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SENSE OF AGENCY: THE MIND IN *SĀṂKHYA* & *YOGA*

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS
SENSE OF AGENCY: THE MIND IN *SĀṂKHYA* & *YOGA*

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Sāṁkhya and *Yoga* are two of the most renowned and influential schools of Indian philosophy. With its rigorous introduction to metaphysics, *Sāṁkhya* revolutionizes Indian philosophy by delineating the constituents of reality: *puruṣa* (consciousness) and *prakṛti* (matter). *Yoga*, the sister school of *Sāṁkhya*, borrows from the latter's metaphysics and introduces a psychologically based paradigm that allows for practitioners to apply the metaphysical teachings of *Sāṁkhya*. Using the metaphysical and psychological constructs of the mind in both schools, this paper serves to ask the question: Which school of thought provides more of a sense of agency to the practitioner? In other words, which school allows the practitioner to feel that he/she is an agent of his/her actions? Using the *Sāṁkhya Kārikā* to represent *Sāṁkhya*, this paper explores the impersonal feelings evoked by the predominance of metaphysics in this text. Using the *Yoga Sūtras* to represent *Yoga*, this paper reveals the highly personal and egoistic reading provided by psychology and practice based verses. Using three concepts to measure a sense of agency (frequency, language of the commentators and results of personal effort) it is clear that *Yoga* provides the practitioner with a more promising feeling of ownership over his/her pursuits.

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“Sankhya and Yoga are different,” The childish declare; not the wise. Even with one of them, practiced correctly, one finds the fruits of both.” – *Bhagavad Gītā* (5.4)

Sāṃkhya is the oldest school of Indian philosophy that introduces the dichotomy of **consciousness** and **material nature**. Much of Indian philosophy has been influenced by *Sāṃkhya*. By grasping the latter’s metaphysics, one can understand the psychological implications of the structure of the mind according to its tenets. Before discussing the mind in *Sāṃkhya*, it is crucial for the reader to understand the school’s proposed metaphysics surrounding it. Once these fundamentals are established, it is easier to understand the functions of each metaphysical entity and the significance of each part in relation to the whole purpose of the mind’s ultimate endeavor of attaining **discriminative wisdom**.

Yoga is known as the sister school of *Sāṃkhya*. In systematically explaining the individual’s quest for **stilling** the **mind**, *Yoga* shares its metaphysics with *Sāṃkhya* in delineating the psychological and practice based paths of *aṣṭāṅga* and *kriyā yoga*. Where *Sāṃkhya* places its emphasis on **discriminative wisdom**, *Yoga* uses this same **wisdom** as a step towards its ultimate goal of **stilling** the **mind**. A key difference between the two schools is that *Sāṃkhya* will divide the mind into three fundamental components, while *Yoga* will use a cohesive single unit. In the *Bhagavad Gītā* verse listed above, Lord *Kṛṣṇa*¹, states that the schools of *Sāṃkhya* and *Yoga* are not different but are very much the same with regards to the end goal. I am interested in exploring if the two philosophical schools of thought do differ and if so, in what ways.

¹ Kṛṣṇa is a key figure known to be a transcendent God in the *Bhagavad Gītā*. In the story, he is the charioteer of the warrior, Arjuna who guides and instructs the latter to fight in an emotionally charged battle. Arjuna’s enemies are his close family members, leading to a conflict between duty and his material attachments.

In order to thoroughly understand and analyze an argument about the mind and its ‘**sense of agency**’, this paper will have a primary and secondary purpose. The primary purpose of this paper is to delineate the differences in the mind in both philosophical schools of *Sāṃkhya* and *Yoga*. By exploring the different views on the mind through the lenses of these prevailing schools of thought, one can grasp a solid understanding of the important expressions of Indian philosophy.

The secondary purpose of this paper is to answer the question: Which school of thought is more likely to contribute to the practitioner’s ‘**sense of agency**’? This paper will explore key differences between *Sāṃkhya*’s predominantly metaphysical approach and *Yoga*’s psychological emphasis. More deeply, one can find that *Sāṃkhya* introduces the goal of **discriminative wisdom** in a highly impersonalized² manner while, on the contrary, *Yoga* introduces the goal of **stilling the mind** in a more personalized³ manner. What is the difference between an impersonal and personal reading of these schools of Indian philosophy, and how do they affect the practitioner? I argue that due to *Yoga*’s more egoistic and personal approach to its goal and the description of the **mind** itself, the reader or practitioner has more of an inclination to believe that he/she has a greater ‘**sense of agency**’ over his/her actions towards **stilling the mind**. Conversely, due to *Sāṃkhya*’s less egoistic, more passive and impersonal approach to its goal and mind, the reader or practitioner has less of an inclination towards feeling a ‘**sense of agency**’.

The primary sources used in this paper are the *Sāṃkhya Kārikā*, *Sāṃkhya Sūtras* and *Yoga Sūtras*. The commentaries for the *Sāṃkhya Kārikā* are by Vācaspati Miśra and Gaudapada. The commentary for the *Sāṃkhya Sūtras* is by Vijñānabhikṣu. The

² Referring to language that does not relate to an individual

³ Referring to language that relates to an individual

commentaries for the *Yoga Sūtras* are by Vyāsa, Hariharānanda, Rāmānanda Sarasvati and a modern commentary by Edwin F. Bryant. The secondary sources are *Classical Sāṃkhya: An Interpretation of Its History and Meaning* written by Gerald James Larson, *Free Will, Agency and Selfhood in Indian Philosophy* by Matthew R. Dasti and Edwin F. Bryant.

Methodology

Words that are written in bold⁴ are the English translations of Sanskrit terms and the headings of every section. Words that are written in single quotations⁵ are the opposite of the words written in bold and do not necessarily have a Sanskrit equivalent. Words that are written in bold and also have single quotations indicate terms that are from another academic discipline⁶ besides religious studies, like psychology. Words that are written in italics⁷ are Sanskrit terms used in the relevant texts. Words that are written with double quotations are mostly direct quotations. At times, to draw the reader's attention to certain words/phrases, the latter will be surrounded by double quotations⁸.

Sense of Agency

‘**Sense of agency**’ is defined as the feeling of being in control of one's decisions (Barlas & Obhi). One is seen as the author of one's own consequences and actions. In translation, this phenomenon can be described as follows: “I feel that I am an agent and have made this decision.” Adding onto this definition, it would make sense that decisions, actions and consequences must be attached to an “I.” They must have a *centralized* “I.”

⁴ E.g. **intellect, ego, discrimination**

⁵ E.g. ‘non-discrimination,’ ‘inactive’

⁶ E.g. ‘**sense of agency**’, ‘**intentional binding**’

⁷ E.g. *citta, buddhi, ahaṃkāra*. The word *centralization* will also be italicized.

⁸ E.g. “I,” “his”

For example, “run” turns into “I” run and similarly, “**mind**” becomes “my” **mind** and **intellect** translates into “his” intellect¹⁰. With action, one must feel that one has made the decision to run. In the sense of possession, one must feel that one is ‘possessing’ something or someone that is a part of a cohesive ‘I’. In the academic field of psychology, ‘**sense of agency**’ is often studied by the ‘**intentional binding effect**’ which refers to the relationship between a perceived voluntary action and its effect. Specifically, ‘**intentional binding**’ is the ‘**temporal attraction**’ between the perceived time of a voluntary action and the effect¹¹ (Haggard et al., 2002; Haggard and Clark, 2003; Haggard et al., 2009; Moore et al., 2009; Strother and Obhi, 2009; Strother et al., 2010).

The ‘**intentional binding effect**’ is said to be linked to a ‘**sense of agency**’ (Moore & Haggard, 2010). It is “...the subjective compression of the temporal interval between a voluntary action and its external sensory consequence” (Moore & Obhi). In other words, greater ‘**intentional binding**’ involves tightening the gap between times of the perceived action and result. Therefore, the greater the ‘**intentional binding**’, the greater one’s ‘**sense of agency**’ will be. Most importantly, the definition uses the word “subjective”. It is not the actual time difference between the cause and effect, but the subjectively perceived difference between the cause and effect experienced by the participant. The difference is that rather than measuring “what is”, a ‘**sense of agency**’ is

⁹ At times the term “mind,” will be written simply as mind or **mind**. When it is not bold, it is referring to a general term for mind often associated with *Sāṃkhya* because there is not a Sanskrit equivalent for the mind consisting of the intellect, ego and mind. When it refers to the specific third part of the mind (*manas*), then it will be written in bold. The only other time mind will be written in bold is when it is affiliated with *yoga* because the word *citta* is also related to the word mind.

¹⁰ The terms ‘his’, ‘your’, ‘my’ all have a *centralized* ‘I’ as a common root. For example, ‘His’ clearly does not represent my personal feeling of agency, but it explains another individual’s sense of I’ness attributed to something else.

¹¹ For example, the time between a perceived voluntary action (moving hands together) and a result (a clap) can indicate ‘**intentional binding**’. The time between this, more specifically, the ‘**attraction**’ between this cause and effect is known as ‘**intentional binding**’.

reliant on “what feels”. This implies that “what feels” as a faster result, will more likely contribute to an individual feeling like an agent¹².

There will be three main points used to explain the differences between *Sāṃkhya* and *Yoga* with regards to a ‘sense of agency’.

- I) Frequency¹³
- II) Language¹⁴ of the commentators (*Centralization*)
- III) Visibility¹⁵ of Results

Premises

The thesis held in this paper within the framework of the exposition on the mind will have three main premises:

- 1) A ‘sense of agency’ is more likely noticed by a practitioner who is frequently exposed to verses about psychology and practical paths while, most importantly, having the freedom to choose from a variety of starting points.
- 2) A ‘sense of agency’ is more likely felt when commentators use language and references that *centralize* metaphysical concepts, ideas, and practices to an individual as opposed to an external, “out there” entity.

¹² The next step would be to observe the relationship between the “actual” time difference between the “subjective feeling” time difference. This will not be discussed, but for now the reader can assume that in these experiments, the subjective time difference is used.

¹³ Frequency refers to the number and repetition of verses pertaining to psychology, practice, psychology/practice, metaphysics and miscellaneous. It also describes the variety of options (starting points to the same path) available to the practitioner, which will be discussed later.

¹⁴ Language refers to the impersonal and personal differences in explanations between the commentators (Vācaspati Miśra, Gaudapada, Vyāsa, Hariharānanda and Rāmānanda Sarasvati), including the notion of *centralization*.

¹⁵ Visibility asks the question: Can the results of the paths be experienced by the practitioner? Can the results of *Sāṃkhya* be experienced and can the results of *Yoga* be experienced? Overall, it refers to the perceived effects from the causes of one’s actions.

- 3) A ‘**sense of agency**’ is more likely noticed when an individual can experience the effects and results of his/her actions.

Frequency (Repetition & Multitude of Paths)

The first measure of frequency refers to the number of verses regarding a particular topic that are available to the reader or aspirant, specifically in the *Sāṃkhya Kārikā* and *Yoga Sūtras*. The topics will include:

- a) Psychology
- b) Practice
- c) Psychology/Practice
- d) Metaphysics
- e) Miscellaneous

Sāṃkhya Kārikā

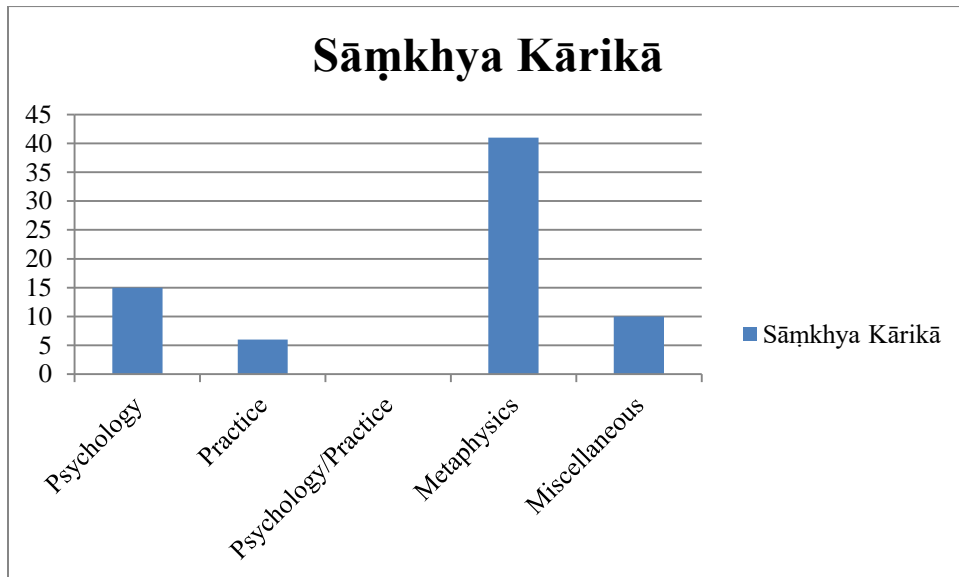


Figure I: Bar graph of the five categories and number of relevant verses in the *Sāṃkhya Kārikā*

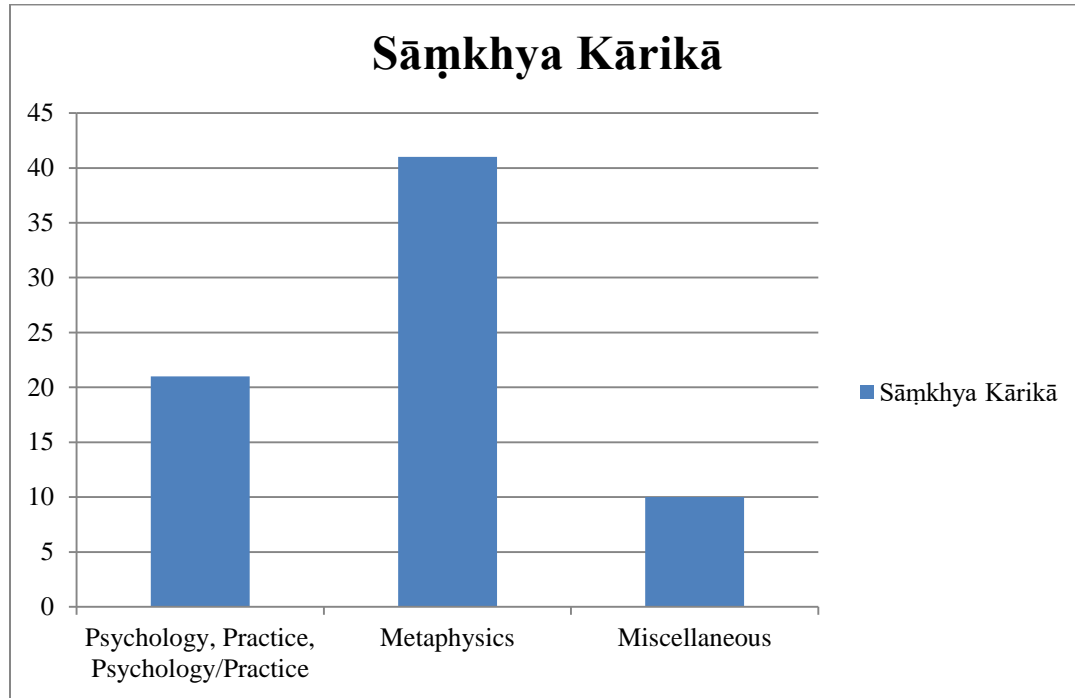


Figure II: Bar graph of the three condensed categories demonstrating the difference between psychology, practice, psychology/practice and metaphysics in the *Sāṃkhya Kārikā*.

In the *Sāṃkhya Kārikā*, there are a total of seventy-two verses. Of the total seventy-two verses, there are roughly around fifteen¹⁶ verses (20.83%) concerning psychology, six¹⁷ concerning practice (8.33%), zero concerning psychology/practice (0%), forty-one¹⁸ (56.94%) concerning metaphysics and ten¹⁹ (13.89%) concerning

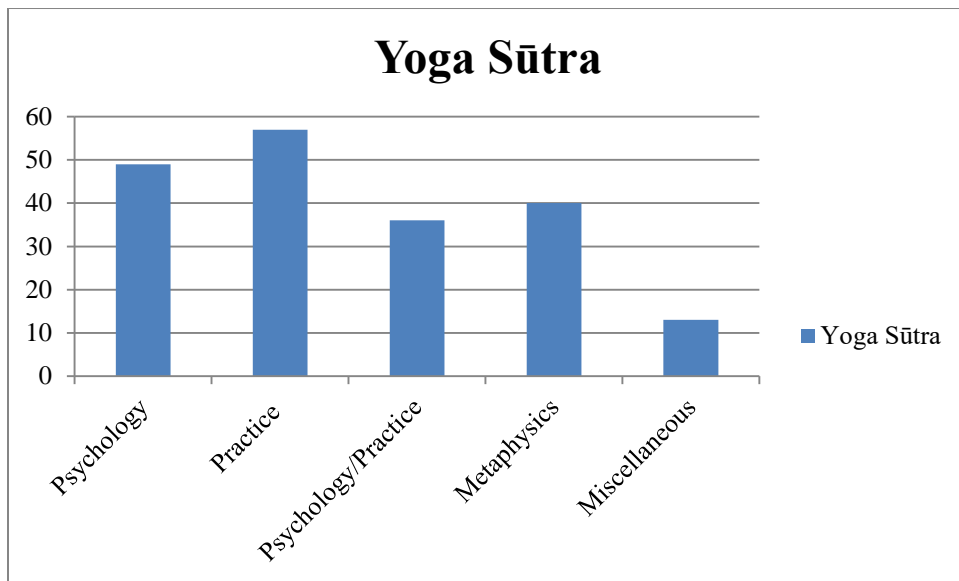
¹⁶ **Psychology:** *Kārikā* 1,2,23,24, 27, 35, 36, 37, 43, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 65

¹⁷ **Practice:** *Kārikā* 44, 45, 51, 64, 67, 68

¹⁸ **Metaphysics:** *Kārikā* 3, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 25, 26, 28, 29, 31, 32, 33, 34, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 62, 63, 66

¹⁹ **Miscellaneous:** *Kārikā* 4, 5, 6, 7, 30, 61, 69, 70, 71, 72

miscellaneous²⁰ topics. Clearly, this text has an emphasis on metaphysics. Furthermore, in figure II we can see that even after placing psychology, practice, and psychology/practice together, there are still twenty-one (29.17%) as opposed to forty-one verses (56.94%) concerning the topic of metaphysics, leaving only ten verses as miscellaneous (13.89%). It is evident that a reader or practitioner will primarily gain a metaphysical feel when reading this text because over fifty percent of the text is related to metaphysics. Therefore, it is important to place ourselves in the role of the reader or practitioner, who is constructing a particular reality from this school of thought.



²⁰ Many of the miscellaneous verses include verses on epistemology: perception, inference and verbal testimony

Figure III: Bar graph of the five categories and number of relevant verses in the *Yoga*

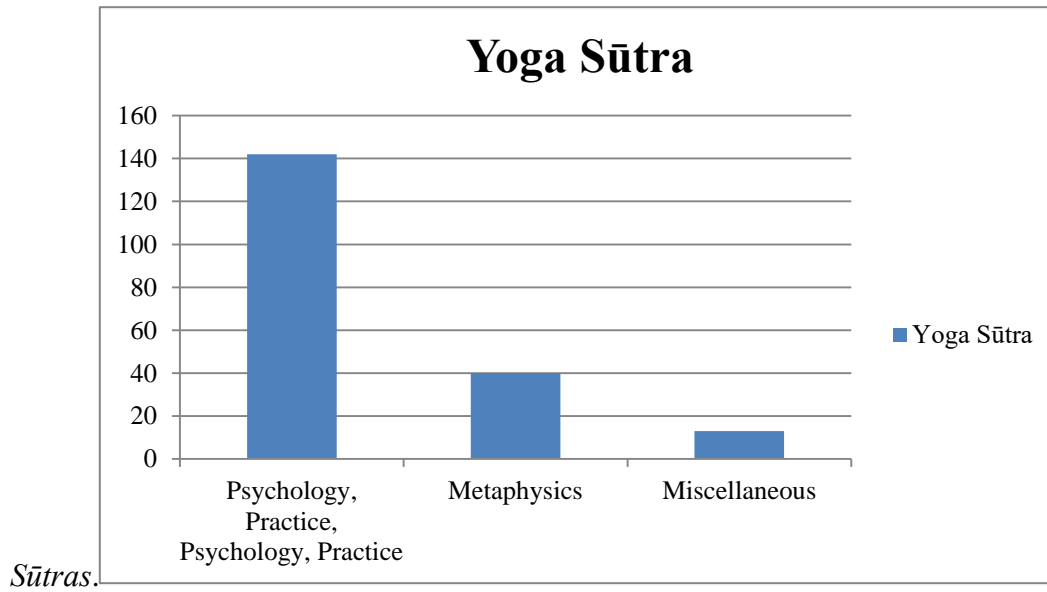


Figure IV: Bar graph of the three condensed categories demonstrating the difference between psychology, practice, psychology/practice and metaphysics in the *Yoga Sūtras*.

In the *Yoga Sūtras*, there are a total of one hundred and ninety five verses. Among them, forty-nine²¹ verses (25.13%) are concerning psychology, fifty-seven²² (29.23%) concerning practice, thirty-six²³ (18.46%) concerning psychology/practice, forty²⁴ (20.51%) concerning metaphysics and thirteen²⁵ (6.67%) concerning miscellaneous topics. The verses on psychology and practice taken independently are each greater than

²¹ **Psychology:** *Sūtra* I.4, I.5, I.6, I.7, I.8, I.9, I.10, I.11, I.15, I.16, I.20, I.41, I.42, I.43, I.44, I.46, I.48, II.3, II.4, II.5, II.6, II.7, II.8, II.9, II.15, II.17, II.23, II.24, II.25, II.26, II.27, III.1, III.2, III.3, III.9, III.10, III.11, III.12, III.20, III.37, IV.18, IV.19, IV.20, IV.21, IV.23, IV.25, IV.26, IV.27, IV.29

²² **Practice:** *Sūtra* I.14, I.21, I.22, I.23, I.28, I.29, I.30, II.1, II.29, II.30, II.31, II.32, II.32, II.34, II.36, II.37, II.38, II.39, II.40, II.43, II.44, II.46, II.47, II.49, II.50, II.51, II.55, III.4, III.6, III.7, III.8, III.16, III.17, III.18, III.21, III.22, III.23, III.24, III.25, III.26, III.27, III.28, III.29, III.30, III.31, III.32, III.36, III.38, III.39, III.40, III.41, III.42, III.44, III.45, III.47, III.50, III.53

²³ **Psychology/Practice:** *Sūtra* I.12, I.13, I.17, I.18, I.32, I.33, I.34, I.35, I.36, I.37, I.38, I.39, I.47, II.2, II.11, II.28, II.33, II.35, II.41, II.42, II.45, II.48, II.52, II.53, II.54, III.5, III.19, III.33, III.34, III.35, III.43, III.48, III.49, III.52, IV.3, IV.31

²⁴ **Metaphysics:** *Sūtra* I.2, I.3, I.19, I.45, I.49, I.5, I.51, II.1, II.12, II.13, II.14, II.16, II.18, II.19, II.20, II.21, II.22, III.14, III.15, III.54, III.55, IV.2, IV.3, IV.4, IV.5, IV.6, IV.7, IV.8, IV.9, IV.10, IV.11, IV.13, IV.14, IV.15, IV.16, IV.17, IV.24, IV.28, IV.32, IV.34

²⁵ **Miscellaneous:** *Sūtra* I.1, I.24, I.25, I.26, I.27, I.40, III.13, III.46, III.51, IV.1, IV.12, IV.22, IV.33

metaphysics. The substantial difference is seen in figure IV, the bar graph, where after being grouped together, there are one hundred and forty two verses (72.82%) on psychology, practice, psychology/practice versus forty verses (20.51%) on metaphysics, leaving only thirteen (6.67%) to miscellaneous. Thus, there are over three times more verses on psychological and praxis than those of metaphysics in the *Yoga Sūtras*. Furthermore, simply chapter one alone has seventeen psychology verses which is greater than *Sāṃkhya Kārikā*'s fifteen psychology verses. Chapter one has eight practice verses while the entire *Samkhya Kārikā* has only six. Finally, chapter one has thirteen psychology/practice verses while the *Sāṃkhya Kārikā* has zero psychology and practice verses. This leaves the *Sāṃkhya Kārikā* only in the lead in terms of metaphysics. However, it is crucial to realize that the *Samkhya Kārikā* only has seventy-two verses while the *Yoga Sūtras* has one hundred and ninety-five verses. The latter has more than double the verses.

The Function of Frequency

Frequency measures two functions: repetition and the number of options (starting points) from which to choose. In the *Sāṃkhya Kārikā*, out of the seventy-two verses, many are metaphysically based and so the reader will get metaphysical feel. With the same logic, since the *Yoga Sūtras* has more psychology based verses, the reader will naturally get a more psychological or practice based feeling.

Frequency also measures the number of options available to the practitioner. When speaking of particular paths, whether organized or disorganized, the *Sāṃkhya Kārikā* has very few verses delineating a path towards the goal of **discriminative knowledge**. In the *Yoga Sūtras*, there are a total three structured angles or starting points

for the same path from which an aspirant can choose: *kriyā yoga*, *aṣṭāṅga yoga*, *abhyāsa* (**practice**) and *vairāgya* (**dispassion**). Each of these paths lead to the same end goal of **stilling** the **mind**, however, depending on the aspirant's preference, he/she can choose to have a particular starting point²⁶. Each path has sub-steps following by detailed directions in the relevant commentaries. Furthermore, the practitioner has the ability to choose the *ālambana* used for meditation. Bryant writes "...*ālambana*, is the support for the mind and refers to any object upon which the *yogi* has chosen to focus or concentrate the mind" (I.10). As the practice of chanting *OM* is strongly suggested, the practitioner has a wide array of options on what to meditate. The practitioner can choose to meditate on the moon, tip of the nose, a deity, another passionless mind, etc. This freedom to choose from many options allows for a '**sense of agency**'.

By offering several starting points and focuses of meditation, the *Yoga Sūtras* provides the aspirant more of a '**sense of agency**'. How does the ability to choose from a variety of choices contribute to a '**sense of agency**'? There is a fundamental belief that "...agency is thought to be strongest in an "environment of opportunities" (Pettit, 2001). Thus, "...it might be expected that agency and freedom are related such that increasing levels of freedom to choose a course of action correspond to increasing levels of agency"

²⁶ This argument can certainly spark debate as the three limbed path of *kriyā yoga* is found within the second limb of the eight limbed path of *aṣṭāṅga yoga*. The argument is not that these are different paths, but are three separate starting points offered to a practitioner. One can argue that *kriyā yoga* is contained within *aṣṭāṅga yoga*, so why perceive them to be separate starting paths? *aṣṭāṅga yoga* contains requirements of celibacy, truthfulness, and three other virtues. What is to say of an individual who is not yet ready to perform celibacy, but wants to begin by weakening the *kleśas* (impediments)? This individual is given the option to begin with *kriyā yoga* and perhaps gradually intensify to *aṣṭāṅga yoga*. What is then to be said about *abhyāsa* and *vairāgya*? **Practice** and **dispassion** is offered in chapter one to those who are more firmly rooted in their practice with the predominance of the *sattva guṇa* (Bryant, 169). Chapter two is for practitioners who are at a more undeveloped stage, under the *rajas* and *tamas guṇas* which will be explained later. Therefore, one can choose either *kriyā* or *aṣṭāṅga yoga*. However, a more developed aspirant can choose **practice** and **dispassion** or perhaps even lean back on *aṣṭāṅga yoga*. Although this topic is highly debatable, one should remember that these are not different paths, but are different starting points.

(Barlas & Obhi, 2013). In plain words, more freedom to choose may equate to more of a **‘sense of agency’**.

In a psychological study, researchers questioned whether more action alternatives produce greater levels of **‘intentional binding’** than a limited choice set. In other words, do more action alternatives produce greater levels of a **‘sense of agency’** than less action alternatives? Participants were required to press a button (on a seven button pad). They recorded two things: their perceived time of key press followed by an auditory tone after their key press. There were three varying conditions. The “no choice condition” forced them to press one button. The “medium choice condition” allowed them to choose from three buttons. The “high choice condition” allowed them to choose from any of the seven buttons. The results demonstrate that “...the degree of overall binding²⁷ was greatest when participants had the highest level of action alternatives to choose from” (Barlas & Obhi, 2013). Both the “medium” and “low choice conditions” show much lower **‘binding’** than the “high choice condition”. Thus, results show that a greater degree of choice is associated with greater **‘intentional binding’**, which in turn means, a greater **‘sense of agency’**.

The issue of frequency is resolved here and will not be discussed in the remainder of the paper.

Language of the Commentators (*Centralizing*)

²⁷ **‘Binding’** once again indicates the relationship between the perceived action and the result. The closer the **‘binding’**, (perceived timing between the two) the more likely to produce a **‘sense of agency’**. In this case, the timing between the two, or **‘attraction’** between the two (action and result) seemed closer when there were more action alternatives.

As the inquiry into the mind proceeds, a key determinant of agency is revealed by the language used by the commentators in the *Sāṃkhya Kārikā* and the *Yoga Sūtras*.

*Centralization*²⁸ or *centralizing* is the phenomenon of applying metaphysical concepts to an individual ego. Specifically, it is the idea of focusing the metaphysical interplay between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* onto a specific person. For instance, in the *Sāṃkhya Kārikā*, the verses and commentaries generally have a detached explanation such as: “the **intellect is ascertainment**”. This statement refers to the metaphysical entity of *buddhi* and simply defines it. In a simplified manner, the process of *centralizing* will change this phrase to: one²⁹’s *buddhi* has **ascertainment** or an aspirant’s *buddhi* has **ascertainment**.

The process of *centralizing* applies an egoistic tone to a broadly, impersonal metaphysical statement. In addition, in a very general sense *centralizing* can refer to applying practices and states of mind to the individual. For instance, ‘The mind is inclined towards *āsana*’, versus ‘One’s mind is inclined towards *āsana*’, indicates the difference between an impersonal and a *centralized* personal reading, respectively. In a general sense, *centralizing* involves the addition of an “I” to a particular statement regarding practice, belief, action, etc. One must pay clear attention to sentences that are *centralized* because through this process, metaphysical concepts are given an “I” and are transformed into psychological concepts after being attributed to the individual.

²⁸ Synonyms are *personalizing*, *centering*, *egoic*, *individuating*

²⁹ This thesis is heavily reliant on the English translations of the commentators and so the original Sanskrit commentaries are not used when referring to *centralized* words like ‘one’, ‘his’, and so on. When *personalized* words are referred to in the translations, they are used as evidence for the commentator using *centered* language. There can certainly be a discrepancy in which the translation shows evidence of *centralization* through language but the original Sanskrit commentary does not. This can be a weakness in the thesis and will be explored and verified once I am more familiar with Sanskrit.

The reader will see certain verses on the mind where the commentators will explicitly use examples in relation to a person and others that will not. It will be clear how the verses that do *centralize* will become more personal to the reader than the ones that do not. When the mind is described in relation to an individual rather than itself as a metaphysical entity, one will gain a more relatable experience. This phenomenon can be easily noticed by the use of the words: “one”, “his”, “aspirant”, etc. The addition of these words indicates an *egoic* self and more responsibility on the practitioner. It is important to note that the *Sāṃkhya Kārikā* certainly has verses and commentaries that provide examples of *personalizing* but the reader will see that *Yoga* will have more of this within the language of the commentators. The reader will see there is moderate *centering* in the verses specifically on the mind in both the *Sāṃkhya Kārikā* and *Yoga Sūtras*³⁰. Gradually, one will see drastic *centralizing* occurring when practices are introduced in the first, second and third chapters of the *Yoga Sūtras*. The following format will include verses from both texts followed by their respective explanations on *centralization*.

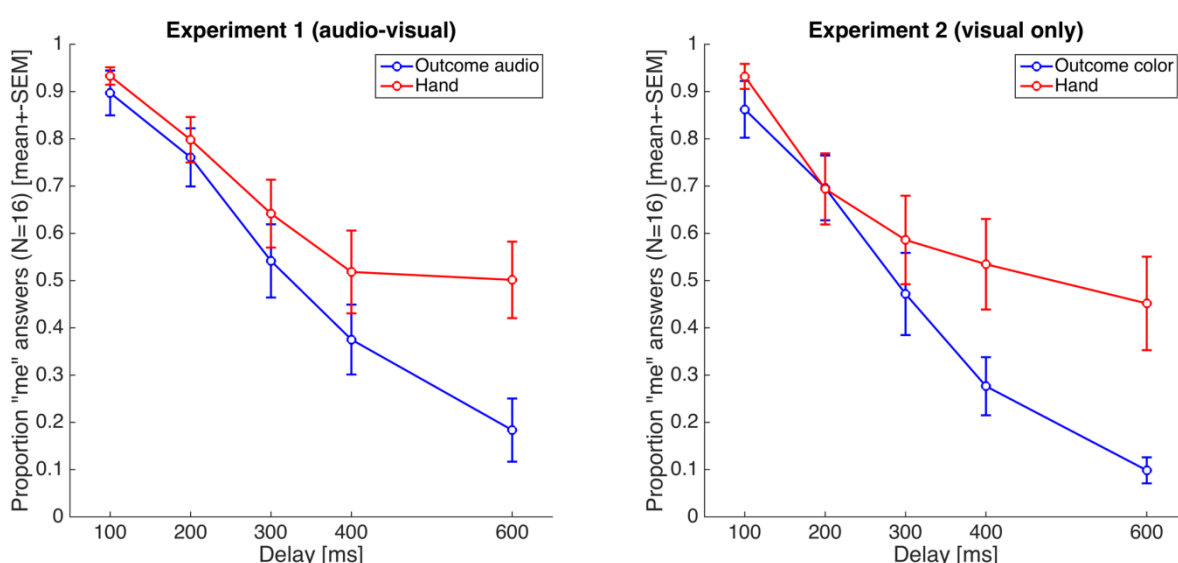
Results of Personal Effort

If a ‘**sense of agency**’ is the feeling of having the ability to make a decision, one must at some point know that a decision has been made either by witnessing, hearing or simply being aware that when there is an action, there is a result. Without being the slightest bit aware that there is a result from the decision, the identity of being an agent is questionable. An agent would feel more like an agent when he/she can witness the result in comparison to being unaware of it. To be an agent or to feel more like an agent is to see, hear, touch, smell or taste the result of one’s actions.

³⁰ Verses not directly related to the mind will have more *centering*.

“Previous studies of the sense of agency manipulated the predicted sensory feedback related either to movement execution *or* to the movement’s outcome, for example by delaying the movement of a virtual hand or the onset of a tone that resulted from a button press. Such temporal sensorimotor discrepancies reduce the sense of agency” (David, Skoruppa, Gulberti, Schultz, & Engel).

In a psychological study, varying ‘**delayed**’ responses were measured with the moment an action was taken. The details of the experiment need not be explained, but the key piece of information to note is the difference between the perceived action and perceived result.



The left chart taken from a study (David, Skoruppa, Gulberti, Schultz and Engel) shows that there is an inverse correlation between the ‘**delay of a response**’ and a ‘**sense of agency**’: the greater the ‘**delay**’, the less ‘**sense of agency**’. This paper is not concerned with the presence or absence of a ‘**delay**’. Instead, the focus is on the idea that a result of a perceived action (whether ‘**delayed**’ or not) can make an individual feel that he/she is an agent to varying degrees³¹.

³¹ The perceived result is indicated by the sound of a tone that is followed by a successfully perceived action indicated by clicking. Therefore, one feels more of a ‘**sense of agency**’ when one hears the

How do one's perceived results followed by actions indicate one's '**sense of agency**' in the *Sāṃkhya* and *Yoga* traditions? Do certain paths provide visible, tangible or feeling based results that allow the practitioner to feel that he/she is an agent? At the end of the presented verses, along with an analysis on *centralization*, there will be an analysis on cause and effect, action and result verses that can provide aspirants with a '**sense of agency**'. At the end of the paper, the remaining verses that include cause and effect relationships that are not discussed in the general body of the paper will be briefly mentioned.

Sāṃkhya Metaphysics

There are two fundamental entities in *Sāṃkhya*: *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*. *Puruṣa* is a **changeless**³², **uncaused**³³, **eternal**³⁴, and **multitudinous**³⁵ **witness**³⁶ (**sentience**) (Vācaspati Miśra, *Kārikā* 19). The term **sentience**, the ability to feel or experience, is often associated with the term **consciousness** which is a term used to define *puruṣa* as well (Larson, 171). The second entity is known as *prakṛti*, translated as **primordial nature** or **primal matter** (Vācaspati Miśra, *Kārikā* 3). *Prakṛti* exists in two forms, **unmanifest** and **manifest**. *Prakṛti* in its **unmanifest** form is known as *avyakta*, *mūlaprakṛti* and *pradhāna*³⁷ (Larson, 161). In its **unmanifest form**, *prakṛti* is **uncaused**, **eternal**, **pervasive**, **inactive**, and **uniform** (Vācaspati Miśra, *Kārikā* 38). Some of its

sound after the click, but more specifically, when one hears that sound more closely in time to the click.

³² (Vācaspati Miśra, *Kārikā* 18)

³³ (Vācaspati Miśra, *Kārikā* 3)

³⁴ (Vācaspati Miśra, *Kārikā* 11)

³⁵ (Vācaspati Miśra, *Kārikā* 18)

³⁶ Vācaspati Miśra, *Kārikā* 19)

³⁷ *Pradhāna*, like *prakṛti* is also translated as primordial nature (Vācaspati Miśra, *Kārikā* 11).

qualities are much like those of *puruṣa*³⁸ (except **sentience**). Generally, *prakṛti* differs from *puruṣa* because it contains *guṇas*³⁹ and a **manifest** form.

These two uncaused entities are in interplay with one another. When *puruṣa* comes near⁴⁰ or interacts with *prakṛti*, **unmanifest** *prakṛti* begins to manifest, also known as creation. In other words, *avyakta prakṛti* becomes *vyakta*, and the physical world begins to form starting from the most subtle form of **matter** to the most gross. The **manifest** form of *prakṛti* is **producible, non-eternal, non-pervasive, active, multiform, dependent, aggregate of parts** and **subordinate** (Vācaspati Miśra, *Kārikā* 10). The terms *mūlaprakṛti*, *avyakta* and *pradhāna* no longer apply and the word *vyakta* is now used.⁴¹

The first evolute that emerges as *vyakta prakṛti* is *buddhi*. *Buddhi* is known as the faculty of **will** and **intelligence**, specifically the ability to **discriminate** between **consciousness** and **material nature** (Vācaspati Miśra, *Kārikā* 23)⁴². As the evolution of *prakṛti* proceeds, the next form of **matter** is *ahaṁkāra*, or **ego**. *Ahaṁkāra* is a sense of

³⁸ Vācaspati Miśra writes that *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* are similar because they are uncaused, unchanged and eternal (Vācaspati Miśra, *Kārikā* 11). *Puruṣa* has other qualities like **solitariness** and **neutrality** which indicate a lack of the three *guṇas*, which also means a lack of pleasure, pain or delusion (Vācaspati Miśra, *Kārikā* 19). Note: While the *Sāṃkhya Kārikā* use terms like **witness, isolated, neutral, spectator** and **non-agent** (Vācaspati Miśra, *Kārikā* 19), it does not mention the words: **eternality, infinite, uncaused**, etc. The latter listed qualities about *puruṣa* are primarily what the commentators say about it.

³⁹ The three *guṇas* will be explained in the subsequent section.

⁴⁰ It is not clear how *puruṣa* comes together or near with *prakṛti*. *Puruṣa* is seen as the animator and initiator of the material evolution, however, it is unclear how an immaterial substance can interact with a material substance. This problem is not discussed in the *Sāṃkhya Kārikā* or *Sāṃkhya Sūtras*. Larson states that “Little attention is given in the *Kārikā* as to *how* the two basic principles – i.e., *prakṛti* and *puruṣa* – come together, although the text does tell us that they are together and *what happens* when they come together” (Larson, 172). Both entities are eternally present, however, it is unclear how *puruṣa* initiates the process for *prakṛti* to begin material evolution. The *Sāṃkhya Sūtras* claim that passion (*rajas*) is the reason why material creation occurs (Vijñānabhikṣu, *Sūtra* 9), however, this is also unclear as well.

⁴¹ The common term of *prakṛti* is still used to describe the manifest form in addition to *vyakta*.

⁴² Deeper functions of the internal organs will be explained later.

I'ness or self-assertion (Vācaspati Miśra, *Kārikā* 24), which will be explained in more detail in a later section. From *ahaṁkāra*, the evolution of *prakṛti* follows two distinct routes. Under the first condition, from a *sāttvic ahaṁkāra*, evolves the eleven sense organs separated into organs of knowledge and organs of action (Vācaspati Miśra, *Kārikā* 25). The organs of knowledge are known as the eye, ear, nose, tongue and skin. The organs of action are known as speech, the hand, feet, excretory organ and organ of generation. The eleventh organ is known as the *manas*, which is both an organ of knowledge and action” (Vācaspati Miśra, *Kārikā* 27).

The *ahaṁkāra* under the influence of *tamas* will produce the five **primary, subtle elements** (*tanmātras*): sound, touch, color, taste and odor (Vācaspati Miśra, *Kārikā* 38). From these form the **gross elements** (*mahābhūtas*): *ākāśa* (ether), air, fire, water and earth. *Kārikā* 38 clarifies that these **gross elements** can be **calm, turbulent** or **deluding** depending on the element's *guṇa*. For instance, a particular “thing” made of the fire element when under *sattva* is **calm**, but when under *tamas* is **heavy**. The notion of *guṇa* will be explained later.

Sound----->Ether

Touch----->Air

Color----->Fire

Taste----->Water

Odor----->Earth

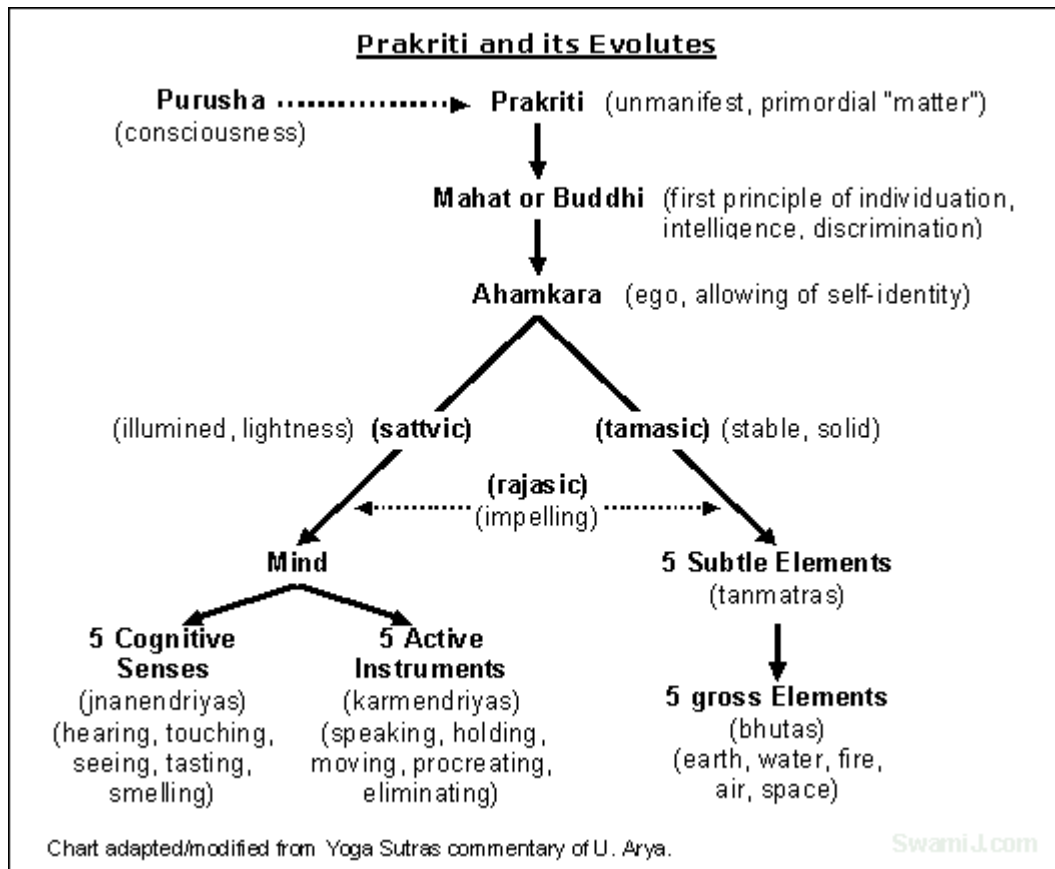


Figure I: Chart from Yoga Sutras commentary of U. Arya found online.

A proper understanding of *Sāṃkhya* metaphysics will familiarize the reader with the foundational concepts of this school and also provide a feel of the impersonal mechanisms used to describe the two fundamental entities: *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*. One can feel the dry, distant language used to describe the constituents of material nature.

Three Internal Organs

***Kārikā 22:* From the Primordial Matter [*prakṛti*] evolves the Great Principle [*buddhi*]; from this evolves the I-Principle [*ahaṃkāra*]; from this evolves the set of sixteen[eleven sense organs and five *tanmātras*]; from the five of this set of sixteen [*tanmātras*], evolves the five elements [*mahābhūtas*] (65).**

The mind⁴³ in *Sāṃkhya* is essentially composed of three parts:

1. *Buddhi*
2. *Ahaṃkāra*
3. *Manas*

These internal organs are under the umbrella of *vyakta prakṛti*. Before explaining the three internal organs, we must be familiar with the differences between **unmanifest** *prakṛti* and **manifest** *prakṛti*.

Kārikā 10: The manifested is producible, non-eternal, non-pervasive, active, multiform, dependent, serving as a mark (of inference), aggregate of parts and subordinate. The Unmanifest is the reverse of this (38).

Vācaspati Miśra explains that the **manifest** is **producible**, which simply means that it is a product, or it can be produced. On the other hand, the ‘unmanifest’ is ‘unproduced’ because it is ‘eternal’. Conversely, the manifest is **non-eternal** or *anityam*, because it can be created and revert back to its original form (**unmanifest** *prakṛti-avyakta*)⁴⁴ and thus undergoes change. To describe **non-pervasiveness**, Gaudapada writes that the **manifest** is not **omnipresent**. (Gaudapada, *Kārikā 10*). The ‘unmanifest’, however, is **omnipresent** and exists within its effects (manifestations) (Vācaspati Miśra, *Kārikā 10*). *Prakṛti* can **pervade** its effects, but the effects cannot **pervade** the causes. Thus the causes are **pervasive**, while the effects are not **pervasive**. For example, *buddhi*, *ahaṃkāra* and *manas* cannot **pervade** *pradhāna*, but *pradhāna* can **pervade** the internal organs. To describe **activity**, Vācaspati Miśra writes that *buddhi* and the other effects are

⁴³ Here, mind is used loosely as a general, umbrella term. In fact, the word mind would more closely related with the term *manas*, but in this situation is used to describe all three internal organs: *buddhi*, *ahaṃkāra* and *manas*.

⁴⁴ To describe impermanence, Vācaspati Miśra describes that the manifest can be subject to disappearance into its material cause (*Kārikā 10*).

mobile because they give up the body and occupy another body⁴⁵ (*Kārikā* 10). *Pradhāna*, or *avyakta prakṛti* does not do this, as it is **pervasive**, it does not move. The manifest is **multiform** because each individual has his/her own internal organs, thus, there is not a single *buddhi* or *ahaṁkāra*. Also, the manifest is **dependent** because its existence depends on its previous cause (Vācaspati Miśra, *Kārikā* 10). We will leave the other characteristics as they are unnecessary to define as of now.⁴⁶

Three Guṇas

Prakṛti, in its **manifest** and **unmanifest** form, is composed of the three *guṇas*, usually translated as the **qualities of matter**. These *guṇas* are metaphysical **qualities** that are in interplay with one another (Vācaspati Miśra, *Kārikā* 11).

***Kārikā* 11: The Manifest [*vyaktam-prakṛti*] is constituted of the three attributes [*guṇas*] (of *Sattwa*, *Rajas*, and *Tamas*), is non-distinguishable, objective, common, non-intelligent, and prolific. So also is the Primordial nature [*pradhānam-prakṛti*]. The Spirit [*puruṣa*] is the reverse of both of them and yet is similar in some respects (40).**

Vācaspati Miśra states that the **manifest material world** is composed of these three **attributes** which have **pleasure**⁴⁷, **pain** and **delusion** as their essences, respectively. The difference between **unmanifest matter** (*pradhāna*) and **manifest matter** is **non-distinguishable** because they have the same essence. The only difference is that **unmanifest** is unperceivable and **manifest** is perceivable (except for *buddhi*,

⁴⁵ This describes the process of reincarnation.

⁴⁶ Why is it important to know these categories? The *Sāṃkhya Kārikā* states that if ones knows these categories one will be closer to the goal of **discriminative wisdom** and subsequently, the removal of suffering. Vācaspati Miśra writes that knowing the *buddhi*'s properties under the states of *sattva* and *tamas* are conducive to attaining **discriminative wisdom** (*Kārikā* 23). This metaphysical framework is necessary to understand the difference between the two fundamental entities, which, according to Larson, contributes to the realization that is required within *Sāṃkhya* (Larson, 177). The notion of **discrimination** will be explained later on.

⁴⁷ The translator has equated the word *sattva* with pleasure; however, this may not be accurate if pleasure is associated with sense pleasure. Instead, one should view the word pleasure as contentment or happiness.

ahaṃkāra and *manas* which are inferred). They are **objective** because they are apprehended by the senses and not based on one's idea (Vācaspati Miśra). In other words, there is an objective reality of the **manifest** that exists rather than a reality in one's mind.

Since the **manifest** is **objective** (existing externally), it is also **common** because all *puruṣas* apprehend it rather than only a few having the ability to perceive its presence. It is **unintelligent** because all **matter** including the *buddhi* is 'insentient', unlike *puruṣa* which is **sentience** itself. It is **prolific** because **matter** continuously produces and evolves, while *puruṣa* does not do any of this. From the perspective of this paper, the strictly metaphysical explanations of the *Sāṃkhya Kārikā* are important pieces of information. There is a lack of psychological attributes not only in the actual *kārikā* itself, but also in the commentator's explanations of the three *guṇas*.

Kārikā 12: The attributes [guṇas] are of the nature of pleasure, pain and delusion; they serve the purpose of illumination, action and restraint and they are mutually dominating and supporting, productive and cooperative (42).

The author describes their nature, purpose and operation.

Regarding their natures, Vācaspati Miśra explains that the term *prīti* (**pleasure**) is used for *sattva*, *aprīti* (**pain**) for the nature of *rajas* and *viṣāda* (**delusion**) for *tamas*. Their purposes are **illumination**, **action** and **restraint**, respectively (Vācaspati Miśra, *Kārikā 12*). Notice how the natures of the **attributes** are somewhat linked to psychological states but are immediately and primarily explained metaphysically. The author does not elaborate on **illumination** but one can perhaps interpret it as clarity and sharpness of mind based on the **sluggishness** of *tamas* explained later. *Rajas* is associated with **action** and motion and thus interacts with immobile and **buoyant** *sattva* by stirring it to **action**. *Tamas*, however, is the **restraint** of **action** and **dullness**. It would seem that

primarily *rajas* acts upon *sattva*⁴⁸, unless *tamas* acts upon *rajas*. Thus, movement **acts** upon **buoyancy**, unless stopped by **restraint**, although this is not entirely so as the following operations will describe their reciprocal relationships.

Vācaspati Miśra explains that the *guṇas* are **mutually dominating** because when a particular *guṇa* is **acting**, it is predominating over the other two. For example, if *sattva* is **acting**, it means that it has dominated over the other two. Thus, it is not only that *rajas* **acts** on *sattva* but also that *sattva* can overpower *rajas*. They are **mutually supporting** because when a *guṇa* predominates, it subserves the other two with its specific quality. For instance, if *sattva* predominates, it subserves the other two with **illumination**. If *rajas* predominates, it subserves the other two with **activity**. If *tamas* predominates, it subserves the other two with **restraint**⁴⁹. They are **mutually productive** because the *guṇas* modify each other. Vācaspati Miśra writes that a particular *guṇa* rests upon the other two while producing its effects. The effects consist of the same fundamental *guṇas*. Gaudapada uses the example of clay turning into an earthen jar. Thus, this may indicate that the effect (jar) still consists of the same fundamental *guṇas* as the clay indicating that there is no difference besides the degree of modification (different levels of the *guṇas*). Finally, they are **mutually cooperative**, meaning that they are never separated from one another. In other words, a single *guṇa* does not exist by itself.

Vācaspati Miśra and Gaudapada offer a slightly more psychological twist by providing an example that the same object can be perceived in various ways depending on the perceiver's essential nature (predominating *guṇa*). For example, Gaudapada writes

⁴⁸ *Rajas* can also act on *Tamas*.

⁴⁹ One can try to visualize a block (the predominating *guṇa*), resting on two blocks (submissive *guṇas*) and impacting the other two.

that a beautiful woman can be a source of delight to bystanders but can be the source of misery to the other wives of her husband and bewilderment to those who are addicted to beauty (Gaudapada, *Kārikā* 12). In this way, Gaudapada is relating the *guṇa* to an individual because a single object can produce varying effects in different types of people based on their natures. One's nature, based on the predominant *guṇa* may determine one's reaction. The process of *centralization* is very weak in the *Sāṃkhya Kārikā*'s exposition on the *guṇas* as it produces a more metaphysical feel.

***Kārikā* 13: The *Sattva* attribute is buoyant and illuminating; the *Rajas* attribute is exciting and mobile; and the *Tamas* attribute is sluggish and obscuring; Their functioning is for a single purpose, like that of a lamp (45).**

The used term for **buoyant** is *lāghava*, that which causes the efficient functioning of all instruments. In such a case, the **intellect**, **mind** and senses function in a lucid state. **Buoyant** is used as lightness, leading to the springing up of things, causes the shooting upward of the flame of fire. Gaudapada writes that the **intellect** is **luminous** and the senses are acute. What exactly is *sattva* **illuminating**? An individual under the state of *sattva* has clearly functioning senses and internal organs. Thus, this **buoyancy** is in contrast to the **sluggishness** of *tamas* which slows the functioning of internal organs. Similarly, this **illumination** is in contrast to the 'darkness' of *tamas*, which naturally clouds the judgement of the internal organs. *Rajas* causes the 'immobile' *sattva guṇa* and *tamas guṇa* to act and initiate their respective effects. It excites the other two *guṇas* into **activity**, otherwise, they would just rest on their own. *Tamas* once again is the **restraining guṇa** which leads to the mind's **delusion**, **sluggishness** and obscurity (Vācaspati Miśra, *Kārikā* 13).

Vācaspati Miśra brings up an exception: If these *guṇas* have contradictory properties how is it that they do not destroy each other? The analogy of a lamp is provided, that wick and oil are opposed to the action of fire, but when all are brought together they cooperate and provide light. In the same way, the three *guṇas* coalesce and cooperate to free *puruṣa*. The mind: *buddhi*, *ahaṃkāra*, and *manas* are manifestations of *prakṛti*, thus they are also composed of the three *guṇas*. Psychological qualities such as **pleasure**, **pain** and **delusion** are attributed to a metaphysics that was originally introduced as **illumination**, **activity** and **restraint**. Therefore, this introduces psychological states of mind intertwined with the metaphysics of the **material world**. By understanding the metaphysics, one forms a foundation to subsequently understand the psychology behind the *guṇas*.

Buddhi

Kārikā 23: Buddhi is ascertainment or will. Virtue, knowledge, dispassion and power are its manifestations when *sattva* attribute abounds. And the reverse of these, when *tamas* attribute abounds (66).

Buddhi is **ascertainment** (*adhyavasāyaḥ*). **Ascertain**, used as a verb, is defined as the ability to identify true and correct information. In other words, a quality of the *buddhi* is the ability to know the truth about an object, person, place, etc. Vācaspati Miśra draws attention to the phrase “*buddhi* is **ascertainment**,” as a statement in apposition, The commentator states that this structure is intended so that one knows that the function is the same as the functionary. Thus, the function of *buddhi* is the same to that which holds the function, perhaps stating that there is no difference between the metaphysical entity of *buddhi* and its distinct function of the ability of **ascertainment**. Thus, **ascertainment** is not a quality of *buddhi*, but *buddhi* itself. Moving on, Vācaspati Miśra states that *buddhi*

is the **determination** that something has to be done, the power of **determination** (*adhyavasāyaḥ*). The *buddhi*⁵⁰ is synonymous with **ascertainment** and **determination**. The *buddhi* has four qualities affected by the two *guṇas*: *sattva* and *tamas*. The *sāttvic buddhi* is: **virtue**⁵¹ (*dharmah*), **knowledge**⁵²/**wisdom** (*jñānam*), **dispassion**⁵³ (*vairāgaḥ*), **lordliness/power**⁵⁴ (*aiśvāryam*).

Vācaspati Miśra defines **virtue** as the cause for **secular prosperity**⁵⁵ (*abhyudaya*) and the **highest good**⁵⁶ (*niḥśreyasa*), **knowledge/wisdom**⁵⁷ as understanding the difference between *puruṣa*, *prakṛti* and its **constituents**⁵⁸, **dispassion** as the absence of ‘passion’⁵⁹, and **lordliness/power** as the **perfections**⁶⁰ (*siddhis*). **Dispassion** is described as a fourfold system, *Yatamāna Samjñā* (**Stage of Endeavor**), *Vyatireka Samjñā*

⁵⁰ In the *Sāṃkhya Sūtras*, *buddhi* is also translated as **intellect** or great principle. (Vijñānabhikṣu, Book 2, *Sūtra* 13).

⁵¹ Humanity, benevolence, and acts of **restraint** (*yama*) and of **obligation** (*niyama*) (Gaudapada, *Kārikā* 23).

⁵² External Knowledge: Knowledge of the *Vedas* and branches (recitation, ritual, grammar, glossary, prosody, astronomy), *purāṇas*, logic, theology, law. Internal knowledge: Difference between nature and soul, three *guṇas* (Gaudapada, *Kārikā* 23).

⁵³ External: Distance from sense objects. Internal: Focused on liberation and perceived nature to be like witchcraft or illusion (Gaudapada, *Kārikā* 23).

⁵⁴ Power of a superior or divine being (Gaudapada, *Kārikā* 23).

⁵⁵ Prosperity is tied to the notion of merit collected by performing sacrifices and charity, which could perhaps be referring to one’s prosperity when forming ‘good’ *karma*. Perhaps the link between a *sāttvic buddhi* and secular prosperity is that one possessing the former is likely to be inclined towards virtuous acts of charity which accrue ‘good *karma*.’ As of now, this is uncertain.

⁵⁶ Vācaspati Miśra specifically mentions that the eight-fold *yoga* (*aṣṭāṅga yoga*) path leads to the highest good. Similarly, perhaps the link between a *sāttvic buddhi* and the highest good is that one who possesses the former is inclined towards practicing *aṣṭāṅga yoga*.

⁵⁷ This is perhaps the most important quality of the *buddhi*, as it is directly related to the goal of *Sāṃkhya*: attaining discriminative wisdom within the *buddhi* for the release of *puruṣa* from *prakṛti*. The second quality of knowledge will be explained later in the paper, when the school’s goal is more elaborately explained.

⁵⁸ Three *guṇas*

⁵⁹ Vācaspati Miśra specifies that dispassion is the absence of passion for sensual enjoyments (67).

⁶⁰ The **perfections** include the ability to become atomic (*aṇimā*), levitation (*laghimā*), magnification (*mahimā*), ability to touch the farthest objects (*prāpti*), unrestricted fulfillment of desires (*prākāmya*), mastery of all elements and products; insubordinate to none (*vaśītvam*), sovereignty over the production, absorption and arrangement of elements (*īśītvam*), infallibility of will (*yatra kāmāvasāyītvam*).

(**Discriminative Stage**), *Ekeṇdriya Samjñā* (**One-Organ Stage**), and *Vaśīkāra Samjñā* (**Control Stage**).

Vācaspati Miśra explains that the *citta*⁶¹ is full of passions and emotions which contribute to its impurity. These passions attract the sense organs towards their objects. In the first stage, *yatamāna samjñā* (**stage of endeavor**), an individual is required to prevent the senses from being attracted to the sense objects. To purify these passions, this stage involves the process of totally inhibiting any sense contact between the sense organs and objects of pleasure. Vācaspati Miśra does not provide an example but perhaps we can use the typical scenario of seeing a chocolate bar and refraining from eating it. If one is blocking the interaction between the senses and their objects, then this requires a willful avoidance of the latter. Thus, if one notices a strong passion for chocolate, one must avoid instances, places, ideas and conceptions of chocolate to the best of one's ability. This may involve eating in places that do not have chocolate, taking an alternate route home instead of passing an ice cream store and switching the channel when there are Cadbury commercials. In this way, when the senses cannot contact the sense objects, there can be no attraction.

In the second stage, *Vyatireka samjñā* (**discriminative stage**), Vācaspati Miśra explains that when the purification process begins, some passions are refined while others are still becoming purified. One is essentially **ascertaining** which passions are purified and which need to be purified (Vācaspati Miśra, *Kārikā* 23). In this stage of **dispassion**

⁶¹ A term used for mind, possibly a combination of *buddhi*, *aḥamkāra* and *manas*. Not commonly used in *Sāṃkhya*, but used in *Yoga Sūtras*. Vācaspati Miśra calls it the **retentive faculty**, suggesting that it is an organ that holds something. In the context of *Sāṃkhya -Yoga*, it seems to be *saṃskāra*. *Saṃskāras* are **mental impressions** that exist within the *citta* which are equivalent to latent or dormant memories and impulses that impact an individual's conduct and condition of life.

one is discriminating between these two categories and forming a conscious awareness of one's passions. For example, after avoiding all instances of chocolate, one becomes aware of that particular desire's gradual refinement, but simultaneously notices one's strong desire for the opposite sex. Thus, one notices what one has conquered, almost conquered and what still needs to be conquered.

In the third stage, *Ekeṇdriya samjñā* (**one-organ stage**), Vācaspati Miśra explains that the sense organs are no longer capable of activities and the purified emotions residing within the *citta* exist as mere craving (Vācaspati Miśra, *Kārikā* 23). In other words, the sense organs are not drawn towards the sense objects because there is no sense contact. Thus, the passions are weak and exist within the mind as a weak craving. This reveals that the word refinement or purification is a process rather than an immediate change. Until this stage, the individual is preventing the senses from contacting the sense objects and identifying his/her weak and strong passions. This leaves the third step as isolating the passions within the mind in a weak and starved form. Therefore, this is a gradual process rather than an on/off switch.

In the fourth stage, *Vaśīkāra samjñā* (**control stage**), Vācaspati Miśra explains that the individual experiences a complete cessation of craving towards all sense objects even when the latter is in proximity (Vācaspati Miśra, *Kārikā* 23). In other words, even after the senses contact the sense objects, one is no longer interested in pursuing the latter. A *sāttvic buddhi* entails having this type of **dispassion**. Overall, as the *buddhi* becomes more *sāttvic*, the passions (impurities) become refined and weakened. This process involves withdrawal from sense objects, **discrimination** between strong and weak passions, complete isolation of cravings, and elimination of cravings.

To describe the *buddhi* under a state of *tamas* the author states that it is the opposite of the four previously mentioned qualities: ‘vice’, ‘ignorance’, ‘passion’ and ‘servility’. One can argue that since a *sāttvic buddhi* is inclined towards **virtuous** activity, a *tāmasic buddhi* would have a propensity towards ‘vice’ or *adharmic* actions.⁶² Furthermore, if *sattva* entails **discrimination**, *tamas* indicates ‘non-discrimination’: a total and complete inability to understand the difference between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* (*avyakta*, *vyakta*).⁶³ The *Sāṃkhya Sūtras* states that the *buddhi* becomes reversed through tincture (Vijñānabhikṣu, 198). When *rajas* and *tamas* act on *buddhi*, the nature of the latter changes, it becomes reversed. This implies that the *buddhi*’s natural course of progress is towards *sattva* or perhaps *buddhi* is in a natural state of *sattva*.⁶⁴

When the commentary on *buddhi* is compared to that of *Sāṃkhya*’s *guṇa* model, the *buddhi* is described by the commentators as having a slightly more *centralized* theme because it is explained as having inherent qualities of **virtue**, **knowledge**, **dispassion** and **power**. These inherent qualities are manifestations of an “individual’s” successful cultivation of a *sāttvic buddhi*. How does a **virtuous** *buddhi* act? How does a *buddhi* with **knowledge** act? How does a *buddhi* with **dispassion** act? By attempting to answer these questions, the reader will naturally find a *centralized* answer because these inherent qualities are related more to the individual than the metaphysical **intellect**. Overall, when reading Vācaspati Miśra’s commentary on the *buddhi* in the *Sāṃkhya Kārikā*, a

⁶² This may perhaps refer to a path of attaining bad **merit** from **sinful deeds** or chasing material desires rather than pursuing a path of **renunciation**.

⁶³ It is very interesting to note here that in the *Kārikā*, **discrimination** indicates an understanding of knowing the difference between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*, however, in the *Yoga Sūtras*, not only is this important but also one must understand his nature to be *puruṣa*, the seer. In the *Kārikā*, there seems to be a metaphysical distinction but not an understanding of identity. Metaphysics is discussed, but never in relation to one’s identity.

⁶⁴ A *rājasic buddhi* is not mentioned in the *Sāṃkhya Kārikā*.

practitioner is not limited to a metaphysical interpretation but is instead, exposed to a more psychological feeling.

A large portion of Vācaspati Miśra's commentary on the *buddhi* includes the four stages of **dispassion**. These four stages are the same four stages mentioned in the *Yoga Sūtras* of Patañjali (Rāmānanda Sarasvati, I.15). Vācaspati Miśra wrote his own commentary on the *Yoga Sūtras*, suggesting a common link of ideas between both texts. Vācaspati Miśra even uses the word *citta* to describe the mind, which is a term more closely related to the *Yoga Sūtras* and not mentioned even once in the *Sāṃkhya Kārikā*. Why is this important? The *Yoga Sūtras*⁶⁵ was written earlier than Vācaspati Miśra's commentary on the *Sāṃkhya Kārikā*⁶⁶. Thus, if Vācaspati Miśra took these four stages of **dispassion** from the *Yoga Sūtras* commentary, if we were to exclude them from the *Sāṃkhya Kārikā*, his commentary would have a drastically more metaphysical interpretation of *buddhi* in that very text. Therefore, without using the *Yoga Sūtras*, a reader would indeed have a more metaphysical or impersonal sense of understanding the **intellect** in the *Sāṃkhya Kārikā*. Consequently, as previously mentioned, an impersonal or “out there” approach in defining constituents of the mind can provide a more detached reading and less room for a ‘**sense of agency**’ for the practitioner. Although there are psychological qualities mentioned as residing in the *buddhi*, the lack of *centralization* can make it difficult for an aspirant to feel like an agent.

Ahaṃkāra

Kārikā 24: Ahaṃkāra is self-assertion; from that proceeds a two-fold evolution only, viz, the set of eleven and the five-fold primary (or rudimentary elements)” (68).

⁶⁵ 5th century C.E. (Maas, 2006)

⁶⁶ 9th century C.E. (Larson, 149).

Vācaspati Miśra explains that *ahaṃkāra* is **self-assertion**⁶⁷ and when there is **self-assertion**, there is ego-centricity. He provides several statements to demonstrate this form of egocentricity: “I am entitled to this.” “Verily, I am competent to do this.” “All these objects of sense are for my sake only.” “There is no one else other than me who is entitled for this, Hence I am.” If *buddhi* is **will**, *ahaṃkāra* is **ego-centricity**, and the latter emerges from the former, then it seems that *ahaṃkāra* is a form of a “*centralized will*.” The individual is not only ‘willing’ to act in a *sāttvic* or *tāmasic* manner, but he/she now believes that he/she is the actor. In other words, the act itself is attributed to a concept of self. Metaphysically, it may help to imagine the *buddhi* as a force of generalized **will**, and *ahaṃkāra* as a magnetic force, pulling the **will** into a *centralized* self. For instance, imagine a hot air balloon (*buddhi*) expanding/floating upwards and a person (*ahaṃkāra*) is pulling it down by the ropes. The verbal form of this phenomenon can be demonstrated as such:

“**Will**” → (*Ahaṃkāra*) → I “**will**.”

“**Ascertain**” → (*Ahaṃkāra*) → I “**ascertain**.”

Furthermore, Larson states that “...the *buddhi* is individual but not personal. It is outside of self-awareness” (Larson, 183). The *buddhi* is independent of the *ahaṃkāra*. Perhaps, it is the *ahaṃkāra* that is pulling the *buddhi* into individuality, when in its original form, is generalized. The *Sāṃkhya Sūtra* states that *ahaṃkāra* brings out the **ego** (**self-centeredness**) in every case of cognition, “...the matter of which cognition would, else, have lain dormant in the bosom of Nature, the formless Objective” (Vijñānabhikṣu, Book 1, *Sūtra* 72). This statement reveals that cognition is occurring somewhere within

⁶⁷ This is the translator’s choice of words and the proper definition will be explained. In *Sāṃkhya Sūtras*, it is also translated as **conceit**, which functions to bring out the **ego** (Vijñānabhikṣu, Book 1, *Sūtra* 72).

prakṛti, but *ahaṃkāra* is that force which brings that cognition to a central agent. Perhaps this *sūtra* agrees with the notion that *buddhi* is general until it is pulled in by *ahaṃkāra*.

This *kārikā* on *ahaṃkāra* is perhaps one of the only verses where the commentator Vācaspati Miśra explicitly relates a metaphysical concept to the individual. The word *abhimāna* is used to describe *ahaṃkāra*. *Abhimāna* is defined as a “self-conceit, conception of one’s self, pride⁶⁸.” *Ahaṃkāra* is defined as “the conception of one’s individuality, self consciousness⁶⁹.” These definitions clearly indicate that the **ego** is related to the self⁷⁰. Thus, this verse does not seem to have the problem of *centralization*. From the practitioner’s point of view, reading this verse on *ahaṃkāra* allows for a more *personalized* experience. Although, the definition, without a clear explanation on how **self-ego** manifests (e.g. pride) can still retain a metaphysical form.

Manas

Kārikā 27: Of these (sense organs), the Mind [*manas*] possesses the nature of both (the sensory and motor organs). It is the deliberating principle, and is also called a sense organ since it possesses properties common to the sense organs. Its multifariousness and its external diversities are owing to special modifications of the Attributes [*guṇas*] (71).

Vācaspati Miśra states that cognition and action are not possible without the *manas* coming into contact with the sense organs. This occurs after the sense organs come into contact with sense objects⁷¹.

- 1) Sense organs perceive sense objects
- 2) *Manas* comes into contact with the sense organ

⁶⁸ Monier Williams Sanskrit Dictionary (Online)

⁶⁹ Monier Williams also defined as egotism, making of the self, thinking of the self.

⁷⁰ Not to be confused with soul, *puruṣa* and *ātman*

⁷¹ Subsequently, the *manas* comes into contact with either *ahaṃkāra* or *buddhi*, depending on the commentator.

As mentioned previously, the sense organs are either categorized into organs of knowledge or organs of action. The *manas* is a special organ because it is both an organ of knowledge and organ of action. The *manas* functions as a **deliberating principle**. Since **deliberation** involves thinking carefully and thoroughly before making a decision, the notion of doubt comes into question. This **deliberation** is different from the *buddhi*'s function of **ascertainment**, because the former is a rational process of understanding, while the latter is knowledge of an object. Vācaspati Miśra provides an example stating that when the senses contact the sense objects, at times a doubt will occur as to what the object is. For example, one may ask “Is that my friend or a stranger?” The mind will continue to **deliberate** until certainty arises. One can infer that certainty must come from the *buddhi*, because *buddhi* is **ascertainment**. When referring to *manas*, Gaudapada's translation involves the word **reflection**.

The commentary of the *Sāṃkhya Sūtras* states that the mind is both an organ of intellect and action just as a single man can be a variety of characters (Vijñānabhikṣu, 206). With his beloved, he can be a lover, with someone indifferent, he becomes indifferent and with someone else, he is someone else. A more applicable example is a woman who can be a mother, daughter and wife. In such a way, when mind is associated with the organ of vision, it is related to seeing. When associated with the organ of sound, it becomes associated with hearing. The commentator is saying that whatever organ (action, or intellect) with what the mind is associated with, the latter seems to take on that same (action, intellect) characteristic.

Using only the *Samkhya Kārikā*'s commentaries, one can clearly see that the **mind** (*manas*) is entirely described as a metaphysical **material** entity. Once again, it is

described as a sensory and motor organ with the ability of **deliberation**. The only manner in which it is *centralized* is when Vācaspati Miśra describes the initial unknown apprehension in the mind such as an idea that arises in the mind of a boy (Vācaspati Miśra, *Kārikā* 27). At first, the boy is unaware of what exactly is in front of him. Then the **mind** goes on to determine what this unknown idea is by comparing it to a certain genus, which then later identifies what the idea is. However, most commonly the example of the **mind**'s identification process is seeing an unknown distant object, followed by the **mind**'s inquiry or **deliberation** of the identity of that distant object. The commentator *centers* the *manas* to an individual by describing it as a sense organ that **deliberates** from a boy's point of view. This form of *personalization* is more prevalent in the *Yoga Sūtras*.

Discriminative Wisdom in the *Buddhi*

In *Sāṃkhya* philosophy, the goal is for *puruṣa* to break free from the grasp of *prakṛti*. This result occurs by the attainment of **discriminative wisdom**, *vijñāna* within the *buddhi* (Vācaspati Miśra, *Kārikā* 2). This is the metaphysical goal in *Sāṃkhya*. The personal⁷² goal of *Sāṃkhya* is practically the same, however, it is viewed from the individual's eyes. The goal involves an end to the mind's suffering, which is also attained by **discriminative wisdom** within the *buddhi*. Although there are two ways to see the same goal, the *Kārikā* begins with the personal goal.

- I. *Puruṣa* and *prakṛti* are bound.
- II. This binding occurs because the *buddhi* does not have proper **discrimination**.

Thus, **discrimination** is needed within the *buddhi* and cultivated (Vijñānabhikṣu, Book 1, *Sūtra* 56).

⁷² A practitioner

III. When **discrimination** is attained, *prakṛti* releases *puruṣa* (Vācaspati Mīśra, *Kārikā* 66).

IV. Plot Twist: *Puruṣa* was never bound, it is *prakṛti* that binds and frees itself⁷³ (*Kārikā* 62). One still needs to **discriminate**, and since **discrimination** exists within the *buddhi*, one can conclude that this false perception (‘non-discrimination’) occurs within the **intellect**.

***Kārikā* 1: From the torment caused by the three kinds of pain, proceeds a desire for inquiry into the means of terminating them; if it be said that (the inquiry) is superfluous since visible means exist (we reply), not so; because (in visible means) there is the absence of certainty (in the case of the means) and permanency (of pain) (2).**

In this *Kārikā*, the problem is clearly defined. Only from understanding pain resulting from the three-fold types, *ādhyāmika*⁷⁴, *ādhibautika*⁷⁵ and *ādhidaivika*⁷⁶, does one begin a search for the removal of it.⁷⁷ The first step of the journey into *Sāṃkhya* philosophy begins with one’s acknowledgement of pain in the **material world** followed by the desire to remove it completely. After this step, this *Kārikā* states that relieving this form of pain cannot be accomplished through **visible** means such as *Vedic* rituals, wealth, women, and pleasure, because their results are **temporary** and **uncertain** (Vācaspati Mīśra, *Kārikā* 1). For example, after realizing one feels dissatisfied or agitated and subsequently engages in sexual activity, one still finds oneself in a state of suffering. Another example can be of a CEO who earns a six figure salary but still finds himself

⁷³ This will not be explained as of now, but is a large component of this school’s philosophy.

⁷⁴ Intra-Organic: body-disorder of wind, bile and phlegm; mind-lust, anger, greed infatuation, fear, envy, grief and non-perception of objects (Vācaspati Mīśra, *Kārikā* 1)

⁷⁵ External influences: man, beasts, birds, reptiles, plants and inanimate things (Vācaspati Mīśra, *Kārikā* 1)

⁷⁶ Supernatural agencies: demi-gods, goblins, evil spirits, superhuman beings, planets (Vācaspati Mīśra, *Kārikā* 1)

⁷⁷ Although there are three types of pain, I would argue that these pains all commonly exist within the mind, because regardless of where they come from, the mind feels frustration from it. Although they originate from different places, the mind is still suffering from them at some point.

suffering, perhaps from a disease or general dissatisfaction. Although a symptom of suffering has been relieved, suffering as a whole is not. It seems that this text is arguing that one form of suffering will only be replaced by another. Thus, rather than short lived alleviation, one needs a permanent solution stated in the next verse.

Besides the *kārikā* on the *ahaṃkāra*, the first and second verses are some of the most subtle *personalized* verses in this particular text, without using the terms ‘one’, ‘individual’, etc. In order to speak of the three types of pain, the commentator must relate them to the individual. In particular, speaking of the mental forms of suffering and the **temporary** remedies like charming women, drinks and food, clearly demonstrates a more *centralized* approach to the goal of *Sāṃkhya*. Furthermore, in the following verse, mention of *Vedic* sacrifice as **temporary** means also indicates one’s futile attempt at ending one’s suffering. It is important to note that although the *kārikā* itself seems like it is *centralizing*, it is the commentary that has a more personal feel.

Kārikā 2: The scriptural means is like the obvious means since it is linked with impurity, decay and excess. The means contrary to both and proceeding from the Discriminative Knowledge [vijñāna] of the Manifest [vyakta prakṛti], the Unmanifest [avyakta prakṛti] and the Spirit [puruṣa], is superior (6).

According to *Sāṃkhya*, the only effective termination of pain is through **discriminative knowledge**. One must cultivate **discrimination** within the *buddhi*, which as previously mentioned is a quality of the *sāttvic buddhi*. Thus, the quality of **wisdom/knowledge** listed under the *buddhi* is the very goal in *Sāṃkhya* philosophy. **Discriminative knowledge** is defined as knowledge of the **manifest** (*vyakta prakṛti*), **unmanifest** (*avyakta prakṛti*) and **spirit** (*puruṣa*). Vācaspati Miśra states that one must first attain knowledge of the **manifest** (*vyakta*), then the **unmanifest** (*avyakta*) and that the latter is the cause of the **manifest** (9). From knowing that **manifest** and **unmanifest**

(*prakṛti*) must exist for another⁷⁸ (*puruṣa*), the knowledge of *puruṣa* is gained.

Knowledge of the distinction itself is gained from understanding the **manifest**, which is:

“...from the Sruti (Vedas), Smṛti (Canonical texts), Itihāsa (historical accounts) and Purāṇas (mythology); then by duly having established the same through scientific reasoning, and finally by absorbing that knowledge into oneself by earnest and uninterrupted contemplation⁷⁹ for a long time” (Vācaspati Miśra, *Kārikā* 2).

The process of attaining **discriminative wisdom** is clearly delineated by Vācaspati Miśra. By the means mentioned above, one must first attain knowledge of *prakṛti*. This seems to be counterintuitive, one can argue that the purpose of religious textual sources is for the understanding of God or a higher consciousness apart from matter, but in *Sāṃkhya*, according to Vācaspati Miśra, it seems that the direct goal is to understand **material nature**. If these means satisfy the *buddhi*’s understanding of **manifest** and **unmanifest** *prakṛti*, one must finally understand that *prakṛti* exists for another, *puruṣa*. Thus, **discriminative wisdom** has been cultivated. If this is the case, one must have a totally *sāttvic* *buddhi*.

Discrimination, being a quality of the *buddhi*, indicates that one does not need to seek **discrimination** outside of oneself, because it already exists within. If **discrimination** is already a part of the *buddhi* and individuals are unable to cultivate it, then there must be something keeping the *buddhi* from acting with **discrimination**. The most logical answer here would be the *guṇa* of *tamas*⁸⁰, as stated in a previous verse. If the *buddhi* has such an important task and is covered by the quality of *tamas*, then the only solution would be to make the *buddhi* more *sāttvic*. The next step is to inquire into the process of making the *buddhi* *sāttvic* when it is not. There are many options within

⁷⁸ This inference is not clearly explained.

⁷⁹ This refers to meditation.

⁸⁰ This quality is **heavy** or **sluggish**, but also, the *buddhi* under *tamas* is the opposite of being in *sattva*, which means it lacks **discrimination**.

the *Sāṃkhya Sūtra* as well as the *Bhagavad Gītā* which explain how to reduce *rajas/tamas* and increase *sattva*. To reiterate, the goal of *Sāṃkhya* is to cultivate **discrimination** within the *buddhi*, which is its natural state under the *guṇa* of *sattva* while its natural state under *tamas* being ‘non-discrimination’.⁸¹

When defining **discriminative knowledge**, Gaudapada refers to knowing the twenty-five total principles (*tattvas*⁸²) of *Sāṃkhya* philosophy. **Discriminative knowledge** entails the understanding of the *buddhi*, *ahaṃkāra*, *manas*, five subtle elements, five gross elements, the eleven organs of perception and *puruṣa* (Gaudapada, *Kārikā* 2). When one completely understands *Sāṃkhya* metaphysics, one has **perfect knowledge**.

The metaphysical goal of this school is the release of *puruṣa* from *prakṛti*. The same goal viewed from a personal lens, is for an individual to end his/her suffering. His/her suffering occurs because of that very bond between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*. The individual who is under this bond has ‘non-discrimination’. Larson states that the world is understood by the individual, by how *puruṣa* witnesses it when it is in conjunction with *prakṛti*. Therefore:

“...this explains why the principles (*tattvas*) in the *Kārikā* are expressed usually in terms of a psychological rather than cosmological categories...In the *Kārikā*, however, the basic *tattvas* or principles are analyzed mainly from the point of view of the individual. Little attention is given to cosmological implications, and one can only conclude that such concerns were secondary in the mind of the author” (Larson, 178).

When referring to *Sāṃkhya*, the author also creates two categories: psychological and cosmological. Thus, it is safe to say that one can view the soteriological goal of

⁸¹ The inability to discriminate between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*.

⁸² There are twenty-five total *tattvas*, material and immaterial entities used to describe the metaphysical world of *Sāṃkhya*.

Sāṃkhya from a personal or metaphysical lens, respectively. From a psychological lens, the *Sāṃkhya Kārikā* has only a few verses that are rooted in the lens of the individual. So, for the most part, I will have to disagree with Larson when he says the *tattvas* are expressed in a more psychological manner. It is clear from the majority of verses that the view is from a more metaphysical lens, certainly in comparison to the *Yoga Sūtras*. Once again, this *kārikā* *personalizes* without the use of the terms ‘one’ and ‘his’ but through the natural relation to the individual⁸³.

Locus of Agency⁸⁴

Kārikā 20: Therefore, through this union, the insentient evolute appears as if it is intelligent; and similarly, also from agency belonging to the guṇas, the neutral Spirit [puruṣa] appears as if it were the Agent (62-63).

The *Sāṃkhya Kārikā* (and *Sāṃkhya Sūtras*) states that *puruṣa* does not have the function of ‘agency’ (Vijñānabhikṣu, 129). This *kārikā* states that agency is a function of the *guṇas*, which are the constituents of *prakṛti*. Thus, ‘agency’ must exist somewhere within *prakṛti*. The *Sāṃkhya Kārikā* states that the *buddhi* is translated as **determination**, the **will** to do something. Thus, it seems that ‘agency’ is located in the *buddhi* according to the *Kārikā*, in Vācaspati Miśra’s commentary. Furthermore, *sūtra* 54 states “Self-consciousness, not Soul is the agent” (Vijñānabhikṣu, 450). Even though the *Sāṃkhya Sūtras* mentions *buddhi* to be the highest and final organ, it still considers the *ahaṃkāra* (**ego**) to be the source of ‘agency’. The *Sāṃkhya Sūtras* take a slightly different view: the soul is seen as an agent only through the influence and proximity of the *buddhi*. In other words, *puruṣa* is seen as an agent because *buddhi* is near it. If the **soul** has no such

⁸³ Examples like *Vedic* sacrifices, expiatory rites and animal sacrifices are provided. Even if the sentence was: ‘*Vedic* sacrifices were performed,’ it would still be difficult to separate this from the individual. This is why the *kārikā* still manages to *center* even without the use of certain words.

⁸⁴ The purpose of this section is to locate ‘agency’ in the *Sāṃkhya* school of thought. This topic may appear to be a digression but is in fact helpful in locating the seat of **doership**.

quality, and the quality of ‘agency’ is occurring due to this reason, then ‘agency’ must be a part of *buddhi*.

In order to understand the meaning of ‘agency’ in relation to *puruṣa*, Bryant points out a highly important axiom in the *Sāṃkhya* school of thought: If something is ‘eternal’, then that thing cannot change (Bryant, 19). In order for an entity to be ‘eternal’, it must retain its identity or essence. A manipulation of that very entity suggests the production of a new entity with a different identity, qualifying the former as **non-eternal**. Thus, the *puruṣa* is seen to be ‘eternal’ because it does not undergo change, movement or manipulation. It is important to understand ‘agency’ because the *Sāṃkhya Kārikā* uses the word *akartṛbhāvaḥ*, **non-agent**, to describe the lack of ‘agency’ in *puruṣa* (*Kārikā* 19). Bryant writes that “To be an agent, of course can only transpire in a context of changeability and responsiveness: ‘agency’ presupposes the potential to make choice and change one’s choice if one so determines) some form of investment in choice, and determinative and desirable choice between options” (Bryant, 20). Therefore, since ‘agency’ requires a change in choice, it cannot exist within *puruṣa*. It must exist with *prakṛti*.

The Internal Instruments: Order

Vācaspati Miśra states that first a sense object is perceived and the message then travels to the *manas* upon where it is **reflected**. Then the message goes to the *ahaṃkāra* which leads to the thought, “I experienced this.” Finally, the sense perception is presented to the *buddhi* which subsequently makes a decision, but also reflects the sense perception back to the **soul**, which simply witnesses it (Vācaspati Miśra, *Kārikā* 36).

Kārikā 36: These (external organs with the Mind and the I-Principle) which are characteristic-wise different from one another, and are different modifications of the attributes, and which resemble a lamp, illuminating all (their respective objects) present them to the *Buddhi* for the purpose of the Spirit, (ie for their exhibition to the Spirit)” (83).

Vācaspati Miśra provides an analogy of a village chief officer who collects taxes from the heads of different families and presents them to the head of the district. The head of the village gives the taxes to the head of all the districts who finally gives it to the king. In the same way, the external organs with their perceived objects, present sensory information to the *manas* which gives it to the *ahaṃkāra*, and finally gives it to the *buddhi*. The *manas* observes the sense impressions and **ruminates** and the *ahaṃkāra* takes personal cognizance by adding an “I.” Overall, according to Vācaspati Miśra, everything is presented to the *buddhi*.

Although Gaudapada agrees that the internal organs present information to *buddhi*, his order differs from that of Vācaspati Miśra’s. He states that after a sense object contacts the senses, sense perception comes into contact with the *manas* but then goes to the *buddhi* second instead of the *ahaṃkāra*. In other words, the *ahaṃkāra* is last on the list because addition of an “I” to a particular cognition occurs at the very end. He states that:

“...a person going along a road sees an object at a distance, and is in doubt whether it be a post or a man: he then observes some characteristic marks upon it, or a bird perched there; and doubt being thus dissipated by the reflection of the mind, the understanding discriminates that it is a post; and thence egotism interposes, for the sake of certainty, as, verily (or, I am certain it is a post)” (Gaudapada, *Kārikā* 30).

The *Sāṃkhya Sūtras* seems to agree with Gaudapada because it states that when something has been **determined** by the *buddhi*, then the making of an **ego** takes place (Vijñānabhikṣu, Book 2, *Sūtra* 16). This suggests that the process of *buddhi* is followed by *ahaṃkāra*. In *Kārikā* 36, Vācaspati Miśra introduces an objection and poses the

question: Why do all the sense organs present the sense perception/cognition to *buddhi* rather than *ahaṃkāra*, as the last organ. The next verse should demonstrate why.

Kārikā 37: Because, it is the *Buddhi* that accomplishes the experiences with regard to all objects to the *Puruṣa*. It is that again that discriminates the subtle difference between the *Pradhāna* and the *Puruṣa* (84).

Vācaspati Miśra explains that the main objective of the organs is to serve *puruṣa*, in other words, for *puruṣa* to be free. The only way for *puruṣa* to be free is for *buddhi* to **discriminate** the difference between the two entities. Thus, the *buddhi* is the most important organ because it accomplishes the purpose directly, while the other organs do not. *Buddhi* has the potential to accomplish *Sāṃkhya*'s main goal of releasing *puruṣa*. With this argument, Vācaspati Miśra makes sense when trying to explain the importance of the *buddhi* over the *ahaṃkāra*. He accomplishes this by explaining that this very organ performs the most significant function of all, **discrimination**. If so, then it must be the most important and dominant organ of which other organs are subordinate. *Ahaṃkāra* is the I'ness, and produces a sense of individuality. Although its function is important, and indirectly serves the purpose of **discrimination**, it does not directly do as the *buddhi* does. And so,

“...among the organs, the *Buddhi* alone does this directly; hence, that alone is considered to be the Principal organ, just like the government being considered superior to all other chiefs by virtue of his being the direct agent of the king, while others such as the village head etc, are only of the secondary importance when compared to the former” (Vācaspati Miśra, *Kārikā 37*).

The *Sāṃkhya Sūtras* agree with this statement accepting the *buddhi* as the most immediate and direct solution for the **soul**'s emancipation (Vijñānabhikṣu, Book 2, Sūtra

40). Furthermore, Vijñānabhikṣu states that *buddhi* is important because *saṃskāras*⁸⁵, reside within it. These **expressions** do not reside within the senses such as the eye and ear, because if they did then experiences previously perceived would not be remembered by those who lose sight or hearing, respectively (Vijñānabhikṣu, Book 2, *sūtra* 42).

Gaudapada does not provide a reason for the *ahaṃkāra* being the last organ of perception. In his commentary on the same *kārikā*, Gaudapada certainly acknowledges the importance of the *buddhi* in accomplishing the *puruṣa*'s main goal, even directly, but does not explain why he considers *ahaṃkāra* as the last organ.

It is clear that the *ahaṃkāra* *centralizes* the *buddhi* and *manas* to an individual. In the same way, the commentators are occasionally *centralizing* the metaphysical entities to the individual when trying to explain the functions. Essentially, we are speaking of the same phenomenon when trying to understand the mind in *Sāṃkhya*. Are the commentators providing a *centralized* (*ahaṃkāra*-like) experience when describing the mind? On the contrary, are the commentators providing a more impersonal description of the mind and goal of this particular school of philosophy? Although there are analogies that refer to individuals, there still seems to be a metaphysical feel when talking about the interaction between the three internal organs.

Kārikā 51: Reasoning, oral instruction, study, the three-fold suppression of pain, acquisition of well-wishers, and purity (or charity) are the eight forms of success. The three mentioned before are the three restrainers of *siddhi* (or success).

This is one of the only verses in the *Sāṃkhya Kārikā* that provides a suggested course of actions directly in the verse which is independent of the commentators'

⁸⁵ Saṃskāras are mental impressions that reside within the *buddhi*. They constitute the sum total of our memories, experiences, inclinations, etc. In the *Yoga* school of philosophy, *saṃskāras* exist within the *citta* (Hariharānanda, *Sūtra* 18). This idea will come later in the paper.

explanation. Vācaspati Miśra writes that to suppress pain, one must perform *adhyayanam*⁸⁶, *ūhaḥ*⁸⁷, *suhṛtprāptiḥ*⁸⁸, *dānam*⁸⁹ etc. Clearly this verse *centralizes* because it prioritizes a psychological path over metaphysics. *Yoga* will certainly have more many paths recommended than the *Sāṃkhya Kārikā*, but it is necessary to point out one of these verses. A proposed path consisting of actions provides the practitioner with the ability to witness visible results. When the practitioner starts to gain an understanding of the scriptures, more like-minded company, etc, he/she gains more knowledge. Subsequently, he/she can start to see the effects of his/her actions. By seeing the effects of his/her actions, he/she can feel more like an agent.

The Internal Instruments: Function in Time

Kārikā 33: The internal organ is three-fold. The external is ten-fold; they are called the objects of the three (internal organs). The external organs function at the present time and the internal organs function at all three times (80).

The ten external organs only function in the **present moment**. For instance, sight is perceived by the eye, sound by the ear, smell by nose, texture by touch, taste by tongue only in the **present moment**. The three internal instruments, *buddhi*, *ahaṃkāra* and *manas* function in the **past, present and future**. For instance, a person can use the mind to think of the past or even imagine a future circumstance. Three interesting examples in the form of inferential statements are given by Vācaspati Miśra to explain this example (*Kārikā 33*).

- a) **Past:** It had rained because the river has become full with water
- b) **Present:** There is fire in the mountain because there is smoke

⁸⁶ Learning while living with teacher in hopes of understanding scriptures and the self.

⁸⁷ Reasoning or argumentation

⁸⁸ Acquiring friends, fellow students

⁸⁹ Charity, purity

- c) **Future**: It would rain provided no obstacles are there, because, we see ants carrying eggs.

Gaudapada provides an example stating that,

“...intellect forms an idea, not only of a present water-jar, but of one that has been or will be made: so egotism exercises consciousness of an object past, present, or future: and mind considers the past and future, as well as the present. Internal instrument is, therefore, for all times” (*Kārikā*, 33).

This simply explains the limitations of the external organs compared to the internal organs. The commentators are *centralizing* very minimally.

Kārikā 30: Of all the four [senses, *manas*, *ahaṃkāra*, *buddhi*] , the functions are said to be simultaneous and also successive with regard to the seen objects; with regard to the unseen objects, (and also seen objects) the functions of the three are preceded by that (76).

To explain simultaneity, Vācaspati Miśra uses an example of an individual who is surrounded by darkness. After the individual sees light from lightening and perceives a tiger, four steps take place. The eye's perception of the tiger, the mind's consideration (*manas*), identification with the self (*ahaṃkāra*), and determination (*buddhi*) occur all at once (*Kārikā*, 30). Thus, what seems to be a process that may seem separated by time is not and instead occurs **instantaneously**. Gaudapada states that the “Intellect, egotism, mind and the eye see form at once, in one instant, (coming instantly to the conclusion) that is a post. The same three, with the tongue, at once appreciate flavour; with the nose, odour: and so with the ear and skin” (Gaudapada, *Kārikā*, 30). Gaudapada provides the example of a person seeing an object but does not know whether it is a post or a man. The *manas* **reflects**, then the *buddhi* **discriminates** that it is a post, and finally *ahaṃkāra* states that: I am certain that it is a post.” Thus, *buddhi*, *ahaṃkāra*, *manas* and the eye are

progressively occurring. Here, we see a distinct difference between the order of interaction between the organs, but we will cover this in a different section.

Next, Vācaspati Miśra explains what he means by the word **successively**. He states that, when a man sees something vaguely in a dim light, he applies his **mind** to figure out what it is. Then when the **mind** notices that it is a ‘cruel robber’ with a bow aimed at him, the *ahaṃkāra* makes him aware that this threat is occurring at him (I’ness), then the *buddhi* **determines** that the man should escape immediately. But what about things that are unseen that do not require sense perception? Vācaspati Miśra states that the internal organs function on their own, without sense perception. He does not provide an example here, but we can perhaps imagine a situation where a student has to present for a speech the next day. In the moment, he is not perceiving the presentation or a podium, but is using the *manas*, *ahaṃkāra* and *buddhi* to imagine the event, leading to his anxiety. The *manas* can imagine a situation and the situation then causes him to relate it to himself by seeing the threat happening to him. Then the *buddhi* states that either he needs to prepare more or avoid it. However, this knowledge could only have occurred if it had been perceived or experienced before (*Vācaspati Miśra*, 76).

This is a clear example of *centralizing* the speed and order of interactions between the internal organs. The reader can understand the succession of the internal organs with reference to a tiger and a post. The commentators even use the language “when one sees...a tiger facing him...” and this is immediately linked to the *ahaṃkāra*. This type of language helps for a personal experience. In a *decentralized* experience, the commentator could have written, when the organ of sight perceives a tiger, the information is passed to

the mind which then considers, followed by the ego adding an “I”. The language and examples help the practitioner by relating it to oneself through visualization.

Yoga

The *Yoga Sūtras*, will provide more of a psychological feel as psychology and practice based *sūtras* are analyzed. This will allow the reader to imagine the world of the practitioner, or *yogi*, who strives for the end goal of this school of thought. The reader should pay close attention to the highly *centralized* verses located in this text in comparison with most verses of the *Sāṃkhya Kārikā*.

Sutra I.2: Yoga (1) is the suppression of the modifications of the mind.

Where in *Sāṃkhya* the goal is to cultivate **discrimination** within the *buddhi*, in *Yoga*, the goal is to **still/suppress** the **mind** from having any **modifications**⁹⁰ (*vrittis*). In order to accomplish this, the **mind** must be in a state devoid of thoughts. When this occurs, the seer⁹¹ abides in his own nature (Patañjali, I.3). When all *vrittis* are **stilled**, the **seer, pure consciousness**, abides within itself and is no longer being taken in or absorbed by the *vrittis* of the **mind**. If the **seer** is not abiding in its own nature, then it is totally absorbed in the *vrittis* (I.4). A more appropriate word than absorption is identification. When the *puruṣa* is conscious of the *vrittis*, instead of itself, it is identified with the *vrittis*. The verse states that the **seer** appears to assume the form of the **modifications**.

It would seem that Vyāsa is saying that one believes one’s true nature to be the very thoughts one has and thus experiences this erroneous conception. This occurs because the **mind**, specifically *buddhi* is in proximity to the *puruṣa* and so its

⁹⁰ The Sanskrit word for modification is *vṛtti*.

⁹¹ Pure consciousness or *puruṣa*

modifications are taken to be *puruṣa* itself. Therefore, it is important to understand that either the *puruṣa* is conscious of itself or *puruṣa* is conscious of the *vrittis*, which indicates that the **mind** confuses *puruṣa* for the *vrittis*. Thus, there are only two optional states for *puruṣa* to experience. Here a question is brought forward. In the second state, the mind is falsely confusing the *puruṣa* for the *vrittis*, which one could argue is Descartes' famous *cogito ergo sum* (I think therefore I am). In this situation the mind is cognizing itself to be the soul. However, in the first state what exactly is cognizing if the **mind** has been stilled? If the *puruṣa* is conscious of itself, how does one know that this is the case if one has depended on the **mind** to cognize experienced states? This question needs to be explored further.

In the beginning verses, there is little *centralization* occurring. The *sūtras* along with the commentaries are speaking of the relationship between **consciousness** and *citta* in a slightly impersonal manner much like that of the *Sāṃkhya Kārikā*. In the first few verses, when intricately discussing the *citta* under the influence of the three *guṇas*, Vyāsa and Hariharānanda mention the term *yogin*, practitioner of *yoga*, twice. This word is mentioned in reference to the states and byproducts of **mind** that are achieved when **stilled**. Rāmānanda Sarasvati, also explains the different states of **mind** under the various *guṇas* but with reference to the four types⁹² of *yogins* (1.2). In a *personalized* experience this is important because the reader is initially exposed to language that is distant, but is soon followed by the idea of applying this distant language to the progress of a *yogi*. This allows the reader to step out of an impersonal environment into the personal reality of a *yogi*. Furthermore, Rāmānanda Sarasvati provides three examples of the error of

⁹² The four types of *yogins* will not be discussed, however, it is important to note that certain inclinations and states of mind under the *guṇas* are related to a particular class of *yogin*. These classes are: *prathamakalpikah*, *madhubhūmikah*, *prajñājyotiḥ*, *atīkrāntabhāvanīyah*.

associating the *puruṣa* with the mental states of the *citta*: ‘I am tranquil’, ‘I am miserable’, ‘I am deluded’” (I.4). In this example the commentator provides a solid example of *centering* by applying the metaphysical phenomenon of **ignorance/ego**⁹³ in the form of personal mental states.

Hariharānanda writes “Such subject-object or proprietor-property relationship between the Seer and Buddhi is established by (analyzing) one’s own self-cognisance as in “my intellect”(Hariharānanda, I.4). Here, Hariharānanda is saying that the particular relationship between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* (specifically *buddhi*) is established by a *centralizing* process, by using or applying the **intellect** from one’s point of view. In other words, by being aware of one’s own cognitive processes, one can understand the relationship between these two metaphysical entities. Overall, there is a moderate amount of *centralization* in the first verses of this text because even if the particular language is excluded, metaphysical concepts are still *centered* around an individual.

Vṛttis, for the most part, are obstacles to the path of *Yoga* (**stilling** the **mind**). There are *kliṣṭa*⁹⁴ and *kliṣṭa*⁹⁵ *vṛttis* (Patañjali, Sūtra I.5). The five types of *vṛttis* are *Pramāṇa*⁹⁶, *Viparyaya*⁹⁷, *Vikalpa*⁹⁸, *Nidrā*⁹⁹, *Smṛtaya*¹⁰⁰

It is the *vṛttis* that need to be **stilled** in order to achieve the goal of *Yoga*. Thus, one must know the differences between the categories of **afflictive** and **non-afflictive**

⁹³ The metaphysical root of this psychological state will be explained.

⁹⁴ **Detrimental/afflictive** to the path of *yoga*. For example, “I am the body and the mind.”

⁹⁵ **Beneficial/non-afflictive** to the path of *yoga* “I should meditate today.”

⁹⁶ **Perception, Inference and Testimony** (Patañjali, I.7)

⁹⁷ **False knowledge/illusion** formed of something other than what it is (Patañjali, I.8)

⁹⁸ **Verbal cognition** of a thing that does not exist (Patañjali, I.9)

⁹⁹ **Dreamless** sleep produced by inertia (*tamas*) in a state of vacuity or negation (Patañjali, I.10).

¹⁰⁰ **Recollection** caused by reproduction of the previous **impression** of an object without adding anything from other sources (Patañjali, I.11).

vr̥ttis. *Kliṣṭa* or **afflictive** *vr̥ttis* come from the *kleśas*¹⁰¹, which are mutations of the *guṇas* and serve as **impediments** to *yoga*. These *vr̥ttis* distance one from the goal of *Yoga*.

Akliṣṭa or **non-afflictive** *vr̥ttis* do not emerge from the *kleśas* and are conducive to attaining **discriminative knowledge**¹⁰². Hariharānanda writes that these *vr̥ttis* of *viveka*¹⁰³ stop the functions of the *citta* by counteracting the *vr̥ttis* of the three *guṇas*. Thus, although the goal is to **still** the **mind**, the **non-afflictive** *vr̥ttis* are **beneficial** in reaching the goal. He writes “...non-afflictive modifications show up when spiritual practice and detachment effect a breach in the flow of afflictive mental modifications”

(Hariharānanda, I.5). When an individual is having consistent **thoughts** that are not conducive to the goal of *yoga*, **non-afflictive** *vr̥ttis* start to break these **thoughts** when one has included spiritual **practice** and **detachment** in one’s life. Similarly, the commentator writes that the same can occur as **afflictive** *vr̥ttis* break the flow of **non-afflictive** *vr̥ttis*. One can infer that this occurs when an individual is moving away from spiritual **practice** and **detachment**.

If afflictive *vr̥ttis* come from the *kleśas*, then from where do the **non-afflictive** *vr̥ttis* come? Hariharānanda writes that “*Samskāras* are in turn causative factors of other modifications like right cognition (*Pramāṇa*) etc” (1.5). A cycle is established: *vr̥ttis* lead to *saṃskāras*, and *saṃskāras* produce new *vr̥ttis*. This cyclic relationship is occurring in the *citta*, and by cultivating **non-afflictive** *vr̥ttis* one gradually reach the goal of *yoga* (**stilling** the **mind**). Based on this cyclic model, if one cultivates **non-afflictive** *vr̥ttis*, then in turn, one cultivates *saṃskāras* that will produce further **non-afflictive** *vr̥ttis*.

¹⁰¹ These impediments will be explained more thoroughly in a later chapter.

¹⁰² In *yoga*, the term for discriminate knowledge is *viveka* (II.26). In *Sāṃkhya*, it is *vijñāna* (*kārikā* 2).

¹⁰³ *Viveka* is discrimination. “*Viveka* is only the distinction between the seer and the seen” (Rāmānanda Sarasvatī, II.26).

However, this solution can only work if **non-afflictive** *vṛttis* are associated with **non-afflictive** *saṃskāras* and afflictive *vṛttis* are associated with **afflictive** *saṃskāras*¹⁰⁴.

In the opening verses of *vṛttis*, there are no instances of *centralization* besides when the terms spiritual **practice** and **detachment** are used to describe the process used to break the pattern of **afflictive** *vṛttis*. Therefore, a similar distant language that was used in the *Sāṃkhya Kārikā* is also being used in the *Yoga Sūtras*, however, there is a direct emphasis on the psychological **modifications** of the **mind** (**knowledge, error, sleep, etc.**) from the beginning. What types of **thoughts** are individual's having that act as distractions to the goal? Answering this question by nature is *centering*. This emphasis may naturally evoke a more personal feeling within the reader. Also, there are several verses that explain each *vṛtti* in depth. Within these verses, there is great potential for more verses demonstrating *centralization*. For instance, for the sleep *vṛttis* Vyāsa writes:

“Since we can remember when we wake up that we had been sleeping, sleep is called a mental modification, as indicated in the feelings expressed by phrases such as ‘I slept well, I am feeling cheerful, it has cleared my brain’ or ‘I slept poorly; on account of disturbed sleep, my mind has become restless, and is wandering unsteadily,’ or I was in deep sleep as if in a stupor, my limbs are heavy, my brain is tired and languid, as if it has been stolen by somebody else and lying dormant” (Vyāsa, I.10)

A **mental modification** that occurs within the *citta*, a *vṛtti*, is a metaphysical concept that is being applied to the **mind**, but specifically an individual. This is evident through language use of words like ‘I’, ‘we’, ‘my’, ‘somebody’, etc. Simply by providing examples, the verses become *personal*. Therefore, it is important to note that

¹⁰⁴ The next question to ask is, if afflictive *vṛttis* are derived from the *kleśas* and non-afflictive *vṛttis* are derived from *saṃskāras*, what is the relationship between the two causes? In other words, what is the relationship between the *kleśas* and *saṃskāra*? As we define the *kleśas*, this relationship will become clearer.

although not all the verses on specific *vr̥ttis* *personalize*, they predominantly have a psychological and personal flavor.

I.12 By Practice and detachment these can be stopped (35).

The analogy of a river is used to describe the **mind**. The **mind** flows towards **good**¹⁰⁵ or **evil**¹⁰⁶. According to Vyāsa, in order to totally inhibit the *vr̥ttis*, one must develop a habit of **discrimination** and **renunciation**, respectively (Vyāsa, Sutra I.12). **Renunciation** in particular, stops the flow of the senses towards sense objects, which in this case is evil, and developing **discrimination** opens the floodgate of **discriminative knowledge**. “Thus, practice and detachment are the means of arresting the modifications of Chitta” (Hariharānanda, I.11). Vyāsa uses the term *sthiti* (tranquility) to describe a **mind** in a state of undisturbed calmness (I.13). Only by prolonged **practice**, without break and with devotion, does **practice** become firmly instilled (Patañjali, I.14). Vyāsa expands and uses the terms **austerity**, **continence**, **learning**, **reverence** and **earnest attention** in describing practice.

The commentators use impersonal language to describe **practice** and the manner in which it should be performed. This *sūtra* is *centralized* simply by answer the question: Who is performing practice and detachment? The process of *centralization* is implied when a practice or path is provided. Although impersonal language is used when describing the practice, this verse reveals another determinant of a ‘**sense of agency**’ and is much less metaphysical. The verse indicates that by the combination of **practice** and **detachment**, the *vr̥ttis* of the **mind** are stopped. More specifically, by **practice**, the **mind** becomes one pointed. This indicates that a practitioner can see the results (tranquil or one

¹⁰⁵ Towards *viveka* (**discriminative knowledge**) ending in *kaivalya* (**liberation**) (Vyasa, 35).

¹⁰⁶ Towards cycle of re-birth and ‘non-discrimination’.

pointed mind) by consistent, respectful and long-term **practice** (I.14). This verse provides the practitioner with a realizable result that can manifest as a result of his/her practice.

Thus, there is a chance that this verse can evoke a ‘**sense of agency**’.

I.15: When the mind loses all desire for objects seen or described in the scriptures it acquires a state of utter desirelessness which is called detachment (37).

According to Vyāsa, **detachment** (*vairāgya*) occurs when,

- A) The mind is indifferent to perceivable objects such as women, food, drinks, power and does not desire after them
- B) The mind does not desire going to heaven or a discarnate state, dissolution into primordial matter
- C) The mind is indifferent to good or evil

This state of **detachment** is known as *vaśīkāra- samjñā*. Simply put, Vyāsa states what **detachment** is and its sign. Hariharānanda goes on to describe the four stages of **detachment** making *vaśīkāra- samjñā* the last stage. These were the same stages that were discussed in *Vācaspati Miśra*’s commentary on the *Sāṃkhya Kārikā*, except in the *Yoga Sūtras*, these stages are listed in the actual *sūtras*, while in the *Sāṃkhya Kārikā*, they are a part of *Vācaspati Miśra*’s commentary. The state of **detachment** mentioned in the *Yoga Sūtras*, *vairāgya*, is equivalent to the *vaśīkāra* stage also mentioned in the *Sāṃkhya Kārikā*. *Yatamāna* is the continued and systematic effort of uprooting **attachment** from the **mind**. As a result, when one has identified on what one has improved and what is left to improve, one has reached the *vyatireka* stage. In the *ekendriya* stage, the **attachment** for objects is so weak that it cannot activate any sensory or bodily function and dwells only in the mind as just curiosity with desire (I.15). This certainly expands on *Vācaspati Miśra*’s four steps of **detachment** in *Sāṃkhya*. Therefore, this *sūtra* and its commentaries have weak *personalization* but once again, the state of **detachment** is naturally *centered* to an individual. The **mind** is detached, however, it is

clear that the language does not point to an “out there” entity but more towards an individualized **mind** that was once absorbed in the *vṛttis*.

1.16: Indifference to the *guṇas* or the constituent principles achieved through a knowledge of the nature of *puruṣa* is called *paravairāgya* (supreme detachment).

Paravairāgya is a state in which a *yogi* becomes totally indifferent to the *guṇas*.

This state is reached when the *yogi* attains knowledge of *puruṣa*. According to Vyāsa, the very practice itself of trying to realize *puruṣa*, allows the *yogin* to attain clear vision¹⁰⁷ and steadiness in *sāttvic* qualities, which subsequently leads to **discriminative knowledge** (knowledge of *puruṣa*). This is a direct answer to the question: how does one make one’s **intellect** *sāttvic* but also transcend the *guṇas*? With knowledge of *puruṣa*, along with **practice/detachment** the aspirant becomes more situated in *sattva* and eventually transcends the *guṇas*. According to Hariharānanda, suffering is related to the belief that *buddhi* is **pure consciousness** (I.17). This false belief terminates once **detachment** is cultivated. The highest form of **detachment** is that which is free from *rajas*, because *rajas* interferes with the discernment between *puruṣa* and *buddhi*. Hariharānanda writes “...because a slight excess of dynamic *Rajas* destabilizes that state of discernment” (I.17). Therefore, another reason to eliminate *rajas* is because one cannot determine one’s true nature when it is predominant.

Vyāsa writes:

“When detachment appears in the shape of clarified knowledge, the Yogin, with his realization of the nature of Self, thinks thus: ‘I have got whatever is to be got; the afflictions which have to be eliminated have been reduced; the continuous chain of birth and death, bound by which men are born and die, and dying are born again...’”

¹⁰⁷ Clear vision may refer to seeing reality through *sattva* as it is as opposed to the distortion caused by *tamas*.

This *sūtra* is highly *personalized*. A realization is explained from the point of view of the *yogi*. Also, Hariharānanda specifically has the option of writing about the *buddhi* in an impersonal manner but chooses to describe it in relation to the *yogi* (e.g. the *yogin*’s **intellect**).

I.27: The sacred word designating Him is praṇava or the mystic syllable OM (Patañjali, 63).

The **mystic syllable OM** is another form of *Īśvara*¹⁰⁸. Hariharānanda writes that the “...concept of *Īśvara* cannot be grasped without the help of an appropriate signifying word. Such word-meaning relationship being correlative, the signifying term is eternal: (I.27). It seems that because *Īśvara* is **eternal**, the word related to him is also **eternal**. Due to this relation, an aspirant must “Repeat it and contemplate upon its meaning” (I.28). Vyāsa writes that by doing so, one achieves one-pointedness. By repeating mantras the goal of *yoga* becomes firm and by *yoga*, the chanting of *mantras* is improved (Vyāsa, I.28). As a result, the **soul** is revealed. This *sūtra* indicates a particular starting point for **stilling** the **mind**, more specifically achieving one-pointedness of **mind**. The practitioner can choose to chant *OM* or other *mantras* for that matter. More generally, *OM* chanting can be viewed as a different starting point for the same path because the practitioner can choose to chant *OM*, while not engaging in *kriyā yoga* and *aṣṭāṅga yoga*. Patañjali does not mention this, but since he mentions the starting points of three practices: *kriyā yoga*, *aṣṭāṅga yoga* and *OM* chanting which certainly do overlap, why can the practitioner not choose one over the other?

¹⁰⁸ *Īśvara* is a term used to function as a position held by an individual’s preferred transcendent deity. E.g. *Shiva*, *Viṣṇu*. Beyond transcendence of *karma*, *kleśa* and time, there are characteristics of *Īśvara* that will not be described in this paper.

By chanting *OM* “...comes realization of the individual self and the obstacles are resolved” (Patañjali, I.29). Vyāsa writes that obstacles such as illness are removed by devotion to *Īśvara*. The individual **self** is realized by first recognizing the qualities of *Īśvara*: **pure**¹⁰⁹, **blissful**, **isolated** and **unemcombered**. After realizing these qualities, the aspirant realizes the qualities of one’s own **soul**. Overall, how is the term *OM* related to the **mind**? *OM*, an eternal correlate of *Īśvara*, is used to achieve one-pointedness of **mind**, the removal of obstacles and finally realization of individual **self**.

There is much *centralizing* in these verses as the commentators are referring to the relationship between a higher being and the aspirant. Ideas, practices, obstacles are all related to the *yogin*. This provides a highly *personalized* account for the practitioner in comparison to that of the *Samkhya Kārikā*. After all, it is the *yogin* who is prescribed to chant *OM* to achieve a one pointedness of the **mind**. Along with a personal reading, the practitioner is also provided with a concrete starting practice and a variety of *mantras*. The combination of a personal reading and an option of *mantras* to chant can provide the aspirant with a strong ‘**sense of agency**’.

Kriyā Yoga & Aṣṭāṅga Yoga

II.1 Tapas (Austerity or sturdy self-discipline—mental, moral and physical), Svādhyāya (repetition of sacred mantras or study of sacred literature) and Īśvara-praṇidhāna (complete surrender to god) are Kriyā Yoga (yoga in the form of action). [sic!]

Kriyā Yoga involves *Tapas*¹¹⁰, *Svādhyāya*¹¹¹ and *Īśvara-praṇidhāna*¹¹².

¹⁰⁹ Explain all these references Pure blissful, etc.

¹¹⁰ Austerity

¹¹¹ Repetition of Sacred Mantras or Study of Sacred Literature

¹¹² Complete surrender to God

In *Kriyā Yoga*, the goal is to diminish the **obstacles** to *yoga* known as *kleśas* (Patañjali II.2). *Tapas* or **austerities** are necessary to purify the mind of *vāsanās*¹¹³. Supposedly, these *vāsanās* of actions and afflictions have existed from the beginning of time, and due to this, they are very difficult to eradicate from the **mind** (Vyāsa, II.1). Thus, *tapas* leads to the removal of these *vāsanās* through cleanliness and purity of mind. Hariharānanda mentions that *tapas* weakens the dominance of *rajas* and *tamas* in the **mind** and includes **celibacy**, *āsana*, *prāṇāyāma*, fasting etc. He explains *tapas* as a practice to discipline the body while the other two steps of *kriyā yoga* lead to the discipline of the organs of speech and mind (Hariharānanda, II.1). Rāmānanda Sarasvati agrees and expands because, in his opinion, *tapas* involves **celibacy**, devotion towards a *guru*, **truth telling**, vow of silence, performing duties based on stages in life, endurance of opposites (heat & cold or pain & pleasure), and moderate eating (II.1).

Vyāsa simply states *svādhyāya* as the repetition of *OM* and the study of scriptures relating to liberation. Finally, Vyāsa states that *Īśvara-praṇidhāna* involves surrendering all actions such as the desire for the fruits of one's actions to *Īśvara*.

Hariharānanda writes,

“The three-fold practice results in withdrawal from external activities, leading to pacification of the organs of action and perception, and dawning of detachment and forbearance, all of which enhance the competence of the devotee for practicing concentration” (II.1).

In this portion concerning *tapas*, *centralization* occurs in a broader sense. Vyāsa uses the example of a ‘man without discipline’ to demonstrate how the goal of *yoga*

¹¹³ *Vāsanā* has three psychologically relevant definitions from the Monier Williams dictionary: “the impression of anything remaining unconscious in the mind, the present consciousness of past perceptions, knowledge derived from past memories.” The most applicable definition would be the first: unconscious impressions.

cannot be reached without *tapas*. He also writes that a ‘yogin’ should follow an undisturbed path of purification. *Centralization* specifically involves applying a metaphysical concept to an individual. However in this verse, the term is used more broadly as the practice of *kriyā yoga* is associated with *yogins*. Either way, this is contributing to a ‘sense of agency’ by attaching the practice to a notion of ‘I’: Who is the individual performing these three limbs of *kriyā yoga*? Rāmānanda Sarasvati uses phrases like ‘one’s preceptor’, ‘one’s thought’, ‘one’s stage of life’, and ‘one’s actions’, to describe **self-study** and **devotion** to *Īśvara*. Overall, there is a medium to high amount of *personalization* in this *sūtra*.

As explained before, *samādhi* is synonymous with a **still mind** (absence of *vṛttis*) or **consciousness** abiding in its own nature. *Kriyā yoga* allows for this particular result by weakening the **obstacles** to *yoga*: *kleśas*. This is a necessary step because *samādhi* cannot occur when *kleśas* are active in the **mind** (Rāmānanda Sarasvati, II.2). **Discriminative knowledge** attenuates the **obstacles** and as a result, finding the distinction between *puruṣa* and *buddhi* is not hindered. According to Hariharānanda, **discriminative enlightenment** is the finishing touch to the *kleśas* (which are already thinned down). These weakened *kleśas*, like roasted seeds, are not yet removed but remain inactive in the **mind**. He writes that these roasted seeds cannot create any more **afflictive modifications**¹¹⁴. The only **modifications** that can occur are those that help **discriminate** the difference between *puruṣa* and *buddhi*. To reiterate, *kriyā yoga* weakens the *kleśas* and with the emergence of **discriminative knowledge**, the latter destroys them.

Kleśas

¹¹⁴ This is relevant

Kleśas are known as the **impediments** to *yoga*, in other words the **impediments** to **stilling** the **mind**. There are five in number: *avidyā*¹¹⁵, *asmitā*¹¹⁶, *rāga*¹¹⁷, *dveṣa*¹¹⁸ and *abhiniveśa*¹¹⁹ (Patañjali, II.3). Hariharānanda writes, “When *Kleśas* become active, they infiltrate into both latent and overt parts of *Citta*, and strengthening the sway of the *Guṇas* they tune the mind to worldly activities” [sic!] (II.3).

II.5: Avidyā consists in regarding a transient object as everlasting, an impure object as pure, misery as happiness and the not-self as self.

Avidyā, is known as **ignorance/nescience** and is the breeding ground of the other *kleśas* (whether dormant, attenuated, interrupted or active) (Patañjali, II.4). The previous *sūtra*, II.4, reveals that **ignorance** is the main **impediment**, the ground where all the other **impediments** thrive. This indicates that the other *kleśas* depend on **ignorance**. By attacking **ignorance**, the other **impediments** will be affected as well. The previous verse indicates that *kleśas* can be in four different states: Dormant *kleśas* are those that are still present in the **mind** of a *yogin* who has left his/her body but will soon reemerge in another form (Rāmānanda Sarasvati, II.4). Weakened *kleśas* are those that are gradually weakening due to the practice of *yoga* and the last two categories, interrupted, manifested, occur when a *yogin* is attached to worldly objects. For instance, if I am angry with a friend, I am not calm with him (or calm). If I am calm, then I am not angry with him. In the first case, calmness is interrupted and anger is manifested. In the second case, anger is interrupted and calmness is manifested. Both can reemerge when the *kleśas* contact the sense object.

¹¹⁵ Misapprehension about the real nature of things

¹¹⁶ Egoism

¹¹⁷ Attachment

¹¹⁸ Aversion

¹¹⁹ Fear of death

Avidyā has four crucial components. First, a *citta* in *avidyā* sees a transient object as permanent. The example given by Vyāsa is of seeing the moon, stars, world, sky and heavenly beings as permanent, however, in time, all of these have to pass. The next component includes seeing an impure object as pure. This refers to the body itself as disgusting because “...of its place (of origin), of its germinal source (1), of its constituent factors, of its secretions, of its disintegration and of its adventitious purity” (II.5). The body itself is unclean and impure: Vyāsa provides an example of seeing a maiden who is very beautiful with an amazing body as pure, but in truth, is not the case because this beauty will fade. It is seeing misery as happiness: Vyāsa explains that all worldly objects are painful and sorrowful, because they cause suffering due to the nature of the *guṇas* which produces changes (2.5).

The final component of *avidyā* is seeing the ‘not-self’ as **self**. This is a crucial component to *avidyā*. The **self** or *puruṣa* is eternal, changeless, infinite, etc. When one looks upon the **material world** and considers objects or even the **mind** as a part of one’s self, then one is considering the not self to be the self. *Avidyā* is the most important *kleśa* that needs to be weakened because all other impediments are weakened when *avidyā* is. Once again the *kleśas* need to be eliminated in order to **still** the **mind**, because by nature, the *kleśas* are **impediments** to *yoga*. It is important to note here that with reference to the final point, *avidyā* is similar to ‘non-discrimination’ in *Sāṃkhya*. *Avidyā* involves seeing the ‘non-self’ as the **self**, and ‘non-discrimination’ involves seeing *prakṛti* as *puruṣa*.

With regards to *centralization*, Vyāsa writes “So also it is Avidya when one looks upon things as one’s own, when these are not so. For instance, people look upon external objects, other persons, animals, even one’s own body and mind, which are the seat and

instrument of experience, as constituting one's own Self or Puruṣa, while in reality these are not so" (Vyāsa, II.5). Applying the phenomenon of **ignorance** to an individual's perception is enough to indicate the process of *personalizing*. This is due to the 'I' being introduced in the form of one's possessions. Rāmānanda Sarasvatī writes "Those who are engaged in the performance of actions (as the means of attaining *Yoga*) have their afflictions weakened. In the case of those who are attached to worldly objects, their afflictions are either interrupted or manifested" (II.4). *Kleśas* are essentially a combination of the *guṇas*, they are purely metaphysical. An impersonal definition of *kleśa* can simply be ignorance. However, both Vyāsa and Rāmānanda Sarasvatī extend the definition of *kleśa* to refer to an individual's point of view. This is *centralized* because he is directly attributing this erroneous cognition (metaphysical *kleśa*) to people.

(II.6): Asmitā Is tantamount to the identification of puruṣa or pure consciousness with buddhi.

The next *kleśas* is **ego**, known as *asmitā*.¹²⁰ Vyāsa states that **ego** is seeing the *puruṣa* and *buddhi* as the same. He states that *puruṣa* is absolute **awareness** and *buddhi* is an instrument of knowing. One is confusing **pure awareness** and the most subtle instrument of knowing (2.6). When they appear united, this is called experience. Hariharānanda states that this false identification of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* leads to misapprehensions like "I am happy," "I am in distress." These misapprehensions lead people to *bhoga* (experiencing pleasure and pain). In this misapprehension, what people strongly believe to be the state of *puruṣa*/the self, is in reality the experience of the *buddhi* being presented to *puruṣa*. Once someone understands the difference between

¹²⁰ In *Sāṃkhya*, the word ego is translated as *ahaṃkāra*. Note the difference between *asmitā* and *ahaṃkāra*.

these two, these false identifications of “I am this” and “I am that” disappear and no longer arise. **Desire** and **aversion** no longer enter the **mind**.

Asmitā (**I am’ness**) itself is the process of *centralizing*. The word “I” is in the language. One could argue that *centralizing* is “*ahamkāra*’ing” or “*asmitā*’ing”. Vyāsa adds a quote by *Āchārya* Pañchaśikha: “When one fails to see that Purusa is different from Buddhi by virtue of his immaculateness, immutability and metapsychic consciousness, one regards Buddhi as the true self through delusion (2)” (Vyāsa, II.6). Here, the example of *asmitā* is seen from the point of view of a person. This adds further to the effect of *personalizing*.

II.7: Attachment is that (modification) which follows remembrance of pleasure.

Attachment (*rāga*) is the **thirst/hankering** after pleasure (Vyāsa, 125). *Rāga* is specifically the act of desiring. This strong **desire/hankering** comes from a previously experienced pleasure which is most probably in the form of a *samskāra*. In order to have *rāga*, one must have had a previous experience of that which one is **desiring**. For example, in order to have a chocolate craving, one must have previously experienced the pleasure of chocolate. Furthermore, Hariharānanda writes that when one experiences pleasure, the experience itself leaves a subliminal **imprint** in the form of *vāsanā* (491). This *vāsanā* bring forward a memory of pleasure in the mind (making it keen) and subsequently creates *rāga* for that object. This verse is already *centralized* as Vyāsa refers to an individual chasing pleasure due to a metaphysical *kleśa* which exists in the *citta*.

II.8: Aversion is that (modification) which results from misery.

According to Vyāsa, “...aversion is the feeling of opposition, mental disinclination, propensity to hurt and anger towards misery or objects producing misery.” Much like *rāga*, this occurs when one has experienced such a misery before. From recollection of this misery, one has created a strong sense of **aversion** towards the object of misery. According to Hariharānanda, with **aversion**, one feels an urge to exterminate this past sorrow and what had brought it about.

Hariharānanda describes a type of **aversion** known as *Pratigha* which originates in *Pratighāta* (obstruction) which is the “...urge to retaliate and get rid of what had stood in one’s way earlier” (Hariharānanda, II.8). He goes on to say that when one has no **aversion**, one has nothing to oppose, but with **aversion**, opposition is at every step. Although subtle, there is *personalizing* because the act of **aversion** is not only associated to the **mind** but is also associated to the individual’s mind.

II.9: As in the ignorant so in the learned the firmly established inborn fear of annihilation is the affliction called abhiniveśa.

This *kleśa* is known as having the craving “Let me never be non-existent; let me be alive.” According to Vyāsa, much like *rāga* and *dveṣa*, *abhiniveśa* must be present in a person who has experienced death before because it is most likely linked to *saṃskāras*. Rāmānanda Sarasvatī writes that “Excessive clinging for life consists in anxiety due to fear which is well-known and spontaneous and which is found in the learned one too (as in the ignorant)” (II.9). *Abhiniveśa* contributes to anxiety and fear, and clearly acts as a hindrance to the path of *yoga*. One’s intelligence¹²¹ does not necessarily affect one’s **fear of death**. Furthermore, the commentator makes it clear that **fear of death** implies that the

¹²¹ A learned and unlearned person are both affected by this. Here intelligence should not be used synonymously with *buddhi*-intellect because if it was, a developed intellect would only serve to clear *abhiniveśa* rather than harbor it. Thus, the word intelligence here must be of some other type of intelligence. (find the Sanskrit)

self is different from the physical body (II.9). One is clearly afraid of losing the body, therefore, this also indicates that *avidyā* (identification with the body and mind) is the root of the **fear of death**.

Rāmānanda Sarasvati writes “Abhinivesa is the fear of death present in every living being whether learned or ignorant” (II.9). He also writes that the fear of death exists both in the ignorant and wise ones. The *kleśa* of *abhiniveśa* is highly *centralized* by relating the psychological state to an individual. The *citta* (a metaphysical entity) is being viewed by a psychological microscope by being individuated. In Hariharānanda’s commentary, the words ‘one’ is used frequently along with ‘I’. One can even witness *abhiniveśa* attributed to a worm, which is a form of subtle *centralization* but in this case, does not contribute to agency because it is too distant of a species for an aspirant to relate to.

II.10 The subtle *kleśas* are forsaken (i.e. destroyed) by the cessation of productivity (i.e. disappearance of the mind).

Subtle *kleśas* (specifically weakened **impediments** in a **mind** with **discriminative knowledge**) are eliminated by the dissolution of the mind. In a **mind** with **discriminative discernment** only a small portion of **ego** (*asmitā*) can exist, but when the **mind** is dissolved, *asmitā* is dissolved with it. **Discriminative knowledge** ends volition and sensation in the **mind**, and the latent *kleśas* become weaker. According to Hariharānanda, the final act is the renunciation of **discrimination**. When this occurs, the *kleśas* are completely destroyed. The **mind** merges back into its cause, *asmitā* (**ego**) and the latent impressions disappear (Rāmānanda Sarasvati, II.10). The subtle *kleśas* disappear when the **mind** merges back into **ego**. Therefore, the weakened *kleśas* are only removed when the **mind** and **ego** dissolve back into their causes by **discriminative**

knowledge. Hariharānanda writes that once **discrimination** occurs “...the final curtain comes down on mind and with it the death blow for the Kleśas” (II.10). In this *sūtra*, there is weaker *centralization* because there is more of a metaphysical sense.

Aṣṭāṅga Yoga

II.28 When impurities are destroyed through the practice of the different accessories to yoga enlightenment dawns, culminating in discriminative enlightenment (1).

Vyāsa states that when practicing *aṣṭāṅga yoga*, the five forms of **ignorance** (impurities) are reduced or destroyed and subsequently **true knowledge** manifests (Vyāsa, 11.28). Also the distinction between *puruṣa* and the *guṇas* is known. An analogy is given that practicing the limbs of *yoga* removes the impurities like an axe severing wood. Consistent practice of the limbs will give **discriminative knowledge**. Hariharānanda states that increase of **knowledge** is directly proportional to the decreasing of impurities. Thus, the path of *yoga*, along with *kriyā yoga* and **practice** and **detachment** in Chapter 1 all move towards the greater goal. However, note that *aṣṭāṅga yoga* specifically creates **discriminative enlightenment**. This indicates a highly important detail: The results of one’s actions are visible and thus, contributes to a ‘**sense of agency**’. He writes “As the practices are performed, the impurities are attenuated and correspondingly the lustre of knowledge increases until discriminative enlightenment is attained, *i.e.* the true nature of the distinction between Purusa and the Gunas is known” (II.28).

It is important to note the difference here between *Sāṃkhya* and *Yoga*. In *Sāṃkhya*, **discriminative knowledge** is the ultimate means. However, in *Yoga*, after one attains **discriminative knowledge**, one is required to surrender that last *vṛtti* and still the

mind. The stilling of the **mind** is an extra step after **discriminative knowledge**. The practice of *aṣṭāṅga* yoga itself is *personalizing* because it is a providing path that cultivates the metaphysical *vr̥tti* of **discrimination** within the *citta*. Thus, this metaphysical process is being directly applied to the individual and transformed into a psychological process. The following *sūtras* will allow the reader to get a *personal* and *centered* feel of the text compared to the *Sāṃkhya Kārikā*.

II.30 Ahimsā (non-injury), satya (truth), asteya (absention from stealing), brahmacharya (continence) and aparigraha (abstinence from avariciousness) are the five yamas (forms of restraint). [sic!]

The first step of the path to **discriminative knowledge** is the five *yamas*. *Ahimsā* represents **non-violence** or the abstention from hurting any being at all times. The other *yamas*¹²² are based off of this one. *Satya* refers to telling the **truth** in speech. One should speak only for the purpose of communication with lack of deceit, delusive and meaningless intentions. Words should only be uttered for benefit and not to inflict harm. *Asteya* refers to **refraining from stealing** things that belong to others. *Brahmacharya* is suppressing one's sexual activity (**celibacy**). *Aparigraha* is refraining from wanting things (**non-coveting**) because according to Vyāsa they create trouble and decay.

The commentary of this *sūtra* is highly *centralized* as the words 'one', 'others', 'brāhmaṇa', 'self-restraint' 'person' 'women', 'her' are used in relation to conduct. In fact, it is highly difficult to speak in a metaphysical sense by separating these codes of conduct from the individual. The *yamas* are clearly rules and conduct that an individual must follow indicating a drastic difference from the instructions of the *Sāṃkhya Kārikā*. There are plenty of examples of visible results from one's actions because one can see

¹²² Yamas are universal (II.31)

character traits after the practice of *yamas*. For instance, when the *yogin* is firm in *ahimsā*, sentient beings in his presence cease to be hostile (Patañjali, II.35). When *satya* is cultivated, the *yogin*'s words become true (Patañjali, II.36). When one tells another to be **virtuous**, the latter becomes virtuous (Vyāsa, II.36). When the *yogin* cultivates non-stealing, everything naturally comes to him/her (Patañjali, II.37). When celibacy is established, the *yogin* attains power (Patañjali, II.38). There are verses that can directly contribute to one's '**sense of agency**' by clearly explaining the results of one's practice.

II.32: Cleanliness, contentment, austerity (mental and physical discipline), svadhyaya (study of scriptures and chanting of mantras) and devotion to god are the niyamas (observances). [sic!]

Vyāsa states that **cleanliness** is external¹²³ and internal¹²⁴. **Contentment** involves being satisfied with one's basic necessities and not desiring anything more than needed. **Austerity** involves the ability to handle conditions of heat and cold, hunger and thirst, standing/sitting calmly and sometimes, the absence of speech and fasting for religious vows. **Study of scriptures** involves studying *śāstras* (for liberation) and repeating *OM*. Finally, **devotion to God** means surrendering all actions to *Īśvara*.

The reader might have noticed how the first three *niyamas* are the same as the steps in *kriyā-yoga*. Hariharānanda clarifies that **cleanliness** involves eating pure food (not stale or rotten food). He states that "Uncleanliness imbibed from contact with external objects also makes the mind dirty" (II.33). Thus one must maintain external **cleanliness** so the **mind** can also maintain its **cleanliness**. Internal **cleanliness** involves removing negative emotions (impurities of the mind) like "...arrogance, ego, inability to endure others' prosperity, jealousy, ascribing faults (where there are none) wrongly to

¹²³ (Daily washing, eating pure food)

¹²⁴ (removal of impurities of the mind)

others, bearing ill will etc.” (II.33). According to Vyāsa, the aspirant who practices **cleanliness** gets heart purification leading to mental bliss/joy. Following this bliss comes one-pointedness following subdued senses. After the senses are subdued, the *buddhi* becomes firm in the ability to realize the self (II.41).

Not only are these verses *centralized*, but they also provide the aspirant with a sense of **agency** through cause and effect. For example, when one practices **cleanliness**, one develops an **aversion** towards one’s body and other bodies (Patañjali, II.40). Once again, through **cleanliness**, mental bliss and joy emerge (II.41). From practicing **contentment**, unsurpassed happiness is gained (II.42). Also, when impurities are destroyed and **austerities** are practiced, the perfection of the body and organs results (II.43). By study and repeating *mantras*, one can communicate with one’s desired deity (II.44). Finally, from devotion to *Īśvara*, *samādhi* is attained (II.45). Clearly, the *niyamas* indicate a cause and effect relationship where the practitioner gets a ‘**sense of agency**’ indicating that if he/she puts in effort, these results may occur.

What happens when one finds opposition to the *yamas* and *niyamas* in the form of disturbing **thoughts**? Patañjali suggests that the individual should actively find contrasting (more positive) **thoughts** to overcome the intrusive pervasive thoughts (II.33). For instance, Vyāsa states that if one has the **thought**, “I shall speak untruth,” he should think “I took refuge in the virtues of *yoga* by promising security to all living beings” (II.3). This functions to act as a reminder of one’s conviction towards **non-violence** and the path itself. It seems that while practicing the *yamas* and *niyamas*, oppositions may arise and one should constantly and vigilantly have countering **thoughts**. It seems that Patañjali is suggesting that with the goal in mind, one should to have these **thoughts** or

create these *vr̥ttis* in order to neutralize or weaken the previous *vr̥ttis*. Opposing *vr̥ttis* must be neutralized because they can potentially pose a threat to the path. This *sūtra* offers the practitioner a ‘**sense of agency**’ because he/she is actively thinking of counteracting **thoughts**. By one’s effort and creativity in producing these **thoughts**, one has the opportunity to witness one’s result¹²⁵.

Results of Personal Effort

I.21: Yogins With Intense Ardour Achieve Concentration And The Result Thereof, Quickly (Patañjali). [sic!]

This *sūtra* indicates a straightforward principle: the aspirant who is vigilant and hardworking will achieve results more quickly. In other words, more input equals more output. Rāmānanda Sarasvati writes “...supra-cognitive trance is at hand in the case of yogin-s who have intense detachment and pursue the means in an abundant measure” [sic!] (I.21). If performed intensely, the cause is effort and the result is the goal of *yoga*.

This is an evident *sūtra* indicating that one’s actions are related to the results. In other words, there is a direct cause-effect relationship between one’s sincere efforts and outcome of practice. There is nothing comparable to this in the *Sāṃkhya Kārikā*. I will present six verses in succession that indicate efforts related to results. These statements can be viewed as a series of ‘if-then’ statements that involve the practitioner’s effort followed by his/her results. Thus, this verse can clearly provide the aspirant with a ‘**sense of agency**’.

¹²⁵ In this case, one can infer that a successful result is a counteracting thought that defeated the original disturbing thought. And, so once the original thought is defeated, the practitioner can say “I have defeated the previous thought.”

Once again, the purpose of listing the following *sūtras* is to provide the reader with a clear indication that the practitioner can get a predominant ‘**sense of agency**’ from witnessing tangible results.

I.33: The Mind becomes purified by the cultivation of feelings of amity, compassion, goodwill and indifference respectively towards happy, miserable, virtuous and sinful creatures. [sic!]

A **mind** full of serenity is one that has been cultivated with one-pointedness. A **mind** that has been cultivated with one-pointedness is one that is pure through the thoughts listed above. The practitioner must cultivate positive feelings towards the happy, compassion towards the suffering, and indifference towards the evil ones. This thought process requires one’s effort and practice. After sufficient practice the individual will experience a purified, content mind.

Hariharānanda writes:

“...even if the person is one’s enemy, the feeling should be one of elation as on seeing a friend happy. If feeling like envy or resentment appears at seeing someone prosper it has to be got rid of by conscious cultivation of feeling of amity. Compassion has to be practiced towards all those in distress, irrespective of whether they are friends or foes i.e. to practice being sympathetic towards people when they suffer and refrain from hardening up in cruel delight when suffers misfortune. Whether he belongs to the same sect or not, you should have goodwill for anyone who treads the path of virtue” (1.33).

Rāmānanda Sarasvatī writes that when the individual acts in this manner the **mind** becomes clear by the removal of the *rajas* and *tamas guṇas*. The individual has direct control over the decreasing of these *guṇas*, and therefore, a clear ‘**sense of agency**’.

I.34: By exhaling and restraining the breath also (The Mind is calmed).

A practitioner may feel a ‘**sense of agency**’ by “...exhaling with special care so that the mind remains at the desired place during expulsion of the internal air...and so

“...continuing such practice without any break the mind is to be made one-pointed” (Hariharānanda, I.34). This *sūtra* is a great example of practice producing a result that the practitioner can personally witness. “By the control of vital airs, there results the control of the mind. It is because both are inseparable” (Rāmānanda Sarasvati, I.34). This inseparability can allow the practitioner to directly feel that by controlling his breath, he/she is controlling his **mind**. The practitioner is simply using a tool to control his/her **mind**, just as a gardener uses a shovel to dig through soil. Just as the gardener may feel that he/she is an agent by using a shovel to dig a hole, the practitioner can feel that he/she is an agent by using the breath to control the **mind**.

I.35: The development of higher objective perceptions called Visayavati also brings the tranquility of mind.

This *sūtra* indicates that when a practitioner develops higher perceptions of smell, taste, touch and sound from meditating on specific areas on the body, this “...stabilizes the mind firmly, removes doubts and forms the gateway to knowledge acquirable through concentration” (Vyāsa, I.35).

Vyāsa also adds that when an individual has a direct perception of certain topics in the *śāstra*¹²⁶, then he/she will develop faith in other matters like salvation. As a result then the **mind** will gain faith, energy, remembrance and *samādhi*. In other words, concentrating on specific areas of the body will lead to super sensuous experiences, and this in turn will lead to a solid sense of faith (removal of doubts) in other matters mentioned in the texts. Thus, doubts are removed by one’s own effort. In addition, Rāmānanda Sarasvati writes that when a *yogi* experiences these things “...the yogin

¹²⁶ Sacred texts

strives to concentrate his mind upon an object although it is extremely subtle, with firm belief” (I.35). The practitioner gains a ‘**sense of agency**’ when he/she actively chooses to concentrate on a specific area and experiences the result as super sensuous experiences.

I.36: Or by perception which is free from sorrow and is radiant (stability of mind can also be produced).

By concentrating on the heart center, one attains knowledge of the *buddhi*, which is beautiful. Similarly, when one concentrates on pure **I-sense, ego**, which is made of pure *sattva*, one gets a similar vision. He/she attains the vision of “I am”. From this, his/her **mind** becomes stable. This *sūtra* has much more complexity that is not needed in the moment, but the same idea of the ‘**sense of agency**’ still stands.

I.37: Or (contemplating) on a mind which is free from desires (the devotees mind gets stabilized).

The practitioner who focuses his/her **mind** on an individual who has no passions will develop a **mind** that is desire-less. Rāmānanda Sarasvati gives examples of people like Vyāsa or Śuka¹²⁷. The cause is meditation on a desire-less mind and the effect is a desire-less mind. The practitioner can feel a ‘**sense of agency**’ simply by choosing a role model figure. He/she may feel that he/she has achieved a stable **mind** by effort on an object, which he/she has freely chosen from a multitude of choices.

I.39: Or by contemplating on whatsoever thing one may like (the mind becomes stable).

The cause here indicates any object of meditation (suitable for *yoga*), and the effect is a stable **mind**. The practitioner voluntarily chooses an object like the moon, and from his/her choice followed by consistent practice, he/she can achieve a stabilized **mind**.

¹²⁷ Sage

A ‘**sense of agency**’ can certainly emerge especially because the practitioner has chosen an object based his/her preference.

Clearly there are about six verses in succession showing that by one’s effort, one can still or calm one’s **mind**. In the *Yoga Sūtras*, there is an abundance of *sūtras* indicating that one’s actions are directly related to one’s results. In fact, almost the entirety of chapter three (**supernatural powers**), is dedicated to performing *saṁyama*¹²⁸ on certain areas in the **material world** to attain these *siddhis*. These *sūtras* need not be explained, but they have a similar form to the verses mentioned above. I provides a few examples:

III.19: (By Practicing Samyama) On Notions, Knowledge of Other Minds is Obtained. [sic!]

III.23: Through Samyama On Friendliness (Amity) And other similar virtues, strength is obtained therein. [sic!]

III.24: (By Practicing Samyama) On (Physical) Strength, The Strength of Elephants Etc. Can be Acquired. [sic!]

A ‘**sense of agency**’ emerges when the practitioner is choosing where to perform *saṁyama*. Simply by the fact that the practitioner gets a choice, he/she is introduced to a sense of control. Then the practitioner is said to have various results based on the location of choice. Thus, a ‘**sense of agency**’ emerges from the particular results that have emerged from his/her choice.

Conclusion

This paper sets out to accomplish two functions,

- 1) To organize and understand the mind in *Sāṃkhya & Yoga*

¹²⁸ *Dhāraṇā, Dhyāna, Samādhi*

- 2) To understand which school of thought provides more of a ‘**sense of agency**’.

This has been measured by frequency, the language of the commentators and results of personal effort.

‘**Sense of agency**’ refers to an individual’s subjective experience of feeling control over his/her actions. In answering how one feels a sense of control, I have referred to the three forms of measurement listed above. Through the principle of repetition, one can evidently see that the *Sāṃkhya Kārikā* provides more verses based on metaphysics while the *Yoga Sūtras* provides more verses based on psychology and practice. This is important to understand because metaphysics alone, at least in this sense, cannot easily explain how the mind of an individual is affected from subjective points of view. Thus, there is reliance on the part of psychology to explain the various states of mind. Through the principle of the commentator’s language, the practitioner is constantly given responsibility through the concept of **I’ness**. Both metaphysical concepts and practices are *personalized* to the individual providing a ‘**sense of agency**’ that an impersonal reading cannot offer. In both texts, the verses demonstrating the mind and its functions are mildly to moderately *centralized*, however, *Yoga* beings to *centralize* more dramatically when the *kleśas*, practices, and *siddhis* are encountered. In addition, these *egoic* verses are repetitive which also creates a ‘**sense of agency**’. Through the visibility of results, the practitioner can witness the effects of his/her actions. By witnessing one’s results, one is able to feel more like agent. *Yoga* allows for the practitioner to feel that he/she has control over the results of his/her actions while *Sāṃkhya* barely allows for this.

One school of thought is not superior to the other. In fact, one can conclude there are always two readings of *Sāṃkhya* and *Yoga*: metaphysical¹²⁹ and psychological¹³⁰.

One can read almost any verse metaphysically and by simply adding a particular word one can then make it sound psychological. Perhaps this is why both are known as sister schools. Coming back our introductory quote, it is difficult to say whether both schools lead to the same goal. However, it is clear that both have substantially different focuses. In fact, they seem to function almost too perfectly as partners: metaphysically and psychologically.

¹²⁹ Impersonal

¹³⁰ Personal

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