

INTRO TO SAMKHYA PHILOSOPHY

Sanskrit Terms

Following is a partial list of Sanskrit terms to know to support your study of Samkhya Philosophy.

Abinevesha:	Confusion about birth and death; instinctual clinging to life in the body-mind; strong desire arising from identification of the Self with the body or mind; fear of death; one of the five kleshas or obstacles described by Patanjali in the Yoga Sutras.
Ahamkara:	Ego, identifying principle, "I amness."
Asmita:	The sense of I-ness, egoism; mistaken identification of the eternal Self with the body and mind; one of the five kleshas or obstacles.
Atman:	The divine Self, Spirit, soul.
Avidya:	Ignorance, wrong knowledge of the Self; primary of the five kleshas or obstacles and the root cause of suffering.
Brahman:	Absolute Reality without form.
Chakra:	A vortex or center of energy in the subtle body. There are seven major chakra centers.
Citta:	Consciousness, the individual field of awareness or mental field, which includes intellect, ego, and the sense mind.
Dvesha:	Aversion; one of the five kleshas or obstacles.
Guna:	A quality or attribute. The three qualities of nature that make creation possible are sattva guna, the uplifting quality of illumination; tamas guna, the quality of inertia; and rajas guna, the quality of activity.
Ishwara (Ishvara):	The divine intelligence and power that brings forth creation and that permeates, regulates, and sustains it—the Creator, Lord, or God.
Jnanedriyas:	Subtle organs associated with sense perception. They include ears, skin, eyes, tongue, and nose – and respectively allow us to: hear, feel, see, taste, and smell.
Kaivalya:	Aloneness or isolation. It is the liberation of consciousness that occurs when one realizes the distinction between their essential nature as unchanging pure existence and the mutable qualities of nature.

Kapiladev:	Sage who created the <i>Samkhya Sutras</i> in written form from the oral teachings.
Karmendriyas:	Subtle organs associated with action. They include the larynx, hands, feet, genitals, and anus – and respectively allow us to express, grasp, move, procreate, and excrete.
Klesha:	An affliction, impediment, or obstacle to superconsciousness or Self-realization; a cause of suffering. The five <i>kleshas</i> or afflictions include ignorance (<i>avidya</i>), egoism (<i>asmita</i>), attachment (<i>raga</i>), aversion (<i>dvesha</i>), and clinging to life in the body-mind (<i>abhinivesha</i>).
Kriya Yoga:	Actions that support spiritually conscious living; purification to remove obstacles to <i>samadhi</i> or Self-realization. The path of yoga defined in Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, which includes self-discipline (<i>tapas</i>), study of the nature of consciousness (<i>svadhyaya</i>), and surrender to God (<i>Ishwara pranidhana</i>).
Mahabhutas:	Great or gross elements (earth, water, fire, wind, space).
Mahat/Buddhi:	Cosmic mind, intellect, individual form.
Manas:	Sense mind, recording mind, the seat of thinking.
Mantra:	A sacred word or word formula that connects the vibration of sound to the primal energy of creation.
Maya:	Illusion; the cosmic principle of appearance, which refers to God's creative power; its qualities veil the invisible Absolute.
Moksha:	Spiritual liberation, absolute freedom; liberation of consciousness from the errors of perception that cause identification with the small self. The fourth of the purusharthas, the universal goals of life.
Nirodha:	Restraint or extinction. In yoga, it refers to the control or cessation of vrittis, which purifies the mental field.
Om (AUM):	The primordial sound of creation, the origin of all sound, the name or vibrational essence of <i>Ishwara</i> .
Prakriti:	Primordial nature, eternal, active and non-conscious; the source of creation.
Prana:	Literally, "to breathe forth"; subtle vital energy, life force, breath. Prana is the connecting link between the physical, mental, and spiritual dimensions of our being.

Pranayama:	Regulation or control of the breath, expansion of the vital energy; the fourth limb of the eight limbs of yoga.
Pratyahara:	Process of withdrawing the senses inwards, away from sense objects; the fifth limb of the eight limbs of yoga.
Purusha:	Spirit, pure, conscious, eternal, existence Being; the indwelling divine nature of every person.
Rajas:	Activity, restlessness; one of the three <i>gunas</i> or qualities of nature.
Rishi:	Seer of spiritual Truth, a Vedic sage. Those who have received direct transmission of the Vedic hymns.
Samadhi:	Synonymous with the term yoga, meaning to bring together completely. In the highest sense, it means consciously abiding in our essential nature.
Samkhya:	One of the six major systems of Indian philosophy, along with Yoga and Vedanta. The Sanskrit word <i>Samkhya</i> (sometimes spelled <i>Sankhya</i>) translates as “enumeration” and refers to identifying and numbering the principles of manifestation.
Samskara:	A print of past action in the mind, latent impression, innate tendency.
Samyama:	Meditative contemplation with the intention to realize what is examined. It progresses from concentration to meditation to oneness with that which is contemplated.
Sanatana Dharma:	The eternal way or religion; system of eternal values beyond human history; the basis of all order in the universe; traditional name for the Vedic philosophical principles of spiritual practices known as Hinduism.
Sattva:	Luminosity; illuminating, purifying, uplifting influence; one of the three <i>gunas</i> or qualities of nature.
Tamas:	Inertia, darkness, resistance, stability; one of the three <i>gunas</i> or qualities of nature.
Tanmatras:	Essences of the elements. They include sound, touch, form, taste, and odor.
Tattva:	Principles of manifest creation.
Upanishads:	The latest portion of the Vedas; source teachings for the philosophy of Vedanta; dialogues between guru and disciple regarding the nature of Ultimate Reality: Supreme Consciousness, Spirit, God, Brahman.

- Vedas:** Knowledge, wisdom, revealed truth or scripture; the most ancient sacred scriptures of the Hindu tradition or *Sanatana Dharma* (the eternal way or religion); the source of yoga philosophy.
- Vritti:** A wave-like motion in the mental field, such as a thought or feeling. Five vrittis or mental activities are accurate perception, inaccurate perception, fantasy, memory, and sleep.
- Yoga:** Union or oneness. It is both the means and the goal of spiritual practice—restoring our awareness to its inherent wholeness.

*Many of the Sanskrit terms listed in this document were drawn from:
The Jewel of Abundance, Ellen Grace O'Brian; Sanskrit Terms for Kriya Yogis (CSE handout), Yogacharya O'Brian;
and The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, Baba Hari Dass*