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**CITTA-PARIKARMA – A YOGASŪTRA BASED FRAMEWORK
FOR PRENATAL EDUCATION**

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Vyasa's commentary to Yogasūtra 1.33 introduces a term called Parikarma for the Citta – यस्य चित्तस्यावस्थितस्येदं शास्त्रेण परिकर्म निर्दिश्यते

Parikarma means tools for preparing the mind. It refers to the set of seven methods suggested by Sage Patañjali from Sūtra 1.33 to 1.39. In the context of Yogasūtra, these tools prepare the mind for higher yogic pursuit called Samāpatti (Samādhi).

Interestingly, going by the etymology, the word Samāpatti means becoming/transformation. This seminar is also about a transformation. It is a transformation from womanhood to motherhood. This transformation also needs preparation of various kinds. Mental preparation is the foremost preparation that is required.

The Vedic lore has many interpretations of various layers that include - ādhiyājñika, ādhidaivika, ādhibhautika and ādhyātmika strata. Yogasūtra is not a Vedic text but taking the cue of multiple interpretations from the Vedic interpretations, an ādhiprāsūtika (on the prenatal layer) interpretation is attempted for those Yogasūtras which are aimed at providing guidelines for mental preparation for motherhood.

The very definition of a Sūtra also accommodates or validates this kind of an interpretation. Of the six characteristics of a Sūtra "viśvatomukham" is the fourth character – Sūtra is that which has multiple facets or dimensions or that which is universal (the other five are alpākṣaram asandigdham, sāravat, astobham, anavadyam). A Sūtra is multi-layered and universal and hence a dimension or facet that is applicable to the context of prenatal education and the mind associated therein is attempted here.

The seven Parikarma Sūtras (1.33 to 1.39) in a way present seven check boxes. By checking those boxes, a would-be-mother can feel assured that she is going through the right kind of mental preparation that is prescribed by the highly

respected Sage Patañjali whose teachings are now embraced by the entire universe with open arms.

It is very well known that citta-kṣobha (afflictions of the mind) and citta-vikṣepa or citta-cāñcalyam (distractions of the mind) are the causes of psychological and psycho-somatic problems which are at the root of sympathetic nervous response. These are, certainly, not desirable to anyone and especially for an expecting mother.

As per the Sūtras, citta-parikarmas prepare the mind by guiding it to a state to citta-prasādanam (pleasant state of mind) and citta-sthairyam (steady state of mind) which are opposites of citta-kṣobha and citta-vikṣepa or citta-cāñcalyam. In scientific terms, it can be stated that Yogic practices lead to para-sympathetic nervous responses.

The summary of the content of the citta-parikarmas, which are proposed to be elaborated with examples during the presentation, is as under -

1.33 – मैत्रीकरुणामुदितोपेक्षाणां सुखदुःखपुण्यापुण्यविषयाणां भावनातश्चित्तप्रसादनम् ॥

ideal emotional responses situations and individuals

1.34 – प्रच्छर्दनविधारणाभ्यां वा प्राणस्य ॥

regulation of the breath

1.35 – विषयवती वा प्रवृत्तिरुत्पन्ना मनसः स्थितिनिबन्धनी ॥

Conductive/calming Sensory experiences

1.36 – विशोका वा ज्योतिष्मती ॥

avoidance of state of depression by having positive thoughts

1.37 – वीतरागविषयं वा चित्तम् ॥

Learning about emulate-able personalities or learning from the experiences of elders

1.38 – स्वप्ननिद्राज्ञानालम्बनं वा ॥

Taking note of the dream and deep sleep experiences

1.39 – यथाभिमतध्यानान्नाद्वा ॥

Allowing the mind to dwell upon/meditate upon desirable objects of focus

These tools, as can be noted, cover a range of activities that influence the mind including – emotional responses, positive thoughts, breath regulation, conducive sensory exposure, sleep and visualizations. These include physiological and

