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The Concept of Chitta in Yoga Darshan

Abstract:

As explained in yoga philosophy, the idea of Chitta represents the totality of consciousness, which includes the mind, intellect, and ego. Originating in ancient books such as Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, Chitta is the blank canvas on which our perceptions, feelings, and ideas are projected. This essay explores the many facets of Chitta, how it shapes human experience, and how important it is to the quest for self-realization and spiritual awakening. The abstract aims to shed light on the complex interactions between Chitta and the route to enlightenment and inner harmony by drawing on both traditional teachings and modern viewpoints.

Keywords:- Chitta, Consciousness, Mind, Intellect, Ego, Vritti, Patanjali's Yoga Sutras

Introduction:

Patanjali defines Yoga as: “योगश्चित्तवृत्तिनिरोधः” Yoga is the arrest of the Vritti (activities) of the Chitta.

The nature of the Chitta is very important to get the results of cessation of Vrittis. Swami Hariharananda Aranya considers in Yoga Karika that the Chitta is another name of Antahkarana, which is a modification of three gunas i.e. Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. Therefore the Chitta has threefold nature i.e. illumination, activity and staticness. This Chitta is of two kinds i.e. Pratyayatmaka (with Vritti) and Samskaratmaka (with Samskaras only).¹ Vachaspati Mishra considers Chitta as Antahkarana, which is the proponent of Buddhi.² Vijnana Bhiksu considers Antahkarana Samanya as a Chitta, but he has not accepted it as an aid to the Buddhi (intellect), he believes that in reality the Antahkarana is one but there can be four Antahkarana due to seeming different in division of Vritti. ³ The four Antahkarana probably means Manas, Buddhi, Chitta and Ahamkara which have also been accepted as Chitta in Yogadarshan. Narayana Tirtha considers Antahkarana triad as Chitta.⁴

¹ अन्तःकरण-धर्मा याः प्रख्या-स्थिति-प्रवृत्तयः ।

त्रैगुणास्तद्भवेच्चित्तं संस्कार-प्रत्ययात्मकम्॥ Yoga Karika -1/6

² चित्तशब्देनान्तःकरणं बुद्धिमुपलक्षयति । त.वै., पृ. 3

³ चित्तमन्तःकरणसामान्यमेकस्यैवान्तःकरणस्य वृत्तिभेदमात्रेण चतुर्धात्र दर्शने विभागात् । यो.वा., पृ.12

⁴ चित्तस्य महदहंकारभेदेन त्रिविधा अन्तःकरणस्य वृत्तयो भवन्ति । -यो.सि.च., पृ.3

Considering the views of various commentators and keeping in mind the goal of Yogadarshan, Chittavrittinirodha, only one of the Buddhi, Manas and Ahamkara should not be considered with the Chitta. The aim of Yogadarshan is to control the behavior of the practitioner and control it completely. Therefore, considering the Buddhi, Manas and Ahamkara as the Antahkarana, all three should be considered with the Chitta.

Though the Chitta is sattvapradhan, there is a harmony of all the three Gunas in it. Vachaspati Mishra clearly considers the contrast of Gunas to be the cause of different states of Chitta.⁵

Chittabhumi: The different states of the Chitta are called the Bhumis of the Chitta, which are said to be Ksipta, Mudha, Viksipta, Ekagra and Niruddha.⁶

1. **Ksipta:-** In the Chitta when Rajoguna is predominant and Sattva and Tamoguna resides in the secondary, then it is said to be a Ksipta State. The nature of Rajoguna is said to be active,⁷ so in this state the mind keeps getting attracted towards various subjects. Both commentators Vachaspati Mishra and Vijnana Bhiksu accept this.⁸ Vachaspati Mishra considers it extremely unstable.⁹ This is the opinion of Ramanandayati, that this Chitta belongs to the class of Monster.¹⁰
2. **Mudha:-** This is the Tamoguna predominance state, so it is full of sleepless Vrittis.¹¹ Ramanandayati believes that this stage is of the demoness.¹²
3. **Viksipta:-** Although this state is same as Ksipta state, is Rajoguna predominant, but it is said to be Viksipta state due to the presence of a little Sattvaguna occasionally. Even if it is extremely unstable, it is the opinion of Vachaspati Mishra that he is stable on one subject for some time.¹³ It is the opinion of the Vijnana Bhiksu that even after attaining stability due to Sattvaguna, this state achieves instability in the middle bit due to Rajoguna.¹⁴ Ramanandayati considers Devadi with this Chitta.¹⁵
4. **Ekagra:-** This is the Sattvaguna predominant state of the Chitta because Rajas and Tamoguna remain very well controlled in that period. This is the reason that in this

⁵ एकमपि चित्तं त्रिगुणनिर्मिततया गुणानां च वैषम्येण परस्परविमर्द- वैचित्र्याद्विचित्रपरिणामं सदनकावस्थमुपपद्यत इति । त.वै., पृ. 10

⁶ क्षिप्तं मूढं विक्षिप्तमेकाग्रं निरुद्धमिति चित्तस्य भूमयः । व्या.भा., पृ. 1

⁷ क्रियाशीलं रजः । व्या.भा., पृ. 190

⁸ (क) क्षिप्तं सदैव रजसा तेषु तेषु विषयेषु क्षिप्यमाणमत्यन्तमस्थिरम् । त.वै., पृ. 4

(ख) क्षिप्तं रजसा विषयेष्वेव वृत्तिमद् । यो.वा., पृ. 6

⁹ क्षिप्तं सदैव रजसा तेषु तेषु विषयेषु क्षिप्यमाणमत्यन्तमस्थिरम् । त.वै., पृ. 4

¹⁰ रजसाऽत्यन्तं चलं क्षिप्तं दैत्यानाम् । म.प्र., पृ. 2

¹¹ (क) मूढं तु तमः समुद्रेकान्निद्रावृत्तिमत् । यो.वा., पृ. 6

(ख) मूढं तमसा निद्राऽऽदिवृत्तिमत् । यो.वा., पृ. 2

¹² तमसा निद्रादि मन्मूढं राक्षसाम् । म.प्र., पृ. 1

¹³ क्षिप्ताद्विशिष्टं विक्षिप्तम् । विशेषोऽस्थेमबहुलस्य कादाचित्कः स्थेमा । त.वै., पृ. 4

¹⁴ क्षिप्ता द्विशिष्टं विक्षिप्तम् । सत्त्वाधिक्येन समादधदपि चित्तं रजोमात्र- याऽन्तरान्तरा विषयान्तरवृत्तिमद् । त.वै., पृ. 6

¹⁵ क्षिप्ताद्विशिष्टं विक्षिप्तं देवादीनाम् । म.प्र., पृ. 2

state, the Chitta becomes focused on some subject, both the Vijnana Bhiksu and Ramanandayati have made it clear.¹⁶ This is in the case of Samprajnata Yoga.

5. **Niruddha:-** It is completely different from other states of Chitta because in other states there are some types Vrittis, whereas in this state all the Vrittis are arrested and only Samskara remains, both commentators have made it clear.¹⁷ This is the state of Asamprajnata Samadhi of Yogis who have arrested all the Sattvika Vrittis.¹⁸

Chittavritti:

The aim of Yoga is arrest of Vrittis, so it is absolutely necessary to have knowledge of the Vrittis. Therefore, the commentator has determined their number and nature.

These Vrittis are considered to be of two types with the distinction of Klista and Aklista. Vyasa Dev believes Klista means those Vrittis which are for the affliction and the origin of the karmasaya.¹⁹ The tendencies of the Vrittis for which the Asmita klesha is afflicted, Vachaspati Mishra²⁰ considers this Vritti as the Klista Vritti because these vrittis have a tendency to earn Klesha and they are said to be the origin of the Karmashya group. Vijnana Bhiksu considers to the Klesha here with sorrow. In result this Vrittis are the Duhkhadayini means Visayakara Vrittis are said to be Klista.²¹

The Vrittis which generate wisdom (Vivekakhya) and destroy the ability to give birth of gunas are Aklista Vritti.²² Vachaspati Mishra considers that wisdom which is received in the condition of prashantvaahita of only Sattva-bhuddhi without Rajas and Tamas.²³

Although the cessation of both Klista & Aklista Vrittis is required, however, the arrest of Klista vritti has been preached by the Aklista Vritti earlier. Later on, Vachaspati Mishra has made it clear that the Vivekakhya Aklista Vritti should also be stopped by Para-Vairagya.²⁴ Vijnana Bhiksu has also mentioned this sequence.²⁵ The type of Vritti that arises produces the Samskaras in its own way, so again the vritti rises in the same form.²⁶ The sense

16 (क) एकस्मिन्नेव विषयेऽग्रं शिखा यस्य चित्तदीपस्येत्येकाग्रं विशुद्ध- सत्त्वतयैकस्मिन्नेव विषये वक्ष्यमाणावधी कृतकालपर्यन्तमचञ्चलं निवातस्थदीपवत् । - यो.वा., पृ. 6,7

(ख) एकाग्रे तु सत्त्वप्रधाने एकविषयस्थिते चित्ते रजस्तमोवृत्तिनिरोधः - म.प्र., पृ. 2

17 (क) निरुद्धसकलवृत्तिकं संस्कारमात्रशेषचित्तं निरुद्धम् । त. वै., पृ. 4

(ख) निरुद्धं च निरुद्धसकलवृत्तिकं संस्कारमात्रशेषमित्यर्थः । -यो. वा., पृ. 7

18 सर्ववृत्तिनिरोधे त्वसंप्रज्ञातः समाधिः । व्या. भा. पृ. 1

19 क्लेशहेतुकाः कर्माशयप्रचयक्षेत्रीभूताः क्लिष्टाः । व्या. भा. पृ. 25

20 क्लेशा अस्मितादयो हेतवः प्रवृत्तिकारणं यासां वृत्तीनां तास्तथोक्ताः । यद्वा पुरुषार्थप्रधानस्य रजस्तमोमयीनां हि वृत्तीनां क्लेशकारणत्वेन क्लेशायैव प्रवृत्तिः । - त. वै., पृ. 25

21 तथा च क्लेशहेतुकाः दुःखफलिका विषयाकारवृत्तय इत्यर्थः । ... कर्माशय- प्रचयानां धर्माधर्मवासनासमूहानां क्षेत्रीभूता आलम्बनीभूताः क्लिष्टा इत्यर्थः । -यो. वा., पृ. 27

22 ख्यातिविषया गुणाधिकाविरोधिन्योऽक्लिष्टाः । - व्या. भा., पृ. 25

23 विधूत रजस्तमसो बुद्धिसत्वस्य प्रशान्तवाहिनः प्रज्ञाप्रसादः ख्यातिः , तथा विषयिन्या तद्विषयं सत्त्वपुरुष विवेकमुपलक्षयति । त. वै. पृ. 26

24 तस्मात्क्लिष्टानामक्लिष्टाभिर्निरोधः , तासां च वैराग्येण परेणेति । - त. वै., पृ. 26

25 तत्र चायं क्रमोऽक्लिष्टा उपादाय क्लिष्टा निरोद्धव्याः , ततस्ता अपि परवैराग्येणेति । यो. वा. पृ. 27

26 तथाजातीयकाः संस्कारा वृत्तिभिरेव क्रियन्ते , संस्कारैश्च वृत्तय इति । एवं वृत्तिसंस्कारचक्रमनिशमावर्तते । -व्या. भा., पृ. 27

is that the Klista Samskaras are formed by the Klista Vrittis and the Aklista Samskaras are formed from the Aklista Vrittis, which again come in the form of Klista & Aklista Vrittis.

Vrittis are of five types with the distinction of Klista and Aklista.²⁷ The existence of the Chitta in a particular way is called “Vritti”, although these are numerous, yet they are divided into five main forms.

1. **Pramana Vritti:-** Vachaspati Mishra considers the means of Prama as Pramana as for virtuous behavior of persons .²⁸ Vijnana Bhikshu has not mentioned the necessity for virtuous behavior while aiming for Prama. He considers Prama as the sense of Anadhigatatattva.²⁹ The number of Pramana in Yogadarshan is considered to be three i.e. Pratyaksha, Anumana & Agama.³⁰

Pratyaksha:- When the Chitta is in contact with an external object through the senses, the Pramana that determines the particular nature of matter is said to be Pratyaksha.³¹ Explaining the nature of the way the Chitta interact with external matter through the Indriyas, the Vijnana Bhikshu writes that the Chitta is not only shaped by the form of subject alone but is shaped squarely with Indriya in this form.³²

AnumanaPramaan:-

Anumana is an indirect knowledge based on Pratyaksha, so it is described after Pratyaksha. Giving the reason for being described before the Agama, Vachaspati Mishra writes that the Agama is based on Anumana (Inference), because the listener gets the sense of words after listening the words that are possible by guessing the words (Anuman).

Agama:- Agama is also known as Apta Vakya. Agama is the knowledge gained from the words of reliable persons or reliable books (scriptures).³³

2. **Viparyaya Vritti:-** Viparyaya is wrong knowledge, which does not illuminate the true nature of matter .³⁴ This matter is obstructed by the Pramana, such as the appearance of two moons in place of one moon due to eye defect is a Viparyaya Vritti. Because it gets interrupted by accurate knowledge of a moon.³⁵ Both Vachaspati Mishra & Vijnana Bhikshu also considers “ Samsaya” under Viparyaya Vritti.³⁶

²⁷ वृतयः पञ्चतयः क्लिष्टाक्लिष्टाः। -यो. सू. 1/5

²⁸ अनधिगततत्त्वबोधः पौरुषेयो व्यवहारहेतुः प्रमा । तत्करणं प्रमाणम् । —त. वै., पृ. 29

²⁹ अनधिगततत्त्वबोधः प्रमा , तत्करणं प्रमाणमिति प्रमाणसामान्यलक्षण- सुगमत्वादकृत्वैव विभागः कृतः -यो. वा. , पृ. 31

³⁰ तत्र प्रत्यक्षानुमानागमाः प्रमाणानि । -यो. सू. 1/7

³¹ इन्द्रियप्रणालिकया चित्तस्य बाह्यवस्तुपरागात्तद्विषयः सामान्य- विशेषात्मनोऽर्थस्य विशेषावधारण प्रधाना वृत्तिः प्रत्यक्षं प्रमाणम् । - व्या. भा., पृ. 28

³² चित्तस्येन्द्रिय साहित्येनैवार्थाकारः परिणामो भवति न केवलस्य चित्तस्य । -यो. वा., पृ. 31

³³ आप्तेन दृष्टानुमितो वार्थः परत्र स्वबोधसंक्रान्तये शब्देनोपदिश्यते, शब्दात्तदर्थविषया वृत्तिः श्रोतुरागमः । व्या. भा., पृ. 28

³⁴ विपर्ययो मिथ्याज्ञानमतद्रूपप्रतिष्ठम् । -यो. सू. 1/8

³⁵ तत्र प्रमाणेन बाधनमप्रमाणस्य दृष्टम् । तद्यथा - द्विचन्द्रदर्शनं सद्द्विषयेणैकचन्द्रदर्शनेन बाध्यत इति । - व्या. भा. , पृ. 35

³⁶ (क) अतः संशयोऽपि संगृहीतः । त. वै., पृ. 35

(ख) संशयस्याप्यत्रैवान्तर्भावः । यो. वा., पृ. 36

3. **Vikalpa Vritti:-** The Chitta Vritti is created by the knowledge of word only, which is made of substancelessness, is called Vikalpa Vritti.³⁷ Ex:- Chaitanya is the nature of Purusa. Hearing this there is a sense of adjective Noun feeling in Chaitanya and Purusa, which, being immaterial, is not a Pramana form but a Vikalpa form. Because Chaitanya being only Purusa, here in that impenetration, the adjective Noun form has been conceived.³⁸

Being based on Sabdajnana, it can be inferred in the Agama Pramana. Vyasa has prohibited it to be embedded in the Pramana because it is a zero- object .³⁹

Because the object is zero, it can be embedded in the Viparyaya. Solving this doubt, Vyasa writes because the differential behaviour of the Vritti is seen on the basis of the word knowledge, hence it cannot be interpolated in the Viparyaya .⁴⁰ The behaviour that takes place through a Viparyaya Vritti is only momentary, because behavior is not possible when obstruction of inaccurate knowledge by realization of the matter occurring in the later period, where as there is no obstruction (impediment) to the realization caused by the Vikalpa Vritti.⁴¹

4. **Nidra Vritti:-** While describing the characteristic of the vritti of Nidra, the author has used the term 'Vritti'⁴², whereas it is not used in other Vrittis. The reason is that both commentators believe in clarifying the 'habituality' of Nidra; otherwise, through the vritti acquired from repetition, it becomes clear that it is a vritti. The main purpose of explaining this is to affirm their view by refuting the denial of Nidra as a vritti by logicians, etc.⁴³

Here Nidra does not mean ordinary sleep but the deep sleep in which there is no scope of dreams (Sushupti). Susupti is the third state of human consciousness. Due to the absence, the vrittis that relies on the nature of tamas is termed as Nidra.⁴⁴ By absence, both commentators mean the absence of both waking and dreaming state.⁴⁵ The reason for the absence of these vrittis is tamas because it envelops the intellect like darkness, preventing the acquisition of

³⁷ शब्दज्ञानानुपाती वस्तुशून्यो विकल्पः । - यो. सू. 1/9

³⁸ वस्तुशून्यत्वेऽपि शब्दज्ञानमाहात्म्यनिबन्धनो व्यवहारो दृश्यते । तद्यथा - चैतन्यं पुरुषस्य स्वरूपमिति । व्या. भा., पृ. 38

³⁹ स न प्रमाणोपारोही । व्या. भा., पृ. 38

⁴⁰ न विपर्ययोपारोही च । वस्तुशून्यत्वेऽपि शब्दज्ञानमाहात्म्यनिबन्धनो व्यवहारो दृश्यते । व्या. भा., पृ. 38

⁴¹ तथा च यथाऽर्थशब्देन यथाऽर्थज्ञानेन च यादृशो व्यवहारो भवति शब्द- ज्ञानरूपस्तादृश एव व्यवहारो विकल्पादपि दृश्यते विवेकिनामपीत्यर्थः । विपर्ययस्तु नैवम् , बाघोत्तरमिदं रजतमिति शब्दप्रत्यययोरभावादिति ॥ - यो. वा., पृ. 39

⁴² अभावप्रत्ययालम्बना वृत्तिर्निद्रा । यो. सू. 1/10

⁴³ (क) निद्रायास्तु वृत्तित्वे परीक्षकाणामस्ति विप्रतिपत्तिरिति वृत्तित्वं विधेयम् । न च प्रकृतमनुवादकं विधानाय कल्पत इति पुनर्वृत्तिग्रहणम् । - त. वै., पृ. 40-41

(ख) निद्राया वृत्तित्वस्फुटीकरणाय पुनर्वृत्तिग्रहणम् । - यो. वा., पृ. 41

⁴⁴ (क) अभावः तस्य प्रत्ययः कारणं बुद्धिसत्त्वाच्छादकं तमः । त. वै., पृ. 41

(ख) अभावस्य प्रत्ययः प्रतिसंक्रमस्थानं कारणमिति यावत्, तच्च चित्तसत्त्वाच्छादकं तमोद्रव्यमन्धकारादिवत् । - यो. वा., पृ. 41

⁴⁵ (क) जागृवृत्तीनामभावः ।- त. वै., पृ. 41 (ख) जाग्रत्स्वप्नवृत्तीनामभावस्य ।-यो. वा., पृ. 41

knowledge of objects. It is only this vritti, characterized by the nature of tamas, that is called the specific vritti of nidra.⁴⁶

5. **Vritti:-** Smriti is memory. It is also one kind of Vritti. Memory is one's past experience which is not lost in course of time.⁴⁷ Whatever one experiences are deposited in the Chitta. Gradually with the passage of time most of the experiences are lost and are deposited in the Chitta in the form of Samskaras. The experiences which are not lost and remain in the form of the Vrittis in the mind are known as Smriti. Vaachaspati Mishra has accepted the characteristic described by the author of memory in the same way.

This five Vrittis can be arrested by two methods i.e. Abhyasa and Vairagya which have to be practiced simultaneously.⁴⁸

Conclusion:

In summary, the yoga philosophy of Chitta provides significant insights into the nature of consciousness and the human experience. Practitioners can create increased awareness, emotional balance, and mental clarity by adopting a holistic knowledge of Chitta. People can set out on a life-changing path towards self-realization and spiritual fulfillment by using the power of Chitta. May we endeavor to cultivate and elevate the Chitta, releasing its ability to illuminate the road towards inner peace and enlightenment, as we continue to investigate and incorporate the teachings of yoga philosophy into our lives.

⁴⁶ (क) तमः , तदेवालम्बनं विषयो यस्याः तथोक्ता वृत्तिर्निद्रा । - त. वै., पृ. 41

(ख) तदेवालम्बनं विषयो यस्याः सा तथा तादृशी वृत्तिर्निद्रेत्यर्थः । यो. वा., पृ. 41

⁴⁷ अनुभूतविषयासंप्रमोषः स्मृतिः । यो. सू. 1/11

⁴⁸ अभ्यासावैरान्याभ्याम् तन्निरोधः । यो. सू. 1/12

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