

The Concept of *Citta* in Yoga Philosophy

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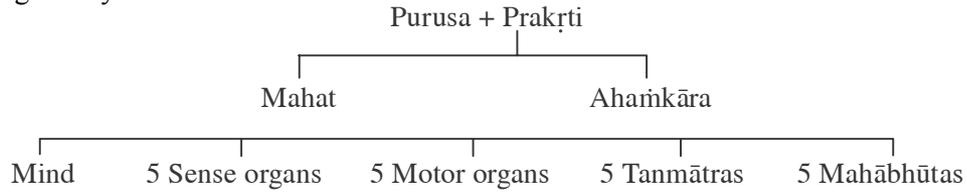
Abstract: Vācaspati Miśra points out that *citta* is a kind of *antaḥkaraṇa* called *buddhi*. The cause of *buddhi* is *prakṛti*. Thirteen instruments (*karaṇa*) are admitted in the Sāṃkhya. Ten external sense organs are five organs of knowledge, five organs of action and three internal sense organs are *mahat* or *buddhi*, *ahankāra* and *manas*. Therefore, the eleventh organ is *citta* (mind) which is called *antaḥkaraṇa*. Without the assistance of *citta* (mind), the organs of knowledge cannot acquire knowledge and organs of action also cannot perform its action. The extraordinary attribute of mind is “*Saṃkalpakam manaḥ*”. Determinative form (*Saṃkalpaka rūpa*) is the definition of *citta* or *itarvyavartaka dharma*. *Citta* is permanent, pervasive like the sky. But its function is contracting and expanding. It is luminous because it reveals objects like light. Its constituents are the qualities of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. It is always changing. It remains in two states: (1) *vṛtti* which is prompted by *bhoga* and (2) *nirodha* (suppression) which is represented by *ekāgratā* and various stages of *Samādhi*. *Citta* has the following *bhumis* or levels of existence—*kṣipta* (unstable), *mudha* (deluded), *vikṣipta* (distracted), *ekāgra* (concentrated) and *niruddha* (suppressed). *Citta* becomes pure through the constant practice of *astāṅgayoga*. Consciousness reflected in the modification of *citta* (*cittavṛtti*) is the knower or *jñātā*. Yogi realises that discriminative knowledge also is a quality of *citta*. Purusa is different from *citta*. All the sufferings (*kleśas*) of *citta* can be removed through the renunciation of attachment. So Patanjali calls it *kaivalya*. Here the constant practice of *astāṅgayoga*, renunciation and the cessation of modification of causal qualities lead to *kaivalya*.

Keywords: *Citta*, *antaḥkaraṇa*, *buddhi*, *prakṛti*, *purusa*, *saṃkalpa rūpa*, *manaḥ*, *vṛtti*, *kṣipta*, *mudha*, *vikṣipta*, *ekāgra*, *niruddha*, *saṃkoca-vikāśi*, *astāṅgayoga* and *kaivalya*.

‘*Citta* (mind) is a kind of *antaḥkaraṇa* called *buddhi*’,¹ says Vācaspati Miśra in his *Tattvavaiśāradī*. Since a mind has three functions of *prakhyā* (manifestation), *pravṛtti* (tendency to act) and *Sthiti* (steadiness), it must be made of the three *guṇas* or constituent principles namely, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. The cause of *buddhi* is *prakṛti*. The *Citta* possesses both the non-eternal state of an effect (*anitya kāryāvasthā*) and the eternal state of a cause or *nitya kāryāvasthā* (as a form of *prakṛti*). Therefore, the *citta* may have the impression (*saṃskāra*) and *adrṣṭa* even at the time of dissolution (*pralaya*). At other times than the state of *svarūpāvasthā* of the *draṣṭā* purusa there is total identification with the *vṛtti* that may be present in the *citta* at the particular time.² The purusa remain in its own form or its primordial state or condition at the time of its arrested state.

Swami Shivananda, in his ‘*Mind: Its Mysteries and Control*’, says, ‘That which separates you from God is mind. the wall that stands between you and God is mind. Pull the wall down through *Om-cintana* or devotion and you will come face to face with God’.³

Isvarakrishna mentions twenty-five *tattvas* as the central theme of the Sāṅkhya in the third Sāṅkhyakārikā.⁴ The process of the evolution of the world after the Sāṅkhya shows the following twenty-five *tattvas*:



Thirteen instruments (*Trayodaśa Karaṇa*) are admitted in the Sāṅkhya. Ten external sense organs- Five organs of knowledge, five organs of action and three internal sense organs - *mahat* or *buddhi*, *ahaṅkāra* and *manas*. Therefore the eleventh organ is mind which is called *antaḥkaraṇa*.

Isvarakrishna gives an introduction of mind in the 27th Sāṅkhyakārika. In this *kārikā* he points out that *Manas* or mind comprises both sensory and motor organs.⁶ This is the characteristics of mind, because mind is helpful both for the action of organs of knowledge and for the action of organs of work. Without the assistance of mind the organs of knowledge cannot acquire knowledge and the organs of action also cannot perform its action.

The *lakṣaṇa* of *indriya* given by Vācaspati Mīśra in the 26th Sāṅkhyakārika is as follows: *Sāttvikahaṅkaropadanakatvamindriyatvam*.⁵ That which is produced from *sāttvika ahaṅkāra* is called *indriya* or sense-organ.

Lakṣaṇa of mind after the Sāṅkhya: The attribute which belong only to mind, not elsewhere is called the extraordinary attribute of mind. the extraordinary attribute of mind is “*Samkalpakam manaḥ?*” Determinative form (*Samkalpaka rūpa*) is the definition of mind or *itarvyavartaka dharma*. Therefore, it is a kind of attribute which differentiate a sense organ from other one.

Here the word ‘*Samkalpa*’ means to imagine properly, to know the object with the relationship between qualifier and qualificand. When there is the relation between a sense organ and the object, the *nirvikalpaka vṛtti* called ‘*ālocana*’ is produced. This cognition is known as ‘*sammugdha*’. The knowledge in which the special feature of the object is not regarded as the object of it, is called ‘*sammugdha jñāna*’.

After the *sammugdhajñāna*, our mind functions and it is called ‘*Saṅkalpaka*’. Then mind imagines, “this object is such types but not of another types.” This is the type of imagination which is the extraordinary *vyapāra*.

According to the Yoga, *antaḥkaraṇa* which is a transparent category (*svaccha padārtha*) possesses the quality of *sattva* as prominent and modification. This *antaḥkaraṇa* existing in the interval portion of the body has three divisions, namely *buddhi*, *ahaṅkāra* and *manas*. The Sāṅkhya and the Advaita Vedānta also generally accept this view, though there are some differences also among them.

Buddhi, *ahaṅkāra* and *manas* are meant by the term *antaḥkaraṇa* which is called ‘*manas*’. In fact, many actions or *vṛttis* of *antaḥkaraṇa* are admitted in *Sāṅkhya*, Yoga and Advaita Vedānta. Dharmarāja Adhvarīndra, in his *Vedānta-Paribhāṣā*, says that mental state (*antaḥkaraṇavṛtti*) is of four types-doubt, certitude, egoism and recollection. Owing to this diversity of states, the mind, though one, is designated as the *manas*, the intellect, the ego and the *citta*. Therefore, it has been stated: “The *manas*, the intellect, the ego and the *citta* constitute the internal instrument (mind). Doubt, certitude, egoism and recollection these are (respectively) their objects.”⁷

Citta has been conceived as existing in the forms of its states, called *Vṛttis*. These include all the various states of consciousness in our earthly existence. *Citta* has a difference from the senses. While they have functions and faculties, *citta* remains as the entity containing the conscious states. This type of *citta* is called *Kāryacittas* or the effect-*citta* as distinct from *Kāryacitta* or cause-*citta*. The *Kārya-cittas* are immanent like the *Ākāśa*, and are innumerable, being connected with the infinite number of Purusas or souls. According to Vācaspati Mīśra, *Citta*, of which *ahaṅkāra* (ego) is the essence, pervades all as the ego. The *kāraṇacitta* is believed to contract or expand, and appears as individual *cittas* in our bodies in those of the gods, etc. This *citta* appears as *kāryacitta* manifesting itself in our states of consciousness.

The main attributes of *Citta* have been mentioned below:

- (a) It is a permanent entity.
- (b) As stated in the Vyāsa-bhāṣya, it is *ākāśa-kalpa* or like the sky. The similarity between the two lies, according to Vācaspati, in *Vyapitva* or pervasiveness.
- (c) Though *Citta* is pervasive, yet its *vṛtti* (function, modification) is *saṅkoca-vikāśaśāli* (contracting and expanding).

- (d) It is like *ayaskānta-mani* (magnet), and attracts Purusa when the latter is swayed by *Avidyā*.
- (e) It is *bhāsvara* or *luminous*, because it reveals objects like light.
- (f) Its constituents are the qualities of *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*.
- (g) It is always changing. Broadly speaking, it remains in two states, viz. *vṛtti* as referred to above and *Nirodha* (suppression); the former is prompted by *bhoga*, and the latter is represented by *ekāgratā* and the various stages of *Samādhi*.

As explained by Vyāsa, Citta has the following Bhūmis or levels of existence.

Kṣipta (unstable), *Muḍha* (deluded), *Vikṣipta* (distracted), *Ekāgra* (concentrated) and *Niruddha* (Suppressed).

Normal *Vṛttis* or the psychic modifications in normal experience are of the following types:

- 1) *Pramāṇa*– Special means of *Pramā* (correct cognition of the things as they are), viz. *Pratyakṣa* (perception, *Anumāna* (inference) and *Āgama* (written testimony).
- 2) *Viparyaya* – i.e., *Avidyā* (*Vṛtti* leading to false knowledge).
- 3) *Vikalpa*– it is that *Vṛtti* which does not relate to something real, but follows a verbal cognition.
- 4) *Nidrā*– dreamless sleep. Generally it is supposed that, in such sleep, the psyche is non-functional. But, in *Pātāñjala darśana*, it is a condition in which the psyche is concerned with the cause of the lack of any of the *Vṛttis* of the conditions of working and dreaming. that is to say that sleep, devoid of dream, does not mean a condition of unconsciousness.
- 5) *Smṛti*– this is a condition of psyche, which is based wholly on a past state of awareness. In addition to the above *Vṛttis*, several others are but nothing different kinds of *Viparyaya*. These are the constituents of *Pañcakleśa*. The general way to Yoga is suppression (*nirodha*) of the *Vṛttis*. There is, however, difference in the means of suppression of the two types of psychic changes – dispositional and non-dispositional. for the latter are recommended *Abhyāsa* (practice) and *Vairāgya* (dispassion, non-attachment). The other means can be divided into two groups of which one is *Kriyāyoga* (*tapas*, *svādhyāya* and *Īśvara-praṇidhāna*) and the other *Aṣṭāṅga-yoga*. The first two groups prepare the aspirant by cleaning his psyche. the third is known as *Aṣṭāṅga-yoga* which has been described in a separated section.

Yoga Psychology: Psychology, as revealed in the Yoga philosophy, is briefly as follows. Individual self (*jīva*) is free. In its own nature, it is pure consciousness, free from the limitations of the body of flesh and blood and the modifications of the mind (*citta*). It is associated with

the gross body. It is more closely related to a subtle body. This body is constituted by the senses, mind, ego and intellect.

Due to ignorance, it identified itself with mind (*citta*). *Citta* is the first product of Prakṛti. In it, of the three qualities of *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*, the first is predominant, *Citta* is really unconscious. As it is nearest to the self, it reflects, through the manifesting power of *Sattva*, the consciousness of the self. Thus it becomes apparently conscious and intelligent.

It is different from the internal sense, called *manas*. Being related to an object through *manas*, it assumes the form of that object. The objects of the world are known by the self through the modifications of *citta*, which correspond to the forms of the object known. The self is essentially immutable. But, as it is reflected in the changing states and processes of *citta*, the self seems to be subject to change. It also seems to pass through the various states of the *citta*. The position is clarified by an illustration. Though the moon may remain in the same position, yet, being reflected in moving waves, seems to change its position.

Mental modifications may be of five classes which are as follows:

- i) *Pramāṇa* – true recognition,
- ii) *Viparyaya* – false recognition,
- iii) *Vikalpa* – verbal cognition,
- iv) *Nidrā* – sleep,
- v) *Smṛti* – memory,

Pramāṇa above is of three kinds, viz., perception, inference and verbal testimony, *Viparyaya* is knowledge of an object as what it not really is. It involves doubt or uncertain knowledge. *Vikalpa* is only verbal knowledge caused by the perception of words, having no really corresponding facts. For instance, when the expression *ākāśakusuma* is uttered, the meaning is understood, but there is no real existence of such a thing. Again, when one says ‘consciousness of the soul’, two separate entities come to the mind, viz. consciousness and soul. In reality, however, these are identical. *Nidrā* is caused by the predominance of the quality of *tamas* in the *citta*, and the resulting cessation of waking consciousness and experiences of dream. So, it indicates *susupti* (profound dreamless slumber. It is wrong to think that, in sound sleep, mind ceases to function so that there is no consciousness at all. But, on waking, the person, who slept, says, ‘I slept well’, ‘I knew nothing’. This shows direct experience of the state of sleep. Such experience presupposes some cognitive mental state or process. *Smṛti* consists in the reproduction of past

experiences without any alternation or innovation.

Citta, being modified into any of the above *vṛttis*, the self is reflected in it. So the self is likely to take the state as of itself. Therefore, it appears to pass through different states of *citta* and stages of life. It considers itself subject to the bondage or birth, decay and death, and also subject to *Pañcakleśa* (Glossary).

As the fetters of the self are due to its identification with mental modifications, liberation requires the cessation of such modifications which, indeed, is the aim of Yoga (*Yoga-cittavṛtti-nirodhaḥ*). When the ripples of the empirical consciousness (*kāryacitta*) disappear leaving the *citta* in a state of perfect serenity and pristine condition (*kāraṇa-citta*), the self realizes itself as any entity quite distinct from mind and body, and is free, immortal and self-luminous intelligence.

According to the Yoga, *citta* is *vibhu parimāṇa* or pervasive but it is not atomic like the view of the Naiyāyika. It is not also *madhyama-parimana* like that of the Sāṃkhya. Through *citta* is pervasive, yet its *vṛtti* (function, modification) is *saṅkoca-vikāśasāli* (contracting and expanding).

According to the Sāṃkhya, *citta* is equal to the form of the body (*dehaparimāṇa*) of an individual self (*jīva*). In response to this, Vyāsa-deva points out that the light of a lamp becomes contracted when it (the lamp) is covered by a vessel but if it is kept open in a room then it becomes expanded. In like manner, when the *citta* enters into the body of an elephant, it takes the form of the body of the ant, again if it enters into the body of an elephant, it takes the form of the body of that elephant. What is the utility of this contraction and expansion of the *citta* depending on the size of the substratum? In response to this question, the opponents say that if the *citta* would be pervasive like the sky, then it is not possible for the pervasive thing to move and then the pervasive *citta* will not be able to leave the former body and to take new body and it will not be possible for it to move towards heaven or hell. But if the *citta* remains only in the substratum, then it can leave a body, can take another body and in between them it can take a subtle body ect.⁸ Vijñānabhikṣu had called it a one-sided view of the Sāṃkhya.

For the refutation of this view Yogācārya points out that *citta* is pervasive (*bibhu*) i.e., *paramamahatparimāṇa* but its *vṛtti* (modifications) is contracting and expanding (*saṅkoca-vikāśasāli*). In favour of this decision the message of the *śruti* is as follows: “*anantaṃ vai manaḥ*”⁹ i.e., mind is full of innumerable *vṛttis* (modifications).

Vijñānabhikṣu in his ‘*Yogavārttika*’ says that according to the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, pervasive

ākāśa limited by ear is produced. In the same way, though the *citta* of an individual self (*jīva*) is pervasive (*bibhu*) and eternal, the stain in the mirror causes disturbance in its manifestation. In like manner, ignorance and action also covers that the *citta* and it cannot reveal itself. Here the *Vṛtti* which is the cause of knowledge is admitted. This is the *vṛtti* which can be contracted and expanded depending on the small or big bodies. This is the view of Yogācārya Patañjali.

Now the question may be raised: *citta* is the modification of prakṛti; so how can it be pervasive like purusa? For the solution of this problem. Vacaspati Miśra in his ‘*Tattvavaisāradi*’ (the treatise of the *Yogasūtrabhāṣya*) says that the pervasiveness like *ākāśa* but it is not absolute pervasiveness like purusa. Therefore, though *kāryatvanibandhan buddhi* is limit or not pervasive, it is pervasive like sky or *ākāśa* and it is the significance of pervasiveness. So there is no problem here when it is said that it is produced from *pradhāna* or prakṛti. Secondly, through *citta* is pervasive like sky (*ākāśa*), there will be no objection of omniscience because the modifications (*vṛttis*) of *citta* is *paricchinna* (not pervasive) and *saṃkoca-vikāsi*.¹⁰

The Nāiyayikas admit that mind is atomic.¹¹ But according to the Yoga if mind is atomic, then to attain knowledge through the five sense-organs, at the same moment of eating a cake would not be possible. Again a person would not be able to remember different sentences uttered by many individuals simultaneously. Mind will not be *madhyamaparimāṇa* because mind also will be dissolved when all things will be destroyed at the time of dissolution; therefore it (its impression) will not be included in the *adṛṣṭa* of an individual (*jīva*). So, it is the pervasiveness (relative) of *citta* which is acceptable.¹²

Firstly, the *citta* could not receive the experience of the sky etc if it had no pervasiveness like the sky. Secondly, different types of cognitions of the yogis are not possible if there is no pervasiveness of the *citta*.

When there is the contact between our sense organ e.g., our eyes and the external objects, our *āntahkarana* goes to the object and takes the form of the object and this type of transformation (object-form) of the *citta* is called *cittavṛtti*. In the context of interpretation of *citta* Vijñānabhikṣu says, “*Yena Cittam Jivati*.”¹³ The significance of this statement is that *citta* cannot exist without with its *vṛtti* or modification.

Vyāsa points out that yoga means concentration or *Samādhi*. It is a characteristic of the mind in all its habitual states, *Samādhi* is possible in whatever state the mind may be this type of states are five in number. These states are *kṣipta* (restless), *Mudha* (stupefied), *vikṣipta*

(distracted), *ekāgra* (one-pointed and *niruddha* arrested). Of these, the mind which is naturally restless (*kṣipta*) has not the patience or intelligence necessary for contemplation of a super-sensuous subject and consequently cannot think of any subtle principle.

The Second is the stupefied (*vikṣipta*) mind. The mind which through infatuation in a matter connected with the senses is unfit to think of subtle principles, is called stupefied mind. The persons who are engaged in thoughts of family or wealth generally concentrate on them. It is an instance of concentration of an infatuated mind.

The third is distracted (*vikṣipta*) mind. This is different from the restless mind. Most of the spiritual devotees have this type of mind. A mind which can be calm sometimes and disturbed at other times is regarded as a distracted mind. When temporarily calm, a distracted mind can understand on them for a time. There can be concentration even with a distracted mind but such concentration does not last long, because basic trait of such a mind is calmness at one time and restlessness at another.

The fourth is the one-pointed (*ekāgra*) mind. The mind which is pointed to one direction only, that is, holds on to one thing only, is called a one-pointed mind. When one thought vanishes from the mind and the next that arises is similar and there is a continuity of successive states, then the mind is called one-pointed. When it becomes a habit of the mind, then the state of the mind can be really called one-pointed. When one-pointedness is mastered, it leads to *samprajñāta Samādhi*. That *Samādhi* is real yogic *Samādhi* leading to liberation.

The fifth state in which the thought processes have been stopped or arrested at will by long disciplinary practice (*nirōdha*). This is the last state of mind. When, through practice, all thoughts can shut out from the mind for a long time, the mind can be regarded as having reached an arrested state. When by this process the mind-stuff gradually ceases to function, liberation can be attained only at that time.

III

At last we can conclude that the knowledge of discrimination between *purusa* and *prakṛti* is the cause of *kaivalya* after the yoga philosophy. *Citta* becomes pure through the constant practice of *astāṅgayoga*.

Consciousness reflected in the modification of *citta* (*cittavṛtti*) is the knower or *jñātā*— this feeling of *purusa* through the *citta* is received by *purusa*. Gradually, Yogi realizes that discriminative knowledge also is a quality of *citta* or *buddhi*. it is called *heyaguṇa*. *Purusa* is

different from the *citta*. In this way, all the suffering (*Kleśas*) of *citta* are removed or ceased through the renunciation of attachment. For this reason Patañjali calls it (absolute dissolution or discriminative knowledge or *vivekakhyaṭi*) *kaivalya*. Here the constant practice of *aṣṭāṅgayoga*, renunciation and the cessation of modification of casual qualities (*Kāryakārṇatmaka guṇas*) lead to *Kaivalya*.

According to the scriptures, those who are in bondage will be liberated. Purusa is ever-free, so there is no question of bondage with regard to purusa. The attribute of bondage belongs to prakṛti, i.e., *citta*. It is only ascribed to purusa. In the same way, liberation also belongs to *citta*. Liberation of purusa is nothing but superimposition of it (liberation or *kaivalya*).

It is stated in the Sāṁkhya-kārika also that purusa cannot be bound and liberated also. It is prakṛti which takes different forms and can be bound sometimes and be liberated at other times.

Therefore, we find a scientific explanation of mind or *citta* and its different modification (*cittavṛtti*) in Yoga psychology. An individual can reach the highest position gradually removing his personal weakness through the power of Yoga and can attain *Kaivalya* or liberation.

Notes and References

1. *Cittasabdenantahkaranam, buddhimupalakṣayati, Tattvavaisaradi, 1/1.*
2. *Yogasūtra, 1.4.*
3. Swami Sivananda, *Mind: Its Mysteries and Control*, The Divine Life Society, Shivanandanagar-249192, Tehri-Garhwal, U.P., p.3, 1990.
4. “*Mula Prakṛtiravikṛtiḥ mahadādyāḥ prakṛti vikṛtayaḥ sapta., Sorhakastu vikaro na prakṛtirnavikṛtiḥ purusaḥ ||3||*”
5. ‘*Sāttvikāhamkāropādānakatvamindriyatvam*’, *Sāṁkhya-kārikā-26.*
6. “*Antaḥkaranam trividham buddhiḥ ahamkāraḥ mana iti śarārabhyantaravṛttitvadantah kāraṇam*”. *Sāṁkhyatattva kaumudi-33*
7. “*Manobuddhirahamkarascittam Karanamantaram, Samsayo niscay garvah smarenam visays ime.*”, Vedanta-Paribhasa of Dharmaraja Adhvarindea, Translated and Annotated by Swami Madhavananda, Advaita Ashrama, Advaita Ashrama, 5 Delhi Entally Road, Kolkata-700014, 1983, p.32.
8. “*Matantaramupanyasyate. Ghataprasadadi-madhyasthah pradipo yatha ghataprasadaparimanah sankocavikasi ca, tatha cittamapi grhyamanaputtikahastyadisariraparimanam. Tatha casati cittasya antarabhavahpuvottarasariragrahanayoryad antara tatra bhavah ativahikabhavah ityarthan, samsarasca yutah-sangacchata iti tesam nayah-Bhasvati-4.1.*”
9. *Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣat-1.1.9*
10. “*Gaganamandalavat trailokyavyapitvad-vibhutvam manusah, evancedasya vṛttirai vidhiti sarvajnatapattirityata uktam – vṛttirevasya*”. *Tattvavaisaradi-4.10.*
11. “*Anumāna ekanceti dharmasamuccaya jnanayaugapadyat*” *Nyāyasūtrabhāṣya-3.2.59.*
12. *Yogasāra-4.*
13. *Yogavārttika-1.5*