



# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

## Chitta-Prasādan And Conflict Resolution: A Yogic Approach To Heal Ideological Divides

Prerna Tyagi<sup>1</sup>, Rajni Nautiyal<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar, Department of Naturopathy and yoga, Hemvati Nandan Bahuguna Garhwal University, Srinagar, Uttarakhand,

<sup>2\*</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of Naturopathy and yoga, Hemvati Nandan Bahuguna Garhwal University, Srinagar, Uttarakhand,

### Abstract

In a world increasingly marked by ideological rigidity, emotional polarization, and interpersonal conflict, the pursuit of inner stillness and mental clarity is more essential than ever. Despite technological progress, humanity continues to grapple with stress, reactive behavior, and fractured dialogue. Ancient Indian philosophy, particularly Patañjali's Yoga Darśana, offers not merely physical discipline but a profound psychospiritual methodology for inner transformation and social harmony. The concept of Chitta-Prasādana—introduced in Yoga Darśana—presents a subtle yet powerful method to cultivate mental peace through the attitudes of Maitrī (friendliness toward the joyful), Karuṇā (compassion for the suffering), Muditā (delight in the virtuous), and Upekṣā (equanimity toward the unwholesome). This paper aims to present Chitta-Prasādana not merely as an internal yogic technique but as a potential theoretical framework for resolving ideological and interpersonal conflict through cultivated emotional disposition and subtle perception. The article highlights the real-world relevance of this integrative approach for working professionals seeking emotional balance, better interpersonal relationships, and resilience amid growing ideological divides. The study follows a theoretical and interpretive approach grounded in traditional yogic texts, with an emphasis on Yoga Sutra and classical commentaries. The four Bhāvanās (attitudes) are explained as transformative inner dispositions capable of refining the Chitta (mind-field) and dissolving reactive patterns. The analysis bridges yogic psychology with contemporary issues of mental and social disharmony. Chitta-Prasādana emerges as a timeless process of internal purification that enables clarity, empathy, and resilience. By consciously cultivating these four attitudes, the practitioner not only achieves inner balance but also contributes to conflict resolution in the outer world. This ancient framework holds profound relevance today as a non-violent, self-regulatory approach to healing ideological divides and restoring relational harmony through the stillness of mind.

**Key words-** Chitta-Prasādana, Yoga Sutras, Conflict Resolution, Polarization, Emotional Regulation, Mindfulness.

## Introduction

Ideological divides and emotional conflicts are rising globally, with growing polarization affecting communities, families, and workplaces alike. Surveys indicate that majority populations across nations now report declining trust, increased social tension, and anxiety about political outcomes. This division is not just political—it extends to cultural, ethical, and value-based differences that are increasingly difficult to navigate in daily life <sup>[1]</sup>. Working professionals are deeply affected by growing divides. A 2021 survey found that 89% of employees face workplace conflict, spending an average of 3.5 hours per week managing it. <sup>[2]</sup> Much of this conflict arises from clashing values, with political tensions entering workplaces. A poll found that 72% felt stressed about elections and 59% were concerned about rising polarization. <sup>[3]</sup> In a hybrid work survey, nearly 45% of U.S. employees admitted they did not want to go into the office at times specifically because of colleague or employer's political opinions <sup>[4]</sup>. This effect was even more pronounced for full-time in-office workers (50%) <sup>[4]</sup>. The costs of such polarization are both emotional and economic, employees reporting negative impacts on focus, mental health, teamwork, and belonging due to political divisiveness jumped to 95% <sup>[5]</sup>. These findings show that ideological polarization causes real stress, harms well-being, and reduces productivity. Traditional conflict resolution methods often fall short, as they overlook the need for inner emotional regulation. Research shows that unmanaged emotions fuel intolerance, and silencing conversations can deepen divides. <sup>[6]</sup> Hence, there is a growing need for interventions that cultivate inner equanimity, empathy, and self-awareness. In this context, Yoga philosophy, particularly the concept of Chitta-Prasādan (clarity or pleasantness of mind) from Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, offers a meaningful lens. This article explores how yogic wisdom, combined with modern psychology and neuroscience, can enhance emotional resilience and reduce conflict. It presents a model linking yogic mind training to practical benefits for professionals and educators, offering a path from inner clarity to social harmony in a polarized world.

## Emotional Conflict, Polarization, and the Mind – A Modern Psychological Perspective:

Ideological conflicts often stem from emotional responses to perceived threats to identity, triggering anxiety, anger, and cognitive bias. Studies show that polarization reduces cognitive flexibility, reinforcing rigid, us-vs-them thinking <sup>[7]</sup>. This mental rigidity deepens echo chambers and limits mutual understanding. Neuroscience confirms this cycle: partisan identities shape perception, creating "neural polarization" <sup>[8]</sup>. Emotional biases like fear and outrage drive intolerance <sup>[9]</sup>, overpowering rational dialogue. Hence, experts emphasize emotion regulation to reduce polarization <sup>[10]</sup>. Mindfulness and compassion practices have shown promise in calming reactivity and improving perspective-taking <sup>[11]</sup>. Even short trainings can reduce cognitive rigidity <sup>[12]</sup> and activate empathy-related brain regions <sup>[13]</sup>, fostering a more open, balanced mindset. These findings highlight the importance of inner transformation in resolving outer conflicts.

## Yogic Theory of Chitta-Prasādan in Classical Texts: Cultivating a Clear and Friendly Mind

Classical yogic literature provides a deep well of insight into training the mind toward clarity, equanimity, and benevolence. In Patanjali's Yoga Sutras – a foundational text of Yoga philosophy– Sage Patanjali outlines methods for stabilizing the mind and removing inner disturbances (antarāya). One of the most relevant sutras to conflict resolution is Yoga Sutra 1.33, which introduces the concept of Chitta-Prasādan (often translated as "the purification or pleasantness of mind"). The sutra states:

मैत्रीकरुणामुदितोपेक्षणां सुखदुःखपुण्यापुण्यविषयाणां भावनातश्चित्तप्रसादनम्॥1/33॥<sup>[14]</sup>

## **maitrī karuṇā mudito-pekṣāṇām-sukha-duḥkha puṇya-apuṇya-viṣayāṇām bhāvanātaḥ citta-prasādanam 1/33**

Sage Patanjali teaches that the mind becomes clear and serene by cultivating four key attitudes: maitrī (friendliness toward the happy), karuṇā (compassion for the suffering), muditā (joy for the virtuous), and upekṣā (equanimity toward the harmful). Practicing these responses helps the yogi remain untroubled by others' actions, preventing negative emotions like envy or anger. Chitta-Prasādan is thus the yogic path to maintaining a benevolent and stable mind in all circumstances. This idea resonates strongly with the concept of the brahma-vihāras (the four divine abodes) in Buddhism, which are the same four qualities of loving-kindness, compassion, empathetic joy, and equanimity <sup>[15]</sup>. The focus is on consciously choosing positive attitudes to maintain inner balance—responding with compassion instead of hatred or envy. Classical texts view this as an antidote to mental disturbances, helping the yogi stay centered. The Bhagavad Gita reinforces yogic values of equanimity and universal goodwill. In verses 12.13–14, Krishna praises those who are free from malice, compassionate, balanced in joy and sorrow, and steady in mind and devotion as spiritually elevated and deeply cherished <sup>[16]</sup>. Yogic philosophy emphasizes mental balance and goodwill, even toward adversaries. Spiritually, this reflects the belief in the divine within all; practically, it helps break the cycle of reactivity and conflict.

### **Conceptual Integration: Yogic Attitudes Meet Modern Psychology**

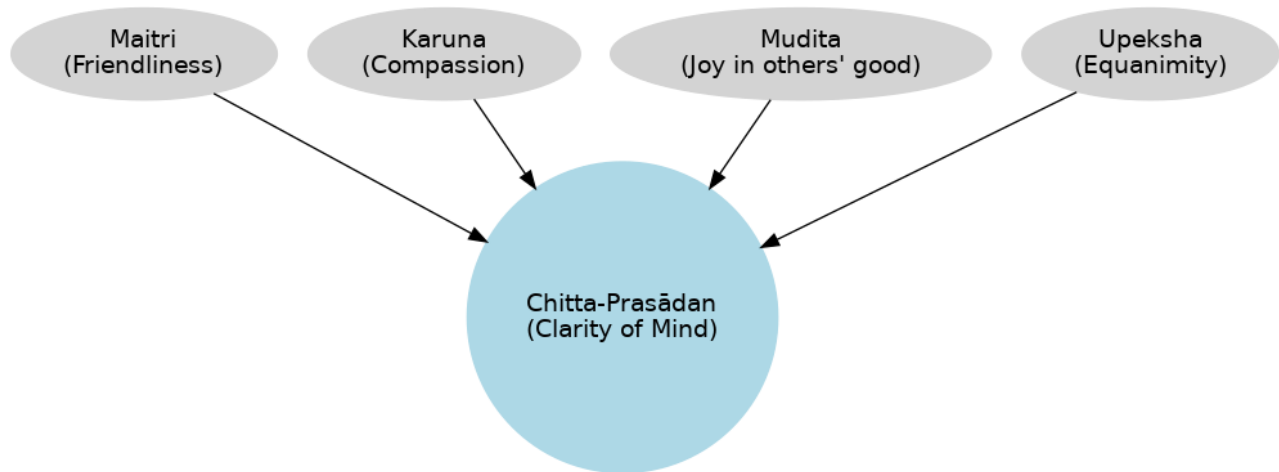
Maitrī, or loving-kindness, addresses envy and rivalry. Research on loving-kindness meditation shows it enhances positive emotions, social bonding, and even reduces implicit bias toward out-groups by promoting emotional warmth and cognitive control <sup>[17]</sup>. Karuṇā, or compassion, redirects reactivity into empathy. Studies show that compassion training activates empathy-related brain regions and reduces amygdala response to distress cues, improving emotional regulation and reducing interpersonal conflict <sup>[18]</sup>. Muditā fosters a mindset of shared joy and cooperation, offsetting jealousy or ego-driven competition. Positive psychology links it with better relationship quality and team cohesion, especially in high-pressure environments. Upekṣā, or equanimity, builds emotional neutrality even under provocation. Mindfulness studies confirm that cultivating non-reactive awareness reduces limbic reactivity and strengthens prefrontal self-regulation, helping individuals stay calm during heated exchanges <sup>[19]</sup>. The four attitudes of Chitta-Prasādan reflect core elements of emotional intelligence: maitrī and muditā foster goodwill, karuṇā builds empathy, and upekṣā supports emotional balance. These traits reduce reactivity and enhance cognitive flexibility <sup>[19]</sup>.

### **Application to Modern Contexts: Chitta-Prasādan as a Mechanism for Conflict Resolution**

Modern workplaces bring together diverse ideologies, making interpersonal conflict and emotional strain increasingly common. Without internal tools for emotional regulation, even small disagreements can escalate, affecting team cohesion and mental well-being <sup>[20]</sup>. While traditional conflict training focuses on external skills, yogic practices like Chitta-Prasādan offer inner resilience—cultivating calm, empathy, and self-awareness. Professionals who embody maitrī (friendliness) and karuṇā (compassion) help create a positive team culture. Research shows that leaders who remain composed and empathetic during conflict set the tone for others <sup>[21]</sup>. Many organizations now integrate mindfulness and compassion programs, which have been shown to reduce stress and enhance empathy and collaboration—critical skills for navigating today's

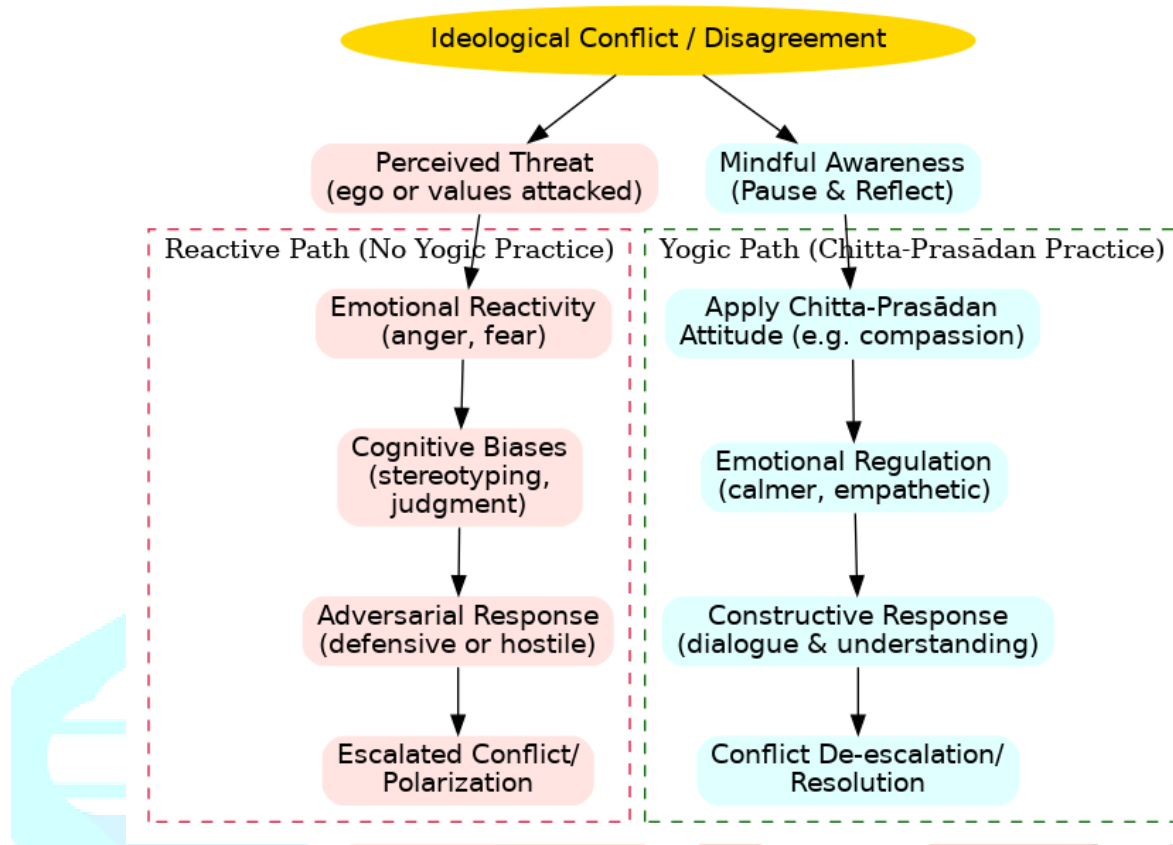
polarized environments <sup>[22]</sup>. Adopting yogic attitudes like compassion, forgiveness, and calmness helps protect against the mental health effects of anger, resentment, and stress often triggered by ideological conflict <sup>[23]</sup>. Research shows that such traits reduce risks of anxiety, depression, and burnout. In high-pressure work settings, empathy fosters psychological safety, encouraging collaboration, creativity, and open dialogue. In essence, workplaces need more than policies—they need individuals with the inner clarity and emotional intelligence that Chitta-Prasādan nurtures. This mindset does not replace conflict resolution tools but strengthens them from within, enabling respectful engagement across differences.

**Figure 1:** Highlights the core yogic attitudes prescribed by Sage Patanjali- how they contribute to a purified and clear mind.



Four key yogic attitudes that cultivate Chitta-Prasādan (“clarity or pleasantness of mind”). Patanjali’s Yoga Sutra describes developing maitrī (Friendliness), karuṇā (Compassion), muditā (Joy in others’ good fortune), and upekṣā (Equanimity) as the means to purify and steady the mind. By practicing these attitudes in everyday encounters, one’s consciousness becomes calmer, clearer, and more positive. Such a mind is not easily disturbed by envy, anger or prejudice. Instead, it remains gracious and balanced. In essence, the four attitudes act as four pillars supporting an inner state of peace. A mind established in Chitta-Prasādan is characterized by emotional stability and goodwill toward others, which is an ideal foundation for constructive engagement in the face of conflict.

**Figure 2:** A conceptual model contrasting a Reactive Conflict Path (left, red) with a Chitta Prasādan-Informed Path (right, green).



In a typical conflict, opposing views are seen as threats, triggering emotional reactivity like anger or fear. This leads to rigid thinking and adversarial behavior, escalating the conflict. In contrast, the Chitta-Prasādan approach begins with a mindful pause—rooted in upekṣā (equanimity)—which allows space to respond with compassion, friendliness, or understanding rather than instinctive defensiveness. This shift calms the nervous system, opens empathy, and enables constructive dialogue. Even if the other person remains reactive, one’s composed and kind response can interrupt the cycle. Over time, such inner regulation transforms conflicts into opportunities for mutual respect and solution building, with Chitta-Prasādan acting as an internal mediator between stimulus and response. The change begins with one person—and often, that is enough.

### Discussion:

The role of Chitta-Prasādan (clarity or pleasantness of mind) in resolving conflict cannot be understated, particularly in the face of increasing ideological divides and emotional polarization. While the modern world is increasingly divided, yogic teachings provide a profound solution. As we have seen in the introduction, polarization and emotional conflicts significantly affect mental well-being and productivity in various environments, especially workplaces <sup>[24]</sup>. This aligns with Patanjali’s Yoga Sutra 1.33, where the four core attitudes—Maitrī (friendliness), Karuṇā (compassion), Muditā (joy), and Upekṣā (equanimity)—are the bedrock of cultivating inner balance. In the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna teaches the importance of cultivating equanimity and detachment in the face of challenges. Krishna emphasizes that a balanced mind, free from anger, hatred, and emotional extremes, is the key to finding clarity and spiritual insight. In Chapter 2, Verse 47, Krishna advises Arjuna: “Your right is to perform your duty only, but never to its fruits. Let not the fruits of action be your motive, nor let your attachment be to inaction” <sup>[25]</sup>. This counsel stresses the importance of cultivating mental peace and detachment from the outcomes of actions, a principle central to



the practice of Chitta-Prasādan. By doing so, individuals can avoid becoming entangled in emotional reactivity and can approach conflicts with a clearer mind and greater empathy, leading to better resolution. Furthermore, the Buddhist teachings on the Brahma-Vihāras (the four divine abodes) closely mirror the four attitudes of Patanjali's Chitta-Prasādan. These teachings encourage individuals to cultivate kindness, compassion, empathetic joy, and equanimity in their daily lives. The Brahma-Vihāras foster mental peace and emotional stability, qualities that are vital in de-escalating conflicts and preventing the deepening of ideological divides <sup>[26]</sup>. As Miller explains, these qualities support not only the well-being of the individual but also contribute significantly to resolving societal tensions <sup>[27]</sup>. Moreover, modern research in neuroscience and psychology validates these ancient practices. Studies show that compassion and mindfulness training, which cultivate the same mental attitudes as those prescribed by Patanjali, activate regions in the brain related to empathy and reduce emotional reactivity <sup>[28]</sup>. Maitrī (friendliness) can reduce implicit bias <sup>[29]</sup>, while Karuṇā (compassion) fosters empathy <sup>[30]</sup>, which is crucial for conflict resolution. Similarly, Upekṣā (equanimity) aids in reducing the brain's limbic reactivity <sup>[31]</sup>, helping individuals remain calm even in heated discussions. Through the Chitta-Prasādan approach, we are encouraged to develop internal emotional regulation, a skill that is essential in addressing external conflicts. As Ford et al. point out, individuals who regulate their emotions well are better equipped to deal with ideological conflicts in a balanced manner <sup>[32]</sup>. Their ability to engage in thoughtful dialogue rather than reactive responses makes them effective agents of change in any environment. The integration of these principles into workplace environments has shown promising results. Research by Bartlett et al. demonstrates that mindfulness-based interventions in workplaces lead to reduced stress, enhanced emotional intelligence, and improved conflict resolution outcomes <sup>[33]</sup>. Such interventions encourage individuals to approach disagreements with an open mind, fostering collaboration and mutual respect, even in the most polarized environments. Chitta-Prasādan, as a tool for conflict resolution, therefore, not only provides an internal framework for cultivating peace but also offers a universal method for addressing the social challenges of our time. By adopting Patanjali's model of Maitrī, Karuṇā, Muditā, and Upekṣā, individuals can foster emotional resilience, cultivate empathy, and facilitate healthier interpersonal relationships, contributing significantly to societal harmony.

## Conclusion and Future Direction

The increasing ideological fractures in our world call for solutions that go beyond policy debates and into the realm of the human heart and mind. Chitta-Prasādan, as a yogic approach to mental refinement, offers a beacon of hope in this regard. It reminds us that the antidote to hatred is love, the remedy for anger is compassion, and the cure for fear is understanding. In today's divided world, the yogic concept of Chitta-Prasādan—a calm, compassionate, and clear mind—offers a practical approach to resolving ideological conflict. Rooted in Patanjali's Yoga Sutras, its four attitudes align with modern science on emotion regulation, bias reduction, and empathy. This article presented Chitta-Prasādan as an internal mediator, helping individuals manage emotions before conflict escalates. Even one person's shift in mindset can improve workplace harmony and foster mutual respect. Future research should explore this model in real-life settings, measuring outcomes like stress, emotional responses, empathy, relationship outcomes, and communication. With cultural adaptation, it could serve as a secular framework for emotional intelligence and conflict resolution worldwide.

## References

1. Rahrigh, H., Beloborodova, P., Castro, C. et al. (2025). Examining emotion reactivity to politically polarizing media in a randomized controlled trial of mindfulness training versus active coping training. *Sci Rep* 15, 5209. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-024-84510-0>.
2. Minson, J. A., & Gino, F. (2022). "Managing a Polarized Workforce." *Harvard Business Review*, March–April 2022. <https://hbr.org/2022/03/managing-a-polarized-workforce>.
3. Weishaupt, F. (2024). "45% of workers say they don't want to go into the office because of political tensions." *Fast Company*, Oct 3, 2024. <https://www.fastcompany.com/91201760/45-of-workers-say-they-dont-want-to-go-into-the-office-because-of-political-tensions>.
4. Ford, B. Q., Feinberg, M., Lam, P., Mauss, I. B. & John, O. P. (2019). Using reappraisal to regulate negative emotion after the 2016 US Presidential election: Does emotion regulation trump political action?. *J. Personal. Soc. Psychol.* 117, 998.
5. Ford, B. Q. & Feinberg, M. (2020). Coping with politics: The benefits and costs of emotion regulation. *Curr. Opin. Behav. Sci.* 34, 123–128.
6. Halperin, E., Sharvit, K. & Gross, J. J. (2011). Emotion and emotion regulation in intergroup conflict: An appraisal-based framework. In *Intergroup Conflicts and their Resolution: A Social Psychological Perspective* 83–103.
7. Wu, J. S.-T., Hauert, C., Kremen, C., & Zhao, J. (2022). A framework on polarization, cognitive inflexibility, and rigid cognitive specialization. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, Article 776891. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.776891>.
8. Leong, Y. C., Chen, J., Willer, R., & Zaki, J. (2020). Conservative and liberal attitudes drive polarized neural responses to political content. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 117(44), 27731–27739. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2008530117>.
9. Green, D. J., Duker, A., Onyeador, I. N., & Richeson, J. A. (2023). Solidarity-based collective action among third parties: The role of emotion regulation and moral outrage. *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy*, 23(3), 694–723.
10. Ford, B. Q., & Troy, A. S. (2019). Reappraisal reconsidered: A closer look at the costs of an acclaimed emotion-regulation strategy. *Current directions in psychological science*, 28(2), 195–203.
11. Brown, K. W., & Ryan, R. M. (2003). The benefits of being present: mindfulness and its role in psychological well-being. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 84(4), 822.
12. Greenberg, J., Reiner, K., & Meiran, N. (2012). "Mind the trap": mindfulness practice reduces cognitive rigidity. *PloS one*, 7(5), e36206. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0036206>.
13. R. Davidson et al. Study shows compassion meditation changes the brain. *University of Wisconsin–Madison News*. (2008). <https://news.wisc.edu/study-shows-compassion-meditation-changes-the-brain/>
14. Goyandaka, H. D. (Ed.). (n.d.). *Yog Darshan of Patanjali with Hindi explanation*. Chap. 1, Shloka 33, p. 31. Gita Press.
15. Miller, B. S. (1979). On cultivating the immeasurable change of heart: The Buddhist brahma-vihāra formula. *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, 209–221.
16. Prasad, D. R. (1988). *The bhagavad gita*. International Gita Society.
17. Stell, A. & Farsides, T. (2016). "Brief loving-kindness meditation reduces racial bias, mediated by positive other-regarding emotions." *Motivation and Emotion*, 40(1), 140–147.
18. Weng, H. Y., Lapate, R. C., Stodola, D. E., Rogers, G. M., & Davidson, R. J. (2018). Visual attention to suffering after compassion training is associated with decreased amygdala responses. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 9, 771. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2018.00771>.

19. Desbordes, G., Negi, L. T., Pace, T. W., Wallace, B. A., Raison, C. L., & Schwartz, E. L. (2012). Effects of mindful-attention and compassion meditation training on amygdala response to emotional stimuli in an ordinary, non-meditative state. *Frontiers in human neuroscience*, 6, 292. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fnhum.2012.00292>.
20. Kim, Y. M., & Cho, S. I. (2020). Socioeconomic status, work-life conflict, and mental health. *American Journal of Industrial Medicine*, 63(8), 703-712.
21. Csoka, L. S. (2011). Mental Strength for Leadership. *The Handbook for Teaching Leadership: Knowing, Doing, and Being*, 213.
22. Bartlett, L., Martin, A., Neil, A. L., Memish, K., Otahal, P., Kilpatrick, M., & Sanderson, K. (2019). A systematic review and meta-analysis of workplace mindfulness training randomized controlled trials. *Journal of occupational health psychology*, 24(1), 108.
23. McCartney, P. (2017). Politics beyond the yoga mat: Yoga fundamentalism and the 'vedic way of life'. *Global Ethnographic*, 4, 1-18.
24. Adeyemi, J. K. (2022). Workplace conflict on productivity and emotional stability of employee. *International Journal of Management and Business Applied*, 1(2), 103-109.
25. Shunmugam, M. Y., & Sukdaven, M. (2024). Understanding the moral and ethical dimensions of the Bhagavad Gita. *Theologia Viatorum*, 48(1), 223.
26. Kumar, S., & Chandradeep, K. Buddhist Concepts of Suffering (Dukkha) and Compassion (Karuna) in Maus by Art Spiegelman. *THE INDIAN JOURNAL OF ENGLISH STUDIES*, 211.
27. Miller, R. B. (1991). *Interpretations of conflict: ethics, pacifism, and the just-war tradition*. University of Chicago Press.
28. Wheeler, M. S., Arnkoff, D. B., & Glass, C. R. (2017). The neuroscience of mindfulness: How mindfulness alters the brain and facilitates emotion regulation. *Mindfulness*, 8, 1471-1487.
29. MacKenzie, M. (2018). Virtue, self-transcendence, and liberation in Yoga and Buddhism. In *Self-Transcendence and Virtue* (pp. 203-221). Routledge.
30. Widdison, L. (2022). Aestheticized Tragedy (Karunārāsa) as an Intellectual Virtue. *Comparative Philosophy*, 13(1), 7.
31. Ward, L. (2015). *A Theoretical Discussion of Bhāvanā and its Effects on Brain Plasticity*. University of the West.
32. Ford, B. Q., Feinberg, M., Lassetter, B., Thai, S., & Gatchpazian, A. (2023). The political is personal: The costs of daily politics. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 125(1), 1.
33. Bartlett, L., Martin, A. J., Kilpatrick, M., Otahal, P., Sanderson, K., & Neil, A. L. (2022). Effects of a mindfulness app on employee stress in an Australian public sector workforce: randomized controlled trial. *JMIR mHealth and uHealth*, 10(2), e30272.