

Session 73 Smuriti Vrutti Part 1

Welcome to this new session, and, we are commencing on smṛti vṛtti the last of the pancha tattva vṛttis; the last of the 5-fold vṛttis.

Smṛti as it is known to the common man is just a memory, which is a function of the brain. So, as I said towards the end of the last session, the memory is not smṛti and smṛti is not memory. Memory is part of this smṛti vṛtti.

Patanjali is not speaking of that memory. Usually, the sutra is translated as a sutra on memory, but let me tell you again, that it is smṛti vṛtti. It's a technical term. It must be maintained as it is, and it should not be rendered as memory. Memory is a part of this smṛti because as you are aware that the citta is an ocean, it has that ocean depth. Now, when we speak of our memory, it is something in the surface of the sea, like in the surface of the sea, you get the waves, ripples, bubbles, but hundreds of meters, thousands of meters, at depth of the ocean, we don't get these things.

So, we cannot be expecting those waves at the depth of some 500 meters or 1000 meters or 2000 meters or 3000 meters. That is only available on the surface of this sea. So, the mind is actually an ocean. Psychological mind is a peripheral mind, surface mind, whereas the citta, circumscribes the whole mind, in its entirety of the depth.

Now, this memory which we speak about is something that is on the surface of mind, but there is also a kind of memory unknown to modern science on deeper plane of that mind.

Under the conscious mind there is subconscious mind and under the subconscious mind, there is something that can be called as ultra-conscious mind. And then, immeasurable is the depth of the mind. Citta considers all those depths of the mind. There are smṛtis in saṅskārik mind.

And therefore, as I said in the last lesson that, there is a smṛti, a kind of smṛti, a source of smṛti, function of the smṛti, whereby liberation is actualized.

Even the Indian mind knows about something called as antim kālin smṛti, Bhagvad Gita mentions about it antim kālin smṛti. Now, what is this smṛti? do you want to remember the life at the end, at the end- point of the life? At the point of death, do you want to recall, do you want to go through the diary of the whole life? That is not antim kālin smṛti spoken about it is some of our karmas, some of our karmas and which is going to impel us into our next manifestation.

So, as Bhagvad Gita speaks about that maxim- yā mati sā gati.

That mati is a kind of intelligence. It's a buddhi. So last moment, buddhi casts a mold for next life. And therefore, it is said that we recall the memories of that class of life, whereby we are impelled into womb of that class of life.

And this antim kālin smṛti can be liberating one as well.

Now, this is not the mnemonic memory. This is the memory in the deep saṅskāra kośa. And therefore, the smṛti concept is totally different.

Elsewhere Patanjali speaks about *smṛti pariśuddhi*. What is that *smṛti* which is purified? It is not this mnemonic memory that needs purification. And there is no way here really to purify this memory, sort out this memory.

We cannot do the sorting out of memory. You know, what we don't want to remember we more often remember but what we want to remember more often we forget. It's not in our hands as to what you must be remembering and what we must not be remembering, but there are so many other forces which are working of behind our memory.

It's not your volitional force whereby, you can remember what you want to remember and you will forget what you don't want to remember. And exactly opposite happens, if you try to understand the law of this world. Anyway, therefore, once again I say that this is not a memory sutra. This is not an aphorism of memory, whereby, you will try to improve your memory. The mnemonics techniques are available today, whereby you will improve your memory, you don't try to find any such mnemonic kind of techniques so that you can improve your memory. Anyway, here *smṛti* is a *vṛtti* and this is a *citta vṛtti* and not just a *mano vṛtti*. Any peripheral is *mano vṛtti*. We have heard about some children recalling their previous life, past life and previous life. Stray examples are there where we know that some people recall the past life. As to where, where, where, where were they? In what conditions were they? Perhaps they can recognize the place where they were in the last life.

It can be in a distant country that they even have the memory of the house, where they lived in the last, previous life or last life. So, we have heard about this when the world thinks about the rebirth, incarnation theory. So, there are certain instances which have come to surface, that very few people can remember past life.

So, this is certainly not a mnemonic memory. This is not the memory that is coming from brain. It is a deep psyche memory. Therefore, every one doesn't have it. We do not know who were we last, in the last manifest, manifestation, in our last incarnation, we don't have even slightest clue of our last incarnation. However, there are some, therefore it is not the mnemonic memory.

So, we have these examples of people recalling something of the past life and our past lives. So that is also *smṛti*.

Then, *smṛti pariśuddhi*. This comes in the *samāpatti* topic. Now, what is that *smṛti* there? It's a totally different connotation there. So therefore, you have to understand these terms, when they come in this text with reference to context, the meaning would change. So, then there is something called *smṛti*, which can be purified.

So, what is the purification of *smṛti* for us to understand on our plane of a consciousnesses that we remember only that thing, which we want to remember and other things are weeded out. So, it is filtered memory. That's what we can understand, filtered memory. So other things don't come to surface.

Again, you will see that even the memory is such a thing, memory. Now we must understand these two terms in distinctly. I would be sometimes saying memory and I would be sometimes saying *smṛti*. When I say *smṛti*, it is for the *smṛti*. When I say memory, it is part of our temporal empirical memory.

Now, if you are going to get a memory of say something, an episode, 25 years back or 30 years back, you get that memory in solid state, and you don't have to remember everything that happened in those 25 years. You straight away land on that episode, which took place 25 years back and not going gradually one year back, two years back, three years back, four years back, five years back, and 25 years back. All the others memories don't come to surface only that memory comes to surface, which was a 25 year back episode. It is not 25-year-old episode. It is 25 year back episode. Understand why I'm saying this. When you say old, it is an age. So, it includes 25 years, but here 25 years are not included you only get memory of something that happened 25 years back.

So that's the marvel of this memory. You don't have, you don't create a kind of a turmoil in your mind, that all the memories up to that point in time surface in your mind and create a havoc.

You only select or only that memory is selected and you don't have to have other memories. During that period, during those 25 years, so many episodes have happened in life. So many things have come and gone. So many things are gone to memory cortex also, but they don't all come to surface and you straight away land on that as if selectively you land on that memory.

That's a great marvel to human brain, human psyche. You don't have to go back as if it's a diary of memories and then you turn pages to come to a page. You don't have to turn pages to come to a particular page.

So, the memory is really a marvel to human brain and human psyche. Anyway, now, we are coming to this last and ultimate vṛtti in the set of five vṛttis, which Patanjali has mentioned and it is, why is it that he has mentioned at the fifth place? because this memory pertains to all the earlier four, earlier four records, earlier four vṛttis.

So, when it is a smṛti vṛtti we are remembering earlier vṛtti. Now since it is a recollection of earlier vṛttis, the earlier vṛttis are of the nature of pramāṇa, viparyaya, vikalpa, nidrā, as well as smṛti, because you can have memory of memory. Having had no pramāṇa at all no pramāṇa vṛtti, no viparyaya vṛtti, no vikalpa vṛtti. What is the scope of having memory vṛtti? So, in absence of the earlier four vṛttis, where is the scope for the fifth vṛtti? So, it is not just the fifth.

It is because of the four that you have the fifth, and the fifth vṛttis constituted by the body of the four or even five vṛttis, because there is memory of memory also. It is not memory of your perception and memory of your inference and memory of your testimony, memory of your illusion, memory of your verbal delusion, but there is memory of memory itself.

So, it must have that body of those four or five vṛttis which is the locus for memory. If that body is not available, then the vṛtti smṛti, memory vṛtti is also not available. Therefore, see the logic in bringing this vṛtti at the fifth place.

So, it is all is dependent on purva vṛttis because memory is always having as its substrate an experience, a past experience, if there is no past experience, how will you have a memory? So, it needs the support of experience and experience is always with some vṛtti. You can't say that there was an experience, but there was no vṛtti.

Vṛtti is a means of experience. So, pratyaksha anumāna, agamah, viparyaya, vikalpa should be there for you to constitute a memory or create a basis for memory and therefore, very logically,

Patanjali has given fifth place to this vṛtti. That's one thing. Another thing that if the mind doesn't have any vṛtti of the nature of pratyaksha, anumana, agamah, viparyaya, vikalpa, suppose there is no vṛtti, will the mind be empty? No, the mind takes recourse. You know, the mind has this kind of alternative arrangement, that it will either take recourse to imagination, or it will take support of memory. So, the mind will be kept engaged. So, this vṛtti is one of those vṛttis, which keeps mind engaged even if mind doesn't have a fresh vṛtti, a new vṛtti.

Even if the senses don't have any object, the senses are not fasting. The senses are not starving. They don't have to starve because there is absence of a sensory object. The senses are also kept engaged by smṛti. If there is no physical object around for senses, the senses will take support of smṛti, memory, or imagination.

So, it's a great provision to human mind, rather than making the mind idle.

So, when there is no stimulation in the form of any input to senses or input of mind, it has this baggage of memories and imaginations, and therefore the mind will take recourse to kalpana vishwa, that is imaginative world, imaginary world, memory world. So, these are huge worlds, imagination, imaginary world, and the world of imagination and world of memory. So, the mind will be kept engaged and the mind will be active.

So, it's a great bounty- memory. It will not keep your senses idle and mind idle or senses starving and mind starving in absence of inputs. These will provide inputs to mind from within, kalpana, imagination and memory. So, try to understand how bountiful is this memory. Imagine memory card removed from your psyche.

How the business of activity of life will be paralyzed, will be lame, will be obstructed and will be at a disadvantage.

So somewhere, if you can spare a thought on how much your memory is contributing for your smoothness of business of life, from a smoothness of business of life, to richness of business of life, activity of life. Memory is a great contribution. So, for a while, just imagine if you were without any memory or for a while, it happens that you don't have any memory or lost your memory. What will be your fate? The business activity of life will be impeded, obstructed, and paralyzed, even paralyzed. So, we don't really recognize this memory aspect or smṛti aspect within us, which is very much at our fingertips.

And because we remember so many things, our business activity of life is facilitated, smoothed and even enriched. Particularly we understand if we have, if the memory fails us in examination, we understand our fate. It's a very miserable state to be not having memory while you are in examination. So, it is not that one passes examination, because one is intelligent and one has grasped the subject. See how much memory plays a role for you, to appear for an exam for an examination, write down an examination or answer in an examination, answer in a test. It could be written examination or oral examination. The memory comes from very, very, very handy.

So therefore, it's a great endowment to human mind, human psyche. Then memory has a twin that's called recognition. If you recognize something, something, someone, what is that? You say it is memory, but many times you remember something and someone, but you don't really recognize and then it is quite inconvenient. You remember the person, but you can't recognize

the person, you can't place the person. Yes, I have seen, I've seen him, this person, I've seen that person, but then you scratch your head. It is not comfortable condition to be not recognizing. The memory is there, but recognition is failing and that's not a comfortable state of mind, so we scratch our head. So, recognition is one thing, memory is another thing and Indian philosophical system deals with both, smṛti and pratyabhigña. It's called pratyabhigña, to recognize; now, it is not totally independent of memory, but it is a facet of memory. Recognition is a facet of memory.

Many times, you recognize a person, but you do not have all the memories about the person. Sometimes we have memory about the person, about that means you remember that person, but you do not recognize. So, there can be sometimes a kind of a short circuit and then that's not a comfortable condition. Anyway.

So, memory, recognition, these are two terms with which Indian psychology has dealt with in its philosophical subject matter; because psychology, as I've been telling you is a subject integral to philosophy and it should be that way rather than we have today, that psychology has nothing to do with philosophy. Is your mind real or unreal? If the mind is real, then why don't you understand understanding realities is so important? And philosophy deals with realities.

If you recall right in the enunciation to Patanjali yoga sutra, I told you about it, and the Indian seers, who were going after identifying realities, understanding realities, postulating realities, comprehending realities, they understood the importance of human mind because, who is going to realize? The mind is going to realize, and therefore psychology and philosophy go hand in hand in Indian system of thought and not in Western system of thought. Those are two separate disciplines, philosophy and psychology. Anyway, now I told you a bit about bounty of this memory, bounty of memory, which is peripheral smṛti, which is smṛti of the mind. I'm not referring to smṛti of the citta.

Here the mention is about citta vṛttis. This memory has an enormous depth, and it's not just mnemonic, kind of memory. Then I told you about the bounty to some extent, to what to know about this endowment, that human mind psyche, consciousness, has by way of memory and how we are miserable without this workable memory, normal memory. If we don't have this normal memory, we know the predicament, we can imagine the predicament, we have experienced the predicament and we have taken for granted. The memory is taken for granted, for which sometimes we have to pay cost and we do pay cost. Okay. That's one thing. The other thing is that memory is also a turmoil.

Memory is also a turmoil; it is also a problem; more particularly for those who have a delicate kind of sleep process. They want to sleep. They want to go to sleep. They want to have a sleep, but the memories play havoc, and lot of turmoil is created. And our minds are absolutely restless, turbulent by the havoc that the memory plays while we are lying on the bed. So, if our sleep is a delicate thing, then the memory really pokes its way into our mind, and then we expectantly wait for sleep and it doesn't come. Why does it not come? It is because of the havoc of memory, chaotic dance of memory in our mind. So, it makes us restless. It makes us agitated.

So, look at the other side of this memory also. Now another funny role or sometimes, tormenting role that memory plays is that, you do not have really any sorrow in your life, but there will be the sorrow playing havoc when you don't have actual sorrow. It is because of the memory. So,

when you don't have sorrow, you can have memory, and then you can understand how tormenting is that. So, when there is no actual memory, there can be imaginary memory. There can be memory of, there can be sorrow of memory, sorrow of imagination. So, both these, memory and imagination, which I told you, which occupy the mind when the mind doesn't have any stimulant or input coming from outside.

So, when you don't have sorrow, you are in the memory of sorrow. So, you are sorrowed. So, without sorrow, you can be in sorrow, without actual sorrow, you can be in sorrow.

But then there's also an advantage. When you don't have happiness, positive happiness, happiness around, happy kind of stimulant to your mind, you can still have memory of your happiness and you can be happy. So, this is another magic that memory has that when you don't have sorrow, you can be in sorrow, when you don't have pleasures and delight, you can be in pleasures and delight. So, it is both that you have advantage as well as disadvantage. So, this point is also to be noted here while we are dealing with memory. When you don't have actual happiness, yet you can have happiness, when you don't have actual sorrow, you can still have sorrow. The *smṛti* can also invoke delusion in you.

So, the memory can give rise to sukha, dukkha, moha, as much as memories lie in sukha, dukkha, moha. So, memory is about sukha, dukkha, moha; memory also can generate sukha, dukkha, moha. So, understand this. Memory is of sukha, dukkha, moha; memory is of pain, pleasure, delusion, and memory can sprout, generate, sukha, dukkha, moha, that is pain, pleasure, delusion.

The memory can be *sukhakāraka*, memory can be *dukkhakāraka*, memory can be *mohakāraka* and memory also can be *jñānakāraka*. This is so important for student class, student clan. Memory builds up your knowledge, just as you know, in civil structure there are bricks and concrete or stones and concrete and brick by brick is built up then it is with the help of concrete.

Similarly, knowledge process has this memory in it, like in civil structure, you have cement, concrete and you have that steel, structure, and without which you can say it is a stone building, or it is a brick building, but then these things are very much there in structure of it. Steel structure is so important, particularly in a modern civil construction, which is with cement, concrete or brickwork even, but we understand how steel is important for structuring.

So, this memory is also *jñāna kāraka*, the memory also is a generator of knowledge. It is generator of sukha, dukkha, moha, and it is generator of knowledge. It is based on sukha, dukkha, moha, it is also based on knowledge. I remember because I know, I remember because I have experienced pain, pleasure, delusion; and then I remember, therefore I have knowledge. I remember; therefore, I have pain, pleasure, delusion. Have you heard this properly?

I have knowledge; therefore, I have memory. I have experience of pain, pleasure, delusion, therefore, I have memory. So, identify the cause and effect.

Then I have memory, therefore, I have knowledge. I have memory; therefore, I have experience of pain, pleasure, delusion. I experience pain, pleasure, delusion, even if they are not around, if they are not actually there, still, I can have them.

Memory is both, cause of a structure and memory is super structure as well. So, it can be infrastructural memory and it can be superstructural memory.

Then there is a set of memory which is coveted, we want it, it is desired, we long for it. It's a wanted memory. It is very, very, very wanted memory. And there is also unwanted memory. We don't want it, but we can't dispense with it. We can't be free from it. It doesn't leave us, nor do we leave it.

So smṛti is jñānakāra. Smṛti is also smṛtikāra because there can be a memory of memory. Memory can generate memory.

So also consider this in your thought process. Memory is sukhakāra, memory is dukkhakāra, memory is mohakāra, memory is jñānakāra, and memory is smṛtikāra. Memory is also karmakāra. Because of memory, you will do certain things, your activity. So, the activity is because of memory, there are certain activities which you can identify that they are structured over memory. In absence of memory, you will not have that activity.

So, look at this memory where, where all it is cause, where all it is causal factor, causing factor, causal factor, and where all it is effective.

If you don't have a particular experience, you can't have memory of it. The memory is a generation of something. So, find out how memory is because of jñāna, memory is because of sukha, dukkha, moha, memory is because of karma. Having done something, you remember something. As much as having, having had a memory of something, you do something.

So it can be both in the place of cause and effect as well. So, try to understand this memory, vṛtti. Even just vṛtti, because we are familiar with this memory. We do not know that smṛti of which adhyatma speaks about or even smṛti pariśuddhi which Patanjali is speaking about, but somewhere understand Patanjali dealing with the topic of citta vṛtti, not mano vṛtti. And we are all so far discussing mano vṛtti memory, memory of the mind, memory in the mind, memory for the mind.

Then as I just now told you, smṛti and pratyabhiḅhā. Smṛti means memory and really the memory here I'm referring to; pratyabhiḅhā means to have recognition, to be recognizing.

So, for our business of life to be smooth and proper, we need both, memory and recognition.

So, memory will give room for recognition. Without, not having memory at all, how will you recognize? So, recognition depends upon the baggage of memory, the support of memory.

I just now told you, and you can imagine, without recognition, how you have a kind of a restless condition in your mind?

So in short let us, just recapitulate what all smṛti does. So as a student, this list will be important for you. The smṛti gives you sorrow when there is no actual sorrow, smṛti gives you pleasure when there is no actual pleasure. When you have sorrow, actual sorrow in front of you, you can set it aside by memory. You can sweep it aside by memory. Listen to this carefully, when you are in sorrow in the sorrow is around you. Sorrow is clinging onto you. You can just brush it aside by memory. When you are in pleasure, when you are having pleasure, the pleasure, pleasure is cringing onto you, you can just brush it aside by a memory.

So, memory gives you sukha dukkha, memory also brushes aside sukha dukkha. Ponder over this.

When there is sorrow, the memory can give you pleasure.

So, it is not that it only brushes aside sorrow. It also, it actually instates pleasure. That's how it is brushed aside. So, when there's actual sorrow and it gives you sukhānubhava, it gives you pleasurable experience.

So, also vice-versa. When there is sukha it will give you experience of dukkha.

The smṛti is so vital for pratibhā, for intuition, and so, it's an exaltation of your knowledge, exaltation of your wisdom. It is called pratibhā. So, smṛti contributes for pratibhā. It is pratibhākāraka, that means it is because of intuition, intuitivity. It is jñānakāraka which I just now explained. It is buddhikāraka; your intelligence is also enriched. So, your knowledge is enriched. Your intelligence is also enriched. You will not come across a very intelligent person with very poor memory.

So, also you will not come across very knowledgeable person with very, very poor memory. So, it is jñānakāraka, buddhikāraka and vyavahārsaukāryakāraka. It is vyavahārupyogi, it is useful for business activity of life and therefore it will create ease for business activity of life. That's an easing factor. If you don't have memory, you don't have easing factor. That's called vyavahāra saukārya and therefore memory is vyavahāra-saukārya-kāraka

Then memory gives you a recognition pratyabhigñākāraka.

You can't imagine pratyabhigñā without memory. Memory is agyannivāraka ; memory removes your ignorance.

Then memory gives meaningfulness, to your baggage of experience. If you have a lot of experience, but if the memory is very poor, you can understand what is dis facilitating, how dis facilitating is that. So, the baggage, the sack of your experience becomes meaningful only if you have memory. A lot of experience, but you don't have memories of all those experiences, then you are not really a wise person in life. If you want to be wise in life, that experience should come handy with the help of memory. Memory also keeps you alert and keeps you awake.

Otherwise understand how you will lack alertacity without memory. When a person is very alert, what is it? Don't you see memory component on the surface when somebody is very, very alert? And see how much it is material for you to be conscious. When will you call yourself to be conscious? One of the components is memory. If that is not there then you are not really conscious. So that is called satarkatā and jagrukatā. Memory is an important component for that.

So now we are dealing with what is called as the activity of memory, Smṛti vyapara, and the smṛti here means mnemonic memory.

So, let's, try to proceed on this matter. So, I gave you a little enunciation to the memory, which is a part of smṛti and now we are going to slowly excavate this memory to understand the smṛti on deeper planes. However, this was just an enunciation to smṛti vṛtti, which is memory vṛtti. So now you can equate smṛti and memory with what we are discussing. But in our discussion, which will be going further, it won't be proper to consider as memory because so far, we are considering

with psychological memory, the mental memory, the cerebral memory, the brain generated memory. And then, then that is also smṛti. So here we can have equation of smṛti with memory.

But as we proceed further and further and further, we will not be able to have this equation in place. We'll have to consider smṛti as smṛti and not call it, not dub it as memory. Anyway, this was just an enunciation to memory, the English word memory, the memory that we have in our faculty functions. So, with that, we will end the lesson today with this enunciation to memory, which is enunciation to aspect of smṛti. Namaskar all of you!