

Sâm'khya Tattvas

Sâm'khya envisions the cosmos in three layers: the causing, the caused and causing, and the caused. To this is added a fourth ingredient, the un-caused, or acausal manifestation. The three strata associated with causality is further differentiated into various principles or Tattvas. Each of these principles has its own unique structure, but they are all understood to be of the same substance – the guñas. In fact, the arisal and relationships of the various tattvas is characterized as the activity of these guñas. To understand the guñas fully, we must understand their shapes – the tattvas, and, naturally, to understand the tattvas, we must understand the guñas. These two phases of understanding are much more than conceptual exercises. When the tattvas are understood, the hypnotizing effect of the chaotic cosmos is quelled, and jñâna emerges as the detached awareness of the liberating soul. When the guñas are understood, that liberation is complete. The apparent jackstraw conceptualism of Sâm'khya philosophy applies only to its conceptual husk; when approached and experienced as the exfoliation of Soul by reason, it is a powerful spiritual antiseptic, capable of removing much of the ego's grip upon our experience.

The first layer of the cosmos is understood as the container and cause of the cosmos. To the unenlightened, it is said, the container is Prakriti – Nature Herself – and the cause is Purus:a – the evolving soul. To the enlightened, or awakened individual, the Soul is known as the container, and Nature, Prakriti, is known as the cause. The reversal of these definitions is outlined through reason, and achieved through the six equi-valent samâdhis of yoga.

For now, let us take the term guña as synonymous with 'constituent' and examine the Tattvas. Purus:a is that Tattva which is un-constituted by the guñas. Such un-constitution is still in relation to the guñas, and therefore may be included as a Tattva. Prakriti is that Tattva which is entirely constituted by the guñas – or rather is constituted by the entirety of the guñas in all their permutations. This definition is a little misleading, since Prakriti is only constituted by the guñas in all their permutations, but the remaining Tattvas are each constituted by each permutation of the guñas. I think of Prakriti as the roiling mass of sentient, potent 'stuff' out of which the ages are born, and into which they disappear without a trace.

From the interaction, joining, and separation of Purus:a and Prakriti arise the three great Tattvas upon which the living cosmos is built. These tattvas are: Intelligence, Distinction, and Quality (Buddhi, Aham'kâra, and Tanmâtra). Insofar as the evolving Soul seeks to know Nature, it impresses that knowing upon her, which appears as the knowable cosmos, or Buddhi. The seeking part of 'seeking to know' carries the mark of difference (the difference between Soul and Nature), which endlessly differentiates the knowable cosmos, and is known as the principle of individuality by the cosmic mind – Buddhi. This is Aham'kâra. The impression which is made upon Nature by Soul is the prior of

substance or receptivity in the cosmos, and emerges as the undifferentiated, mysterious matrix of possible qualities which pervade the entire universe. Each time this place of quality – Tanmâtra – is known by Buddhi, a reason-principle is born. Each time this place of quality is differentiated by Aham'kâra, a creature – or a world – is born.

The three, Buddhi, Aham'kâra, and Tanmâtra are co-evolutes of the interaction of Purus:a and Prakriti. Buddhi only gets top billing because we are biased towards knowledge – a bias which reveals these Tattvas as the relationship of Purus:a to Prakriti. When they are experienced as the relationship of Prakriti to Purus:a, then we have the ordinary dominance of Tanmâtra, of the unexamined ever-expanding glamour of phenomena. This is the path of science – including the occult and subjective sciences. Aham'kâra is the path of discrimination; when this is applied to the objective series, the cosmology of Sâmkhya emerges; when it is applied to the subjective series, the mystical path of Yoga is revealed. When no reference to Soul or Nature is available, then we are in the ordinary condition of human experience, where events come and go, with little attention given to whether there is any repetition or development amongst them. This is the path of advertising, and ordinary unconscious life.

Examined or not, each of these three great Tattvas contributes to the next 20, which are really four sets of quintuplets. They are: the differentiated tanmâtras, the five elements, the five organs of knowing, and the five organs of karma. When the intelligence of the cosmos – Buddhi – regards its prior as other, it sees Prakriti. The content of that seeing is Tanmâtra as a mass; what I've called the matrix of manifest qualities. The implied distinction between Buddhi and Prakriti is identical to Aham'kâra. In the relation between Buddhi and Prakriti it is latent, but necessary. A point to keep in mind is that when we know something, our knowledge forms a content independent and distinguishable from the item known – when I know a tree, my knowledge remains with me, is a content of my knowing, and is at best similar to the true tree. (Vedânta will refute this, but only by awakening our soul to Reality; within the dreaming world of the cosmos, Sâmkhya's view is correct.)

When Buddhi, the intelligent cosmos, directs its attention to the distinction between itself and either Purus:a or Prakriti, the natural power of differentiation is reflected upon itself or projected into Tanmâtra, respectively. When Aham'kâra is assimilated into Buddhi as the cosmic mind forms an image of its subject, the evolving soul, the result is the arising of the 5 organs of knowledge. When Aham'kâra is assimilated into Tanmâtra as Buddhi regards Prakriti, the result is the differentiation of Tanmâtra into 5 sub-groups. The number 5 is evidently the result of the possible combinations of the guñas, and the explanation will be left to that section.

When the single intelligence, the cosmic mind, encounters distinction, a basic split occurs – into the mind as organ, and as container – which is hardly a big distinction at this stage. However when these two aspects attempt to relate

to each other, the split widens, because the very intent to relate to the other aspect as other instead of as same emphasizes their difference, and they become the natural locations of the subject (as organ) and object (as container) polarity within manifestation. As organ(s), they are called the Indriya-s (little Indra-s, or little Sky-gods); as containers they are called the Tanmâtra-s.

The organs are called organs of knowledge - jñâna-indriyas - because they are direct differentiations of Buddhi - the cosmic mind or intelligence. We could even say that they are differentiations evolved within Buddhi through which it recognizes differentiated matter, or the tanmâtras. Conversely, the tanmâtras emerge as a 5 in order to contain the 5 ways of knowing now becoming distinct from Buddhi. Once so distinguished, they remain a 5-fold, and so are traditionally counted as such (making the starting line-up a seven - one Buddhi, one Aham'kâra and 5 Tanmâtras).

Even as the cosmic mind, Buddhi, is posterior to Nature, who is the object of its knowledge, so also the jñâna-indriyas are posterior to their object of knowledge, the tanmâtras. The only knower who is prior to what is known is Purus:a - and this, according to Sâm'khya, is the fundamental cause of phenomena. As soon as Purus:a looks up towards Maya and Shiva, the cosmos becomes quiescent, and order (i.e. no manifestation) is restored. Neither Vedânta nor Tantra agree with this. Vedânta says that as soon as Purus:a stops looking anywhere manifestation - and Shiva &co. - are known to be illusions on the face of Brahman. Tantra says that when Purus:a learns to look both ways, the world stops being infiltrated with ignorance, and becomes the eternal adornment of the unmanifest. All three traditions agree that the efficient cause of manifestation is the gaze of Purus:a upon Prakriti - they just don't agree on what to do about it.

Purus:a gazes upon Prakriti, making an impression within Her. That impression is Tanmâtra as receptacle, and Buddhi as the knowing act, while Aham'kâra arises because of the difference between these two. Aham'kâra differentiates Buddhi from Tanmâtra, and then contributes to the 5-fold differentiation within Tanmâtra. Buddhi gazes upon the differentiated Tanmâtra which generates impressions within the Tanmâtras of Buddhi - these impressions are the jñâna-indriyas. When the cosmic consciousness contemplates the 5-fold matrix of qualities, those qualities become infiltrated with intelligence and now behave as qualified faculties of knowing. Knowing such as: philosophic (hearing), theologic (seeing), cultural (touch), occult (smell), and scientific (taste).

These forms of knowing in turn regard their origin as tanmâtra, and form contents of knowledge which are images of the subtle qualities called Tanmâtra. These images are traditionally called the 5 Great Elements - Aether, Fire, Air, Water, and Earth. Western Alchemy has done a lot with 4 of these; we seem to have lost sight of the rarest element, Aether, the substance of language, music, and intuition.

When the modes of knowing (jñâna-indriyas) seek to understand the 5 elements of the physical world (the bhûtas), they leave their mark upon these elements, even as Purus:a marks Prakriti and Buddhi marks Tanmâtra – and with a similar result. The result here is the arisal of the karma-indriyas, the organs of action. They are so called because they are composed of the elements, not the tanmâtras, and because they are the means by which entities accrue and discharge karma. The jñâna-indriyas are composed of tanmâtra, which is itself a pure, direct image of Prakriti – which is to say that the vehicles of knowledge are themselves of the stuff of the cosmos itself as a direct image of Nature and Soul. Therefore when these vehicles examine their own substance they will find traces of the wisdom of Nature and the insight of Soul. When these vehicles look away from themselves into their subsequent, the Great Elements of the physical world, they are no longer guided by Purus:a’s gaze or Prakriti’s power. Furthermore as fragmented states of knowing, they cannot comprehend the whole, even of a given bhûta or element, much less all 5. Therefore the primary impact they make upon these elements is one of effort or intent, not wisdom. These forms of karma are: meaning & confusion; motion & stasis; attachment & detachment; creation & sterility; and assimilation & rejection. They leave their mark in our body as speech, locomotion, grasping, reproduction and elimination.

The 25th Tattva is Manas – the ordinary mind of wakeful self-awareness. We experience its origin in the simple effort to keep track of all the tanmâtras, jñâna-indriyas, bhûtas, and karma-indriyas. This is the principle of relative relationships, and as such ties everything together, both as its function and as a principle. There is a lineage from Purus:a to Buddhi to Jñâna-Indriya – each of these being an image of consciousness in matter. There is another lineage from Prakriti to Tanmâtra to Bhûta – each of these being an image of matter in consciousness. The third lineage is from Aham’kâra to Karma-Indriya to Manas – each of these being a form of relationship between the descending grades of consciousness and matter. Each of these grades characterizes an increasing degree of sophistication, at the expense of a decreasing degree of purity or proximity to simple Being. Aham’kâra is the relation of difference which then sets about differentiating first Tanmâtra into the 5-fold Tanmâtra and then Buddhi into the 5 Jñâna-Indriyas. The Karma-Indriyas are the relations of interaction which attempt to weave together what Aham’kâra has separated and distinguished. Manas is the relation of judgment, synthesis, and self-ordering which makes a final image within itself of all the other principles, and thus organizes the whole. With the emergence of manas, all the principles necessary for quasi-independent existence are in place. Through the power of Manas, a creature can go about organizing itself, its world, and even its relation to the tattvas. Without this principle, a creature has only partial self-existence, and is dependent upon the ordering principles of Buddhi, Aham’kâra, or the Tanmâtras to provide its organs, as well as organize its life and identity.

Now for the guñas, and their role in generating the tattvas. The guñas are the irreducible substance-elements of phenomena. In Prakriti they are in a chaotic state of meaningless, insubstantial transformation into each other. As soon as they are known, distinguished, and stabilized, they are gathered into three conditions: sattva (thought or authenticity), rajas (energy or relation), and tamas (substance or otherness). As distinguishable they can no longer sustain their unmanifest (indeterminate) state. There are seven subgroups of 3 incommensurable elements: each element taken alone (a, b, or c); each taken as a pair (ab, ac, or bc), and the three taken as a single group (abc). All of these groupings occur in the same place – manifestation – and in three different causal moments – one for each type of group (single, dual, and triple). To these seven are added the guñas as indistinguishable from one another and as inapplicable – Prakriti and Purus:a respectively.

The three cases of single guñas become the basis for Buddhi (sattva), Aham'kâra (rajas), and the Tanmâtras (tamas). The three cases of paired guñas are the basis for the jñâna-indriyas (sattva + rajas), the karma-indriyas (sattva + tamas) and the bhûtas (rajas + tamas). The final case where all three are taken as a group is the basis for manas (sattva + rajas + tamas).

That is the structure; here, briefly, are the meanings. That which has no quality of manifestation is Purus:a, or Soul. That which has all the qualities of manifestation in an undifferentiated condition is Prakriti, or Nature. That which is of the substance of Thought (sattva) is Buddhi, or Cosmic Mind/Intelligence. That which is of the substance of function (rajas) is Aham'kâra, or the power of Specificity. That which is solely of the substance of substance (tamas) is Tanmâtra, or subtle qualities as matter. That which combines the characteristics of intelligence and function (sattva + rajas) becomes the organs of knowing (jñâna-indriyas). That which combines the characteristics of intelligence and matter (sattva + tamas) becomes the organs of doing (karma-indriyas). That which combines the characteristics of function and matter (rajas + tamas) becomes the elements of the physical world (bhûtas). That which is the equal blend of intelligence, function, and matter (sattva + rajas + tamas) is the ordinary mind or reflective consciousness (manas).

We now have the two unmanifest principles and seven levels of manifestation taking shape through the various phases of the guñas and their interactions. We have not explained the 5-fold characteristic of tanmâtra, the indriyas, or the bhûtas. For this we need a closer look at the 9 groups. Sâmkhya doctrine asserts that the guñas are inseparable even as they are irreconcilable. This means that there are only two phases: either they're changing into one another, or they're not. When they are, that's the chaos of Prakriti, the fertile womb of the world, wherein meaning becomes power, becomes matter, and back again, for eternity. When the guñas do not change into one another, but change into themselves (since they're always in motion (rajas) they have to change into something), we get the 7 groups of manifest tattvas. We just worked out the

simple version, but we allowed the guñas to appear in various groups of less than three. This is actually impossible; there is no part of the phenomenal world that lacks any one of the three characteristics: meaning, function, or matter.

The solution comes from recognizing that there are four unequal relationships and one equal relationship amongst three elements. In the unequal cases, either one guña is superior to the other two, or is equal to the other two, or two are equal to one, or two are superior to one. Each of these relationships has a technical name in Sâmkhya. (I will use the > sign for superior, the ⇔ & ⇐ to indicate equity, and < to indicate inferiority.) These names are: **abhibhava**¹ (overpowering, ">"), **janana**² (generating, "⇔"), **âshraya**³ (resting on, "<"), and **mithuna**⁴ (paired "⇐").⁵ There are two terms expressing the equalized condition of the guñas: **visadris:a**⁶ **pariñâma**⁷ (dissimilar transformation - i.e. each guña

¹ **abhibhava** = overpowering, powerful; prevailing; predominance; defeat, subjugation under 66-3 ⇐ **abhi-√bhû** = to overcome, overpower, predominate, conquer, surpass, over-spread 66-3 ⇐⇐ **abhi-/to**, towards, on account of, superiority, intensity; *into, over, upon, the motion of going towards* + **√bhû/to become**; *to come into existence*, ⇔⇔ *superiority of becoming; becoming superior*

² **janana** = generating, begetting, producing, causing; a progenitor, creator; coming into existence; 'life;' 410-3 ⇐ **√jan** = to generate, beget, produce, create, cause, to cause to be born 410-1

³ **âshraya** = that to which anything is annexed or with which anything is closely connected or on which anything depends or rests; a recipient, the person or thing in which any quality or article is inherent or retained or received; seat, resting-place; dwelling, asylum, place of refuge, shelter; depending on,; having recourse to; help; assistance, protection; authority, sanction, warrant; (in Grammar) the subject, that to which the predicate is annexed; (with Buddhists) the five organs of sense with manas (the six together being the recipients of the **âshrîta** or objects which enter them by way of their **âlambana** or qualities); source, origin, *in final place of a compound - depending on, resting on, endowed or furnished with* 158-2 ⇐ **â-√shri** = to attach one's self to; to join; to adhere, rest on; to betakes one's self to, resort to; to depend upon, to seek refuge in, enter, inhabit 158-2 ⇐ **â-/near**, towards + **√shri** = to cause to lean on, or rest on, lay on or in, fix on, fasten to, direct or turn towards, to resort or have recourse to 1098-1 **Y.S. 2.36**

⁴ **mithuna** = paired, forming a pair; a pair (male and female; but also 'any couple or pair'); pairing, copulation; a pair or couple; the sign of the zodiac Gemini; the other part, complement or companion of anything; honey and ghee; (*in Grammar*) a root compounded with a preposition 816-3

⁵ c.f. Para #147 KCB Studies in Sâmkhya

⁶ **visadris:a** = unlike, dissimilar, different, not corresponding, unequal 953-1

⁷ **pariñâma** = change, transformation, alteration, development, evolution; ripeness, maturity ⇐ **pari-ñam** = to bend or turn aside, to bend down, stoop; to

changes into either itself or one of the other guñas – the condition of the unmanifest) and **sadris:a**⁸ **pariñâma** (self-replicating change – i.e. each guña changes into itself – the condition of manifestation). When we're dealing with the substance of Purus:a (none) or Prakriti (all), we're dealing with the equilibrium of **visadris:a pariñâma**; for all the manifest tattvas, equilibrium is provided through **sadris:a pariñâma**. This gives us five images of the guñas; these are applied both to the generation of the 9 levels of the tattvas and to the activity of each tattva once formed.

In the formation of the tattvas, **abhibhava (>)** establishes the first evolutes: when sattva suppresses the appearance of Rajas and Tamas (thought over function and substance), Buddhi, the Cosmos as True Mind appears. When Rajas, function, is dominant, Aham'kâra appears, and Tanmâtra arises when Tamas, substance, is dominant. Insofar as these three must be spoken sequentially, Buddhi can be said to generate the sequence (**janana, ⇔**); in that the Mind cannot Exist without Function or Substance, it is said to rest upon Aham'kâra and Tanmâtra (**âshraya, <**); which themselves must be paired to act as this foundation for Buddhi (**mithuna, ⇐**). Each of these terms can be applied to the sequential and simultaneous emergence of Mind, Function, and Matter from the Cosmic Womb of Prakriti. The fifth mode – equity – appears as the capacity of each tattva to sustain its own identity, and the necessity that all three emerge together.

All five arrangements apply to each of these tattvas, but in a manner (relatively) unique to that tattva. For Buddhi, these arrangements give rise to the various modes of the Mind, which are called the **bhâva-s** (becoming or faculties) and **vritti-s** (activity or unfoldment) of Buddhi. These are traditionally listed as four pairs: knowledge/ignorance (**jñâna / ajñâna**), detachment/passion (**vairâgya/râga**); willing/bondage (**aishvarya/anaishvarya**); and merit/demerit (**dharma/adharma**).⁹ These are the effects of the four unequal modes applied to Buddhi itself taken as Container and Content. When the container – Mind – dominates content, there is wisdom (**abhibhava** produces **jñâna**). When the container gives birth to the content, that is the origin of 'will' (**janana** produces **aishvarya**). When the container rests upon the content, that is the origin of the constitution of Mind by Reason-Principles (**dharma** is produced by **âshraya**). When the container, Mind, is paired with itself as Content, that is the origin of Feeling, or **vairâgya**, through the action of **mithuna**. The difference between wisdom & ignorance etc. is the meta-application of these modes to the interrelationships of the Tattvas amongst themselves. When Buddhi dominates

change or be transformed into; to develop, become ripe or mature; to become old [transformation or evolution. T.M.P. Mahadevan] Y.S. 2.15

⁸ **sadris:a** = resembling, like, similar to; suitable, fit, proper 1140-1

⁹ c.f. Para #102 ff. KCB Studies in Sâm'khyâ

& suppresses the other Tattvas, then there is (according to Sâmkhya) wisdom; when it is paired with them, there is ignorance.

A careful application of each of these modes within and amongst the various Tattvas produces a surprisingly rich and complex cosmology from what at first appears a simplistic schemata. When these modes act within Aham'kâra, they generate various types of causality. When they act within Tanmâtra, the five subtle qualities emerge – which have various names, but might best be described by the terms used to define the relationships amongst the **guñas** themselves (i.e. **abhibhava** &c.). In the **jñâna-indriya-s**, the **karma-indriya-s**, and the **bhûta-s**, the five act in similar ways, as befits the secondary status of these Tattvas. Here is how they fall out:

Arrangement	Jñâna-indriya	Karma-indriya	Bhûta
equal	hearing	speech	Aether
abhibhava	sight	locomotion	Fire
janana	touch	grasping	Air
âshraya	smell	creation	Water
mithuna	taste	elimination	Earth

Within **manas** (amongst humankind) these five function as means of generating empirical knowledge (or error) when sattva is emphasized, as means of generating virtues (or vices) when rajas is emphasized, and as means of maintaining (or objectifying) the ego when Tamas is emphasized. The correct – and corrective – use of these functions is the provenance of Yoga, for which see the Yoga Sûtras¹⁰. From a cosmological view, these arrangements within **manas** are arbitrary & unnatural, so they can be changed at any time, which is at once a warning and a hope for all.

To examine the cosmos in terms of the tattvas is to view it through the lens of Sattva, and to consider the cosmos as substance (guñas) is to give preference to Tamas. The viewpoint of Rajas remains. That is the viewpoint of experience, and of spiritual freedom. This view begins by observing the genuinely empirical world, and this examination is the real starting point of Sâmkhya as a practice. There are no new terms to learn: this perspective is

¹⁰ Here is a possible application of the preceding table as it appears within manas:

Arrangement	Sattva	Rajas	Tamas
equal	valid testimony	pramâñas	tranquillity
abhibhava	perception	transformation	heroism
janana	inference	imagination	love
âshraya	analogy & comparison	memory	desire
mithuna	absence	sleep	sloth

embedded in the act of **viveka**¹¹ – the discrimination of contents from subject, and vice-versa. Each moment of discrimination is complete when there is a cessation of experience, the arising of knowledge and the crystallization of a tattva as objective content. The accomplishment of such a moment is marked not so much as an ascent or acquisition of a stage, but as the deconstruction of time towards eternity. After all, each time the discriminating act is complete, the previous condition of experience no longer exists as such – so one is effectively on the bottom rung of the ladder all the time.

Although a conceptual map of the stages of discrimination may be drawn, that act is antithetical to discrimination itself. This is a primary difference between Sâmkhya and Vedânta. Vedânta holds that all knowledge is real knowledge and knowledge of the Real, whether the occasion for such knowledge be empirical, discriminative, mystical, or philosophical. Sâmkhya holds that the only real knowledge is Purus:a's Self-awareness, and the only means of achieving that knowledge is the act of discrimination. All else is ignorance. Such ignorance is not mere harmless conceptualization (or misconception). Ignorance binds the subject to the object and generates an addictive enjoyment of that content, even when the content is negative (like pain). Ignorance can be sattvic, such as a samâdhi or jñâna (as the act of Buddhi, not Purus:a), or tamasic, such as our lack of conscious access to Buddhi and as ordinary delusion (wherein we believe conceptions to be knowledge).

How then to proceed? With a few examples, and a recommendation. The first example comes from the dream experience. You are dreaming, and while dreaming you become aware of the meaning – and the psychological cause – of the dream. In that moment you are no longer dreaming, or no longer *experiencing* the dream content as a dream, or as real. The content becomes transparent to its meaning and cause, and the base of experience is relocated to a pure awareness of the psyche. Thereafter that particular experience becomes a vivid memory of psychological self-awareness, and is not remembered as a dream, or even as having ever really been a dream. Since it is improbable that a single dream will reveal our entire psyche to itself, the ordinary experience of dreaming will continue. This also shows the work involved with developing

¹¹ **viveka** = discrimination, distinction; consideration, discussion, investigation; true knowledge, discretion, right judgment; the faculty of distinguishing and classifying things according to their real properties; the power of separating the invisible Spirit from the visible world (or spirit from matter, truth from untruth, reality from mere semblance) 987-3 (⇐ **vi-√vic** = to sift (esp. grain by tossing or blowing) divide asunder, separate from; to shake through; to cause to lose, deprive of; to distinguish, discern, discriminate; to decide (a question); to investigation, examine, ponder, deliberate; to show, manifest, declare 987-1 ⇐ **√vic** = to sift, separate (exp. grain from chaff by winnowing); to separate from, deprive of; to discriminate, discern, judge 958-1) **Y.S. 2.26, 2.28**

discrimination – each event of discrimination releases an awareness of a richer, more potent experience which is ever more difficult to pass beyond.

The second example is also psychological – which is the true realm of **manas**, and thus the necessary origin for discrimination (being the lattermost tattva). There are moments of reflection in which we see our psychological overlay upon perception; this can lead to a further recognition of the archetypal origin of our perception and behavior. In such a moment, the experience ceases to be ours or have anything to do with us. In fact, the content is redistributed into perception and archetype, with nothing left to experience. When such a discrimination is complete, the experience is absolutely annihilated – it doesn't even belong to our past or our future anymore – it is unfindable as a content, although there may be a pseudo-memory of the content having once been believed to be an experience. The common demonstration of this process is the collapse of a relationship. When we recognize that a relationship consists **solely** of archetypal contents superimposed upon neutral percepts (i.e. the other person), in a moment we can lose any awareness of having ever been in a relationship with that particular person – and the person becomes no different to us than a stranger. A consideration of an adolescent romance most frequently fits this paradigm. It requires a little more insight and detachment to accomplish this deconstruction of adult or existing relationships (including those we believe to exist in our past or future).

Although these examples are accurate demonstrations of the mechanics of discrimination, they are neither real nor spiritual acts of discrimination. The recommendation is to take advantage of the map and the postcards to set forth on the adventure of **viveka**: like all pilgrimages, once begun, a new karma and a different form of grace become one's companions and guides. What follows is a poetic construction of these acts; it is neither accurate nor true, for the reasons already stated.

The first act is to objectify **manas**. This is nothing less than objectifying the reflective consciousness which is coextensive with personal psychology. Although this act is not the complete objectification of the ego, it is the first encounter with the ego as other, as the fountain of ignorance and error. Even though there's a long, long way to go from here, the journey has begun, and can never be abandoned. When this discrimination is complete, the entire process of psychological differentiation is known to be mechanical and other. Since the ego has been only revealed and has yet to be defeated, it promptly suggests that it, together with individuation is non-existent and unnecessary. If this is believed, the ego becomes invisible, and the yogi is companioned by a very large, primitive ego draped in the finery of spiritual accomplishment. This leads to the paradoxical (and common) condition of a person blessed with subtle spiritual sensitivity and burdened with a garish psychology.

After a successful disengagement of **manas** one is faced with the **bhûta-s** – the Great Elements (and elemental forces) which sustain the physical world. The

temptation here is to engage either in the simplified life of the satisfied monk or to invest in the pursuits of depth psychology, alchemy, or magic. Having left reflective consciousness to its own devices, there is no longer an obvious overlay obscuring and buffering the cosmic beauty of the perceived world. The **bhûta-s** are the constituents of the body, its sense-world, and the individual unconscious or animal nature. The effect of discrimination here dissolves the self-existent character of each and every content; what is presented is known to be “combined dependent origination” – ripples on the river of becoming. This discrimination is usually precipitated through the effective use of koans or their kin. These are designed to melt the mind – to unloose the fixity of perception and allow the mind to directly apprehend the fluid indeterminacy of phenomena, whether subjective or objective. When form is empty and emptiness is form, the next challenge is revealed – **karma**.

The discrimination of the **karma-indriyas** doesn't result in the absolute dissolution of karma; it does go a long way towards removing the ego as the source and manager of karma. Individual karma basically consists of the acts which separate us from the flow of becoming, the acts which realign us with that flow, and the consequences of our separation. Since no entity can ever really be separated from becoming per se, such separation, though real to the will, is impossible to the mind. The **karma-indriyas** are those organs of individual existence which allow us to act independently of the World-Idea as manifestation. When positively used, they bring about an enhancement of that manifestation, but this is not the current task of the pilgrim. To apply **viveka** to the **karma-indriyas** is to lose all experience of individual effort (or lack thereof). This is not fatalism, which sets aside the individual's free will; it is a dissolution of the lesser will altogether, both as defining oneself, and as a faculty in other entities. Here one must unreservedly acknowledge the incorporation of one's own activities as so innately inseparable from the whole as to be unfindable. So when the dying Gandhi was asked who his assassin was, he was not deluded when he merely pointed to the horizon.

To successfully apply **viveka** to the **jñâna-indriyas** is to outgrow the pursuits of the Renaissance – philosophizing, theologizing, historical awareness, occult knowledge and scientific curiosity. In the Sâm'khya discipline each act of **viveka** is absolutely destructive of an experience – or would be if the practitioner were to continue to believe in their bondage to phenomena. With **viveka** upon **jñâna-indriyas**, the practitioner dissolves their identification with a specific philosophic tradition, deity or religion, historical epoch, archetype, or even association with a specific embodiment (this is where the questions of existence about Shakespeare, Jesus &c. arise). As with the earlier **tattvas**, this **viveka** must be applied to others as well: characterizations such as 'ignorant,' 'informed,' 'devout,' 'skeptical,' 'creative,' and 'ordinary' are no longer present to the mind. There is awareness of thoughts, impulses, beliefs, feelings, but these are neither contained in/as the individual nor vice-versa.

Ironically, we experience people working through this state as Promethean figures, setting out new directions for science, religion, the arts, and philosophy. This is because they are now identified only with the three great tattva-s: **Aham'kâra**, **Tanmâtra**, and **Buddhi**, and every motion of their being is at once common and universal. To such an one, their own capacity to understand (or be understood) is of little consequence: what now lies before is the crucifixion of the ego – the objectification of **Aham'kâra**. To explain or even describe this event is surely foolish and irreverent. We only know that the heroes who attempt this, much less succeed, ought to be honored by the whole of humanity, for it is a rare and painful accomplishment.

A more familiar term for **Tanmâtra** is reason-principle – the shaping intelligent forces that are the axioms of creaturely existence. Belief in them is the basis of experiencing creation as independent of Being. When understood as mere arrangement of guñas (or Ideas) their self-existence cannot be sustained.¹² The metaphor for the **viveka** upon **Tanmâtra** is Prospero's relinquishing his books and staff – or the yogi moving beyond any employment of siddhi. When the words of the philosopher give shape to a tradition, a culture, and the course of human history, it is a sign that they have passed through this phase – at the conscious cost of their lineage.

Finally, when the cosmos itself reaches a moment of perfect self-knowing, **Buddhi**, through the Grace of **Ishvara** and with the support of **Prakriti**, stands aside, and a new Bodhisattva is born. With neither will nor ego-identity remaining, this is the moment of **viveka** turning upon itself – and being turned upon itself. This is the assimilation of mentalism and the fruition of epistemological discipline. The remaining ascent from **Purus:a** to **Âtman** shall unfold in the mysterious remoteness of pure, empty Being.

Sâm'khya is a unique tradition, absolutely homologous to itself. It demonstrates that there are three constituents of immediate experience, and uses these very constituents to prepare and direct each individual towards their Soul. Although there are greater, and deeper teachings, few of these latter can be really understood, much less realized save through the practices of Sâm'khya, which are merely the wisdom, power and act of the ensouled cosmos itself.

¹² This is where Sâm'khya parts company with Tantra and NeoPlatonism. These traditions have little investment in either the reality or significance of the lower tattvas, as they are all organs internal to the individual and can be subsumed therein. The higher tattvas, starting with Aham'kâra, are not the product of the individual Purus:a alone, but are the work of Îshvara, Shakti, and Shiva. As such they can not be truly dissolved by any individual act, including **viveka**.