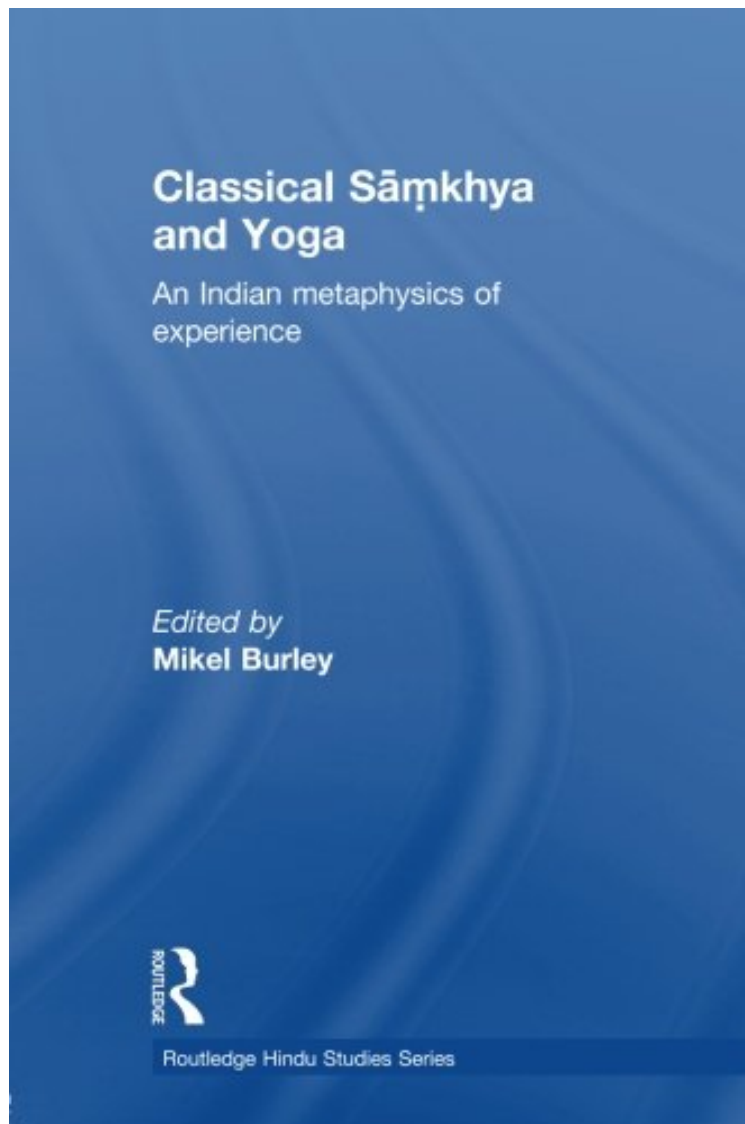


[Download] Classical Samkhya and Yoga: An Indian Metaphysics of Experience (Routledge Hindu Studies Series)

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Mikel Burley

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#1259433 in Books Mikel Burley 2012-09-12 2012-09-13 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.21 x .55 x 6.14l, .0 #File Name: 0415648874240 pages Classical Samkhya and Yoga An Indian Metaphysics of Experience Routledge Hindu Studies Series | File size: 36.Mb

Mikel Burley : Classical Samkhya and Yoga: An Indian Metaphysics of Experience (Routledge Hindu Studies Series) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Classical Samkhya and Yoga: An Indian Metaphysics of Experience (Routledge Hindu Studies Series):

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. The Rejection of Realism By Ed"...I hope enough has been done to demonstrate the extreme unlikelihood that Samkhya and Yoga are responsible for the sorts of crude cosmological speculations that have been avidly attributed to them by several generations of putative exegetes. What they are instead responsible for, I have proposed, is among other things an elaborate and insightful system of interrelated principles that is best construed as an Indian metaphysics of experience." (162) These concluding lines of Burley's "Classical Samkhya and Yoga" summarize what he hopes to have accomplished, and it seems that he has done so quite convincingly. One of the original features of his book is the way it deals with the problem of the fundamental categories of prak'ti, or the tattvas, having been historically understood as having both a cosmogonic and psychological designation. On the one hand they seem to be presented as an account of how the universe "unfolds" in a temporal and causal sequence in which some fundamental matter (prakriti) is transformed into the constituent elements of the universe. On the other they are presented as an account of how phenomenological human experience arises. However, this dual nature or bivalence is never mentioned or even suggested in the texts (Samkhyakarika Yogasutras) themselves. Burley confronts this issue by asking two simple questions, 1.) How does the physical arise from the psychological? 2.) How can aspects of psychology emerge sequentially, when all are present at any given time? The problem can be resolved, argues Burley, if we abandon a realistic and diachronic interpretation in favor of a reading that takes the tattvas as a synchronic analysis of experience. Burley's project is essentially Kantian in nature (Chapter 3), arguing that the metaphysical nature of primordial matter (prakriti) is better understood with respect to Kant's transcendental metaphysics, rather than as a product of direct causality and offers an original account of the elements (bhutas) as the forms that must accompany sensory content rather than as material entities that are themselves transformations of more subtle entities. Or as Burley quips, "My view now is that prakriti is 'matter' only in the sense that it is that which makes up 'the matter of experience'." (x) Burley's primary argument is a rejection of realism, condemning many modern interpretations of Samkhya and Yoga as being too enthusiastically dualist. As Burley himself writes, "...what we are faced with in Samkhya-Yoga metaphysics is not a mind-world dualism as typically understood in the tradition stemming from Descartes, but something which, though hard to pin down exactly, can provisionally be termed a subject-experience dualism (where 'experience' is construed as including both acts- or powers to act- and the contents thereof). 'The world' qua subject-independent realm of entities - is not in the picture." (79) Concerning the realism of matter and prakriti influenced by western conceptions of dualism, the comparison to the mind-body dualism of Kant and Descartes fails as Kant's "I think" and Descartes' "res cogitans" are certainly analogous to Samkhya's tattva of ahamkara, which is, in their own understandings, "phenomenal" and "res extensa," respectively. Burley argues that from the position of Samkhya-Yoga, the entire issue of realism simply cannot be addressed, the very posing of the question simply being inappropriate to the purview of phenomenology. That is, regardless of whether or not a physical world exists independent of purusha is entirely irrelevant to the soteriological aim of Samkhya-Yoga. Burley's point is that Samkhya-Yoga does not profess to be a "grand unified theory," so to speak, that can account for all other standpoints. It simply attempts to account for how things appear when one follows the prescribed methods of Yogic practice. Reading into Samkhya and interjecting the realism suggested in the nyaya and vaisheshika darshanas is simply an error. As a whole, Burley's book is excellent. It is carefully researched, well argued, and perhaps the most impressive, Burley attempts to stay entirely within the bounds of the text (other than obvious Kantian reading). This deliberate framing makes a very poignant addition to the greater conversation on Samkhya-Yoga, while presenting his argument in such a way that will allow others to pursue like-minded projects that build upon this work. In addition to the novel insights within, the book is also general and inclusive enough to be read as an introductory text for those interested in the field. Complaints? Ease up on the Latin, Burley. :p 4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Innovative new study on Samkhya-Yoga metaphysics By Doug Osto This is an excellent book on (primarily) Samkhya metaphysics, and the most innovative treatment of the subject since G. Larson "Classical Samkhya". The author resolves the long standing apparent tension between cosmological-cum-psychological interpretations of Samkhya's tattva-theory by offering a new synchronic and phenomenological interpretation of the tattvas as the necessary conditions for experience to occur. Moreover, the study makes a compelling argument against a realist reading of prakrti. This book is a most welcome contribution to the field.

Samkhya and Yoga are two of the oldest and most influential systems of classical Indian philosophy. This book provides a thorough analysis of the systems in order to fully understand Indian philosophy. Placing particular emphasis on the metaphysical schema which underlies both concepts, the author adeptly develops a new interpretation of the standard views on Samkhya and Yoga. Drawing upon existing sources and using insights from both Eastern and Western philosophy and religious practice, this comprehensive interpretation is respectful to the underlying spiritual purpose of the Indian systems. It serves to illuminate the relation between the theoretical and practical dimensions of Samkhya and Yoga. The book fills a gap in current scholarship and will be of interest to those concerned with Indology as well as philosophies in general and their similarities and differences with other traditions.

About the Author Mikel Burley received his PhD in Indian philosophy from the University of Bristol, and currently

teaches in the School of Philosophy at the University of Leeds. His previous publications include *Hatha-Yoga: Its Context, Theory and Practice* and numerous articles on both Western and Indian philosophy.