

Introduction to Samkhya Philosophy

Knowing that what we think, what we intend, and what we believe is the basis for our experience, wise people change their lives by changing their consciousness.

—Yogacharya O’Brian (Daily Inspiration, 10/24/17)

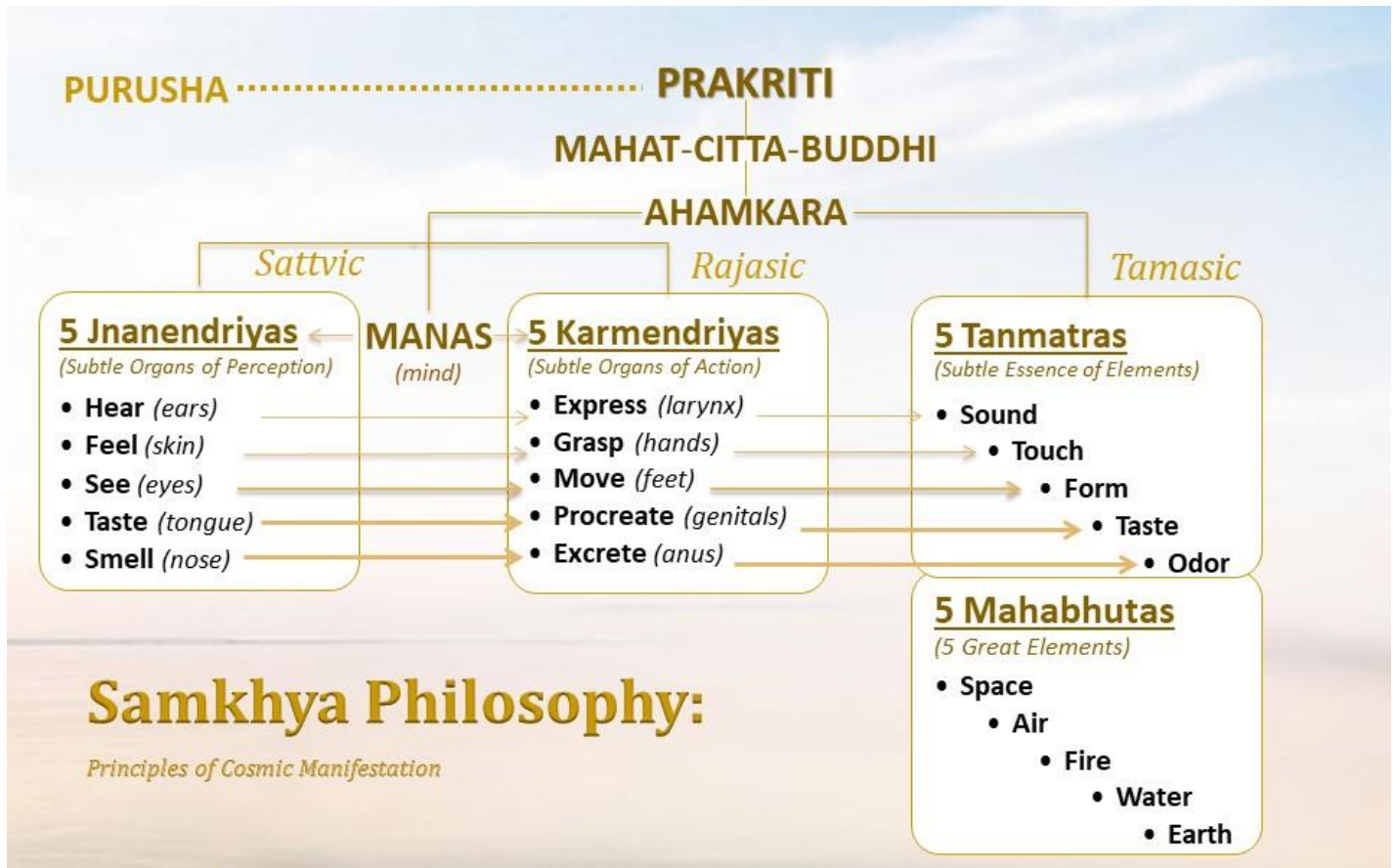
Samkhya is one of the six major systems of Indian philosophy, along with Yoga and Vedanta. The Sanskrit word *Samkhya* (sometimes spelled *Sankhya*) translates as “enumeration” and refers to identifying and numbering the principles of manifestation.

Samkhya names each element of creation, its function, and its relationship with all other elements. According to Samkhya, there are twenty-five elements or evolutes of manifestation, beginning with two primordial, eternal principles, Purusha (spirit) and Prakriti (nature). Creation then continues progressively from the subtle aspects of mind and consciousness to the gross elements that make up the physical realm of space, air, fire, water, earth.

For yogis, understanding Samkhya is key to understanding the workings of the mind, how it impacts our experience, and how we can change it. It is a map of the human experience that shows us the way from pain and suffering to peace and bliss. When one understands Samkhya, yoga philosophy and practices gain more profound meaning and focus. We have a deeper understanding of why we practice asana, pranayama, mudra, mantra, meditation in a manner that supports us to move from the gross physical level to the more subtle levels of mind and consciousness where we can make lasting changes.

Having a practical experience of Samkhya philosophy through the path of yoga can help us recognize our connection in the web of life and bring forth profound possibilities as we realize how our thoughts, words, and actions impact all of existence.

SAMKHYA PHILOSOPHY



Principles of Samkhya Philosophy

(From the Subtle to the Gross)

- 1) Purusha (Spirit)
- 2) Prakriti (Nature)
- 3) Buddhi / Mahat (Intuitive Wisdom)
- 4) Ahamkara (Ego self)
- 5) Manas (Mind)
- 6) 5 Sense Perceptions (Hear, Feel, See, Taste, Smell)
- 7) 5 Senses of Action (Express, Grasp, Move, Procreate, Excrete)
- 8) 5 Subtle Elements (Sound, Touch, Form, Taste, Odor)
- 9) 5 Gross Elements (Space, Air, Fire, Water, Earth)