.5 We now come to another important point about the early Buddhist concept of time. Note the 2 key verbs we are now examining: “**discerned**” [§4.3 etc] and “**understood**” [§4.4 etc]—they apply to all the repetitive passages related to how time is *relative* to Sāriputta’s experience. Both “discerned” and “understood” entail that these processes occur in his mind: they are mental processes, **mind-made**. These experiences take time but that time does not have any real existence. It is only a series of **concepts** relative to the realities of the states noticed by Sāriputta. In other words, time is a relative truth of the world of experience in our own mind or consciousness.

In **the (Devatā) Samiddhi Sutta** (S 1.20), when a female forest deity tries to entice the young monk Samiddhi to enjoy sensual pleasures, he replies: “I have abandoned what takes time (*kālīka*), avuso, to go after what is visible right here (*sandiṭṭhika*).” **Sandiṭṭhika**, in fact, describes one of the virtues of the Buddha Dhamma, and refers to true reality, rightly seeing which we awaken to nirvana. “**What takes time**” (*kālīka*) is a humorous wordplay on sensual pleasures, especially sex, which keeps the world busy and populated.⁹⁵

3.6.3.6 Sandiṭṭhika, the “visible here and now,” is, of course, the present moment to which we wisely attend. From **§4.3** (and its refrains) we know of the 3 phases of each of the states: *they arise, they are present, they disappear*. A similar triad of terms is found in **the Saṅkhata Lakkhaṇa Sutta** (A 3.47a) which describes the “conditioning characteristics of the conditioned” (*saṅkhatassa saṅkhata, lakkhaṇa*), in reference to each of the 5 aggregates [3.4.1], which is characterized by “arising (*uppāda*), passing away (*vaya*), a becoming-other of its presence (*ṭhitassa aññathatta*).”⁹⁶ This triad was systematized in the Abhidhamma as “arising” (*uppāda*), “presence” (*ṭhiti*) and “breaking up” (*bhaṅga*).⁹⁷

These are useful and interesting conventional terms, but they all point to what has already passed, including the “present.” These descriptive words are helpful in communicating with the world, but, in

⁹⁴ Cf Bunnag 2016:89.

⁹⁵ See SD 31.7 (6.2); SD 32.2 (3.1.3); SD 10.16 (4.5.1); SD 51.15 (3). A related “time” term is *samaya*, which refers to the proper occasion for Dharma practice: **Samayāsamaya S** (A 5.54), SD 51.15.

⁹⁶ S 23.37/3:37 f + SD 33.11 (2); SD 17.2b (3.3); SD 27.2b esp (2).

⁹⁷ On the 3 phases of time SD 17.2b (1.1.2).

reality, none of them exists. Time, in other words, is unreal: it keeps passing away. This is the true reality of **impermanence**.

Existence occurs in time, which is itself *conditioned*. Beyond the conditioned that is samsara, there is nirvana, **the unconditioned**. Since nirvana is free of samsara, it is said to be time-free or timeless (*akāli-ka*). It is outside of time. Hence, it is neither impermanent, nor unsatisfactory, nor non-self: nirvana has no attributes.⁹⁸

Our task, then, is to be in time with our practice, ever watching the present. This is the way of the timeless, time-free nirvana.

<i>Kālo ghasati bhūtāni sabbān’eva sah’attanā yo ca kāla,ghaso bhūto sa bhūta,pacaniṃ pacīti</i>	Time devours beings, everyone, including oneself; but the being who swallows time cooks the one who cooks beings.	(J 245/2:260)
--	--	---------------

3.6.4 The perception of impermanence

3.6.4.1 For the most part, **the Anupada Sutta** (M 111) is a “practice” sutta: it records the Buddha’s own account of Sāriputta’s meditation leading to his arhathood. Its key passages [§§4.3-4.5 etc] are valuable lessons in the practice of insight (*vipassanā*), including **the perception of impermanence** (*anicca,-saññā*). The perception of impermanence is very helpful for our own practice leading us up to streamwinning in this life itself.⁹⁹

Hence, the Sutta attests that the perception of impermanence is also helpful in giving us some understanding of the nature of **time** in the light of early Buddhism. It helps us to see how impermanence is an integral aspect of our whole being—what it means to exist in time. This puts the perception of impermanence into a cosmic perspective, since all *that was, is and will be*, are bound up in time.

3.6.4.2 Sāriputta is well aware of the theme of **the 3 phases of reality** explained in connection with the first 7 of the 9 progressive abodes [3.1]. In fact, we know that he becomes a streamwinner upon listening to just the first 2 lines of this famous quatrain uttered by Assaji, one of the first 5 monks:

<i>Ye dhammā hetu-p,pabhavā tesaṃ hetuṃ tathāgato āha tesaṃ ca yo nirodho evaṃ,vādī mahā,samaṇo</i>	Whatever states that arise from a cause, ¹⁰⁰ their cause the Tathagata [thus-come] has told, ¹⁰¹ and their ending, too ¹⁰² — thus spoke the great recluse.	(Mv 1.23.5+10) ¹⁰³
---	--	-------------------------------

The account of Sāriputta’s meditation as recorded in **the Anupada Sutta** (M 111), in fact, gives details on how he fully understands the meaning of the quatrain’s last 2 lines. The Commentary tells us that the 3rd line refers to both the 3rd truth (the path) and the 4th truth (the ending of suffering). This sequence is

⁹⁸ On “non-self” being the principle behind all conditioned things, see **Dhamma Niyāma S** (A 3.134), SD 26.8.

⁹⁹ See **(Anicca) Cakkhu S** (S 25.1), SD 16.7.

¹⁰⁰ This line refers to the 5 aggregates [3.4.1], in, the 1 noble truth, that of suffering (*dukkha,sacca*) (VA 5:976,20)

¹⁰¹ This line refers to the 2nd noble truth, that of the arising of suffering (*samudaya,sacca*) (VA 5 975,23).

¹⁰² These 2 lines refer to the 3rd+4th noble truths: those of the path to the ending of suffering and the ending of suffering itself (VA 5:975,23-25). This is the “practice” sequence: **Mahā Saḷ-āyatanika S** (M 149,11 etc) + SD 41.9 (2.4); SD 53.26 (2).

¹⁰³ SD 42.8 (1.2). Mv 1.23,5+10 @ V 1:40,28*+41,35* (VA 5:975) = Ap 3.1.146/1:25 (ApA 231) = Peṭk 10 = ThaA 3:95. See also SD 49.20 (1.2.2.2).

probably the older one (than the better-known sequence of 1-2-3-4), as found, for example, in the **Mahā Sal-āyatanika Sutta** (M 149).¹⁰⁴

3.7 WISE ATTENTION AND ITS BENEFITS

3.7.1 Sāriputta’s mind is purified and free

3.7.1.1 In §4.5, Sāriputta is described as follows: “He dwelled **unattracted** to those states, **unrepelled; independent, detached; free, unfettered; with a barrier-free mind**” (*so tesu dhammesu anupāyo anapāyo anissito appaṭibaddho vippamutto visaṃyutto vimariy’ādīkatena cetasā viharati*). Like §4.4, this passage, too, recurs in all the other 9 progressive abodes [Table 3, panel 5]. These passages describe Sāriputta’s mental purification during his meditation.

This same list of adjectives on **mental purification** is taught to the monks and given in the 1st person (the practitioner’s voice) in the **Cha-b, bisodhana Sutta** (M 112), the sutta after the Anupada Sutta in the Majjhima Nikāya. At M 112, this list of adjectives describes the practitioner’s mind towards the seen (*diṭṭhe*), the heard (*sute*), the sensed (*mute*), and the known (*viññate*).¹⁰⁵

At **M 112**, the Buddha says: “It is by knowing thus, seeing thus” (*evaṃ ... janato, evaṃ passato*) **these “4 expressions”** (*vohāra*)—the seen, the heard, the sensed and the known—through not clinging, that the mind is free from the influxes (of sensual lust, existence, views and ignorance) (that is, becoming an arhat).¹⁰⁶ This same explanation applies to Sāriputta in M 111, too.

3.7.1.2 The Commentary to the Anupada Sutta gives the following glosses on the terms of the passage, thus:

<i>anupāya</i>	unattracted , that is, unmoved by the power of lust (<i>rāga, vasena anupagamano hutvā</i>),
<i>anapāya</i>	unrepelled by the power of repulsion (<i>paṭigha, vasena anapagato</i>);
<i>anissita</i>	independent of craving and view (<i>taṇhā, diṭṭhi, nissayehi anissito</i>),
<i>appaṭibaddha</i>	detached from, unbound by lustful desires (<i>chanda, rāgena abaddho</i>);
<i>vippamutta</i>	free from sensual lust (<i>kāma, rāgato vippamutto</i>),
<i>visaṃyutta</i>	unfettered by the 4 bonds (the 4 influxes), that is, all the defilements (<i>catuhi yogehi sabba, kilesehi vā visaṃyutto</i>);
<i>vimariy’ādī,- katena cetasā</i>	a mind free from the mental barriers that are defilements (<i>kilesa</i>) and mental objects (<i>ārammaṇa</i>), free as a result of their removal. (MA 4:89,5-27)

3.7.1.3 These 7 states, beginning with *anupāya* and the rest [3.7.1.2], are clearly an older form of what we now popularly known as **the 5 mental fetters** (*pañca, nīvaraṇa*).¹⁰⁷ They are mental impurities (*cetaso upakkilesa*) that weaken our wisdom (*paññāya dubbalī, karaṇe*),¹⁰⁸ thus preventing us from rising above the mere physicality of our senses. In this way, we are unable to directly see the true reality of our being. Hence, we can call them **the “7 hindrances.”** [3.7.2]

¹⁰⁴ See the verse above, line 3 n.

¹⁰⁵ These 4 expressions (*vohāra*) refer to the gamut of human sensing, with “sensing” (*mute*) referring to the senses of smell, taste and touch. See SD 53.5 (2).

¹⁰⁶ M 112,4.2/3:30,8-13 (SD 59.7).

¹⁰⁷ On the 5 mental hindrances (*pañca, nīvaraṇa*), see **Nīvaraṇa**, SD 32.1; (**Nīvaraṇa**) **Saṅgārava S** (S 46.55), SD 3.12.

¹⁰⁸ **D 12,30/1:246, 25.16/3:49 f; M 39,15/1:276; S 46.37/5:94, 46.38/5:96** (cf Sn 66); **A 5.51,3/3:63, 6.57,7/3:386; Vbh 244 f.**

3.7.2 The 7 hindrances

3.7.2.1 While the 5 hindrances distract us so that we are unable to gain any mental focus for meditative cultivation, **the 7 hindrances**—lust, repulsion, craving and view, lustful desire, sensual lust, and defilements—work at a deeper level in our own being to prevent us from ever reaching the path. A key characteristic of an old teaching is that it tends to be *non-technical*, appearing even as a sort of “make-do” list of what to avoid.

Note, too, that the 7 hindrances overlap one another in places. This is characteristic of an oral teaching where the teacher directly teaches the student who practices not the *words*, but the **method** behind them. Hence, when we overcome these 7 hindrances, our mind focuses itself into dhyana.

3.7.2.2 When we understand how the 7 hindrances formula work, we will see that they are related to **the 5 mental hindrances** (*pañca, nīvaraṇa*), thus:¹⁰⁹

The “7 hindrances”

“He dwelled **unattracted** to those states, unrepelled, independent, detached, free, unfettered; with a barrier-free mind.” [§4.5]

mental hindrances overcome

(1) sensual desire	<i>kāma-c, chanda</i>
(2) ill will	<i>vyāpāda</i>
(3) restlessness and worry	<i>uddhacca, kukkuccha</i>
(4) sloth and torpor	<i>thīna, middha</i>
(5) doubt	<i>vicikicchā</i>

- The meditator overcomes **sensual desire** by being unattracted (*anupāya*) to pleasant mental objects as they arise to him.
- Conversely, he is not distracted by its opposite—**ill will**—that is, towards unpleasant mental objects; he is unrepelled (*anapāya*) by them.
- **Restlessness and worry** do not trouble him: he is mentally independent (*anissita*) and detached (*appaṭibaddha*) from being emotionally dependent on others.
- **Sloth and torpor** do not overcome him since he is mentally free (*vippamutta*) from sensual lust, and unfettered (*visaṃyutta*) from ill will.
- He is free from **doubt** since his is a mind free from mental barriers, neither narrowed by defilements nor distracted by mental objects; his mind is bright and open on account of having removed all mental barriers (*maṛiyāda*) or hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*).

All these passages suggest the temporary suppression of the defilements that otherwise would become hindrances to mental growth. When we remove these hindrances, we attain the 1st dhyana, when the mind begins to become profoundly calm and clear. However, we can only have full freedom from defilements when they are eradicated by the highest path, which Sāriputta attains in the end.

Hence, each of the dhyanas and the attainments are said to have “**further escape**” (*uttari nissaraṇa*) [3.1.2]; there is something more to be cultivated for progress up the path. This refrain recurs for all the stages [§§4.5, 6.4, 8.4, 10.4, 12.4, 14.4, 16.4, 18.2], except for cessation [§20.2] at which point Sāriputta attains arhathood.

¹⁰⁹ Compare these 7 “hindrances” to the 5 “delights” (sensual pleasures, ill will, harming, form, and self-identity) as older sets that evolved into the 5 mental hindrances and the 7 latent tendencies and the 10 mental fetters: SD 55.17 (2), esp Table 2.

3.8 REMOVING THE DEFILEMENTS

3.8.1 Destroying the mental influxes

3.8.1.1 At the end of Sāriputta’s meditation progress—says **the Anupada Sutta** (M 111)—“**his influxes were destroyed by his seeing with wisdom**” (*paññāya c’assa disvā āsavā parikkhīṇā honti*)¹¹⁰ [§19]. That’s all that is mentioned of the “influxes” (*āsava*), without listing them out. This suggests that “the influxes” are already a well-known teaching-set amongst the Buddha’s followers at the time of the composition of M 111.

The older suttas give a list of **3 influxes**: those of sensuality (*kām’āsava*), of existence (*bhav’āsava*), of ignorance (*avijjāsava*).¹¹¹ In the later suttas, the Abhidhamma and Commentaries, the influx of views (*diṭṭh’āsava*) is inserted as the 3rd influx, giving a total of **4 influxes**,¹¹² which are also called “floods” (*ogha*)¹¹³ or “bonds” (*yoga*),¹¹⁴ reflecting their effect upon our minds and lives. The arhat, then, is one who has destroyed **sensuality** (any distraction from any sense-objects), **existence** (no more karma or re-birth) and **views** (free from all views), and **ignorance** (he fully understands the 4 noble truths). [3.8.1.3]

From the sutta usage of the term *āsava*, it is clear that it refers to all the defilements that “flow (inwards, outwards)” (*āsavati*)¹¹⁵ into our being through our 6 sense-bases, keeping us seeking support externally, so that we are caught up in the cycle of existence and rebirths,¹¹⁶ and we continue to be afflicted (*āsava*², DP)¹¹⁷ and festering (*āsava*³, DP) like an open wound, a canker or a discharge (implying pain and suffering).¹¹⁸ Hence, the destruction of the influxes (*khīṇ’āsava*) is a common term for arhat-hood.¹¹⁹

3.8.1.2 In the **Cha-b,bisodhana Sutta** (M 112), which follows M 111 in the Majjhima, we see the Buddha himself, recalling how as a Bodhisattva, having reached mental focus, he declares: “I directed it [the mind] to the knowledge of the destruction of the influxes” (*āsavānaṃ khaya,ñāṇāya cittaṃ abhinin-nāmesim*). This is immediately followed by listing (not of the influxes but of) **the 4 noble truths**; then, the term “influxes” replaces each of the 4 truths in the stock passage,¹²⁰ thus:

19 With the concentrated mind thus purified, and bright, unblemished, free from defects, pliant, malleable, steady and utterly unshakable,

¹¹⁰ Lit, “And having seen his (influxes) with wisdom, he totally destroyed the influxes.”

¹¹¹ The 3 influxes: **D** 2,99.3 (SD 8.10); **D** 33,1.10(20)/3:216,9 ≈ **M** 9,70/1:55,10 (SD 11.14), **M** 36,43/1:249,14 f (SD 49.4); **M** 121,12/3:108 (SD 11.3); MA 1:86,20, 3:41,25 (at M 1:361,24); **S** 38.8/4:256,4 = **45.163**/5:56,-15 = **47.50**/189,29; **A** 3.58,5/1:165 (SD 94.5), **A** 3.59,4/1:167 (SD 80.16), **6.63**,9/3:414,11; **Vbh** 347,11.

¹¹² The 4 influxes: **D** 16,1.12/2:81,26 = 84,5 passim (SD 9); MA 1:62,6 f (at M 1:6,32 + qu S 4:256,4); V 3:5,27 f; SA 2:65,1 f; AA 2:355,28 at A 1:241,24. See CPD: āsava.

¹¹³ The 4 influxes as *ogha*: **Ogha Pañha S** (S 38.11), SD 30.3(1.4 + 1.4.2); **D** 33,1.11(31)/3:230,10 f, 1.5(4)/3:276,-19-21; **M** 36,43/1:249,14-16; **S** 45.171/5:59,3-9; **Vbh** 373,34 f; **Vism** 211,1; 683,34.

¹¹⁴ The 4 influxes as *yoga*: **D** 33,1.11(32)/3:230,11, 1.5(5)/3:276,22-24; **S** 45.172/5:59,10-15; **A** 4.10/2:10,15 (SD 105.1); J 1:374,19; cf Pm 1:129,26 f (*catūhi yogehi yutto loka,sannivāso catu,yoga,yojito*) + Pm A 2:415,18-25; Vbh A §155/35,15-19.

¹¹⁵ *Āsavati*, found only in Comys: MA 1:61,17, pl 1:61,13, AA 2:182,28 ≈ UA 176,2; SA2:64,26.

¹¹⁶ V 3:21,19 (VA 225,1 f) = 5:143,10 = A 5:70,15 (AA 5:32,11), qu DhsA 369,29.

¹¹⁷ V 3:21,19 f; A 1:98,16. As “discharge”: A 1:124,8; AA 2:95,13.

¹¹⁸ A 1:124,8 = Pug 30,9; AA 2:195,13 = PugA 211,26.

¹¹⁹ *Āsava-k,khaya* V 1:8,28*; A 3:69,12*; Dh 253; Tha 16.

¹²⁰ See eg **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2,97/1:83), SD 8.10; **Bhaya,bherava S** (M 4,29/1:23), SD 44.3; **Verañja S** (A 8.11/-4:178) = Pār 1.1 (V 3:1-6).

I directed and inclined it to **the knowledge of the ending of the mental influxes.**

19.2 I knew, as it really is, that

this is suffering;
 this is the arising of suffering;
 this is the ending of suffering;
 this is the path to the ending of suffering;

these are mental influxes;
 this is the arising of influxes;
 this is the ending of influxes;
 this is the path to the ending of influxes.¹²¹

19.3 My mind, thus knowing, thus seeing,¹²² was freed from the influx of sensual desire;
 It was freed from the influx of existence;
 It was freed from the influx of ignorance.¹²³
 (M 112,19/3:36), SD 59.7

Two points should be noted in this ancient passage. Firstly, **the 4 truths** are highlighted as the means of identifying and overcoming the influxes. These “truths” (*sacca*) are not so much doctrines or even teachings, as they are practical tools or means for our application to reach the path and advance on it towards awakening.

3.8.1.3 Secondly, only **3 influxes**—those of sensual desire, existence and ignorance—are mentioned. They are simply extensions of **ignorance** (*avijjā*), whose active twin is **craving** (*taṇhā*); but here, it is used to refer to the craving that easily and often arises from the senses as sensuality (*kāma*). Sensuality refers to any kind of devotion (religious or worldly) to the body, whether physically or externally in some form (*rūpa*).

All this is sustained by our **ignorance**, by which we fail to see sensuality and existence for what they really are: *impermanent, suffering and without an abiding self*. For this reason, even those who have attained the highest of the formless attainments (the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception) are unable to progress any further, on account of their inherent view of a Soul (*atta*) or abiding essence (*brahman*) [3.3.6.2].

3.8.2 Sāriputta’s cessation and arhathood

3.8.2.1 Near the Sutta’s end, Sāriputta is described as “surmounting the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception ... attained and dwelled in **the cessation of perception and feeling**” [§19]. Now, only non-returners and arhats are able to attain this profound state of suspended animation, unique in religion and spirituality. It is then said that “**And his influxes were destroyed by his seeing with wisdom**” [§19b; 3.8.1.1] and then he “emerged mindful from that attainment” [§20.1].

¹²¹ As in **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 26,42), SD 1.11. Comy says that the Buddha, having shown the 4 noble truths according to their own nature (in terms of suffering, *dukkha*) (above), then goes on to show them indirectly (*pariyāyato*) in terms of defilements (*kilesa*) here (MA 1:127).

¹²² “Thus seeing, thus knowing” (*evaṃ jānato evaṃ passato*) refers to insight and the path, which reaches its goal in the path of arhathood. (MA 1:127)

¹²³ This set of **3 influxes** (*āsava*)—*kām’āsava*, *bhav’āsava*, *avijjāsava*—is ancient; also at A 2:211, 4:179. A later (Abhidhamma) list of 4 (with views, *diṭṭh’āsava*, as third) is found in V 3:5 and Comys.

3.8.2.2 The Commentary explains this apparent anomaly by quoting “**the elders of ancient India**” (*jambu, dīpa, vāsī therā*), the early monastics in India,¹²⁴ who explained that: “The elder Sāriputta cultivated the twin practice of calm and insight (*samatha, vipassanāṃ yuganaddham*), and realised the fruit of non-returning. Then, he entered the attainment of cessation, and after emerging from it, he attained arhathood.” (MA 4:90,22-91,10).

3.8.2.3 Apparently, the sentence, “**And his influxes were destroyed by his seeing with wisdom**” should be read as an afterthought or footnote in our modern scholarly convention. In fact, the conjunction, “and” (*ca* from *c’assa*) clearly suggests the sentence is an addendum. After all, we are told further down that Sāriputta now knows that “**There is no further escape (necessary)**” [§20.3], since he has attained the path’s goal, arhathood.

3.8.3 The 4 influxes and the 10 fetters

3.8.3.1 The 3 influxes (*āsava*) of sensual desire (*kām’āsava*), of existence (*bhav’āsava*), and of ignorance (*avijj’āsava*), are a very ancient set, found often in the 4 Nikāyas [3.8.1.1]. When we destroy these 3 influxes, we become arhats. During the early years of the 1st period¹²⁵ of the Buddha’s ministry, those who listened to him and renounced became arhats soon enough. In due course, especially during the middle period onwards, when the Buddha’s community had gained fame, respect and support of the masses, attracted large numbers of renunciants, and even larger numbers of lay-followers.¹²⁶

The more diligent amongst these burgeoning community easily attained pre-arhat stages of the path: streamwinning, once-returning and non-returning. Since most of such neophytes lack the spiritual maturity and readiness of the early arhats, they had to be taught and trained over a longer period by way of a programme of **gradual teachings** for both the monastic and the lay followers.¹²⁷

<u>the 3 influxes</u> (<i>āsava</i>)	<u>the 10 fetters</u> (<i>dasa saṃyojana</i>)	<u>stages of noble sainthood</u>	
views (added later) {	(1) <u>self-identity view</u> ¹²⁸	} <u>The 3 fetters: streamwinner</u>	
(1) sensuality {	(2) <u>spiritual doubt</u>		} +3 roots ¹³⁰ weakened: once-returner
(2) existence {	(3) <u>attachment to rituals and vows</u> ¹²⁹			} The 5 lower fetters: non-returner
(3) ignorance {	(4) sensual lust	} The 5 higher fetters: arhat	
	(5) repulsion		
	(6) greed for form existence		
	(7) greed for formless existence		
	(8) conceit		
	(9) restlessness		
	(10) ignorance		

Table 3.8 The 3 influxes, the 10 fetters and sainthood¹³¹ [cf SD 49.14 (2)]

¹²⁴ This prob refers to the early monastics, direct disciples of the Buddha, and/or any sangha of monastics up to around Asoka’s time, who knew the lives and achievements of the great elders, or belonged to such lineage of oral Dharma tradition.

¹²⁵ On the 3 periods of the Buddha’s ministry, see SD 40a.1 (1.3.2.3).

¹²⁶ On such a scenario, see (**Chakka**) **Nāgita S** (A 6.42), SD 55.12b.

¹²⁷ See **The gradual way**, (SD 56.1).

¹²⁸ See **Antā S** (S 22.103), SD 14.1.

¹²⁹ See **Kukkura, vatika S** (M 57/1:387-392), SD 23.11.

¹³⁰ “3 roots” = the 3 unwholesome roots (*akusala mūla*): greed, hate and delusion.

3.8.3.2 Their path progress was also gradual: they became streamwinners, once-returners and non-returners. To explain how these paths (and their fruitions) are attained, the 3 influxes were extended into the set of **the 10 fetters** (*dasa saṃyojana*).¹³² This evolution of the 3 influxes into the 10 fetters¹³³ is represented in **Table 3.8**.

Note that under the Table heading, “**the 3 influxes**,” only the influxes of (1) sensuality, (2) existence and (3) ignorance are numbered. The term “influx of views” (*diṭṭh’āsava*) is unnumbered: it was added in the later suttas and the Abhidhamma. In the set of **4 influxes**, that of “views” is numbered (3), followed by (4) ignorance.

3.8.3.2 We can easily see how the 3 influxes branch themselves out into the fetters (4)-(10). Although **the arhat** is listed as having destroyed the “5 higher fetters,” numbers (6)-(10), he actually has broken *all* the 10 fetters. **The non-returner** has destroyed the “5 lower fetters,” where the influx of sensuality comprises 2 aspects: the fetters of sensual lust and of repulsion (which are opposites of one another; hence, they are co-dependent). The influx of views covers the first 3 fetters, which is broken by the **streamwinner**, and **the once-returner** has broken these same 3 fetters and also significantly weakened the 3 unwholesome roots (greed, hate and delusion).

Clearly, **the influx of views** (*diṭṭh’āsava*) is actually inherent in the influx of ignorance. The influx of views is listed in its own right—as number 3, making the influx of ignorance as number 4—in the list of 4 influxes. In this way, we have a clear idea of how streamwinning and once-returning are attained in terms of breaking the 10 fetters.

3.9 SĀRIPUTTA’S SPIRITUAL MASTERY

3.9.1 Sāriputta’s mastery of the path [§§21-22]

3.9.1.1 The Buddha, describing Sāriputta’s spiritual mastery, declares that “**he has attained mastery and perfection in noble moral virtue (*ariya, sīla*) ... noble concentration (*ariya, samādhi*) ... noble wisdom (*ariya, paññā*) ... noble freedom (*ariya, vimutti*)” [§21.1]. “Mastery” (*vasī*) refers to fulfilment of the practitioner’s meditation and attaining of the path, while “perfection” (*pāramī*) is the attainment of fruition of arhathood [§21]. The Majjhima Commentary glosses the former as “having attained to mastery by way of practice or habit” (*ciṅṇa, vasitam patto*), and the latter as “having attained to fulfilment” (*nipphatti, patto*) (MA 4:16 f).**

The whole passage is, of course, an extension of the noble eightfold path as the 3 trainings in *moral virtue, concentration and wisdom*, and their fruitions, which are commonly known as **the 10 rightness** (*dasa sammatta*), that is, the 8 path-factors, right knowledge (*sammā, ñāṇa*) and right freedom (*sammā, vimutti*). This well known stock is often found in the suttas.¹³⁴

“**Right knowledge**” refers to the actual awakening (like the moment that we pass our exams with the examiner’s marking our last paper and putting all our marks together). “**Right freedom**” is when we rejoice in the fact of actually knowing, through review knowledge (*paccavekkhaṇa, ñāṇa*), that we have

¹³¹ For details, see SD 10.16 (1.6.6-1.6.8); **Kīṭa, giri S** (M 70), SD 11.1 (5.1.4); (**Sekha**) **Uddesa S** (A 4.85), SD 3.3 (2). See also SD 40a.1 (15.4.4) n; SD 49.14 Table 2.

¹³² The teaching-sets evolved over time and in different ways: see SD 55.17: Table 2 & Table 3.

¹³³ They are respectively, in Pali: (1) *sakkāya, diṭṭhi*, (2) *vicikicchā*, (3) *sīla-b, bata, parāmāsa*, (4) *kāma, raga*, (5) *paṭigha* (sometimes, *vyāpāda*, ill will), (6) *rūpa, raga*, (7) *arūpa, raga*, (8) *māna*, (9) *uddhacca*, (10) *avijjā*.

¹³⁴ For details on the 10 rightness, more specifically called “the adept’s right freedom” (*asekha sammā vimutti*): **Asekha S 1+2** (A 10.111+112/5:222); see SD 19.16 (1.8-10).

awakened to arhathood, and thus we are free from suffering (like the moment we see our name on the exam results list of passing students).

3.9.1.2 Why is that, in Sāriputta’s case, there is *no* mention of “right knowledge” (*sammā,ñāṇa*)? Note that the term used in the Sutta is “noble freedom” (*ariya,vimutti*), instead of “right freedom.” Noble freedom means that, in Sāriputta’s case, his profound wisdom allows him to know that “there is *no* further escape (necessary)” —he has mastered the path and attained fruition of the highest (*vasi-p,patta parami-p,patta*).

In fact, the phrase *so vasi-p,patto pārami-p,patto ariyasmim̐ sīlasmim̐ ... samādhismim̐ ... paññāya ... vimuttiyā* [3.9.2.1]—describing the arhat “who has crossed over” (*paraḡū*) to nirvana—is found in the ancient canonical commentary, **the Mahā,niddesa** (NmA 1:20,24-26), in its comments on the last verse (Sn 771) of **the Kāma Sutta** (Sn 4.1), the first sutta in the Aṭṭhaka,vagga.

This phrase, *vasi-p,patta pārami-p,patta*, and the other related terms, are, in turn, explained in the Mahā,niddesa Commentary, **the Saddhamma,pajjotikā**, thus (with the Pali terms simplified as their stems or head-words):

so	“he,” the noble saint (<i>ariya</i>), that is, the arhat;
vasi-p,patta ¹³⁵	“attained mastery,” attained the state of pleasantness (the dhyanas), power (psychic powers, etc), fulfilment (of the goal, arhathood) (<i>kanta,bhāvaṃ issariya,bhāvaṃ nipphanna,bhāvaṃ patto</i>);
pārami-p,patta ¹³⁶	“attained perfection,” attained to the ending, completion, or the highest state, nirvana (<i>pāramīti avasānaṃ niṭṭhānaṃ uttama,bhāvaṃ vā</i>);
ariya,sīla	“in noble moral virtue,” in faultless moral virtue (<i>niddose silasmim̐</i>);
ariya,samādhi	“in noble concentration,” in faultless samadhi (<i>niddose sanādhismim̐</i>);
ariya,paññā	“in noble wisdom,” in faultless wisdom (<i>niddose paññāya</i>);
ariya,vimutti	“in noble freedom,” in faultless freedom by way of fruition (of the path) (<i>niddose vimuttiyā</i>).

By the 1st (noble moral virtue), he is restrained (*gahitā*) from any unwholesomeness in terms of speech, action and livelihood. By the 2nd (noble concentration), he is *restrained* by way of effort, mindfulness and concentration. By the 3rd (noble concentration), he is *restrained* by way of thought (*vitakka*) and right view. And by the 4th, thus equipped (*taṃ,sampayutta*), he is *restrained* in all other unwholesome states (*sesa,dhammā*). (NmA 81,3-13)

¹³⁵ *Vasi*, “mastery, meditative power” is usually used in connection with meditation (Pm 2:56,19; PmA 3:564,24).

¹³⁶ *Pārami-p,patta* is found at Pm 2:55,29, 56,20; as *paññāya pārami-p,patta*, simply meaning “perfection of wisdom” (non-tt), B 1,74/6,24; BA 58,6+28 f. Dhammapāla lists 5 kinds of a “disciple’s perfections” (*sāvaka,pāramī*): one accomplished in the perfections, one accomplished in the analytic insights, one with the 6 superknowledges, one with the 3 knowledges, the pure-insight meditator (*pārami-p,pattā paṭisambhidā-p,patta cha-!-abhiññā tevijjā, sukkha,vipassaka*): Sāriputta is a master of them all (ThaA 3:208,30-34, 209,9+21 f). **Peṭakōpadesa** uses it in connection with dhyanic powers (Peṭk 146). Comy glosses *pārami,patto* with “the attainment of perfection” (*nippatti,-patto*; Be *nibbatim patto*), and says that this refers to the attainment of arhathood (MA 4:91,17). This may be the only sense that the word *pārami* bears in the 4 Nikāyas. In the later Theravāda literature, beginning perhaps with such works as the Buddhavaṃsa, this word comes to signify the 10 “perfections” that a *bodhisatta* must fulfil over many lives leading to the attaining of buddhahood. In this context, it corresponds to the 6 *pāramitā* of Mahāyāna literature. The two lists overlap only in part, showing different emphases in doctrine.

3.9.2 Sāriputta's heritage

Just before the Sutta ends, the Buddha praises Sāriputta to be, in terms of the Dharma [§23], his true son and Dharma-heir [§22], thus:

He is the Blessed One's son (*bhagavato putto*). Sāriputta's biological parents brought him into the world, that is, samsara; the Buddha is the parent who brings him out of it.¹³⁷

born of his breast (*oraso*). To be "breast-born" is to be the Buddha's legitimate or true offspring by way of gaining the highest goal of the Buddha Dharma, the heart of the teaching.

born of his mouth (*mukhato jāto*). A son who is born by way of hearing the Dharma, listening to the teaching from the Buddha's own mouth, and fully benefitting from it.

born of the Dharma (*dhamma,jo*). One is "Dharma-born" by seeing the Dharma that is true reality, namely, impermanence, suffering and non-self.

created by the Dharma (*dhamma,nimitto*). One is "Dharma-created" in the sense that one's whole life is that of living the Dharma and giving it to others by one's own good example, attesting to the true goodness of the Buddha Dharma as teaching, life and liberation.

a Dharma heir, not an heir of material things (*dhamma,dāyādo no āmisa,dāyādo*) is a true renunciant who gives up gains, honours and worldliness for the life of Dharma-Vinaya, living by it as exemplars and for one's own awakening, as taught in **the Dhamma,dāyāda Sutta** (M 3), SD 2.18. (MA 4:91,18-23)

3.10 SĀRIPUTTA'S WISDOM [§2]

3.10.1 The 6 wisdoms of Sāriputta

3.10.1.1 The Anupada Sutta opens with the Buddha declaring Sāriputta's "**great wisdom**" (*mahā,paññā*) in 6 ways [§2]. The Buddha then goes on to explain why Sāriputta takes 2 weeks to gain all this wisdom by explaining the 9 stages of his path progress, known as **the 9 progressive abodes** [3.1], that is, the 4 form dhyanas, the 4 formless attainments and cessation [Table 3].

The Buddha goes on to explain how Sāriputta experiences and discerns his attainments, one by one, in stages (*anupada vavatthitā*) [2.2.2]. In other words, he is explaining how these 6 kinds of wisdoms have arisen for Sāriputta by way of his comprehensive meditation progress in 9 stages. Hence, the Buddha first declares Sāriputta's wisdom, and then goes on to explain how he attained it in 6 ways. Here, these wisdoms are listed last, reminding us that we, too, can and should attain them, or at least enough of them for our own awakening.

3.10.1.2 The list of Sāriputta's 6 wisdoms is stock and is spoken by the Buddha not only in **the Anupada Sutta** [§2.1], but also by Ānanda in **the (Deva,putta) Susīma Sutta** (S 2.29)¹³⁸—both these suttas are, of course, in praise of Sāriputta's wisdom. The list is also found in **the Lakkhaṇa Sutta** (D 30)¹³⁹ and **the Suppāraka Jātaka** (J 9).¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ On the Buddha being called "father" by the laywoman Uttarā: SD 3.8 (4.3); by Mahā Pajāpatī Gotamī: SD 10.6 (3.4).

¹³⁸ S 2.29/1:63 (SD 86.8).

¹³⁹ D 30,1.26.4/1:158 (SD 36.9).

¹⁴⁰ J 9/4:136,24 f.

3.10.2 The wisdoms explained

3.10.2.0 Detailed definitions of Sāriputta’s 6 wisdoms are given in the **Paṭisambhidā, magga** and the major Commentaries.¹⁴¹ The following is a summary of these Commentarial definitions of the 6 kinds of wisdom.¹⁴²

3.10.2.1 The term “**great wisdom**” (*mahā,paññā*) covers practically all of Sāriputta’s understanding of the teachings of the paths and their fruits, namely, the 3 trainings in moral virtue, in concentration, in wisdom; and the ensuing freedom (which here includes the knowledge and vision of liberation) [§21]; further, of what is possible and what is impossible (*thān’atthāna*); of the attainment of the 4 divine abodes, the 4 noble truths, the 37 limbs of awakening (*bodhi,pakkhiya,dhamma*),¹⁴³ the fruits of recluship (D 2 & SD 8.10(3)), the psychic powers (SD 27.5a(5)), and nirvana. The other wisdoms are special aspects of *māha,paññā*:

3.10.2.2 “**Broad wisdom**” (*puṭhu,paññā*) refers to his great understanding of the various teaching sets, such as the 5 aggregates, the 4 elements, dependent arising, and so on. “Broad” here means that he has mastered practically all the teachings given by the Buddha through his own meditation accomplishments.

3.10.2.3 “**Joyful wisdom**” (*hasa,paññā*) refers to the fact that he has fulfilled all the steps of training, which brings great contentment and joy. All the meditations he has been doing not only bring him joy, but also the knowledge and experience of wisdom, that is, the happiness of nirvana.¹⁴⁴

3.10.2.4 “**Quick wisdom**” (*javana,paññā*) means that he is quick in fully understanding that the 5 aggregates are *impermanent, suffering and non-self*. This speed is not only about how *fast* he is able to understand the teachings given by the Buddha, but also his readiness to understand and clarify to others any difficulties found in the teachings.¹⁴⁵

3.10.2.5 “**Sharp wisdom**” (*tikkha,paññā*): his wisdom cuts off all defilements so that he realizes the 4 paths and fruits in a single progressive practice. “Sharp” refers to clarity with which he understands the states that arise during his meditations, and how this lets him at once relate to the Buddha’s teachings.

3.10.2.6 “**Penetrating wisdom**” (*nibbedhika,paññā*): revulsed at all formations, he penetrates and breaks asunder the mass of *greed, hate and delusion* previously unpenetrated.

3.10.2.7 This list of wisdoms and how they are attained are also given in chapter 7 (*mahā,paññā*) of **Sotāpatti Saṃyutta** (S 55.62-74/5:412 f). There are also other lists of Sāriputta’s wisdom, such as that of 16 kinds.¹⁴⁶ There is also a layperson’s counterpart of such wisdoms.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴¹ Pm 2:190-202; Comys: DA 3:932; MA 4:82-86; SA 1:119-122.

¹⁴² DA 3:932; MA 4:82-86; SA 1:119-122.

¹⁴³ Ie, the 7 sets—the 4 focuses of mindfulness (*satipaṭṭhāna*), the 4 right efforts (*samma-p, padhāna*), the 4 bases of success (*iddhi,pāda*), the 5 faculties (*pañc’indriya*), the 5 powers (*bala*), the 7 awakening-factors (*bojjhaṅga*), and the noble eightfold path (*ariy’ṭṭh’āṅgika magga*)—comprising the 37 limbs of awakening: **Bodhi,pakkhiyā Dhammā**, SD 10.1.

¹⁴⁴ Cf *hasa* in terms of *pīti*: Dhs §§9, 86 etc.

¹⁴⁵ The arhat Piṇḍola Bhāra,dvāja has a similar quality. He is said to have made the lion-roar: “Let those who have any doubt in the path and fruition [the stages of sainthood] question me!” (ApA 300): SD 27.6b {3.3.1.1}.

¹⁴⁶ For Sāriputta’s “16 great wisdoms,” see SD 44.12 (1.8) n.

4 Related suttas

The Anupada Sutta (M 111)—a detailed practical account of Sāriputta’s awakening process in terms of the 9 progressive abodes (*nava anupubba, vihāra*)—should be studied with the following suttas:

4.1 (NAVAKA) JHĀNA SUTTA, The (Nines) Discourse on Dhyanas (A 9.36), SD 33.8

The (Navaka) Jhāna Sutta describes the attainment of arhathood and non-returning through meditation that applies calm as a basis for insight. The Buddha explains that we should first cultivate insight using dhyana as the basis for contemplation by discerning (seeing impermanence in) the 5 aggregates (form, feeling, perception, formations and consciousness).¹⁴⁸

Then, we go on to regard the 5 aggregates in 11 ways, that is, “as impermanent, as suffering, as a disease, as a tumour, as a barb, as a calamity, as an affliction, as alien [as being other], as breaking up, as empty, as non-self.”¹⁴⁹ At the right time, when our mind is sufficiently calm and clear, we direct it to the “death-free element” (*amata, dhātu*), that is, nirvana as a meditation-object.

Like **the Anupada Sutta** (M 111), the (Navaka) Jhāna Sutta lists only the first 7 attainments (the 4 form dhyanas and the 1st 3 formless attainments) as suitable for cultivating insight. While Sāriputta is depicted as going through all the 9 abodes or meditation bases to attain arhathood, the (Navaka) Jhāna Sutta describes each abode or base (a dhyana or an attainment) as a basis for arhathood. For each of these 7 bases, he gives an aspect of **the parable of the archer** which clarifies how the practice should be properly done.

4.2 (NAVAKA) ĀNANDA SUTTA, The (Nines) Discourse by Ānanda (A 9.37), SD 55.19

This is a short teaching given by the elder Ānanda centering on the Buddha’s discovery of “an opening in the confined” (*sambādh’okāsa*). Ānanda speaks of this “opening” in terms of the 9 progressive abodes. The Sutta describes **dhyana** as a profound meditation attainment where we are percipient (of the meditation state) but where neither sensing nor knowing occurs, and which is naturally free of defilements.

4.3 Anupubba Nirodha Sutta, The Discourse on the Progressive Cessations (A 9.31), SD 33.6(3.2.3)¹⁵⁰

This Sutta on progressive cessation (*anupubba nirodha*) shows how each of the 9 stages, except for the last, depends on *the cessation* of the preceding one. The “cessation” (*nirodha*) occurs by way of our emerging from meditation and reviewing a key feature of that state as being “gross” (*oḷārika*), and then progress onto the following stage, and so on until the cessation of perception and feeling.

4.4 Raho, gata Sutta, The discourse on the lone meditator (S 36.11), SD 33.6

This Sutta opens with the 9 progressive abodes by way of cessation (*nirodha*), followed by the same set of abodes by way of “stilling” (*vūpasama*), and then by way of 5 stages of “tranquillization” (*passaddhi*). This last set of abodes comprises only the 4 form-dhyanas and the attainment of cessation.¹⁵¹ Obviously, this tranquillization passage shows that cessation can be attained through the form-dhyanas, *without* any of the formless attainments.

¹⁴⁷ For a lay practitioner’s accomplishment in wisdom, see **Patta Kamma S** (A 4.61,7/2:67), SD 37.12.

¹⁴⁸ On the 5 aggregates [3.4.1], also SD 17.

¹⁴⁹ *Aniccato dukkhato rogato gaṇḍato sallato aghato ābādhato parato palokato suññato anattato*: see §2b n.

¹⁵⁰ A 9.31/4:409 = D 33,3.2(6)/3:266 @ SD 33.6(3.2.3).

¹⁵¹ The 5-stage tranquillization (*passaddhi*) is listed in (**Vedanā**) **Ānanda S 1** (S 36.15/4:119-221) = (**Vedanā**) **Sam-bahula Bhikkhū S** (S 36.17/4:222).

4.5 For other related suttas, see SD 33.8 (4).

4.6 For a discussion on a few technical difficulties regarding **dhyana** faced by teachers and scholars of our time, especially in connection with the nature of knowing and perception during dhyana, especially the interpretation of §10 of the Sutta, see **The Buddha discovered dhyana** (SD 33.1b (6.2.3)).

4.7 CONCLUSION

The Anupada Sutta (M 111), on account of its detailed analysis of deep meditation leading to arhat-hood can only be admired from afar when we have neither experienced dhyana nor seen the path. If we see this Sutta as technically profound or as being filled with techniques and terms that were later taken up by the Abhidhamma, we may dismiss it as a “late” work. The fact that it is preserved in the Majjhima Nikāya means that it was accepted by the early monks, clearly not later than Asoka’s time. This still makes it a canonical sutta.

On the other hand, when we have even a little familiarity with the nature of **dhyana** and have sufficient **wise faith** to aspire to streamwinning in this life itself, we must simply marvel at the clear descriptions of the meditation process we are privileged to study, even emulate at least in parts. In many ways, the teachings of the Anupada Sutta clarify and affirm many theoretical points, even some experiential aspects, we have wondered about. For this reason, the Sutta is translated in full and expediently laid out in full for easier reading or for closer study with copious commentarial notes.

— — —

Anupada Sutta

The Step-by-step¹⁵² Discourse

M 111

[25] 1 Thus have I heard.

At one time, the Blessed One was staying in Anātha,piṇḍika’s park monastery in Jeta’s grove, outside Sāvattihī.

There he addressed the monks thus: “Bhikshus.”

“Bhante,” they replied.

The Blessed One said this:

2 ¹⁵³“Bhikshus, Sāriputta is wise.”¹⁵⁴

Sāriputta, bhikshus, is one with
Sāriputta, bhikshus, is one with

great wisdom;¹⁵⁵
broad wisdom;

mahā,pañño
puthu,pañño

¹⁵² On *anupada*, see (2.2.1(3)).

¹⁵³ This open quote for the start of the Buddha-word close at the end of §23.

¹⁵⁴ “Wise,” *pañña* (in a broad sense); its sense and compass are then elaborated. The whole para: *Paññito bhikkhave sārīputto, mahā,pañño bhikkhave sārīputto, puthu,pañño bhikkhave sārīputto, hāsa,pañño bhikkhave sārīputto, javana,pañño bhikkhave sārīputto, tikkha,pañño bhikkhave sārīputto, nibbedhika,pañño bhikkhave sārīputto*. Elsewhere, the stock adds: “without an equal or a better amongst all beings” (*nāssa hoti koci paññāya sādiso vā seṭṭho vā sabba,sattānaṃ*): see foll n.

¹⁵⁵ On these 6 kinds of wisdom: [3.10].

<i>Sāriputta, bhikshus, is one with</i>	<u>joyful wisdom;</u>	<i>hāsa,pañño</i>
<i>Sāriputta, bhikshus, is one with</i>	<u>quick wisdom;</u>	<i>javana,pañño</i>
<i>Sāriputta, bhikshus, is one with</i>	<u>sharp wisdom;</u>	<i>tikkha,pañño</i>
<i>Sāriputta, bhikshus, is one with</i>	<u>penetrating wisdom.</u>	<i>nibbedhika,pañño</i>

2.2 Bhikshus, in a **fortnight**,¹⁵⁶ Sāriputta gained insight into (his) mental states one by one (as they arose).¹⁵⁷ Now, bhikshus, Sāriputta's **insight into these states one by one (as they arose)**¹⁵⁸ was this:

(1) The 1st dhyana

3 Here, bhikshus, quite secluded from sensual objects,¹⁵⁹ secluded from unwholesome states, Sāriputta attained and dwelled in **the 1st dhyana**,¹⁶⁰ accompanied by¹⁶¹ initial application and sustained application, zest, and joy born of solitude.¹⁶²

4 And there are these states in the **1st dhyana**—
initial application, sustained application, zest, joy, and one-pointedness of mind.¹⁶³

4.2 contact, feeling, perception, volition, mind;¹⁶⁴
¹⁶⁵**will, decision, energy [effort],**¹⁶⁶ **mindfulness,**¹⁶⁷ **equanimity,**¹⁶⁸ **attention**¹⁶⁹—

4.3 these states were discerned progressively by him (one by one).¹⁷⁰

¹⁵⁶ Sāriputta gains arhathood over 2 weeks, as stated in **Dīgha,nakha S** (M 74,14) + SD 16.1 (4). He takes that long (a week longer than Moggallāna does) on account of attaining great wisdom (MA 4:86,7-87,11), cf 3:203 (location); DA 418,16-20; DhA 1:96 on why Sāriputta takes 2 weeks, while Moggallāna only a week to awaken.

¹⁵⁷ *Sāriputto bhikkhave aḍḍha,māsaṃ anupada,dhamma,vipassanaṃ vipassi* [Ee Se so; Be Ce vipassati]. Comy explains that Sāriputta developed liberating insight in successive stages by way of the meditative attainments and the dhyana-factors over a fortnight (beginning from the time of his ordination), as described in the Sutta. At the end of that period, listening to the Buddha explaining the full nature of feeling to his nephew, the wanderer Dīgha,nakha, Sāriputta attains arhathood: **Dīgha,nakha S** (M 74,14), SD 16.1 [2.2.3.1]. On the underscored, see (2.2.2).

¹⁵⁸ *Anupada,dhamma,vipassanaṃ vipassi*: [2.2.2].

¹⁵⁹ On the tr of *kāmehi* (pl) as “from sensual objects,” see SD 8.4 (5.1.1.1).

¹⁶⁰ See (3.2.1.1).

¹⁶¹ What follows are the traditional dhyana-factors, with omission of *citt'ek'aggatā*, but which are mentioned again [§4.1] as “states” experienced by the meditator; this pattern recurs for the rest of the dhyanas [§§5+ 6.1, 7+8.1, 9+10.1, and the 1st 3 attainments [§§11+12.1, 13+14.1, 15+16.1]: they are omitted for the 4th and last formless attainment [§17] and cessation [§19]. On the key terms here: [3.3].

¹⁶² “Born of solitude,” *viveka,ja*; ie, it is the result of the removal of the hindrances. On the 3 kinds of solitude, see **The body in Buddhism**, SD 29.6a (1.5). “One-pointedness of mind” is inherent in this solitude under the right conditions. On the omission of “one-pointedness of mind” (*cittassa ek'aggatā*) and “stillness” (*samādhi*) here, see **The layman and dhyana**, SD 8.5. For other details, see **Sāmañña,phala S** (D 2,77) nn (SD 8.10).

¹⁶³ *Ye ca paṭhame jhāne* [only Ee *paṭhama-j,jhāne*] *dhammā vitakko ca vicāro ca pīti ca sukhañ ca citt'ek'aggatā ca*. This is a restatement of the preceding dhyana-factors that includes *citt'ek'aggatā* [3.3.1.6]. This is repeated in the foll para for all the 1st 7 progressive abodes, with additional information.

¹⁶⁴ *Phasso vedanā saññā cetanā cittam*. This list is stock: §§4.2a, 6.2a, 8,2a 10.2a, 12.2a, 14.2a, 16.2a. There is no list for the 4th and last formless attainment and cessation. These are the bare aspects of the 5 aggregates: [3.4.1].

¹⁶⁵ *Chando adhimokkho vīriyaṃ sati upekkhā manasikāro*. These are mental factors (*dhamma*), which Comy refers to as “characteristics” (*lakkaṇa*). This list is stock: §§4.2b, 6.2b, 8,2b 10.2b, 12.2b, 14.2b, 16.2b. There is no list for the 4th and last formless attainment and cessation. For details: [3.5]. See foll nn.

¹⁶⁶ On energy (*vīriya*), see [3.5.3].

¹⁶⁷ On mindfulness (*sati*), see [3.5.4].

¹⁶⁸ On equanimity (*upekkhā*), see [3.5.5].

¹⁶⁹ On attention (*manasikāra*), see [3.5.6].

These states arose, **known** to him; they were present, *known* (to him); they disappeared, *known* (to him).¹⁷¹

4.4 He **understood** thus:

‘So indeed, these states, *not* having been, come into being; having been, they pass away.’

4.5 He dwelled unattracted to those states, unrepelled; independent, detached; free, unfettered; with a barrier-free mind.¹⁷²

4.6 He understood:

‘**There is a further escape**,’¹⁷³ and with the cultivation of that [attainment], he confirmed that there is.¹⁷⁴

(2) The 2nd dhyana

5 Again, bhikshus, with *the stilling of initial application and sustained application*, Sāriputta attained and dwelled in [26] **the 2nd dhyana**,¹⁷⁵ which has serene faith in oneself¹⁷⁶ and single-mindedness,¹⁷⁷ without initial application and sustained application, with zest and joy born of samadhi.¹⁷⁸

6 And there are these states in the 2nd dhyana—serene faith in oneself, zest, joy and mental oneness,¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁰ “Discerned by him ...,” *anupada, vavatthitā* [2.2.3]. This detailed analysis of mental states into their components is the basis for later Abhidhamma methodology, whose rise was understandably attr to Sāriputta. [3.6.1.2]

¹⁷¹ *Tyāssa dhammā anupada, vavatthitā honti, tyāssa dhammā viditā uppajjanti, viditā upaṭṭhahanti, viditā abbattham gacchanti*: this stock on the 3-phase “moment” cycle of impermanence recurs at §§6.2, 8.2, 10.2, 12.2, 14.2, 16.2; but is omitted in ref to the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception [§20] and of cessation [§20]. See [3.6.1-3.6.3]

¹⁷² *So tesu dhammesu anupāyo anapāyo anissito appaṭibaddho vippamutto visamṃyutto vimariy’ādīkatena cetasā viharati*: recurs (1st person) at **Cha-b, bisodhana S** (M 112/3:30, 12 f), SD 59.7. All these terms signify the removal of the mental fetters and the temporary suppression of the defilements in the 1st dhyana, not the full liberation from defilements through their eradication by the highest path, which Sāriputta attains in the end. Hence, this refrain recurs for all the stages [§§4.5, 6.4, 8.4, 10.4, 12.4, 14.4, 16.4, 18.2, 20.2]. For details: [3.6.4]

¹⁷³ *Uttari nissaraṇa*. On account of Sāriputta’s spiritual capacity, he is able to progress uninterruptedly right up to the attaining of arhathood, where it is stated: “There is *no* further escape (necessary)” [§20.3].

¹⁷⁴ The “further escape” (*uttarim nissaraṇam*) here is the next higher attainment, the 2nd dhyana. This “further escape” stock recurs at all the foll stages [§§4.6, 6.5, 8.5, 10.5, 12.5, 14.5, 16.5, 18.3] except for the last, viz, cessation [§20.3] +n.

¹⁷⁵ See (3.2.1.2).

¹⁷⁶ “Serene faith in oneself,” *ajjhataṃ sampasādanam* (*sampasādo* at §6.1). **Sampāsada** itself means “that which is faith, having faith (Sn 186), trust, conviction (*yā saddhā saddahanā okappanā abhippasādo*, Vbh §574/258, 8 f); hence, a radiantly peaceful faith [SD 14.14 (1)].

¹⁷⁷ “Single-mindedness,” *cetaso ekodi, bhāvaṃ* (“singleness of mind”). Vbh: “That which is the mind’s steadiness, stability, firmness; non-distraction, non-wavering, mental imperturbability, calmness, faculty of samadhi, power of samadhi, right samadhi” (*yā cittassa thiti saṅṅhiti avatṭhiti* [for Ee wr *aviṭṭhiti*] *avisahāro avikkhepo avisahaṭa, māna-satā samatho samādh’indriyaṃ samādhi, balaṃ sammā, samādhi*, Vbh §220(18)/124, 8-10; Dhs §§11 (DhsA 144), 15, 88, 287, 570’ (= Nm 1:365, 23), which is Dhs’ def of *citt’ek’aggatā*, which is thus synonymous with *cetaso ekodi, bhāva*. Technically, the former is a state while the latter is an event, but then early Buddhism sees both as a *process*.

¹⁷⁸ *Ajjhattaṃ sampasādanam cetaso ekodi, bhāvaṃ avitakkaṃ avicaraṃ samādhi, jaṃ pīti, sukhaṃ*. On *sampasādanam* + *ekodi, bhāvaṃ*, see §5 ad loc nn.

6.2 **contact, feeling, perception, volition, mind; will, decision, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, attention—**

6.3 these states were discerned progressively by him.

These states arose, known to him; they were present, known (to him); they disappeared, known (to him). [§4.3]

6.4 He **understood** thus:

‘So indeed, these states, not having been, come into being; having been, they pass away.’ [§4.4]

6.5 He dwelled unattracted to those states, unrepelled; independent, detached; free, unfettered; with a barrier-free mind. [§4.5]

6.6 He understood thus:

‘There is a further escape,’ and with the cultivation of that [attainment], he confirmed that there is. [§4.6]

(3) The 3rd dhyana

7 Again, bhikshus, with *the fading away of zest*, Sāriputta dwelled in equanimity, and mindful and clearly knowing, and felt pleasure with the body,¹⁸⁰ he attained and dwelled in **the 3rd dhyana**,¹⁸¹ on account of which noble ones declare:

‘He has a pleasant abiding who has equanimity and is mindful.’

8 And there are these states in the 3rd dhyana— joy, mindfulness, clear knowing, and mental oneness;¹⁸² [§6.1]

8.2 **contact, feeling, perception, volition, mind;**

will, decision, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, attention—

8.3 these states were discerned progressively by him.

These states arose, known to him; they were present, known (to him); they disappeared, known (to him). [§4.3]

8.4 He **understood** thus:

‘So indeed, these states, not having been, come into being; having been, they pass away.’ [§4.4]

8.5 He dwelled unattracted to those states, unrepelled; independent, detached; free, unfettered; with a barrier-free mind. [§4.5]

8.6 He understood thus:

‘There is a further escape,’ and with the cultivation of that [attainment], he confirmed that there is. [§4.6]

(4) The 4th dhyana

9 Again, bhikshus, with the abandoning of pleasure and pain, and with the previous disappearance of joy and grief,

¹⁷⁹ *Ajjhattaṃ sampasādo ca pīti ca sukhañ ca citt’ek’aggatā ca.* “Oneness of mind” (*citt’ek’aggatā*) occurs §§6.1, 8.1, 10.1, 12.1, 14.1, 16.1. On *citt’ek’aggatā*, see SD 8.4 (5.1.2, 5.2.1).

¹⁸⁰ *Sāriputto pītiyā ca virāgā upekkhako ca viharati ca sampajāno, sukhañ ca kāyena paṭisaṃvedeti.* “With the body,” **kāyena** = the mental aggregates (aggregates of perception, formations, consciousness: *saññā-k, khandho saṅkhāra-k, khandho viññāṇa-k, khandho*, Vbh §587/259,29-31). More fully, *kāyena phassivā* or *phussivā* (“touched with (one’s) body”), (of dhyana and attainment) experienced personally: **Samaṇa-m-acala S** (A 4.87,3), SD 20.13; SD 4.25 (3.3.1).

¹⁸¹ See (3.2.1.3).

¹⁸² *Sukhañ ca sati ca sampajaññañ ca citt’ek’aggatā ca.*

Sāriputta attained and dwelled in the 4th dhyana,¹⁸³
that has neither pain nor pleasure, that is the purity of mindfulness due to equanimity.¹⁸⁴

10 And there are these states in the 4th dhyana—
Equanimity (that is) a neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling,¹⁸⁵
mental unconcern¹⁸⁶ due to tranquillity,¹⁸⁷ purity of mindfulness,¹⁸⁸ and mental oneness,¹⁸⁹ [§6.1]

10.2 **the contact, feeling, perception, volition, mind;**

will, decision, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, attention—

10.3 these states were discerned progressively by him.

These states arose, known to him; they were present, known (to him); [27] they disappeared, known (to him). [§4.3]

10.4 He understood thus:

‘So indeed, these states, not having been, come into being; having been, they pass away.’ [§4.4]

10.5 He dwelled unattracted to those states, unrepelled; independent, detached; free, unfettered; with a barrier-free mind. [§4.5]

10.6 He understood thus:

‘There is a further escape,’ and with the cultivation of that [attainment], he confirmed that there is. [§4.6]

(5) The base of infinite space

11 Again, bhikshus, with the complete surmounting¹⁹⁰ of perceptions of form,
with the disappearance of perceptions of sensory impact,
with non-attention to perceptions of diversity, aware that ‘space is infinite,’¹⁹¹

¹⁸³ See (3.2.1.4).

¹⁸⁴ “The purity of mindfulness due to equanimity,” *upekkhā,sati,parisuddhi*, “This mindfulness, because of that equanimity, is unobstructed, very pure, very clear. Therefore, it is called ‘purity of mindfulness due to equanimity’” (*ayaṃ sati imāya upekkhāya vivaṭā hoti parisuddhā pariyodātā, tena vuccati upekkhā,sati,parisuddhin’ti*, Vbh §597/-261,15 f).

¹⁸⁵ *Upekkhā adukkha-m-asukhā vedanā*: this is a single noun phrase: Vbh §596/261,4-7.

¹⁸⁶ “Mental unconcern,” *cetaso anābhogo*. *Ābhoga* (lit, “bending, bowing, turning”): (1) (mental) inclination, advertence, interest, attention; (2) consideration, (deliberate) thought, idea. See Kvu:SR 221 n4 on *ābhoga* as “ideating”; see Vism 4,180/164, qu at MA 2:63,8, to show that “mental concern” (*cetaso ābhogo*), which was present in the 3rd dhyana, is absent in the 4th. Cf Vbh 307,25, qu Kvu 425,5+7: *pañca viññāṇā anābhogā*, “the unconcern from the 5 consciousnesses (of the 5 physical senses)” (Vbh:T 408,1, *anābhogā*, “not cognitive”); and MA 2:63,8, “non-advertence, unconcern,* *anavaṭṭano anābhogo*. BHSD sv *anābhoga* suggests “effortless” (adj) and “non-effort, impassivity” (subst). Further see BHSD, CPD, DP: *ābhoga*

¹⁸⁷ Be Ce Comy *passaddhattā cetaso anābhogo*; Ee *passi vedanā cetaso anābhogo* (wr); Se *parisuddhattā cetaso anābhogo*. Based on Comy, Be reading is preferred. Comy explains that the mental concern with pleasure, which persists in the 3rd dhyana, is now considered to be gross, and when it subsides there is “mental unconcern due to tranquillity.” (MA 4:90,10-13). Although *passi* (Ee) is aor of *passati*, “he sees” [2.2.1.2], it is inapplicable here, and Ee is prob wr.

¹⁸⁸ “Purity of mindfulness,” *sati,parisuddhi* [3.3.4.2].

¹⁸⁹ “Equanimity, ... etc.,” *upekkhā adukkha-m-asukhā vedanā passaddhattā cetaso anābhogo sati,parisuddhi citt’ek’aggatā ca*. On *upekkhā adukkha-m-asukhā*, see prec line.

¹⁹⁰ *Samatikkamā*: *saṃ* (prefix meaning “totally” + *ati* (“across”) + *√KAM*, to walk). This recurs at each of the other formless bases [§§13.1+15.1+17.1+19.1]. All physical sensing cease in the dhyanas; the mental sensing becomes more refined at each of the 4 formless attainments [3.3.5].

Sāriputta attained and dwelled in **the base of infinite space**.¹⁹²

12 And there are these states in the base of infinite space—
perception of the base of infinite space and mental oneness;¹⁹³ [§6.1]

12.2 **contact, feeling, perception, volition, mind;**

will, decision, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, attention—

12.3 these states were discerned progressively by him.

These states arose, known to him; they were present, known (to him); they disappeared, known (to him). [§4.3]

12.4 He **understood** thus:

‘So indeed, these states, not having been, come into being; having been, they pass away.’ [§4.4]

12.5 He dwelled unattracted to those states, unrepelled; independent, detached; free, unfettered; with a barrier-free mind. [§4.5]

12.6 He understood thus:

‘There is a further escape,’ and with the cultivation of that [attainment], he confirmed that there is. [§4.6]

(6) The base of infinite consciousness

13 Again, bhikshus, by *completely surmounting* the base of infinite space, aware that ‘consciousness is infinite,’

Sāriputta attained and dwelled in **the base of infinite consciousness**.¹⁹⁴

14 And there are these states in the base of infinite consciousness—
perception of the base of infinite consciousness and mental oneness; [§6.1]

14.2 **contact, feeling, perception, volition, mind;**

will, decision, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, attention—

14.3 these states were discerned progressively by him.

These states arose, known to him; they were present, known (to him); they disappeared, known (to him). [§4.3]

14.4 He **understood** thus:

‘So indeed, these states, not having been, come into being; having been, they pass away.’ [§4.4]

14.5 He dwelled unattracted to those states, unrepelled; independent, detached; free, unfettered; with a barrier-free mind. [§4.5]

14.6 He understood thus:

‘There is a further escape,’ and with the cultivation of that [attainment], he confirmed that there is. [§4.6] **[28]**

(7) The base of nothingness

15 Again, bhikshus, by *completely surmounting* the base of infinite consciousness,

¹⁹¹ *Puna ca param bhikkhave sāriputto sabbaso rūpa,saññānaṃ samatikkamā paṭigha,saññānaṃ attha,gamā nānatta,saññānaṃ amanasikārā.*

¹⁹² *Ākāsānañcāyatana (ākāsa + ananta + ya + āyatana): Ākāsānañcāyatana Pañha S (S 40.5), SD 24.15.*

¹⁹³ “Mental oneness” (*citt’ek’aggattā*): note that this state is the only one that is present in all the 4 formless attainments (implicitly in the 4th formless attainment since perception is neither present nor absent therein). In other words, the 4 formless attainments are each a more refined form of the 4th dhyana.

¹⁹⁴ *Viññānañcāyatana (viññāna + ananta + ya + āyatana): Viññānañcāyatana Pañha S (S 40.6), SD 24.16.*

aware that 'there is nothing,'

Sāriputta attained and dwelled in **the base of nothingness.**¹⁹⁵

16 And there are these states in the base of nothingness—
perception of the base of nothingness and mental oneness; [§6.1]

16.2 **contact, feeling, perception, volition, mind;**

will, decision, energy, mindfulness, equanimity, attention—

16.3 these states *were discerned progressively* by him.

These states arose, known to him; they were present, known (to him); they disappeared, known (to him). [§4.3]

16.4 He **understood** thus:

'So indeed, these states, not having been, come into being; having been, they pass away.' [§4.4]

16.5 He dwelled unattracted to those states, unrepelled; independent, detached; free, unfettered;
with a barrier-free mind. [§4.5]

16.6 He understood thus:

'There is a further escape,' and with the cultivation of that [attainment], he confirmed that there is.
[§4.6]

(8) The base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception

17 Again, bhikshus, by *completely surmounting* the base of nothingness,
Sāriputta attained and dwelled in **the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception.**¹⁹⁶

18 He **emerged** mindful from that attainment.

Having emerged mindful from that attainment,

he reflected on the states that had passed, ceased, changed, thus:¹⁹⁷

'So indeed, these states, not having been, come into being; having been, they pass away.'¹⁹⁸ [§4.4]

18.2 He dwelled unattracted to those states, unrepelled; independent, detached; free, unfettered;
with a barrier-free mind. [§4.5]

18.3 He understood:

'There is a further escape,' and with the cultivation of that [attainment], he confirmed that there is.
[§4.6]

(9) The cessation of perception and feeling

19 Again, bhikshus, by *completely surmounting* the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception,
Sāriputta attained and dwelled in **the cessation of perception and feeling.**¹⁹⁹

And **his influxes were destroyed** by his seeing with wisdom.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁵ *Ākiñcaññāyatana (ā-kiñcanā [from a-kiñcī] + ya + āyatana): Ākiñcaññāyatana Pañha S (S 40.7), SD 24.17.*

¹⁹⁶ *N'eva,saññā,nāsaññāyatana (na eva saññā na a-saññā āyatana): N'eva,saññā,nāsaññāyatana Pañha S (S 40.8) SD 24.18. See A Wynne, *The Origin of Buddhist Meditation*, London, 2007: 21 f, 29.*

¹⁹⁷ *So tāya samāpattiyā sato vuṭṭhahitvā ye dhammā [Be Ee Se so; Ce ye te dhamma] atītā niruddhā vipariṇatā te dhamme samanupassati [Comy lemma samanussarati, "(he) recollects"].*

¹⁹⁸ *Evaṃ kira me dhammā ahutvā sambhonti, hutvā paṭiventīti.* This indirect introspective method must be used to contemplate the 4th formless attainment because this attainment, being extremely subtle, does not enter into the direct range of investigation for disciples. Only fully awakened buddhas are able to contemplate it directly. (MA 4:90,18-21)

¹⁹⁹ *Saññā,vedayita,nirodha:* see **Sappurisa S** (M 113), SD 23.7 (2); SD 48.7 (3.2); SD 50.7 (1.2).

20 He **emerged** mindful from that attainment.

Having emerged mindful from that attainment,

he reflected on the states that had passed, ceased, changed, thus:

*'So indeed, these states, not having been, come into being; having been, they pass away.'*²⁰¹ [§4.4]

20.2 He dwelled unattracted to those states, *unrepelled; independent, detached; free, unfettered; with a barrier-free mind.* [§4.5]

20.3 He understood:

*'There is **no** further escape (necessary),'*²⁰² and, having well cultivated that (attainment), he confirmed that there is *none*. [§4.6]

Sāriputta's spiritual mastery

21 Bhikshus, rightly speaking, were it to be said of anyone:

'He has attained mastery and perfection²⁰³ in noble moral virtue, [29]

attained mastery and perfection in noble concentration,

attained mastery and perfection in noble wisdom,

attained mastery and perfection in noble freedom.'

*ariya,sīla
ariya,samādhi
ariya paññā
ariya vimutti*

21.2 It is of Sāriputta indeed that rightly speaking this should be said:

'He has attained mastery and perfection²⁰⁴ in *noble moral virtue*,

attained mastery and perfection in *noble concentration*,

attained mastery and perfection in *noble wisdom*,

attained mastery and perfection in *noble freedom.*'

22 "Bhikshus, rightly speaking, were it to be said of anyone:

'He is the Blessed One's son,

born of his breast,

born of his mouth,

born of the Dharma,

created by the Dharma,

a Dharma heir, not an heir of material things,²⁰⁵

dhamma,dāyādo no āmisa,dāyādo

it is of Sāriputta indeed that, rightly speaking, this should be said.

*bhagavato putto
oraso
mukhato jāto
dhamma,jo
dhamma,nimitto*

²⁰⁰ This sentence recurs at (**Majjhima**) **Sappurisa S** (M 113,29.3), where the influxes are unlisted, too (SD 23.7). Comy quote "the elders of ancient India" (*Jambudīpa,vāsī therā*): "The elder Sāriputta cultivated the twin practice of calm and insight (*samatha,vipassanaṃ yuganaddham*), and realised the fruit of non-returning. Then, he entered the attainment of cessation, and after emerging from it he attained arhathood." (MA 4:90,22-91,10) [3.8.1].

²⁰¹ This passage first occurs at §4.4 (qv), etc, in connection with insight. Since there are no mental factors in the attainment of cessation, Comy says that "these states" (*te dhamme*) must refer either to the those of material form that were occurring while he attained cessation, or to the mental factors of the preceding 4th formless attainment. (MA 4:91,11-15)

²⁰² Note the realisation that there is "no escape beyond" necessary since arhathood has been won [§20.3]. See "progressively higher distinction" (*ulāraṃ pubbenāparaṃ visesaṃ*): **Dhamma,cetiya S** (M 89,12+18), SD 64.10; **Bhikkhuṇī Vāsaka S** (S 47.10,3) SD 24.2; **Ānāpāna,sati S** (M 118,2,2+6.2), SD 7.13. On *ularaṃ visesaṃ*: **Lohicca S** (D 12 passim), SD 34.8. Cf attaining sainthood: "but there is here something more to be done" (*atthi c'ev'ettha uttarim karaṇīyam*): (**Ānanda**) **Subha S** (D 10,1.31 + passim), SD 40a.13; **Assa,pura S** (M 39,3.5/1:271), SD 10.13; **Sevibbāsevitabba S** (M 114), SD 39.8 (1.1.1.8); (**Gaha,pati**) **Potaliya S** (M 54,14), SD 43.8; SD 51.17 (3.4.2.5).

²⁰³ *Vasi-p,patto pārami,patto* [3.9.2.2].

²⁰⁴ *Vasi-p,patto pārami,patto*: §21.1 [3.9.2.2].

²⁰⁵ On heirs of the Dhamma, see **Dhamma,dāyāda S** (M 3), SD 2.18.

23 Bhikshus, the peerless wheel of truth set rolling by the Tathagata is kept rolling rightly by Sāriputta.” [§2]

That is what the Blessed One said.

The monks were satisfied and delighted in the Blessed One’s words.

—evaṃ—

200318 200405 200625