

Today's Lecture

- In-class quiz
- Administrative stuff
- Preliminary comments about the *saddarshanas*
- Some preliminary comments about Samkhya-Yoga
- A very brief discussion of some Samkhya-Yoga metaphysics

Administrative stuff

- The spreadsheet containing your overall grades so far will go online later today. Just go to the course site and follow the relevant link. If there is any discrepancies I should know about, please let me know.
- You can pick up your graded assignments at the end of class.
- For those who picked up their assignments on Friday, I have copies of the grading legend that you can pick up at the end of class.
- There are still nine of you who have not submitted your first assignment to Turnitin. I'm afraid I can't hand your assignments back until you submit them to that site.

Administrative stuff

- I'll have some very general comments about the assignments at the beginning of next class. For now note the following. (1) This assignment is the first of four, and is only worth ten percent of your overall grade. So if you received a low mark don't lose heart. (2) I have given you extensive comments on your assignments, please look them over. The comments will help you with your next assignment. (3) If you think the mark is unreasonable *after looking over my comments*, come and see me. We can talk about it. I have been known to change grades, though you have to make a good case for it.

Some preliminary comments about the *saddarshanas*

- The *sad* (or six) *darshanas* (views, theories, or philosophical systems) are, in large part, philosophical explorations of such basic issues as the nature of the empirical world, the nature of the constituents that make up the mind independent world (if there is one), the nature of knowledge, the nature of truth, the nature of the self, the nature of *moksha*, and the optimal path to *moksha* (Koller, *Asian Philosophies*, p.6).
- Though each *darshana* differs, *sometimes significantly*, on epistemological or metaphysical matters, they share a recognition of the authority of the *Vedas* and a desire to demonstrate that their central claims cohere with those found in the Vedic scriptures (Koller, *Asian Philosophies*, p.6).

Some preliminary comments about the *saddarshanas*

- Remember that these philosophical systems of thought have significant religious import. Each has the explicit aim of facilitating liberation from *samsara*, or ending the suffering associated with embodied existence (Koller, *Asian Philosophies*, pp. 8, 9, 10).
- These philosophies, then, are an integral part of Hindu practice to those who hold them.
- Do remember that each system *tends* to see itself as *the* best path to liberation.

Some preliminary comments about the *saddarshanas*

- It is traditional to divide the six *darshanas* into three pairs: Samkhya-Yoga, Vaisheshika-Nyaya and Mimamsa-Vedanta.
- This reflects the view that each pair shares certain key metaphysical or epistemological tenets or teachings in common (see Koller, *Asian Philosophies*, p. 60, 67, 78).
- **You need to remember, however, that each system has an identity of its own, and its own history.**

Some preliminary comments about Samkhya-Yoga

- For all intents and purposes, the metaphysics of classical Yoga is shared with Samkhya. Contemporary Yoga is another matter. Contemporary practitioners typically hold a Vedantan metaphysics.
- We will be limiting ourselves to Samkhya and classical Yoga.

Some preliminary comments about Samkhya-Yoga

- Samkhya-Yoga are, fundamentally, dualist (Koller, *Asian Philosophies*, p. 54). That is, they believe that reality is fundamentally comprised of two kinds of stuff (as opposed to one kind, which would be Monism).
- They believe that all that exists, or will exist, is, fundamentally, comprised of matter *and/or* consciousness (Koller, *Asian Philosophies*, pp. 54-55, 82).
- The world around us is the product of the ‘interaction between’ *purusha* (or ‘spirit’ or ‘consciousness’) and *prakriti* (‘matter’). Fundamentally, *Purusha* and *prakriti* alone make up reality (Koller, *Asian Philosophies*, p.58).

Samkhya

- Don't confuse *purusha* with the *Atman* of the *Upanishads*. Though 'atman' is a Sanskrit term that can be used to refer to either the empirical self or the Ultimate self, we have been using it up to now to refer to the Ultimate Self (to reflect the emphasis in the *Upanishads* and the *Gita*). So although Samkhya will talk of *atman*, and sometimes mean by this *purusha* (at least when referring to each of our ultimate Selves), it is clearer for our discussion to limit ourselves to talk of *purusha*.

Samkhya

- Though *prakriti* is originally one, *purusha* is many. “[T]he Ultimate Self of each person is a *purusha*” (Koller, *Asian Philosophies*, p. 54).
- This system, then, rejects the monism contained in the *Upanishads* and the monism that may be gleaned from a reading of the *Bhagavad Gita*.
- We are not, according to Samkhya, essentially One (or essentially *Brahman*).
- This speaks to my earlier cautionary comments about looking for a strong unifying theme in Hinduism.

Samkhya

- How does Samkhya's metaphysics find a place in Hinduism proper?
- Take a look at the *Gita* again, this time with an eye for how someone might read a dualist metaphysics into certain passages.
- Consider three passages in particular: 3:26-35; 5:5-17; 13:2-34.

Samkhya

- There are several reasons for why Samkhya adopt a dualist metaphysics.
- (1) They do not want to deny the reality of the material world (Koller, *Asian Philosophies*, pp.54-55).
- (2) They do not want to deny that there is also a seemingly non-material aspect to reality, namely consciousness (Koller, *Asian Philosophies*, pp.54-55, 59).
- These two commitments already seem to commit Samkhya to a metaphysical dualism.

Samkhya

- There are certain things about the world that Samkhya also do not want to deny.
- (1) There are animate and inanimate objects (broadly construed to include beings like us, and other terrestrial [or even extra-terrestrial] animals).
- (2) Organisms have a number of features associated with their material nature, **including their mentality** (see Koller, *Asian Philosophies*, p.58).
- (3) Causal events, and so change, really take place (Koller, *Asian Philosophies*, p. 55).

Samkhya

- (4) These events are not chaotic. Only certain events arise from the presence of certain objects or processes. This is best explained, according to Samkhya, as a transformation of the relevant causes. This transformation consists of a rearrangement of the constituent *gunas* that make up any given cause (be it an object or process) (Koller, *Asian Philosophies*, pp. 55, 56).
- (5) The universe as we know it had a beginning, and gradually moved from simplicity to complexity over a long period of time (Koller, *Asian Philosophies*, p. 57). Sounds familiar.

Samkhya

- From the beliefs that change, or causality, arise from the transformation of extant objects or processes, that the universe as we know it had a beginning, and that it evolved from simplicity to complexity over a long period of time, Samkhya conclude that the material constituents of the universe, the *gunas*, were at one time (albeit in the distant past) in a state of equilibrium (Koller, *Asian Philosophies*, p. 58).

Samkhya

- Something, then, is needed to explain the disequilibrium that initiated the causal change that gave rise to the universe as we know it. This something must be something other than matter ... enter *purushas* (Koller, *Asian Philosophies*, p. 58).
- Samkhya suggest that the very proximity of *purushas* to *prakriti* somehow initiated the disequilibrium in question (Koller, *Asian Philosophies*, p. 58).

Samkhya

- There is a cost to this suggested metaphysics.
- If the very proximity of the *purushas* to *prakriti* somehow initiated the disequilibrium that began material evolution, then these *purushas* must be, by implication, separate or apart from *prakriti*.
- Since these *purushas* are your and my fundamental Selves, you and I are not, *contra* first appearances, actually embodied (Koller, *Asian Philosophies*, pp. 58, 59-60).
- Let that sink in for a second or two.

Samkhya

- There are certain things about conscious beings, including humans, that Samkhya do not want to deny.
- (1) We are attached or averse to the sensations, events or objects of or in our experience.
- (2) We can abandon these attachments or aversions.
- (3) We are bound to samsaric existence (Koller, *Asian Philosophies*, p. 59).

Samkhya

- (4) We can escape our bondage to samsaric existence. That is, we, as conscious beings, can, as conscious beings, escape samsaric existence. In other words, we can in some *intelligible sense* talk of *our* existence beyond *samsara* (Koller, *Asian Philosophies*, p. 59).
- (4) means that we are not, in any substantial sense, our embodied selves. If we can transcend our embodiment entirely and remain, in some fundamental sense, us, we are not, in some substantial sense, any of our particular bodies, or accompanying psyche, in any given birth.

Samkhya

- *Moksha*, or liberation from *samsara* is, for Samkhya, achieved through the realization that we are not, in fact, actually embodied.
- By letting go of our attachments to embodiment, by letting go of our attachments to any given personal identity associated with a particular birth, we free ourselves from the suffering associated with samsaric existence.
- As liberated *purushas* we realize our essential natures as free, conscious subjects (Koller, *Asian Philosophies*, p. 59).