

## Chitta-Prasadanam

(Mahamandaleshwar) Swami Veda Bharati, D.Litt.  
Chancellor: HIHT University, Dehradun  
www.swamiveda.org; www.ahymsin.org.

---

The eight angas of yoga from the second chapter of the Yoga-sutras of Patanjali are commonly identified as the essence of yoga. Here it is to be remembered that the second chapter, *saadhana-paada*, from sutra 28<sup>th</sup> onwards is for a *saadhaka* of the *mrdu-samvega* (mild progress and momentum) as the term is defined in YS 1.21-22 and the commentaries thereof.

The teachings of *samadhi-pada*, the first chapter, are often ignored in giving popular definitions of yoga. What is in *samadhi-pada* that may incorporate the yamas and niyamas for a *teevra-samvega saadhaka*, if not by definitively explicit statement but by implication?

Our answer is in YS. 1.33 :

*Maître-karuNaa-muditopekShaaNaam sukha-duHkha-puNyaapuNya-  
viShayaaNaam bhaavanaatash chitta-prasaadanam.*

(bhaavaartha=papraphrase): The mind-field is made pleasant and clear by the practice of amity towards the happy, compassion towards those in suffering, joyfulness at seeing others meritorious, and the practice of indifference towards the transgressors of virtue.

It appears simple enough but the actual meanings are profound; this becomes clear by studying the explanations given by commentators, starting with Vyasa. He adds: By practising these there arises in one the bright virtue (or bright attributes) (shukla dharma). Thereby the mind-field becomes pleasant and clear; thus made pleasant and clear it attains the state of stability and stillness (sthiti-pada).

In our contemporary parlance the word *pra-sanna* is commonly used to express 'pleased'. In the classics it means pleasant because it is clear. For example in Valmiki's Ramayana, Sage Bharadwaja showing a beautiful mountain stream to Rama says, it is *pra-sanna, san-manuShya-mano yathaa* like the mind of a noble person.

To reverse the *upmaana* and *upameya* (analogue and analogous) in the simile, it follows that the mind of a noble person is pleasant and clear like a mountain stream. That is what is suggested by ‘pra-saadana’ in the sutra. Only such a mind can be stabilized in meditation and can attain the desired stillness.

It answers a question the *sadhakas* often raise: why does my mind not settle down during meditation? Why does it keep wandering? The answer is implicit in the sutra: Dear Sadhaka, your mind wanders, does not attain stability and stillness because you have not made it pleasant and clear through the practice of the four right attitudes of *chitta-prasaadana*.

I term this as emotional purification. Without emotional purification in daily life there can be no ‘pra-saadana’ of the mind and consequently the mind will not attain stability during meditation which alone leads to stability and interior stillness. The commentators go further into the psychology of these practices. Vachaspati Mishra (VM) states (paraphrased here):

The sutra states the means and methods for making the mind-field pleasant and clear that serve as antidotes to the negative attributes like malice (*asooyaa*) and so forth. It is because the mind that is unrefined is filled with these malice and so forth, it cannot bring about samadhi and its supporting means and methods. These practices are the methods of refining the mind (*pari-karman*). It works as follows:

When one practices amity towards those who are happy and in comfort, his mind-field’s dark stains of jealousy are turned off.

When one practices compassion, that is the desire and inclination for eliminating others’ sufferings in the same measure in which one wishes to remove one’s own, then the dark stains of any inclination towards harming others cease. When one cultivates joyfulness at seeing other beings virtuous, the dark stains of malice are turned off. When one cultivates indifference, that is neutrality, remaining in the middle (*madhya-stha*), then the dark stains of intolerance vanish.

By these changes incurring in one, the rajasic and tamasic attributes are turned off and the bright attribute (*shukla dharma*) is produced and grows. That means that one becomes prosperous in the ascendance of *sattva*.

This pleasantness and clarity of mind become natural to him and favour the cessation of *vrttis*. Thus made clear and pleasant, the mind-field, by methods to be prescribed further, attains stability and stillness. Without the presence of

these four right attitudes, amity etc., the methods to be prescribed [in follow-up sutras] will not succeed.

It is to be borne in mind that Ys.1.33 is an *adhikara-sutra*, ‘command-sutra’ that is, it not only starts a topic but ‘controls’ the contents of the following sutras. The *anu-vritti*, implied repeat of the compound phrase *chitta-prasadana*, goes on till the sutra 39, the result of which practices is given in sutra 40.

The list of undesirable traits to be overcome through this four-fold refinement (*pari-karman*) of oneself is not exhaustive. Says Vijnana-bhikshu (VM). All other traits antipathic to yoga, such as *raaga* ( attraction, attachment) and *dveSha* (aversion) ( see YS. 2. 3ff.) are all included, implied... ..

The mind-field thus made pleasant and clear attains the status of being stable and still (*sthira*), that is, it becomes capable of not slipping away (in meditation). These practices are central in Buddhist meditation also where they are termed *brahma-vihaara*, frolics in Brahman. Here we translate the relevant portion from a leading text of Buddhist tantric practices, *Saadhana-maalaa*, Ch.56. It not only gives a theoretical explanation of the *brahma-viharas* but also gives direction for a detailed meditation practice, only the introductory part of which is being translated here. The remainder better not be learnt from books but received as an initiation from a Master proficient in the particular system. Here is the first part of that chapter 56 (We have broken one complex paragraph of the original into several for an easier paraphrase:

First a mantri (one who has received mantra by way of initiation) sitting in a place well disposed to the mind, in a comfortable posture (*sukha-asana*) should contemplate a moon manifesting from within the syllable in the heart<sup>1</sup>.

In that moon one visualizes the syllable ‘dheeh’ [the bija-mantra of Manjushri, the Buddha of Wisdom]. Thus, from the rays of that syllable and the moon having eradicated darkness from his heart, he may contemplate, bring into being in himself (*vi-bhaavayet*) the fourfold *brahma-vihara* in following sequence.

What is amity (*maitree*)? Feeling of love towards all beings as one has towards one’s only son. What is compassion (*karuNaa*)? Desire to upraise from world-ocean the beings who are suffering from three kinds of pains.

---

<sup>1</sup> This requires visualization of the syllables appropriate to the given chakra.

What is joyfulness (*mudita*)? When someone has cultivated the roots of wellness (*kushala*) and thereby has attained pleasures and comforts and sovereign power (*aishvarya*), [saadhaka's] own heart feeling gladness [upon seeing that].

What is indifference (*upeksha*)? Natural inclination, flowing of its own accord, towards (a) conciliating resistances by way of humble entreaty and (b) an attribute of being benevolent and beneficial to others.

When one has cultivated through contemplation (*bhaavana*) the fourfold *brahma-vihaara* [further meditations continue]... ..

Here we can see how deep this fourfold practice goes and combines not only attitudinal changes but also remains a major part of Mahayana Buddhist meditation practices.

It is obvious by the statements of Vyasa and the commentators like VM and VB that no practices of yoga can succeed without a success in these *chitta-prasaadana* observances, the refinements of mind-field, emotional purifications.

Why the yoga teachers are not giving this message loud and clear to all the millions of yoga students and practitioners world-wide is a puzzle and the situation waits to be corrected.