

# Yoga Sutras

This session will include:

- Principles of Samkhya
- Verses from the Yoga Sutras
- Levels of Samadhi



# Principles of Samkhya

There are two aspects of reality

Purusha: Spirit

Prakriti: Matter

In this dualistic philosophy, they are separate.

# Principles of Samkhya: Purusha

- Consciousness, the Self, spirit
- Inactive, male
- Many Purushas exist
- Made of one unchanging reality
- Not involved in manifestation
- Not subject to change, death, decay
- Enjoys the dance of Prakriti (audience)
- Strives for liberation

# Principles of Samkhya: Prakriti

- Female, active, unconscious principle
- Material cause of the universe
- Imbalance of the gunas starts her manifestations
- Only one Prakriti exists
- Subject to change, death, decay
- Principle of movement
- The dancer
- Exists for the enjoyment of Purusha
- Whatever is derived from Prakriti brings pain and pleasure

# Purusha & Prakriti: Summary

- There is a conscious self and an original, unmanifest nature
- Conscious self exists for no other
- There is a single unmanifest cause of material objects
- Matter exists for serving the conscious self
- The conscious self is different from Prakriti and her evolutes

# Purusha & Prakriti: Summary

- The conscious self is not an agent of action
- Union of matter and spirit occurs
- Separation of matter from spirit occurs (Kaivalya)
- There are many Purushas, conscious selves
- After Self-Realization, the body may continue by momentum of its own laws

# Principles of Samkhya: The Gunas

- Sattwa
  - Principle of light, harmony, purity, balance
  - Inclined to good deeds
- Rajas
  - The dynamic, active principle
  - Inclined to worldly deeds
- Tamas
  - The principle of dullness, darkness, inertia
  - Inclined to perform acts of stupefaction

***Can you give examples from your own life of being/  
acting from each of these states?***

# Principles of Samkhya

## Evolution

- Movement from unmanifest Prakriti through grosser and grosser levels of being
- Earth element is the grossest level

## Devolution

- Movement from the gross back to the subtlest
- Ends with dissolution of Prakriti

# Principles of Samkhya: The Kleshas

They are the afflictions, or causes of bondage

See Yoga Sutras, II.2-4

1. Avidya: ignorance
2. Asmita: sense of I-ness
3. Raja: attraction
4. Dvesha: aversion
5. Abinivesha: fear of death

# Principles of Samkhya: Avidya

There are five kinds of ignorance, also known as the five major hells in *Tattva-Samasa-Sutras*

1. Mistaking the eternal for the non-eternal and the non-eternal for the eternal
2. Mistaking the pure for the impure and the impure for the pure
3. Mistaking pleasure for pain and pain for pleasure
4. Mistaking the self for the non-self and the non-self for the self

*What examples can you give from your own life?*

# Principles of Samkhya: The Kleshas

Yoga Sutras, II.4

The kleshas exist in various states

- Dormant – not yet manifested
- Attenuated – temporarily prevented from taking effect due to yogic practices
- Intercepted – one kind of klesha blocks the operation of another one
- Fully active

# Principles of Samkhya: Spiritual Complacencies

1. Matter will give me realization
2. Renunciation will give me realization
3. Time will bring forth realization
4. Destiny and luck will give me realization



# Principles of Samkhya: The Three Kinds of Suffering (Duhkha)

1. **Adhyatmam:** Intrapersonal, to be cured by internal means

Mental: as passion, anger, attachment, fear, jealousy, depression

Physical: imbalance of the doshas (Ayurveda)

2. **Adhibhutam:** Caused by other beings

3. **Adhidaivam:** Caused by natural forces and conscious powers of subtler worlds

***Group Discussion: Give examples of each from your own life.***

# Principles of Samkhya: Aids to Removing the Three Kinds of Suffering

- Guru
- Noble Friends
- Self-purification
- Contemplation with logical mental process
- Knowledge gained from words and authoritative scripture

*Which one(s) have helped you the most?*



# Principles of Samkhya: Five Types of Thought Waves

There are five types of Vrittis, fluctuations of consciousness (citta).

1. Right knowledge – pramana  
Includes direct perception, scriptural testimony, inference
2. Wrong knowledge – viparyaya (rope for a snake)
3. Fiction / Verbal delusion – vikalpa (rabbit with horns)
4. Sleep – nidra
5. Memory – smriti

*Examples of #1-3?*

*Vrittis repeated over and over become samskaras.*

# Principles of Samkhya: Five Stages in the Evolution of Chitta

1. Mudham – overcome with delusion
2. Kshiptam – distracted, random thought
3. Vikshiptam – the process of purification
4. Ekagram – one pointed concentration
5. Niruddham – cessation of vrittis

# Principles of Samkhya: Five Causes and Results of Actions

1. Dhrti: resolution of mind, speech, and action
2. Shraddha: inclinations of faith
3. Sukha: acts undertaken with prayer or expectation of a comforting or pleasant result
4. A-vividhisha: the tendency that blocks the desire for knowledge
5. Vividisha: desire to know matters relating to spirituality

# Principles of Samkhya: 3 Kinds of Bondage

1. Identifying the self with the 8 origins of evolutes (Prakriti, buddhi, ahamkara, 5 subtle elements of sound, sight, touch, taste, smell)
2. Renunciates attracted to objects of pleasure
3. Layman's involvement with ordinary desires and needs of life; renunciates dependence on the offerings of layman

# Principles of Samkhya: 3 Kinds of Liberation (Moksha)

1. Arising from the full expansion of knowledge
2. Arising from the elimination of attachments
3. Arising above good and evil, when the self has abandoned all Prakrtic identifications

# Yoga Sutras: Three Paths

There are 3 Paths of Yoga explained in Yoga Sutras:

1. Abhyasa and Vairagya
2. Kriya Yoga
3. Ashtanga Yoga

*What are the components of each path?*

# Yoga Sutras: Abhyasa

- Includes meditation and unceasing remembrance during the day
- Endeavor towards stillness and stability
- Practice actively creates non-attachment
- Practice becomes firmly grounded when it has been cultivated for a long time, uninterrupted, with earnest devotion (YS I.14)
- Stillness means only one sattvic vritti, like a mantra

# Yoga Sutras: Sthiti

How do we attain sthiti (tranquility)? Through:

**Virya**

Vigor

Strength

Energy

Potency

Virility

**Utsaha**

Enthusiasm

Perserverence

Fortitude

Firmness

Exertion

Vigorous pursuit

*Chariot of Sadhana*, Jerry, Jerry, and Swami Veda Bharati

# Attaining Stillness

*Practicum:* Tantric practice to train the body into stillness for meditation.



# Yoga Sutras: The 9 Obstacles

YS, I.30

1. Sickness
2. Mental laziness
3. Doubt
4. Lack of enthusiasm
5. Sloth
6. Craving for sense pleasure
7. False perception
8. Inability to attain a higher plane of consciousness
9. Inability to maintain a higher plane of consciousness

***Discussion in pairs:***

***Which obstacles bring you the most frustration? Why?***

***Which obstacles have you made the most progress with? How do you know?***

# Yoga Sutras: Obstacles and Habits

- What are some bad habits we have in modern life? What causes them?
- What thoughts do you have around a bad habit? What opposite thoughts can you cultivate?
- What helpful habits do you have?
- What are the benefits of habits?
- What habits do you have that are shaped by family and society? By your constitutional type?

# Yoga Sutras: Chakras and Habits

*Give an example from your life for each chakra below.*

1. 1<sup>st</sup> Chakra: fear and insecurity
2. 2<sup>nd</sup> Chakra: sexuality and sensuality
3. 3<sup>rd</sup> Chakra: self-concept, ego strength
4. 4<sup>th</sup> Chakra: selfless service

# Samadhi

- The 8<sup>th</sup> limb of raja yoga
- Subject and object merge
- Then one abides in one's own nature (YS, I.3)

YS, I.2

Yogash chitta-vritti-nirodhah

Yoga is control of the modifications of the mind.

This refers to samadhi, the *starting* point of yoga.

*Do you believe you can attain samadhi? What has your experience been so far?*

# Samadhi

There are two major levels of samadhi:

## **Savikalpa:**

- retained distinctions between knower, knowledge, and object of knowledge
- sees the relative permeated by the Absolute
- retains I- Consciousness (I am Brahman)
- Samadhi with seed (there is an object of meditation)

## **Nirvikalpa:**

- mind totally merges with Brahman
- no I-Consciousness
- no distinct existence outside of Brahman
- person is totally transformed
- Seedless samadhi (no object of meditation)

# Four Obstacles to Samadhi

- **Stagnation:** reluctance to make fresh efforts when goal is not achieved
- **Distracted, Restless:** can lead to exaggerating a certain feeling or emotion; mind is distracted by ideas
- **Strong attachment to past experience:** agitation from past event coming up from the unconscious mind
- **Satisfied with staying at a lower level of attainment (bliss):** satisfied with 'an inferior bliss' such as temporary visions and ecstasies, which are only milestone

*Which apply to you?*

# Overcoming The Four Obstacles to Samadhi

- **Stagnation**: Study sacred books, discuss spiritual topics, chanting, pilgrimage
- **Distracted**: Patience and perseverance
- **Attachment**: Recall bad results from previous attachments
- **Lower Bliss**: Remember that happiness from objects is transient; use discrimination to detach from all forms of bliss

*From Atmabodha: Self-Knowledge of Sri Sankaracarya,  
Swami Nikhilananda*

# Achieving the Goal of Yoga

YS. IV.34

Since the gunas no longer have any purpose to serve for the Atman, they resolve themselves into Prakriti. This is liberation. The atman shines forth in its own pristine nature, as pure consciousness.

*(How to Know God, Prabhavananda and Isherwood)*

