

# Counselling Techniques in Patanjali Yoga Sutras

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Presenter: Shree Raksha Bhide (PhD Scholar, NIMHANS)

Chair Person: Dr. Hemant Bhargav (Asst Professor of Yoga,  
NIMHANS)

**Yogena cittasya padena vacam  
Malam sarirasya ca vaidyakena  
yopakarottam pravaram muninam patanjalin  
pranajaliranato'smi**

Let us acknowledge the noblest of sages Patanjali, who gave us  
~ Yoga (Sutras) for serenity and sanctity of mind.  
~ Grammar (Sanskrit) for clarity and purity of speech. and  
~ Medicine (Ayurveda) for perfection of health.

-Bhojaraja

# What are Sutras?

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- A thread – Sutrakara – **Minimalistic (Makes understanding difficult)**

Has only 2 verbs in whole of 198 sutras

- Alpa Akshram - Few words
- Asandhigam - Clarity
- Saaratvam - Juicy
- Vishvatomukham - Universal
- Asthobham – Based on true human experience
- Anaavadyam – Dignity

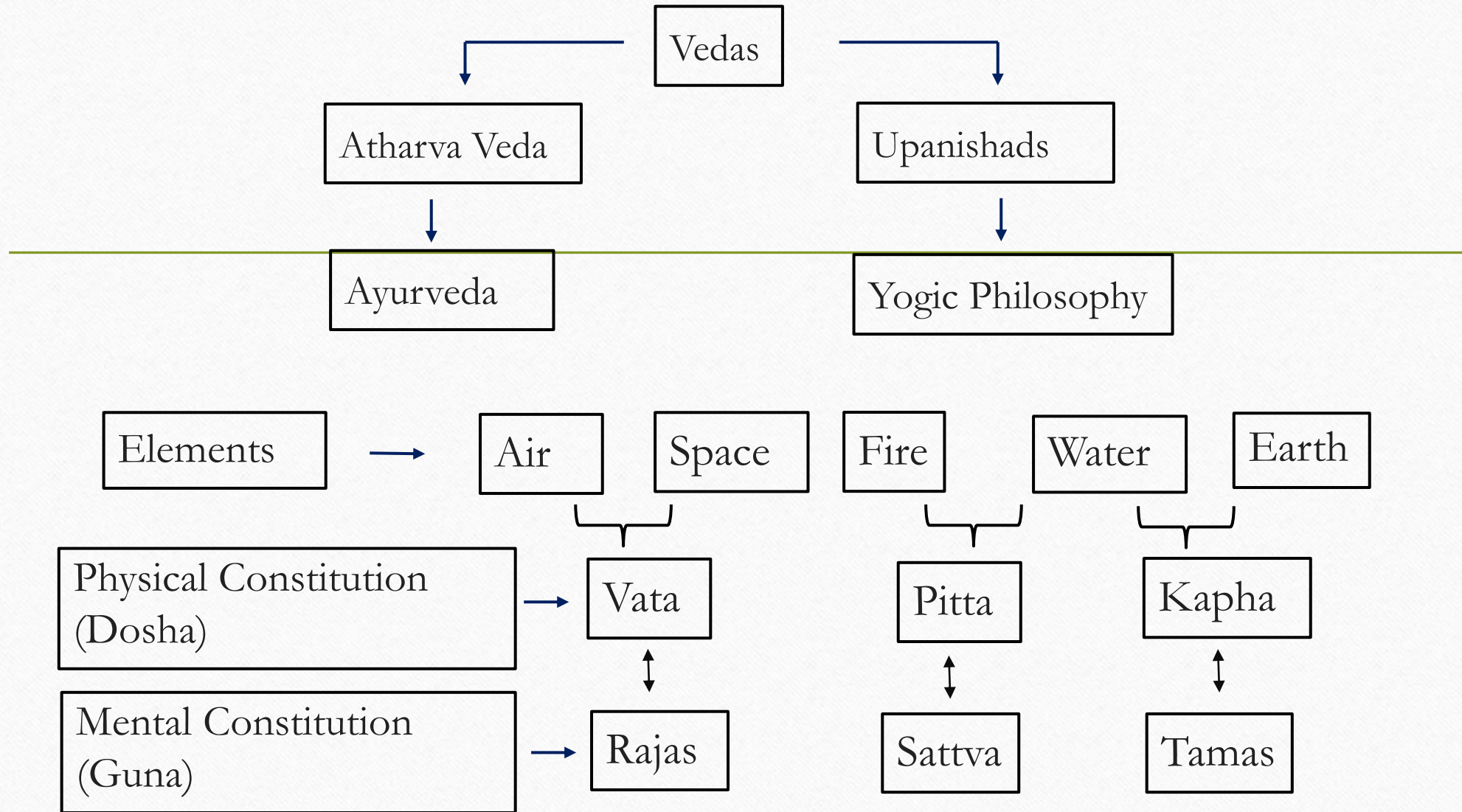


# Patanjali Yoga Sutra - Origin

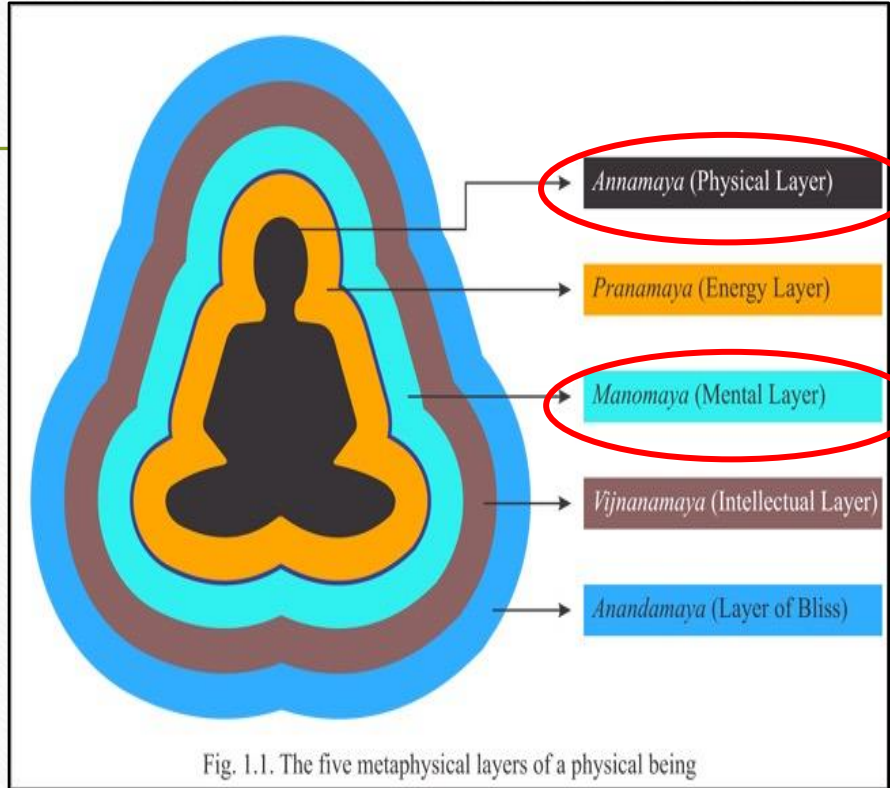


- Who was Patanjali?
- Sankhya - Yoga
- Period – 500 BCE and 400 CE
- 4 Chapters ; 196 Sutras
- Patanjali Yoga Sutras – Vyasa Bhashya (**Primary commentary**) - Shankaracharya Bhashya (Siddantha) – Translations Arabic –Javanese (obscurity for nearly 700 years from the 12th to 19th century- Vivekananda)
- Why Sutra? Kaliyuga , Oral tradition, (Post upanishadic)- Scientific document
- Words like Vitarka / Asmita used differently in different contexts – so read the commentary
- How to read the Sutras?

# Origin of Yoga Based Counselling Program (YBCP)



# YBCP for Balance at Physical and Mental levels



## Annamaya

1. Vata (Movement)
2. Pitta (Metabolism)
3. Kapha (Lubrication)

**BALANCE**

## Manomaya

1. Tamas (Lethargy)
2. Rajas (Restlessness)
3. Sattva (Calmness)

**5 layers of existence** (Panchakosha- Maslows pyramid)  
**(Ref: Taittiriya Upanishad)**

# Therapeutic potential of Yoga Philosophy

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- Yoga Vasishta
- Ramayana
- Bhagavad Gita
- Taitteriya Upanishad
- Patanjali Yoga Sutra
- Upanishad – Post Upanishad literature

# Western vs Indian Counselling

Particulars	Indian	Western
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Background</b></li><li>• <b>Counsellor-counselee Relationship</b></li><li>• <b>Cultural Context:</b></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Scriptural Texts</li><li>• Deeper emphasis on factor of compassion and loving kindness</li><li>• Stronger cultural connection as the theories emerge from local indigenous social systems.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Contemporary scientific psychological theories</li><li>• No personal bond between the Counsellor and counselee</li><li>• This system lacks cultural connection with individuals as it follows uniform methods as prescribed in psychological theories.</li></ul>



## Particulars

- **Attitude**
- **Execution**
- **Target population**

## Indian

- Based on achieving a state of equilibrium and balance at physical and mental factors
- There is no prescription to maintain 'thought diary' or any complex techniques for self-introspection.
- Diseased as well as healthy (for promotion of positive health in healthy)

## Western

- Based on managing presenting symptoms and enhancing positive behaviour
- Includes maintaining 'thought diary' and similar follow up techniques
- Mainly population with psychological disorders

# Understanding Mental Disorders : According to PYS

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## Sankhya

- Dwaita  
Philosophy
- Purusha- Prakruti
- Cause-Effect

## Yoga

- Vritti
- Klesha
- Guna - Prakruti
- Chit - Purusha

# Counselling in Yoga Sutras

## Understanding the Mind

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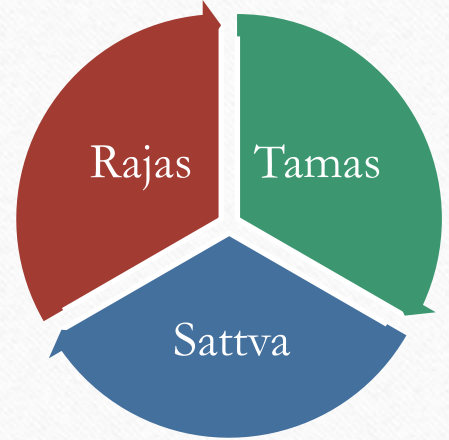
- **Atha** Yoganushasanam (PYS 1.1)
- Yoga **Chitta Vritti** Nirodhah (PYS 1.2)
- Concept of Guna & personality
- Pancha Vritti – Klishta / Aklishta (eg- object- dog)
- Pancha Kleshas
- Dukha- परिणाम ताप संस्कार दुःखैः गुणवृत्तिविरोधाच्च दुःखमेव सर्वं विवेकिनः (PYS 2.15) (**Change**)
- Taapa-Samskara-Guna-Vritti-Virodha = Dukha

**Chitta Vruttis:**



**SAMSKARA**

**Klesha:**



**Balance of Gunas**

# Obstacles according to PYS

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- *Antaraya*
- *Sahabuha*

**Antarayas (obstacles):**  
(PYS 1.30)

Vhyādi  
Styana  
(stagnation)  
Samshaya

Pramāda (haste)  
Ālasya  
Avirati  
(Overindulgence)

Bhrāntidarśana (delusion)  
Alabdhabhūmikatva (no  
perseverance)  
Anavasthitatvāni (regression)

Physical  
Mental  
Intellectual  
Spiritual

CHAIN/Independent/ With Vritti

CHITTA

**Sahabuva:**

Dukha

Daurma  
nasya

angamejayatva

śvāsapraśvāsāh

Vikshepa  
(Distraction)

# Counselling in Yoga Sutras – Coping Strategies

- Core Principle: Strengthen what is Dormant to shift what is dominant. (Eg-elephant)
- Ashtanga yoga
- Abhyasa Vairagyabhyam Tannirodhah
- Kriya Yoga (Discipline/Activity planning-Self Reflection-ACT)
- Maitri- Karuna- Mudita
- Pranava Japa
- Pratipaksha Bhavana – (Cognitive reframing)
- svapna nidrā jñānālambanaṃ vā – Dream analysis
- vīta rāga viṣayaṃ vā cittam – Counsel from someone free of Raga – Guru

# Yogic Counselling in Therapy

TRUST



EGO



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- Samyama – Shraddha- Ego (PYS 3.4) (Like research we do) (Mindfulness based therapy- Sakshi Bhava)
  - Vini-Yoga – (PYS 3.6) – Antar Yoga – Individualised- connection to teacher (Atha Yoganushasanam)
  - Samskara/ Vasana – can be changed (**Parinama**) by (PYS 4.1-3)
  - Parinama- Swabhava (Inner nature)– Kala (Time)- **Nimitta (experience)**
  - Nirmana Chittani asmita maatrat (PYS 4.4) – Leader/ Guru (Addresses dependency in psychotherapy)



# Yogic Counselling in Therapy

- 4 Pillars of Vasana (4.11)

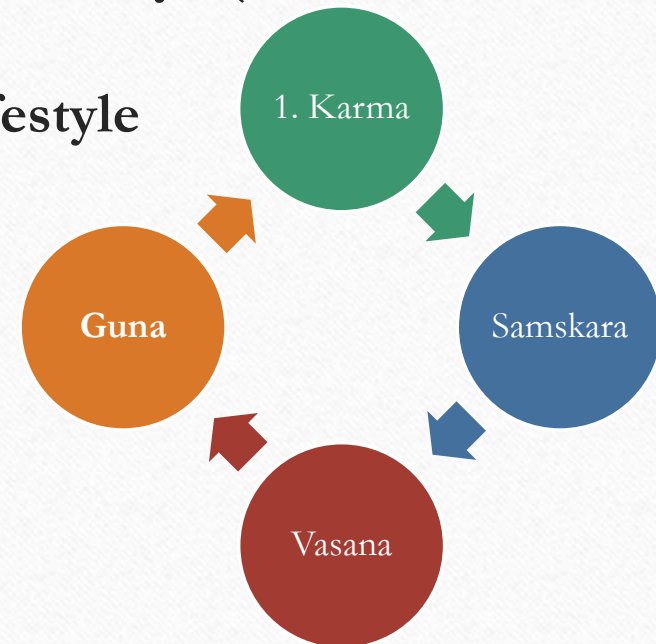
Hetu (origin cause) > Phala (attachment to fruits of actions) > **Asraya (state of mind)** > alambana (external stimuli)

**Asraya – by Abhayasa and Vairagya (Yama-Niyama)- Lifestyle**

- Past- Future- depends on Present (PYS 4.12) How?
- By Guna- (4.13-16)

As Guna is something we have control over if conscious- and **Sattva** should be an association at all times.

- **Perception of Object depends on Guna.**



# Spiritual Quest: Purusha- Prakruti

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- Further, as Samskara- Vasana and Phala weaken,
- Chitta > Dharma Megha samadhi > Purusha (seer & Seen)
- Nivritti – cessation of desire (PYS 4.25)

*"There is a seeking until there is a knowing. When there is a knowing, there is no longer a seeking."*

# Future Directions in Research

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- Including Yoga philosophy in Clinical Counselling / CBT?
- Definition of Sanskrit terminologies- (Issues and perspectives in meditation research: in search for a definition (Awasthi, 2013, Frontiers of Psychology)
- Development of scientific tools – Vritti, Klesha, Guna (eg- VPI)
- Understanding personality based on Guna Theory (Big Five Factor)
- Potential link: Health psychology, positive psychology, and Indian Philosophy

# References

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- Raja Yoga – Swami Vivekananda
- Patanjali Yoga Sutras - Commentary, Desikachar
- Patanjali Yoga Sutras - Prof Bryant, Columbia University
- Patanjali Yoga Sutras - Swami Satchidananda

# THANK YOU

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*"There is a seeking until there is a knowing. When there is a knowing, there is no longer a seeking." (PYS chapter 4)*