

A light blue lotus flower illustration with a circular border and scattered dots. The lotus flower is the central focus, rendered in a simple, stylized line-art style. It has multiple layers of petals, with the innermost petals being smaller and more densely packed. The outer petals are larger and more spread out. The entire illustration is set against a white background. A thin, light blue circular border frames the lotus flower. Scattered around the lotus and within the border are several small, light blue dots of varying sizes, some of which are slightly blurred, giving a sense of depth and movement. The overall aesthetic is clean, minimalist, and serene.

# Gunās

Workshop by Nina

# Samkhya Philosophy

Samkhya (that which sums up) philosophy forms basis for belief systems and is one of the oldest. There is no belief in a specific god/deity but within Samkhya philosophy divides into two categories: the knower (purusha) and the known (prakriti).

1. **Purusha** = source, consciousness, life force, what we can't observe. The Self, never an object of experience, the one who knows.
2. **Prakriti** = the matter, anything observable. Encompasses everything that came before us in the objective universe. Everything that can be known.

The belief is that we are all made up of source and matter.

# Prakriti

- Unmanifest prakriti is a reservoir of limitless potential consisting of three fundamental forces called the gunas in balance with each other.
- Through the interplay of these forces, prakriti manifests as the universe.
- Therefore all that can be known in this world, tangible and intangible, is a manifestation of the gunas in their various forms.
- By becoming aware of how the gunas operate, we can grow on our spiritual path. Apprehending the 'feel' of each guna and using that knowledge as a guide, we can move toward recognition of the knower, the purusha, in us.

# The Three Gunas

- Ancient teachings of yoga, like the Samkhya philosophy talk about three essential aspects of nature – the Gunas.
- Guna means ‘quality, attribute’ in Sanskrit.
- The three gunas were created as an essential component of Sankhya philosophy but the gunas are now a major concept in most schools of Indian philosophy.
- They are described as being constantly in flux and interacting with one another, in a playful state referred to as maya (illusion).
- The play of the gunas can define essential qualities of someone and influence their behaviour and path.

# The Three Gunas - Overview

Rajas	Sattva	Tamas
Activity	Truth / Goodness	Inertia & inactivity
Passion, desire & attachment	Light, harmony & balance	Darkness, delusion & ignorance
Energy	Spiritual Essence	Mass / matter / heaviness
Expansion	Upward flow	Downward flow
Movement	Intelligence & consciousness	Sloth & dullness
Binds by means of passion and craving.	Binds by means of attachment to knowledge and joy.	Binds by means of ignorance and obstruction.

# The Three Gunas - Tamas

- Manifests as darkness, dullness, heaviness. It conceals the presence of consciousness. It deludes all beings from their spiritual truths. Other tamasic qualities are laziness, disgust, attachment, depression, doubt, guilt, shame, boredom, confusion.
- Tamas leads to inaction when action is needed. Each of us has experienced tamas in form of the appeal of procrastination and sleep.
- Tamas can be seen as the past, your lot in life, the given.

# The Three Gunas - Rajas

- Rajas is the energy of change. It manifests as the energy of passion, emotion, desire, sorrow, activity. The nature of rajas is of attraction, longing and attachment and rajas strongly bind us to the fruits of our work.
- Other rajasic qualities are anger, euphoria, anxiety, fear, irritation, worry, stress, courage.
- The activity of rajas may cause movement either toward sattva (increased spiritual understanding) or tamas (increased ignorance).
- Rajas brings happiness by prompting the coupling of the sense with their objects.
  
- Rajas can be seen as the future, desire and externalization.

# The Three Gunas - Sattva

- Sattva is associated with the principles of harmony, knowledge, happiness and goodness.
- It shows itself as beauty, balance and inspiration and promotes life, energy, health and contentment.
- Sattva is the guna that yogis achieve towards as it reduces rajas and tamas and thus makes liberation possible.
- Sattva is not enlightenment itself but it unveils what is true and real.
- Sattva is the present, awakening and process of conscious unfolding. It transcends tension between the two above and it is the desirable quality of the three.



# Dominant Gunas

Certain gunas can be dominant. If this is the case, the following happens:

- Feeling rajasic means feeling passionate, hyper active, active mind, not being able to stop
- When we feel tamasic, we can't get out of bed, feel unmotivated, dragging ourselves through the day.
- We feel clear, calm and harmonious when we're in a sattvic state.

We need all three qualities in our life. Tamas for making us stop and rest, rajas to get us going and sattva to get wisdom.