

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN YOGASŪTRA-S

Radhika Deshpande, Dr. Kalpana Athalye

Ph.D. scholar
Department of Sanskrit
University of Mumbai

The concept of Emotional Intelligence was developed by psychologists John Mayer and Peter Salovey¹. It was further popularized by Daniel Goleman in his book 'Emotional Intelligence- Why it matters more than IQ.' Emotional Intelligence is the ability to monitor one's own and other people's emotions, to discriminate between different emotions and label them appropriately, and to use emotional information to guide thinking and behaviour² (Salovey and Mayer, 1990).

Emotions are conscious mental reactions such as anger or fear subjectively experienced as strong feelings usually directed toward a specific object and typically accompanied by psychological and behavioural changes in the body³. It is a complex experience of consciousness, bodily sensation, and behaviour that reflects the personal significance of a thing, an event, or a state of affairs⁴. The word emotion comes from the Latin root *motere*, which means 'to move', indicating a tendency to act in every emotion. There are seven main emotions that can be seen in humans viz. anger, fear, happiness, sadness, love, surprise, and disgust⁵. Emotions and their reactions developed as slow and deliberate forces of evolution throughout millions of years⁶.

The human brain has two minds: rational mind and emotional mind, a dichotomy typically known as brain v/s heart. The rational mind is thoughtful, deliberate, thoughtful, and analytic, whereas the emotional mind is more impulsive and sometimes illogical⁷. Both the minds are semi-independent faculties and operate in tight harmony. However, during situations that are perceived as an emergency or a peril, it is the emotional mind that overpowers the rational mind⁸. This phenomenon is called emotional hijacking. The rational and emotional minds are governed by the neocortex and the amygdala both of which are centres in the brain⁹. The amygdala stores the emotional memories¹⁰.

Emotional Intelligence is required to bring harmony between the brain and the heart when emotions overpower the rational mind. Emotional Intelligence involves developing five areas viz.

- **Self-Awareness:** This involves recognizing a feeling as it happens. It means observing how an emotion or a thought surfaces, and what impact does it make on you.
- **Self-Management:** This involves handling the feelings, so they are appropriate. This ability is built on self-awareness. Self-management includes the capacity to soothe oneself, to shake off anxiety or irritability, to stay calm in moments of rage, and so on.
- **Motivation:** This involves guiding emotions towards achieving a goal. It means delaying gratification and stifling impulsiveness. People who possess this skill tend to be highly productive and effective in whatever they undertake.
- **Empathy:** It is an ability which, again, builds on emotional self-awareness. Empathic people are more attuned to subtle social signals that indicate what others need or want.
- **Relationship Management:** This is based on empathy and involves abilities that uphold popularity, leadership, and interpersonal effectiveness.

The idea of managing thoughts and emotions is not foreign to Indian philosophy. Psychology assigns the origin of emotions and logical thinking to the brain, whereas Indian Philosophy attributes it to the "antaḥkaraṇacatuṣṭaya" or the "four internal organs." The four internal organs are- manas, buddhi, citta and ahaṅkāra, and they have different functions. These four organs play the role of thinking, analyzing, retaining information, and having a sense of I-ness, respectively. The concept of antaḥkaraṇa occurs in most of the Indian schools of philosophy, like the Yoga, Sāṅkhya, Vedānta and so on. Hypothetically, it can be said that the manas is the emotional mind, whereas the buddhi is the rational mind. Scriptures like the Yogasūtra-s, Śivasūtra-s etc. give guidelines on how the emotional mind can be trained and brought under the control of the rational mind.

¹ <https://www.ihhp.com/meaning-of-emotional-intelligence/#:~:text=The%20term%20emotional%20intelligence%20was,Cognition%2C%20and%20Personality%20in%201990.>

² <https://www.simplypsychology.org/emotional-intelligence.html#:~:text=Emotional%20Intelligence%20is%20the%20E%2080%29Cability,Salovey%20and%20Mayer%2C%201990.>

³ <https://www.apa.org/topics/emotions>

⁴ <https://www.britannica.com/science/emotion>

⁵ Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence- Why it can matter more than IQ*, Bloomsbury, New Delhi, 2013, p. 6-7

⁶ Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence- Why it can matter more than IQ*, Bloomsbury, New Delhi, 2013, p. 5

⁷ Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence- Why it can matter more than IQ*, Bloomsbury, New Delhi, 2013, p. 8,291

⁸ Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence- Why it can matter more than IQ*, Bloomsbury, New Delhi, 2013, p.9.

⁹ Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence- Why it can matter more than IQ*, Bloomsbury, New Delhi, 2013, p. 14

¹⁰ Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence- Why it can matter more than IQ*, Bloomsbury, New Delhi, 2013, p. 20-21

The Yogasūtra-s are 195 in number and were composed by Patanjali. They are based on Yoga philosophy, one of the six āstika Indian philosophies¹¹. The Yogasūtra-s are divided into four chapters: Samādhipāda, Sādhana-pāda, Vibhūtipāda and Kaivalyapāda. In this research paper, the Samādhipāda and the Sādhana-pāda would be considered as they contain more information relating to emotions and Emotional Intelligence. The commentary of Swami Vivekananda on the Yogasūtra-s would be studied.

CONCEPT OF MIND AND EMOTIONS IN YOGASŪTRA-S:

In the commentary of the sūtra 1.2¹², Swami Vivekananda says that knowledge is nothing but a mental reaction from the outer suggestion through the internal organs i.e. the antaḥkaraṇacatuṣṭaya. The four-fold internal organ can be said to be responsible for mental abilities like perception, cognition and emotional reactions. The mind receives suggestions from the outer world and gives reactions to it. This phenomenon is described to be similar to water creating ripples when a stone is thrown in it¹³. It is also mentioned that the mind is like a spoilt child. When uncontrolled, it does whatever it wants¹⁴. An example of a situation triggering anger is used to explain the functioning of emotions- 'A man comes and takes away your watch.' This situation immediately throws the citta into a wave or a ripple. This wave takes the form of anger, leading to further consequences¹⁵. Any reaction without proper thought is considered as the weakness of the citta¹⁶.

Most of the feelings, thoughts and the life events are rooted in the saṃskāra-s. The saṃskāra-s are the fine roots of all the deeds done in past lives. They are the causes which will again bring effects either in this life or the next¹⁷. Past experiences determine a lot of things about present life- objects of fear, attraction, nature of a person etc. Modern science holds that this is due to instincts possibly developed through the process of evolution. However, Yogis believe that it is the experience of the soul transmitted through the body¹⁸.

Such a mind that has been active since countless past lives and is accustomed to constantly reacting to the outer world through thoughts, emotions etc, needs to be brought under control. The act of restraining the mind-stuff from taking various forms is called Yoga. Only a calm mind can the original nature of the Self¹⁹.

EMOTIONAL AWARENESS:

Sūtra 1.4²⁰ defines vṛtti or identification with modifications of the mind. A person's identity is connected to the mind and its alterations. For instance, emotions like sadness are a reaction of the mind and connecting oneself to the thought of being sad results in misery²¹. Similarly, when a person feels the wave of anger surging within, he perceives the soul itself to be angry. People describe their souls based on these mental waves²².

According to sūtra 1.31²³, grief, mental distress and their physiological reactions like tremor of body and irregular breathing occur as a result of non-retention of concentration²⁴. This means that when the mind is not concentrated on the task, or during meditation, it facilitates an upsetting feeling.

According to the sūtra 2.3²⁵, misery is also rooted in ignorance (avidyā), egoism (asmitā), attachment (rāga), aversion (dveṣa) and clinging to life (abhiniveśa)²⁶. The word misery can also be said to refer to negative emotions like sadness, fear, and disgust which are a result of the former. The emotion of happiness or pleasure is connected with attachment to people, objects and own body. People get attached to people and things from which they gain pleasurable feelings²⁷. If people experience positive emotions like happiness, love, surprise etc, they become immediately attached to those objects. Aversion, on the other hand, can be said to dwell on negative feelings. People seek to get away from anything that gives them pain²⁸. It can be said that people tend to feel aversion towards objects that induce negative emotions like hatred and disgust within them.

¹¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yoga_Sutras_of_Patanjali

¹² *yogaścittavṛttinirodhaḥ*.

¹³ Swami Vivekananda (Translation and commentary), Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, Fingerprint Classics, New Delhi, 2021, p.13

¹⁴ Swami Vivekananda (Translation and commentary), Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, Fingerprint Classics, New Delhi, 2021, p.63

¹⁵ Swami Vivekananda (Translation and commentary), Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, Fingerprint Classics, New Delhi, 2021, p.24

¹⁶ Swami Vivekananda (Translation and commentary), Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, Fingerprint Classics, New Delhi, 2021, p.21

¹⁷ Swami Vivekananda (Translation and commentary), Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, Fingerprint Classics, New Delhi, 2021, p.72

¹⁸ Swami Vivekananda (Translation and commentary), Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, Fingerprint Classics, New Delhi, 2021, p.67-68

¹⁹ Swami Vivekananda (Translation and commentary), Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, Fingerprint Classics, New Delhi, 2021, p.17

²⁰ *vṛttisrūpyamitaratra*

²¹ Swami Vivekananda (Translation and commentary), Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, Fingerprint Classics, New Delhi, 2021, p.17

²² Swami Vivekananda (Translation and commentary), Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, Fingerprint Classics, New Delhi, 2021, p.58

²³ *duḥkhadaurmanasyāṅgamejayatvaśvāsā vikṣepasahabhuvah*.

²⁴ Swami Vivekananda (Translation and commentary), Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, Fingerprint Classics, New Delhi, 2021, p.41

²⁵ *avidyāsmītārāgadvēṣābhiniveśāḥ kleśāḥ*.

²⁶ Swami Vivekananda (Translation and commentary), Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, Fingerprint Classics, New Delhi, 2021, p.63

²⁷ Swami Vivekananda (Translation and commentary), Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, Fingerprint Classics, New Delhi, 2021, p.66

²⁸ Swami Vivekananda (Translation and commentary), Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, Fingerprint Classics, New Delhi, 2021, p.66

Ignorance is the root cause of pain and pleasure experienced in life. Through ignorance, a person binds his Self to the body. The idea of body is said to be superstition. Whatever makes people feel happy or unhappy, pain or pleasure is nothing but a superstition²⁹.

When a mind is thrown into a wave of thought or emotion, it never really goes away. It only subsides and stays in a finer form. Every action, thought, and emotion goes down, becomes fine and is stored up, even throughout many births. Both the happy and unhappy states of mind bring only pain in the long run³⁰.

Thus, the concept of emotional awareness is not subjective like in modern psychology where each individual should observe his own emotions and find the cause behind them. The commentary on the Yogasūtra-s clearly gives the root causes and possible effects of emotions that could be applicable to everyone.

EMOTIONAL MANAGEMENT

The Yogasūtra-s provide different means to calm and control the mind. Emotional reactions are one of the finer instincts born from Samskāra-s. These should be controlled in the root³¹. Following are some of the ways that can be implemented to control emotions:

1. **Catching the Emotion before it arises:** It is possible for a person to control his feelings even before becoming conscious that they are acting on him. For instance, when anger arises, it feels like the whole mind has become a huge wave of anger³². It can be said that the key is to identify the moment when the anger surges within the mind and the body. The first step to emotional management involves observing, identifying and catching the right moments before the emotional outbursts.
2. **Reasoning the Situation:** The commentary mentions that the mind jumps to conclusion immediately on receiving a verbal stimulus, without waiting to consider its meaning. This could also be applied to other stimuli like visual ones. If the feeling of anger or misery arises, a person should reason the situation³³. He should take a pause before reacting and allow the rational mind to assess the situation and come up with a suitable response.
3. **Refocusing the mind:** It is the tendency of the mind to dwell on negative emotions giving way to tendencies like anxiety, rumination etc. However the commentary says that the mind is like a crystal that reflects the colour of the flowers beside it. The mind reflects the thing it meditates on³⁴. This indicates that a person wishing to keep anxiety and worrisome thoughts at bay should consciously focus the mind on different things.
4. **Practising Abhyāsa:** Sūtra 1.13³⁵ describes abhyāsa is a continuous struggle to keep the vṛtti-s of the mind restrained. Conscious efforts should be made to prevent the mind from going into waves of emotions³⁶. It is further mentioned that such a restraint requires long and continued practice to be properly effective³⁷. This indicates that patience and perseverance are required to gain control over mental processes.
5. **Practising Vairāgya:** The practice of Vairāgya also involves efforts to stop the mind from forming waves of emotions or unwanted thoughts. However, these efforts come easily to a person who has given up the thirst for objects³⁸. The practice of Abhyāsa becomes easier when an attitude of detachment has been cultivated in the mind. It has been said that attachment and aversion are a result of positive and negative emotions³⁹. If detachment is developed, it would be difficult for the emotions to thrive in the mind.
6. **Practising Āsana-s:** The sūtra 2.46⁴⁰ describes āsana as a firm and pleasant posture. It involves holding the body in a steady pose. Once this stability is attained, the person is not affected by the opposites like heat and cold, good and bad⁴¹. It could also be said that the dichotomy of positive and negative emotions would also cease to affect a person who has mastered the yogic postures. When the organs are controlled, feelings and actions can also be curbed⁴².
7. **Practising breathe control:** Sūtra 1.34⁴³ describes 'throwing out and restraining breath' as a way of controlling the mind. Patanjali has not given details on pranayama and its various types. He simply means that if air is thrown out and held within for some time, it helps the mind become calmer⁴⁴. This method could be useful in calming down high intensity emotions like anger, stress, anxiety etc.

²⁹ Swami Vivekananda (Translation and commentary), Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, Fingerprint Classics, New Delhi, 2021, p.88

³⁰ Swami Vivekananda (Translation and commentary), Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, Fingerprint Classics, New Delhi, 2021, p.71-72

³¹ Swami Vivekananda (Translation and commentary), Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, Fingerprint Classics, New Delhi, 2021, p.67-68

³² Swami Vivekananda (Translation and commentary), Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, Fingerprint Classics, New Delhi, 2021, p.67-68

³³ Swami Vivekananda (Translation and commentary), Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, Fingerprint Classics, New Delhi, 2021, p.21

³⁴ Swami Vivekananda (Translation and commentary), Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, Fingerprint Classics, New Delhi, 2021, p.50

³⁵ *Tatra sthitau yatno 'bhyāsaḥ*.

³⁶ Swami Vivekananda (Translation and commentary), Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, Fingerprint Classics, New Delhi, 2021, p.23

³⁷ Swami Vivekananda (Translation and commentary), Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, Fingerprint Classics, New Delhi, 2021, p.24

³⁸ Swami Vivekananda (Translation and commentary), Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, Fingerprint Classics, New Delhi, 2021, p.24

³⁹ Swami Vivekananda (Translation and commentary), Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, Fingerprint Classics, New Delhi, 2021, p.66

⁴⁰ *Sthirasukhamāsanam*.

⁴¹ Swami Vivekananda (Translation and commentary), Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, Fingerprint Classics, New Delhi, 2021, p.101-103

⁴² Swami Vivekananda (Translation and commentary), Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, Fingerprint Classics, New Delhi, 2021, p.106

⁴³ *Pracchardanavidhāraṇābhyām vā prāṇasya*.

⁴⁴ Swami Vivekananda (Translation and commentary), Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, Fingerprint Classics, New Delhi, 2021, p.43

8. **Practising Meditation:** Meditation is considered as one of the great means of controlling the waves of the mind. Practising meditation helps a person in subduing the mind⁴⁵. There are different types of meditations or samādhi-s mentioned according to the mental capacity and level of the seeker. Meditation enables a person to control his own nature. As the person advances on the path of yoga, he practices higher levels of meditation. The savitarka type of meditation is suitable for amateurs as it has been given as the first type of samādhi. In this type, the mind meditates on an object repetitively by isolating itself from other objects⁴⁶. The object of meditation could be elements of nature, a holy person who already has his mind under control⁴⁷, anything that appeals as good or positive-a place, a scenery or an idea⁴⁸. Over months and years of continuous practice, anger and hatred will be controlled and checked⁴⁹. Seekers who wish to go further on the path of Yoga may reach till the most advanced types like the Asamprajñāta samādhi⁵⁰.

9. **Increasing the sattva state:** The mind operates according to the authority of three states- sattva, rajas, and tamas. Tamas involves qualities like lethargy, harm to others, and indolence. Rajas involves qualities like thirst for power and enjoyment, and activity to achieve the same. The sattva state, however, is the calm state of the mind⁵¹. By observing the characteristics of these three states, it can be said that uncontrolled emotions are a result of rajas or tamas. A person should strive to attain the sattva state, in order to calm the mind and gain emotional control.

10. **Preventive measures:** Some measures have been provided so that any situation triggering negative emotions like sadness should not occur in the future. The sūtra 2.14⁵² says that happiness is a result of virtuous acts, while sadness is the result of sins. It is possible to avoid pain in the future⁵³. In order ensure only positive experiences and emotions, a person should always engage in virtuous actions.

Motivation

Motivation is the drive to reach the goal in spite of setbacks. The sūtra 1.30⁵⁴ discusses about obstructing distractions that hinder a person from reaching his goal of Self-realization. This could also be applied to a mundane goal. The things that may demotivate a person from his goal are- mental laziness, confusion, carelessness, indolence, lack of concentration and slow progress. A person working towards a goal should identify such kind of demotivators and try to overcome them⁵⁵.

Empathy and Relationship Management

If the mind is ill-disposed towards others, it is the mind that is at a loss. The mind can only function well when its waves or reactions are controlled. The sūtra 1.33⁵⁶ gives ideas on how to deal with different types of people. A happy person should be dealt with an attitude of friendship. A sad person should be shown mercy. Good people should be treated with happiness while bad people should be ignored. A person who responds in this manner will have a pacified and contented mind⁵⁷. The sūtra 2.35⁵⁸ says that if a person is kind towards other people, they display no enmity towards such a person⁵⁹. While dealing with people, it is important to remember that everyone including husbands, wives, and friends are only present temporarily in life. All relationships are just a momentary state and people have to pass through it without being attached⁶⁰.

Thus, following Yogic methods for managing emotions makes a person calm, peaceful, and immune to all kinds of mental pain. The person will no longer experience the agony of negative emotions. The person realizes that no other person is needed for him to stay happy⁶¹.

CONCLUSION

The following observations can be made regarding the way the concept of Emotional Intelligence is handled in the Yogasūtra-s:

⁴⁵ Swami Vivekananda (Translation and commentary), Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, Fingerprint Classics, New Delhi, 2021, p.71

⁴⁶ Swami Vivekananda (Translation and commentary), Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, Fingerprint Classics, New Delhi, 2021, p.26

⁴⁷ Swami Vivekananda (Translation and commentary), Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, Fingerprint Classics, New Delhi, 2021, p.48

⁴⁸ Swami Vivekananda (Translation and commentary), Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, Fingerprint Classics, New Delhi, 2021, p.49

⁴⁹ Swami Vivekananda (Translation and commentary), Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, Fingerprint Classics, New Delhi, 2021, p.71

⁵⁰ Swami Vivekananda (Translation and commentary), Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, Fingerprint Classics, New Delhi, 2021, p.28

⁵¹ Swami Vivekananda (Translation and commentary), Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, Fingerprint Classics, New Delhi, 2021, p.13/ 80-82

⁵² *te hlādaparītāpasamśkāraduḥkhairguṇavṛttivirodhācca duḥkhameva sarva vivekināḥ..*

⁵³ *heyam duḥkhamāgatam (2.16)*

⁵⁴ *vyādhistyānasamśayapramādālasayāviratibhrāntidarśanālabdhabhūmikavādavasthitāni citta vikṣepāste 'ntarāyāḥ.*

⁵⁵ Swami Vivekananda (Translation and commentary), Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, Fingerprint Classics, New Delhi, 2021, p.40

⁵⁶ *maitṛīkaruṇāmuditopekṣānām sukhaduḥkhapuṇyāpuṇyaviśyānām bhāvanātaścittaprasādanam.*

⁵⁷ Swami Vivekananda (Translation and commentary), Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, Fingerprint Classics, New Delhi, 2021, p.42

⁵⁸ *ahiṃsāpratiṣṭhāyāmtatsannidhau vairatyāgaḥ*

⁵⁹ Swami Vivekananda (Translation and commentary), Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, Fingerprint Classics, New Delhi, 2021, p.96

⁶⁰ Swami Vivekananda (Translation and commentary), Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, Fingerprint Classics, New Delhi, 2021, p.79

⁶¹ Swami Vivekananda (Translation and commentary), Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, Fingerprint Classics, New Delhi, 2021, p.92-92

1. The concept of emotions and Emotional Intelligence is not separate topic given in the Yogasūtra-s. The topic needs to be segregated from the main teaching. However, it is possible to extract information related to Emotional Intelligence and classify it into the five main areas of Emotional Intelligence.
 2. Emotional Intelligence is just a part of the whole process of Yoga. A possible reason for this could be that the emotions are not entirely an independent faculty of the human mind. They are based on perception, cognition, memory and other things like ignorance, attachment etc. All of these should also be considered while combating emotions.
 3. All emotions present in the modern psychology are not mentioned in the Yogasūtra-s. Happiness, sadness and anger are the only ones that are primarily mentioned. It is possible that the other emotions like surprise, disgust, anxiety, fear come under the previous three emotions. The general idea of pleasure and pain is mentioned more often, which may be inclusive of all positive and negative emotions respectively.
 4. As it takes years to completely be in control of the mind and emotions through these methods, a person requires time and patience till the goal is achieved.
 5. Similes of waves, pebbles, etc. are used in the commentary to simplify the explanations regarding the workings of the uncontrolled mind.
- The concept of Emotional Intelligence can be studied further through other commentaries of the Yogasūtra-s as well as through other Indian philosophical perspectives.

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