



A Structural Analysis of Samskara, its Main Components and Mechanisms

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ABSTRACT

Samskaras play a fundamental role in the definition of the psychological experience and human behavior. However, research in this area is reduced compared with that on other aspects of yoga. In the present analysis, I study the relationship among the components of samskara as well as their effect in the formation of vritti -i.e. cognition, emotion and behavior-. Klesha is the leading factor within samskara and defines the main subjective aspects as well as the performance of the remaining components. The second mechanism, vasana, comprises the conative values of the psyche and, as a dynamic agent, impels overt and cover behavior. The third key factor in given networks is karmasaya, which is formed by the stored karma and among other properties, infuses samskara and the functions of chitta with tendency or inclination towards a certain result.

Keywords: Samskara, subconscious networks, klesha, vasana, karma, karmasaya

INTRODUCTION

The concept of samskara as a subconscious structural and functional network that connects the different mechanisms and contents of chitta, is essential in the understanding of the psychological precepts of yoga. Samskaras act as the framework through which psychological processing takes place and play a notorious role in defining the cognitive and subjective experience. To the contrary as with other factors or dimensions of yoga, research on samskara is relatively scarce; some publishings have addressed the impact that factors like klesha or vasana have on behavior and mental health, however, their consideration as elements of a wider conjoining network is not given the required importance or altogether neglected.

Among the different types of samskaras, the focus of this paper is placed on klišhtah samskaras, considered as those by which common man -as opposed to advanced yogis- operates. Klišhtah samskaras are formed by klišhtah vrttis and give consequently rise to vrttis of the same kind. Klišhtah samskaras -as klišhtah vrttis- are distinguished from the other types of samskara for being tainted and influenced by the effect of klesha, a condition that causes the factors of vasana and karma to operate concurrently through given network.

With this analysis I aim to contribute to a deeper understanding of the relationships existing between the components of klišhtah samskaras and the impact those have in the human experience and behavior.

LITERATURE REVIEW

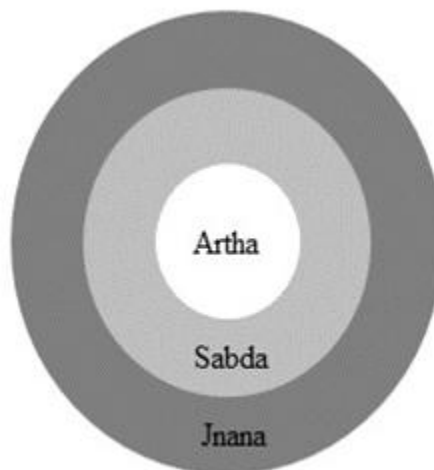
Samskaras are dynamic networks, present in the subconscious layers of chitta, that link the different contents and functions of the mind, and shape, in conjunction with triguna, the course of thought and action. Samskaras are the subconscious systems, or as Rao (2005, p. 205) calls them, “sources of unconscious mentation”, responsible of the way in which knowledge, reaction, feeling and memory combine to compose a vritti (Niranjananda, 1996; Vishnudevananda, 1999). In the field of Yoga psychology, these complex structures have been defined and translated in various manners, being “impressions” (Ghose, 2001, p. 33; Hartranft, 2003, p. 8; Sivananda, 2010), “latent subconscious tendencies” (Radhakrishnan, 2008, p. 320; Vishnudevananda, 1999) or “subliminal activators” (Feuerstein, 1989, p. 28) some of the most common. Maharishi Patanjali, while he explicitly mentions the word samskara scarce eight times in the sutras (I.18, I.50, II.15, III.9, III.10, III.18, IV.9, IV.27), he makes constant reference to their importance as well as the impact of their functional components in the manifestations of chitta.

In general terms we can consider samskara as the framework that shapes chitta, connecting all of its contents and directing the pathways through which its functions and experiences occur. Among the several elements or factors interacting through and within samskara -to form vrtti-, Patanjali (Satyananda, 1976, v. 3.18) distinguishes two main categories: one operational and one repository. With the term “memory” he addresses the information or data content stored in chitta and acquired through previous cognitive experiences. This content, which according to his teachings is stored in the subconscious layer of the mind, is interconnected with the unconscious functional aspects of chitta -through samskara-. He refers to this dimension by the word “vasana”, implicitly including so the three main mechanisms of this operational side of samskara: klesha, vasana and karmasaya, and the unavoidable effect of guna upon them. It should be understood that regardless of this differentiation between memory and vasana -in the context of samskara-, being their relationship malleable and dynamic, it is also inseparable; Prasada (2003, p. xii) resumes this inseparability with the stance “tendency is memory”.

Before proceeding with the analysis of the structure and mechanisms of samskara, a clarification on the usage of the term samskara in singular and plural forms should be made. From a structural perspective, samskara is essentially a network; this network can comprise one object and its jnana -attributed information-, several, or all -those stored in chitta-. When samskara is addressed in the form of a single network, it appeals to the whole conglomerate of objects and their respective jnanas, i.e. a network of networks, also known as the *samskara pinda* (Panda, 1996). Dr. Koshelya Walli (1977, p. 192) uses the allegory of a “fishing net” to describe their shape, where the knots or nodes -which represent each object with its jnana- form part of an interconnected whole. This network holds, directs and links all the contents of the subconscious and unconscious mind, reason why these layers of chitta are, collectively, also known as samskara chitta (Veylanswami, 2015). On the other hand, when samskaras are mentioned in a plural form, they refer to those samskaras composing the samskara pinda.

Method

The analysis of the factors composing klishtah samskaras, their interaction, performance and characteristics, has been done through qualitative structural analysis. This analytic method involves examining the structural and functional components within a system or phenomenon, emphasizing non-numeric data or patterns, to reveal their rules of interaction and consequent effects. As explained in the literature review, samskaras comprise a repository as well as an operational dimension. The repository part is composed of all the stored data within chitta, such as memories or knowledge. The operational part involves principally the factors of klesha, vasana and karmasaya. However, while distinguishable, they always exist and function in a cojoined manner, being ultimately inseparable. It should be highlighted that karmasaya, as its condition of stored karma, has also been considered in some cases as repository, nonetheless, this karma, when becoming active, operates and actively influences the activities within samskara. The information stored in samskara -viz. chitta- is acquired through the experience of vrtti, which at the time of expression either forms a new samskara or modifies/reinforces an existing one. The contents of this vrtti become imprinted in samskara as what is commonly known as the cognized object; similarly this stored information reflects by the same structure and content in the vrttis born from given samskara. This object is composed of three elements: *artha*, *sabda* and *jnana* (Figure 1)



Artha is the entity or object in itself at which cognition is aimed. Satyananda (1976, p. 113), translates artha as true knowledge, Bharati (1986) as “the object denoted as the meaning” and Sankaracharya (Legget, 1990, p. 157) refers to it as

the object or “thing” (*sic.*) of meditation, which can be of internal or external nature, subtle or gross. Artha is considered as the *bija* of *vr̥tti* (Satyananda, 1976, p. 114), and its true meaning or knowledge is covered and colored by its associated *sabda* and *jnana*. *Sabda* is the linguistic attribution to the object being cognized. It is the word(s) or name(s) identified with artha and arises from memory of learnt association. *Jnana* is the knowledge or information attributed to artha -and *sabda*-; *jnana* is the information or data -as well as other objects- related, directly and indirectly, to that object and which conforms, among other things, the class and category of that object. The second aspect of *jnana*, closely interrelated with the first one, is the subjective attributions too the object, to which *klesha* and its *vasanas* do also correspond.

Klesha

The *kleshas*, commonly translated as the -causes of- afflictions (Balsev, 1991) or pain bearing obstructions (Satyananda, 1976; Vivekananda, 1896, p. 56), are the cause of existence of *klishta* *vr̥ttis* and *klishta* *samskaras*. They are a group of factors that exist engrained within the *samskara* network (Legget, 1990, p. 180) and define the subjective -and consequently affective- experience presented in *vr̥tti*. They are said to be inborn (Satyananda, 1976), without beginning or end, and the cessation of their activity is only possible through the cessation of *vr̥tti*.

Klesha is the ruling factor or mechanism within *klishta* *samskaras*; they define their nature as *klishta* as well as they guide the action of *vasana* and *karma* (Walli, 1977, p. 188). The product of these interacting factors reflects in the *vr̥ttis* related to that *samskara* (Balsev, 1991), being this the reason why Feuerstein (1989, p. 30) defines *klesha* as the basic motivational forces behind cognition emotion and behavior. The action of each specific *klesha* is restricted to its *alambana* or object, giving place to the predominance of different *kleshas* -with varying intensity- across *samskaras* and according to their respective object and context (Bhogal, 2010; Sharma, 2014). The *kleshas* arise when confronted with *prakṛti* and exist, necessarily, linked to a specific object, known as *alambana* or object of support of *klesha* (Bharati, 2004, p. 37).

Klesha Alambana

In their original state, *purusa* and *prakṛti* remain independent from each other. This absence of bondage, known as the state of *kaivalya* or freedom of the Self, gets disrupted when *purusa*, by the effect of *avidya*, establishes a bonding connection with *prakṛti*. This effect, described by Patanjali as “*Anityāśuchiduhkhānātmāsu nityāśuchisukhātmakhyātiravidyā*” (PYS, II.5) is the cause of the cycle of births -*samsara*- and the root or “field” -*kshetram*- (PYS, II.4) of the different experiences lived throughout them (Satyananda, 1976).

There is an existing debate on whether *kleshas* are exclusively a product of *prakṛti* or are a combinatory result of the interaction *purusa*-*prakṛti* (S. V. Bharati, 1986; Prasada, 2003). Nonetheless, similar as *prakṛti* being the essence, cause and field of its evolutes, the remaining *kleshas* are defined excisions of *avidya* and the mode through which it takes expression (Balsev, 1991; Jha, 1907). This evolution which occurs at a parallel manner, has its origins at the initial disruption of *prakṛti*’s -unmanifest- balance, stage at which *avidya* exercises its first effect on *purusa* by bonding to its *alambana*, *prakṛti* (see Figure 2).

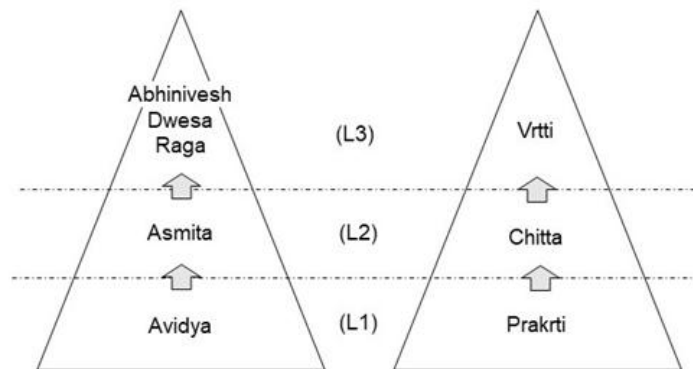


Figure 2 Representation of the three levels of klesha-alambana correspondence

Note: The way in which the *kleshas* exert their effect upon the psyche and ultimately on each person’s life experience, can be divided in three modes or levels, addressed in this figure as L1 -level one-, L2 -level two- and L3 -level three-. This classification is based upon Samkhya and Yoga’s theory of evolution -*Satkaryavada*- and the level of specificity of the *alambana* to which the final effect of each of the *kleshas* relates.



L1: This first stage or level at which klesha affects the freedom of purusa has an overall effect upon each individual's existence. Through the presence of avidya the subject "forgets" or ignores his essential and real nature, consciousness beyond -and devoid- suffering, and enables so the forthcoming pains and pleasures. Avidya is present in any kind of subjective experience, positive and negative, and while its final definition depends ultimately on raga, dwesa and abhinivesh, the mode and intensity radicates on the states of avidya -explained in the following pages-.

L2: As an almost simultaneous effect to the ignorance of the real self caused by avidya, the intrinsic need of an identity triggers the expression of asmita in pro of the formation of an identity. It is so that purusa, by the action of asmita, identifies itself with its reflection on prakrti's evolute, buddhi, creating a new (pseudo-) self based in the contents and modifications of chitta (Bharati, 2004, p. 46). This situation is comparable, in the area of psychopathology, with extreme cases of dissociative generalized amnesia in which the subject completely forgets his identity and forms a new one (Collier et al., 2009, p. 334). The belief of the not-self as the Self, of the establishment of purusa in a form or nature different of its own, is the primal manifestation of ignorance, or false knowledge, and is therefore also known as viparyaya (Balslev, 1991) or error of cognition -in this case about the nature of the self-.

Asmita, which Dr. Aggarwal (2005) defines as "object directed awareness", arises at a first instance by the contact of purusa with chitta/buddhi and translocates -or reflects- naturally into the fluctuations of chitta. Furthermore, the unfolding of asmita into the demarcated forms of raga, dwesa or abhinivesh occurs connected to specific objects of chitta experienceable through vrtti. In fact, we can establish certain parallelism between the manifestation of chitta in more defined and concrete forms -vrttis- and the evolution of asmita into raga, dwesa and abhinivesh.

L3: The last level of definition or specificity of klesha comprises raga, dwesa and abhinivesh klesha, considered as the emotive core of klesha (Balsev, 1991). They define the ultimate subjective and affective qualities attributed to the object and experienced through vrtti. Raga klesha arises directly out of asmita klesha acting as an attractive tendency towards favorable factors to the pseudo-self (created by asmita), fulfilling its needs or creating the experience of pleasure. In the same manner, dwesa acts as a force of rejection or opposition to factors considered unfavorable by the personality, being those putting at stake the state of wellbeing or creating the experience of pain. Dwesa klesha is considered as a consequence of its preceding klesha raga, confronting the loss of pleasure or happiness; however, authors like Walli (1977, p.185) defend that dwesa can also arise directly from asmita klesha -without the intermediation of raga- as a 'survival' response against agents/objects threatening the integrity of the (pseudo)self. At last, abhinivesh, translated as fear of death or clinging to life, arises to the possibility of loss of the known personality and it is responsible for the attitudes and behaviors characterized by avoidance.

The level of intensity, strength or influence of L3 kleshas is determined by asmita klesha, through factors which are defined in psychology as importance or significance -among others- of the object or event. Additionally, the choice of object for the posterior projection of the corresponding L3 klesha is also in great measure defined by the action of asmita and asmita-samskaras.

State of Klesha

The strength with which klesha operates in a subject, at a general level as well as in its individual form with regard of the object or its alambana, is dependent of the person's state of avidya:

"Avidyākṣetramuttareṣāṃ prasuptatanuvichchhinmodārāṇām" PYS II.4

With this sutra, sage Patanjali explains how avidya, in its manifestation through the various kleshas, can adopt four different states known as *prasupta* -or *prashupti* (Aranya, 1983)-, *tanu*, *vichchhinna* and *udara* (ibid.) -or *udārāṇām*-.

The first stage described in this sutra, known as *prasupta*, is commonly translated as the dormant state of klesha. In this state, klesha remains in a latent potential form in the subconscious layers of chitta, awaiting to manifest but without present signs of expression. The duration of dormancy of klesha can range from a specific moment to an indefinite length of time (S. V. Bharati, 2004), and is interrupted when klesha takes expression at the presence of the appropriate concise object (Prasada, 2003) and/or conducive conditions (Rao, 2017).

Tanu or attenuated is the state in which klesha has been brought to a subtle - *sukshma* (S. V. Bharati, 2004)- form, becoming its expression very thin and feeble. During the tanu state, klesha dwells in the mind as latent vasanas that become active when in contact with a related strong stimulant (p.48). While apparently similar, it is important to distinguish between the counteracted or subdued expression taking place in the vichchhinna state, later explained, and the attenuated



state of klesha. In the former mentioned, the manifestation of the counteracted klesha has merely been clouded by the expression of a stronger one, but in the tanu state, the strength of klesha has been actively reduced to a subtle form. Vyasa explains (S. V. Bharati, 2004, v. II.4) that this mitigation of klesha is achieved through the practice of *bhavana pratipaksha* -contemplation of the opposite principle- which is, in resumed terms, kriya yoga. The repeated practice will gradually bring klesha to the tanu state, followed by prasupta, and eventually, with the achievement of viveka, render klesha powerless as a “burnt seed” (p.44).

The third listed state is *vichchhinna*. Swami V. Bharati (2004) elucidates that the prefix “vi-” in given nomenclature, alludes to the intermittent nature of this state which is characterized by the alternance of expression between kleshas; it is so that authors have translated this state as scattered (Taimni, 1961) or interrupted (Aranya, 1983). During the *vichchhinna* state, the expression of an active klesha is interrupted and suppressed by the expression of a different stronger klesha. Interpreting Vyasa’s yoga bhashya (Aranya, 1983; S. V. Bharati, 2004; Jha, 1907; Prasada, 2003) we can determine two main conditions in which this interruption occurs. In the first condition, the importance or presence of a given object temporarily suppresses the expression of klesha towards other objects. In the second case, when two conflicting kleshas - for example raga and dvesa- are directed towards the same object, the klesha of higher intensity will counteract the manifestation of the less important one. The length of subjugation is dependent on the strength of the involved kleshas. If the suppressed klesha is presented with an object -or situation- of higher exciting power, or the object of the dominant one ceases its presence or loses importance, the subdued klesha will then become the dominant and manifest. According to Bharati’s commentary, active kleshas cannot manifest simultaneously -at the same degree of expression-, and although the combination of traits is possible, the experiential result will be led by the dominant one.

The fourth state described by Patanjali is termed *udara* -or *udaranam*- and alludes to the state in which klesha is fully expressed and operational. While we find numerous translations of the yoga sutras in which udara is interpreted as active (Aranya, 1983; Legget, 1990), the use of this term may create certain confusion as kleshas are also active in the tanu state and the suppressed form in *vichchhinna* state. The difference lies in the level of expression and activity of the klesha, which while very subtle in the former mentioned, is notable in the udara state, and corresponds in strength but not in length with the dominant klesha of the interrupted state. By this means, scholars such as Taimni (1961), Sw. Satyananda (1976) or Sw. Jnaneshwara Bharati (2007) referred to udara with terms like expanded, fully operative or actively sustained. Sw. Veda Bharati (2004) explains that when klesha is in the expanded state, its effect is noted in the conscious vrtti and becomes fully operational towards its alambana or object of support; he further insists that this defined expression within vrtti, comorbid in *vichchhinna* and udara states, is characteristic in common man, involved in the world and achievement of pleasures. Taimni (1961), on the other hand, considers the prashupta state as proprietary of the yogis and attributes the remaining three to worldly involvement. These features are representative of the relationship between rajo guna and klesha.

Along with those four states mentioned in the yoga sutras, Vachaspatimisra (Prasada, 2003) describes a fifth state in which klesha is rendered inactive, beyond the state of prasupta. Through the arduous practice of kriya yoga, the yogi reaches *jivan-mukta* and with the achievement of the ultimate knowledge, directs asmita to the function of discerning knowledge - viveka-; the manifestation of the remaining kleshas is perpetually deactivated as “burnt seeds” incapable of sprouting (Aranya, 1983; Bharati, 2004) In this state, the dormancy of klesha is not disturbed even in the presence of the triggering object or conducive conditions.

Vasana

Vasanas, commonly defined as -the vehicle of- desire (Satyananda, 1976, p. 341), are subconscious tendencies, or forces as professor Eliade calls them (1958, p. 43), that direct behavior towards the enjoyment and benefit of chitta, which is, due to avidya and asmita, mistaken as the Self (Satyananda, 1976). Vasanas are, the same as klesha, eternal, with its primal manifestation being the desire to live (PYS IV.10), and although innumerable, they all serve ultimately the same purpose, the -apparent- benefit of purusa (PYS IV.24). Vasanas are the conative forces behind all types of behavior, covert and overt; covertly, vasanas influence processes such as thinking or emotion formation and overtly, they direct action and behavior; in both cases aiming at the experience of pleasure and the avoidance of suffering -however, in the case of *asubha* vasanas, having the opposite effect (Sivananda, 2010)-.

Vasanas exist and operate within samskara (Walli, 1970, p. 199); they are formed as a result of the impressions left by past affective and subjective experiences (Aranya, 1983, p. 465), and performed actions -karmas- (Vivekananda, 1896)-. They exist as subliminal tendencies within the samskaras as potential forces directed towards the repetition of a previously experienced pleasure (Aranya, 1983), becoming active when -under the disposition of karmasaya- the condition is favorable. The origin of vasana is karma, and its final effect is the production of new karma. Similarly, the operations of vasana, as



well as their time and form of manifestation are delimited by karma (PYS IV.8). Vasana is the medium through which karmasaya manifests its fruits or vipaka (Walli, 1977, pp. 186–189)

Sage Vyasa, in his bhasya of the III.18 yoga sutra (Prasada, 2003) describes two kinds or dimensions of samskaras: memory and vasana. The first dimension, memory, is conformed by ‘static’ data or factors such as stored information - objects- or the kleshas to them adhered. The dimension referred to as vasana appeals to the ‘dynamic’ or ‘active’ mechanisms or forces impelling the functions within samskara, including primarily, as its name indicates, the vasana factor. Swami Sivananda (1974b, p. 198) explains that this dynamic potential is possible and fueled by the movement of prana, which operates and becomes active in chitta, through vasana. However, regardless of this qualitative distinction, Patanjali (IV.9) explains how both aspects of samskara are interconnected, being memory samskaras the base for vasana, and those, simultaneously, impellers in the formation of memory.

Components of Vasana

Vasanas are supported by the interaction of four factors upon which their continuity relies. At the absence of one of those, the vasana would cease. Patanjali, in the sutra IV.11, refers to these four factors as *hetu*, *phala*, *asraya* and *alambanaih*.

Hetu means cause and applies to klesha in the case of vasanas (Aranya, 1983; Satyananda, 1976). As we saw before, due to avidya, chitta is mistakenly taken as the self, and so, in the ignorance that purusa exists beyond emotions -and as ananda in the vedantic approach-, the aim is established in the experience of positive feelings and emotions. This state of happiness - to be differentiated from the state of ananda or kaivalya- is achieved through the fulfilment of raga or desire. For the same reason, the effect of dvesa and abhinivesh takes place when facing a threatening stimulus, which again by ignorance of the untouchable nature of the self, triggers opposition and avoidance behaviors. So, while a certain experience (karma) may be the creator of a vasna, the cause impelling it will be the klesha related to it.

Phala is the effect (Satyananda, 1976) or fruit of vasana. Feuerstein (1989, p. 132) explains vasana phala as the impelling motive or reason that drives vasana towards the performance of action/karma and its consequent fruits of birth, experience and life (Satyananda, 1976). This gives as a result the affective experience which at the same time reinforces given vasana. The apparent conflict of phala being a forming factor of vasana as well as its result is explained in the theory of satkaryavada in where the effect exists inherently in its cause.

It should be clarified that while vasana serves as the medium for karmasaya’s fruition or vipaka, which is, eventually the vasana’s phala, vasana in itself does not have an intended result as karmasaya does (Walli, 1970, p.188).

Asraya means support or substratum. Chitta is the medium in which vasanas exist and operate. Vyasa (Aranya, 1983) explains how a fluctuating mind, caused by the predominance of rajas, is more prone for the development and expression of vasana. The development of sattva or one pointedness will render chitta unfavorable to vasana.

Alambanaih has been translated as focal-point (Legget, 1990) or object -of vasana- (Taimni, 1961) and refers to the activating stimulus (Feuerstein, 1989); the object which incites vasana to come forth. The alambanah to which a vasana adheres is the same alambanah of the klesha hetu of given vasana.

Strength of Vasana

Sankaracharya (Tatya, 1885, p. 143), with the stanza “*The growth of motive is the growth of the seed of changing existence*”, addresses the relationship that klesha has upon vasana, not only as its causative factor but also as determinant to its strength. In his work ‘*Crest jewel of wisdom*’ he defines ahamkara -or asmita in yogic terms- as the motive by which the desirer exists and for which the search of pleasure endows. This drive towards enjoyment lies latent – as a seed ready to sprout- in the unconscious layers of chitta and manifests when presented to the triggering object ultimately shaping the life’s experience of the individualized purusa, the desirer.

Further on, Sankaracharya details the two processes through which klesha increases the intensity or strength of vasana (vv. 316-331) and which represent, in a parallel manifest form, the correlation of klesha-vasana-karmasaya. Those are -anxious (v. 320)- thought and *karya* or -external- action.

Asmita, in the presence of objects, gives rise to raga klesha and this to its consequent two. When chitta operates under the influence of raga, it is driven towards the pursuit of the object -of pleasure- generating thus vrttis in the form of desires, or anxious thoughts. The repetition of these type of vrttis, reinforces the samskara linked to the triggering object ergo its respective vasana(s). In a similar manner, Sankara explains that karya or external behavior -in addition to the covert



behavior just described- when ruled by and towards *asmita-raga*, equally empowers *vasana*. On one hand, the performance of *karya* sustains the formation of its directing *vr̥tti* and subsequently its *samskara*. It is so, that by the extinction of the action guided by *asmita* and *raga*, comes the recession of anxious thought or desire and the *vasana* behind it (ibid, v. 320). This extinction of action is described in the *Bhagavad Gita* (chapters 3 and 18) as the detachment of the self from action as well of its fruits.

Along with the reinforcement of *klesha*, the performance of behavior and consequent *karma*, increases the proclivity of *vasana* to take form. This behavior, which can be in the form of thought or external action, adds to the latent *karma* stored in the *karmasaya* and so increases the chances of occurrence of the corresponding *vasanas*.

Karmasaya

The term *karma* has three main connotations which, although interdependent of each other, can be distinguished as action, the stored potentiality derived from performed actions and the fruit or results of that stored potentiality (Vivekananda, 2011). According to the *yoga sutras*, this action-derived potentiality is stored in the subconscious *chitta* conforming what is known as the *karmasaya* -or *karmashaya*- (Whicher, 1998, p. 98). The *karmasaya* holds record of the traces of every action performed, whether overt or covert, performed in this or previous lives. Thus, when we use the term *karmasaya* we are simultaneously referring to the totality of stored *karma* in *chitta*.

In the *sutra* II.12, “*Kleśamūlah karmāsayo dr̥ṣṭādr̥ṣṭajanmavedani yah*” sage Patanjali introduces the term *karmasaya*, defining it as the storehouse of *karmas*, root of afflictions yet to be experienced (Satyananda, 1976, p. 160). As the repository of the traces of every *vr̥tti* experienced, *samskaras* and *karmasaya* are structurally the same (Sivananda, 1991, p. VII); however, at a functional level, during the formation of *vr̥tti*, they play slightly different -but complementary- roles. Patanjali describes *karmasaya* as the latent impressions -*samskaras*- formed by *klesha*-driven actions and which await for their fruition (Aranya, 1983). This structural similitude leads to the various modes of describing the relationship between *karmasaya* and *samskara*, where authors like Sw. Sivananda (1991) or N.C.Panda (1996) define *samskaras* as belonging to the *karmasaya*, -i.e. being the *karmasaya* as the total sum of *samskaras*- while others, like Rao (2017, p. 24) or Walli (1970, p.199) explicitly address *karmasaya* as a part of *samskara*. This last approach, in line with Vyasa and Vachaspati’s teachings (Aranya, 1983), is the most common across *yogic* literature.

The *karmasaya* is formed by the record of all the traces left by actions -covert and overt (Aranya, 1983, p. 425)- performed out of the influence of *klesha* and thus mediated by *klishta* *vr̥ttis*. Those traces left in the subconscious by given *vr̥ttis*/actions, as a whole, receive the name of *agami* or *kriyamana* *karma* and are, according to the nature of their producing action, stored as merit or demerit. Once the *kriyamana* *karma* is produced, it is stored in the *karmasaya* as *nirupakramam*, what is also known, in the terms of the *Bhagavad Gita*, as *sanchita karma* (Satyananda, 1976, p. 260). In the *sutra* 3.23, sage Patanjali defines *nirupakramam* as the dormant *karma* (Satyananda, 1976, p. 260), which’s manifestation will depend upon its degree of maturation, taking place during this or following lifetimes (Aranya, 1983). At last, *sopakramam*, also known as *prarabdha* (Sivananda, 1974a), is the name given to the *nirupakramam*/*sanchita karma* that has completed its maturation and has begun its manifestation. Once *sopakramam* /*prarabdha* *karma* becomes active, its effect cannot be stopped and the fruits unavoidably are to be experienced.

The main psychological effect that *karma* has is the establishment of a tendency, an unconscious predisposition within *samskara* -and *chitta*-, towards the repetition of the same type of actions and behavior (Coward, 1983) and consequent experience. This experience is known as *vikapa* (Krishan, 1997, p. 142) and is also generally referred to in *Mahabharata* literature as *karmaphala* -fruit of *karma*-. *Vipaka* manifests once the *karma* has ripened and consequentially becomes active in the three aspects of life: *jati* or birth, *ayus* or span and *bhoga* or experience (Feuerstein, 1989, v. 2.13), also known as the *Trivipaka*.

Vyasa discusses that *karmasaya*, to the contrary of *vasana*, is *eka-bhavika* (Prasada, 2003, v. 2.13) or of one life. This means that the *nirupakramam* that is generated during one lifetime and which does not become active in that same lifetime will fructify, if it so were, in the next one only. In regard to its relationship with new birth -*jati*- he arguments how all the accumulated *karma*, at the time of death, combines following certain parameters such as dominance-subordination relationships, intensity of *kleshas* or active *vasanas*, giving as a result one -the next- birth, and the characteristics thereof. In the cases of life span and experience, although already partially pre-directed by the given birth, the affecting *karma* may continue their ripening process until their eventual manifestation which can take place at any given time during that life. Moreover, life span and experience can additionally be affected by the new *karma* generated in present life, which according to its strength and nature can fructify before or after, fuel -or be fuelled- and obstruct -or be obstructed- the ones stemming from past life.



To better understand the intricate mechanisms of fruition of karma, sage Vyasa and Vachaspathimisra further categorise nirupakramam into *Niyata vipaka* and *Aniyata vipaka* (Aranya, 1983, p. 141; Jha, 1907). *Niyata vipaka* karma corresponds to the stored karma which, although still in a dormant state, will certainly take effect in this or next life. Its fruition cannot be stopped, neither by the yogi (Satyananda, 1976, Chapter IV), assuring thus reincarnation until its full extinction.

Aniyata vipaka karma, translated as the karma of uncertain (Aranya, 1983) or unappointed (Prasada, 2003) fruition, may or might not take effect. In the case of unobstructed maturation this karma adheres to the rule of *eka-bhavika*, giving its fruits in present or next life. On the other hand, this karma can remain unmanifest due to three reasons which have their respective outcome (Aranya, 1983, pp. 137–139). In the first case, the karma still in dormant state can be destroyed through atonement (p.138) by its opposites. It is so, Vyasa explains (Jha, 1907, p. 57), that vicious or *apunya aniyata* karma can be destroyed by virtue or *punya* karma, and viceversa. The second reason of non-manifestation is the inclusion or dissolution of the *aniyata* karma in another manifesting dominant karma.

This can clearly be exemplified with the mix of a pinch of salt in a tank of heavily sweetened water, rendering the effect of salt unmanifest. At last, Vyasa introduces an exception to the *eka-bhavika* rule; in the third case of *aniyata* nullification, the constant fruition of dominant *niyata vipaka* karma hinders the maturation of *aniyata vipaka* karma from its dormant state into its manifesting process and disabling so its fruition for an indefinite time. In this situation, karma may fructify in any coming birth when kindled by *klesha*, similar karma or favourable settings (p.58).

In resumed terms, *karmasaya*, being produced by *klesha*-induced actions, creates in the same way the tendency towards the repetition of given actions, viz. *klishtah vrttis*. Additionally, by the same relationship, *klesha* is also responsible of the maturation and fruition of that karma which is stored in the *karmasaya* (Aranya, 1983).

Once the karma is matured and ready to manifest, its expression takes place when the adequate conditions appear, through the means of *vasana* (Coward, 1983). *Drstajanmavedaniya* karma, whose *vipaka* is to be experienced in present life -as opposed to *adrstajamavedaniya* in next (Walli, 1977, p. 203), can only be prevented from taking expression (PYS 2.13), by the removal of *klesha* (Baier et al., 2018, p. 295).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In light of the previous analysis, we can conclude the following points:

All the contents of *chitta* are interconnected in a widespread network which establishes the parameters by which cognition, emotion and behavior are defined. As a whole unit this network is often referred to as the *samskara pinda*, which is at the same time composed of several connected *samskaras*.

Addressed in Figure 3 with the term “*Samskara (general form)*”, the common *samskara* structure comprises a central object, which’s knowledge is complimented by related objects within that *samskara*. At a basic or elemental level, each object can be in itself considered a *samskara* in its simplest form, where the central object corresponds with the *artha* of its *vrtti* and the information to it adhered is, as well as the nominal value or *sabda*, conformed by *klesha*, *vasana* and the potentiality of karma.

Klesha plays a leading role in the operational and experiential aspects of *samskara* and their related expressed form -*vrtti*-. The factor *klesha* provides the experiability of *artha*, the attributed subjective and affective values and gives direction to *vasana*. Additionally, the presence of *klesha* promotes the fruition and materialisation of the stored karma when the conditions are adequate.

Vasana functions as the dynamic factor within *samskara*, impelling the different processes and defining their strength, orientation and quality. The characteristics of each *vasana* are determined by its components, which include *hetu*, *phala*, *asraya* and *alambanaih*. *Vasana* can be considered as the conative factor within *samskara* and *vrtti* and directly responsible of action and behavior

Karmasaya refers to the stored karma and is, as *samskara*, part of the subconscious mind. *Karmasaya* is engrained within *klishtah samskara* through which its fruition takes place, however, to the contrary of *klesha* and *vasana*, its existence and experience is not restricted to *vrtti* and *samskara*. *Karmasaya* imprints a tendency or predisposition within *samskara*, what inclines the functions of *chitta* towards a certain experience.

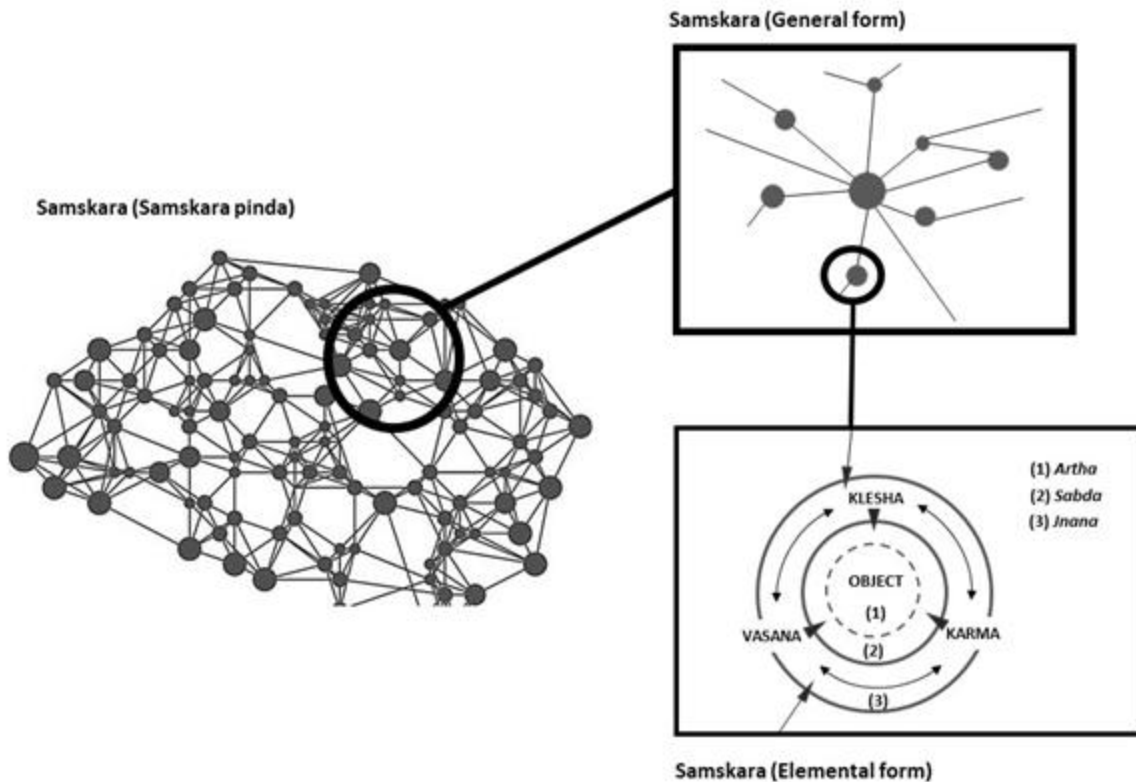


Figure 2 Conceptual representation of the structure of samskara(s)

CONCLUSION

Given the importance of samskara in the psyche and consequently in the different dimensions of human life and experience, the study of samskara and the way in which its mechanisms operate should be given strong emphasis. One of the areas in which the study of samskara would result extremely beneficial, due to its cognitive, affective and behavioral implications, is mental health and psychopathology.

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