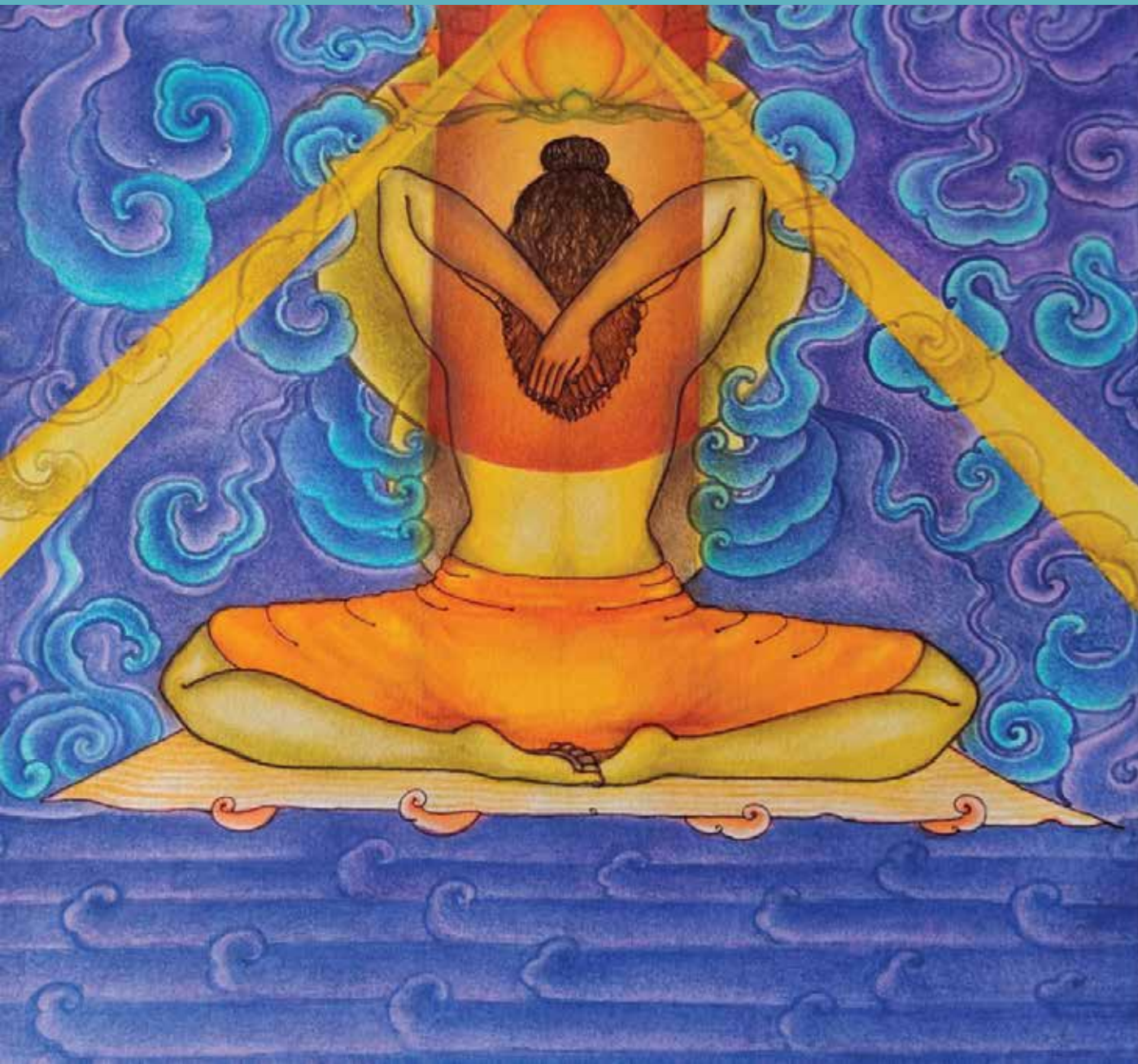


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*Dhyāna-Moolam Gurur-Murthih
Pujā-Moolam Gurur-Padam |
Mantra-Moolam Gurur-Vākyam
Moksha-Moolam Gurur-Kripa ||*

*The Root of Meditation is the Form of the Guru,
The Root of Worship is the Feet of the Guru,
The Root of Mantra is the Word of the Guru,
The Root of Liberation is the Grace of the Guru.*

From **The Editor's Desk**

How will I choose the most suitable form of yoga? Which type of yoga suits me the most? These are the common questions which arises in a person's mind who aspires to learn yoga. This is true, especially when there are multiple options available with a huge variety of yoga centers around, and when the term 'yoga' is being blindly used in different contexts, the aspirants could get more baffled. Moreover, widespread misinformation about yoga and narrow-minded application of the practices also deepens the confusions.

In short, before starting the practices, the person should understand oneself. First and foremost, the student must have an awareness about their own body. The aspirant must have a clear idea about his/her life situations, mental and emotional conditions. Furthermore, a basic understanding about the specialty of the subject and all its related topics is of utmost importance for the aspirant to benefit from the yoga practices. If not, they should be blessed with their poorva samskaras (latent impressions), wherein they would have gained such understanding. Only then they will be able to identify the practices which is most suitable for them.

At this point, we can explain in terms of Adhikari (eligibility), Vishayam (subject), Sambandham (connection between the subject and goal) and Prayojanam (benefit) which are relevant in evaluating suitability of any study. Based on the science of yoga, one attains the eligibility when he/she has a strong determination to achieve inner peace. Naturally this 'peace' becomes the benefit or goal. Yoga can then be considered as that 'subject' which gives such a benefit to the seeker. Whether the subject provides the expected results or not can be verified with those who have already attained the results through their practices. In fact, more appropriate would be for the aspirants to experience the results themselves through their own practices.

Acharya *Bala*

Essence of Yogic Practices



In tradition speaks we try to explore traditional yogic texts to provide insights on the messages conveyed beyond the literal meaning of the verses.

Worldwide, Yoga has gained significant prominence, though mainly from a health and mental well-being perspective. Among the traditional Hatha Yogic practices asanas and pranayama are particularly popular. These days we get to see many ‘modernized’ version of traditional practices. The widespread so-called fusion practices does indicate there is a large misunderstanding on the idea behind Yogic practices. People pursue Yoga for various reasons wherein many resort for health benefits, some for mental wellbeing, some pursue for siddhis (psychic powers) and material benefits, and there are also true seekers. In reality, what is it intended for?

In this edition of Tradition Speaks, we will throw some light on an important verse from Gheranda Samhita, one of the classic texts on Hatha Yoga which will help us better understand the context and purpose behind the yogic practices.

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नास्तिज्ञानात्परो बन्धुर्नाहंकारात्परोरिपुः ॥४॥

nāstimāyāsamaḥ pāśo nāsti yogātparam balam /
nāsti jñānātparo bandhurnāhaṁkāratparoripuḥ
//4//

Before we delve into the verse, it will be useful to understand its context. Gheranda Samhita text is based on the conversation between King Chanda Kapali and Sage Gheranda. Chanda Kapali expresses his wish to learn the discipline of Yoga and Sage Gheranda imparts the knowledge of Hatha Yogic practices which constitutes the entire text of Gheranda Samhita.

In response to the request of King Chanda Kapali, before imparting the hatha yogic techniques, Sage Gheranda spells out the above verse that clearly lays out the ultimate truth behind the yogic practices, without any ambiguity. The English translation of the verse is provided below:

“there are no fetters like those of Maya (Illusion), no strength like that which comes from Yoga;

there is no friend higher than Jnana (Knowledge), and no greater enemy than Ahankara (Egoism).”

This verse establishes the idea behind why one should pursue yoga, and deals with the concepts of Maya, Yoga, Jnana, and Ahankara. We will now explore each of these in further details and the underlying message.

The material world that is experienced by us through our senses is

referred to as Maya i.e. a mere illusion. Life and experiences are nothing but a projection of the senses which is misunderstood to be the reality. Maya binds one to this phenomenal world. Maya is the veil, that one needs to prevail over to understand the ultimate truth.

Gheranda makes reference to Ahankara (Ego) as the greatest enemy. Ego is the “I” ness through which we relate each of our experience gained through the senses. Ego perceives the material world through Buddhi (intelligence) and is the fundamental base for Maya. Maya does not exist without Ego, if there is no “I” ness, there is no experienter or experience and the material world will cease to exist. Death of Ego is the death of Maya, hence one’s Ego needs to be slayed.

Jnana is referred in this verse as the greatest friend, it is the wisdom where one understands one’s own true self. It is the greatest of all knowledge and the pathway to free oneself from all the miseries of the world. Once the veil of this illusionary world is lifted, tattwa Jnana naturally appears wherein one can gain the true understanding of one’s own nature. However, it is impossible for a common man to come out of the clutches of Maya, as the sensory experiences overpowers the reality and true wisdom.

This verse places strong emphasis on the discipline of Yoga that empowers one to break the shackles and bondage of this illusionary world. Yoga is not described as mere practice routine, rather a complete discipline that should

be lived in every walk of life covering thoughts, actions and inactions. It is conscious living with complete awareness. Hatha yogic practices, beginning with the body, mind and more subtler aspects are meant to transform one to realize the ultimate knowledge of the self.

Sage Gheranda, in the subsequent verses goes on to explain the various Yogic practices comprising of shodhana kriyas, asanas, mudra, pratyahara, pranayama, dhyana and samadhi.

In summary, before enumerating the hatha yogic techniques and practices, Sage Gheranda emphasizes on the ultimate objective of pursuing these practices which is to enable one to liberate from bondages. The verse discussed provides the complete conceptual foundation that underpins hatha yogic practices and provides insights on true knowledge (jnana). The essence of life, and yoga as a means to go beyond the material life, is aptly conveyed in this verse.

In all the yogic practices the understanding of real goal is of utmost importance. The greatness of Hatha Yoga is that, through these practices one will naturally evolve and gain the right understanding. There is little doubt that Yogic practices, if adopted with utmost discipline and under proper guidance, will transform one to expand from a limited being to unlimited self.

Ritam Vadishyāmi ॐ

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Chakras

Some Misconceptions - Part : 2



Those who have understood Kula and Akula is considered as a yogi, by both, yoga shastras and tantra shastras. The influence of tantras, especially the Shakta tantra, can be seen in most of the practical aspects mentioned in the hatha yogic texts. The explanation of the term Tantra is “Tanu Vistarayate iti Tantra” (expansion of consciousness), and chakras indicate the different levels of human consciousness.

These chakras or energy points were considered as the stepping stones for the expansion from the very immature and limited animal consciousness to the human consciousness, and further to the infinite Cosmic consciousness.

This can be experienced by Sadhaks through disciplined practice

under the guidance of a Guru. However, when the aspirants approach this subject based on their understanding from books and from what they have heard, they tend to interpret and expound Kundalini and chakras with exaggeration which usually leads to mere imaginations.

When the practices and the concept behind these practices could not be related, some practitioners assumes it to be a snake moving up through the spinal cord whereas some feel it as mere sensations, although these practices are intended to support the attainment of the ultimate goal in human life.

The word ‘Kundalini’ means coiled or one which is in its dormant



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state. With the help of different practice methods, realizing that the limited body consciousness is a part of the infinite cosmic consciousness is the process of Kundalini awakening. Before starting with these practice methods, a Sadhak needs several preparations.

A Sadhak's senses are encircled within the limits of self, family, and society. When hit with sudden alterations, it would lead to a change in the life perceptions and hence the approach towards it. If his/her immediate surrounding finds it difficult to accept, then the Sadhak

would have to go through a lot of hardships to overcome it.

Hence these practice methods should be acquired and practiced only with the advice of acharyas who are well versed in these techniques and moreover follows a lifestyle which is in line with it.



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Gheranda Samhita

A Contemplation



Gheranda Samhita is considered as one of the important traditional texts representing Hathayoga. This text is based on the teachings of Gheranda Muni. Gheranda Samhita is a part of Prasthanatraya, the 3 classical texts of Hatha Yoga - the other two being Hatha Yoga Pradipika and Siva Samhita.

Gheranda Samhita holds a special position in Hathayoga texts, though Gheranda Muni has not preferred to call it Hathayoga and opted to call it the Ghata Yoga or Ghatasta yoga.

“Ghata” means earthen pot which has been equated with present condition of our body and “Stha” means residing in. He has compared the human body to an unbaked earthen pot and for attaining the highest state of yoga it is imperative that this unbaked body is seasoned through various practices of Yoga. Therefore, Ghatasta Yoga means Yoga for Jiva residing in the body.

Gheranda has enumerated seven limbs of Ghata Yoga. They are:

1. Shodhana Kriya- Cleansing processes
2. Asana - Postures
3. Mudra - Psychic gestures
4. Pratyahara - Withdrawal of senses
5. Pranayama - Breathing practices

6. Dhyana - Meditation

7. Samadhi - Equanimity

These practices sequentially bestow purification, strength, steadiness, patience, lightness, realization & isolation.

Gheranda Samhita is an extraordinary practice manual, and the total practices present in the text include:

- 21 Cleansing process
- 32 Asanas
- 25 Mudras
- 5 Pratyahara practices
- 11 Pranayama techniques
- 3 Dhyana methods
- 6 Techniques of attaining Samadhi

After elaborating on the cleansing processes and the asanas, in the third chapter, Gheranda muni explains about Mudras. Mudras result into stability. However other Yogic texts have indicated that Mudras are meant for the arousal of Kundalini.

Gheranda also considers the importance of composure and so he indicates that in order to control the mind, practice of Pratyahara is necessary.

Gheranda asserts the practice of Pranayama as necessary for lightness. Right or ideal place has been given

importance for Pranayama. Along with this, the selection of the right time i.e., season is also very important for beginning the practice of Pranayama. Out of the six seasons, Sarat season (Autumn) is considered conducive for the practice of pranayama according to Gheranda Samhita.

Gheranda Samhita has mentioned Nadishodana or the purification of Nadis of two types. Samanu and Nirmanu. Samanu is generally done with a seed letter also known as Bija mantra and is mostly done by a mental process. This is also called Sabija Nadishodana. 'Nirmanu' is done, by the physical cleanings or dhautis as included in the cleansing processes initially.

While discussing the bija mantra, Gheranda Muni also highlights 8 types of Kumbhakas or retention of breaths. Out of these, the Sahita Kumbhaka is divided into Sagarbha and Nigarbha. The Kumbhaka performed by the repetition of Bija Mantra is Sagarbha and that done without such repetition is Nigarbha.

On the basis of the Matras (the time unit involved), the state of Pranayama has been divided into Uttama (Best), Madhyama (Intermediate) & Kanyasi (Basic).

Dhyana is described by Gheranda Muni as the direct perception of Self and thus considered very important. He has described three techniques of Dhyana – Sthula Dhyana, Jyothi Dhyana and Sukshma dhyana.

And lastly is the seventh limb of Samadhi - he highlights that Samadhi or liberation is achieved due to the blessings of the Guru.

Gheranda Samhita provides the below 6 techniques to attain Samadhi:

1. Dhyana Yoga Samadhi which is achieved through Sambhavi Mudra.
2. Nada Yoga Samadhi which is achieved by performing Khechari Mudra.
3. Rasananda Yoga Samadhi by performing Bhramari Kumbhaka.
4. Laya Sidhi Yoga Samadhi by Yoni Mudra.
5. Bhakti Yoga Samadhi by contemplating on heart and deity.
6. Raja Yoga Samadhi by Monomurchcha Kumbhaka.

We need to be reminiscent of the fact that mere reading of a text especially yogic texts will not help any practitioner understand the techniques and methodology in the required manner. Since these ancient texts include contents that has far hidden meanings, only a competent Acharya will be able to decode the significance deeply knitted in them.

To watch the video on ***Gheranda Samihita***





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Diet For Heart Disease



Heart Disease is one of the major problems of the modernized world. It remains one of the major killer diseases among adults. The correlation between diet and heart disease has long been established. A healthy lifestyle, which includes a good wholesome diet along with regular physical activity, should be the first step solution in prevention as well as treatment of the disease.

Like most of the lifestyle diseases one of the major cause of heart disease apart from diet is the stress of the modern world. The stressful lifestyle takes a toll on the heart and one suffers the consequences in form of the heart disease. Yoga is a complete system and focuses on bringing a balance between body and mind, thus regular practice of yoga brings about a calming effect on the various systems and processes of the body thus reducing the harmful effects of stress.

Major dietary factors responsible for causing heart disease are:

- Over dependence on convenience foods.
- Diet high in inflammatory and processed food.
- Lack of fiber in the diet.

How to eat with the Heart in your mind?

The dietary recommendations for heart disease are fairly simple. Most of the recommendations center around a healthy dietary pattern that emphasizes on increasing fiber intake, meeting the protein needs, consuming healthy oils and fats and avoiding trans fats. Let's understand these recommendations:



Fiber:

Fiber is a component of plant food that is resistant to digestion by the human enzymes. Fiber in the diet is important for gastro-intestinal health as well as has been shown to possess cholesterol-lowering properties. The sources of fiber in our diet are whole grain cereals like whole wheat flour, brown rice, red rice, steel cut oats, jowar, bajra, millets, corn, fruits especially with the skin on, raw vegetables, green leafy vegetables, sprouts, beans, legumes etc.

Proteins:

Proteins are the building blocks of the body and make up all the muscles and tissues. Heart being a muscle, good quality protein is required to maintain its health. Protein in diet comes from lentils, legumes, nuts and seeds, milk and milk products, and non-vegetarian foods. In each meal, one should ensure that you have at least one good source of protein.

Trans Fats:

In recent times trans fats are being touted as one of the worst oils. These oils are liquid at room temperature but to improve their stability they undergo a hydrogenation process, which changes the composition of the original fat, the change is so much that the body cannot recognize the fat any longer and this gets deposited on the walls of arteries and causes plaque. Examples of these oils are vanaspati, hydrogenated oil, margarine etc. These oils must be avoided to maintain a healthy heart.

How to eat with the Heart in your mind?

- Eat at least 2-3 fruits per day.
- Eat salads at every meal chewing slowly.
- Avoid distractions at meal time.
- Have a handful of sprouts daily.
- Have a variety of whole grain cereals.
- Reduce total fat intake, use less oil in cooking.
- If you are non-vegetarian, prefer chicken (skinned) & fish to other meats.
- Have a handful of nuts daily.
- Limit the intake of 'empty calories' and junk food.
- Read labels to find out the kind of oil used in commercially available preparations, Avoid those with hydrogenated fat / trans fats.

Yoga in managing heart disease

Yoga can be very helpful in preventing and managing heart disease as Yoga focuses on bringing a balance between body and mind. The stress, bad diet and poor lifestyle takes a toll on the heart and one suffers the consequences in form of the heart disease.

The yogic diet (Mitahara) teaches moderation; the practitioners are encouraged to eat, fresh wholesome food in moderation with no distractions and to avoid all sorts of extremes in tastes, if one adopts the yogic lifestyle and diet one can most certainly keep most of the disease at bay.



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Origin of Yoga

Classical Period



One needs to understand their own existence in order to understand their own mind.

“Drishyate Anena Iti Darshana”

The knowledge about the reality is compiled in Darshanas. It provides perception through direct experience. To elaborate on the Classical period of Yoga, we need to understand the aphorisms or sutras brought forth by the famous and widely acknowledged Sage Patanjali. Understanding the ‘Darshanas’ are a prerequisite to unlock the potential of the Yoga Sutras.

Popularly known as the Shad Darshanas, there are six philosophical systems or schools of thoughts, which draws their authority from the Vedas. The six disciplines are Sankhya, Yoga, Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Purva Mimamsa and Uttara Mimamsa (Vedanta) and these are often referred in pairs.

The history of Yoga is inextricable from that of the Sankhya tradition.

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Sankhya and Yoga darshana is dualistic in nature, as the ultimate reality is conceived as containing 2 distinct ultimate principles – Purusha, the innermost conscious self or the pure consciousness and Prakrati, the manifestation of the material world.

From Prakriti evolves the 24 principles which includes Mahat (Budhi), Ahankara, Gunas (Satva, Rajas & Tamas), Manas, 5 Jnanendriyas, 5 Karmeendriyas, 5 Tanmatras & 5 Panchabhootas.

This manifestation is the base of Sankhya Darshana which refers to Satkarya Vada – Theory of Causation. According to Satkāryavāda the effect already exists in the cause, in a potential condition. So, it is neither a new creation nor different from the material cause. Hence effect is only an explicit manifestation of that which is contained in its material cause. For example, a pot is not different from the clay, a cloth is not different from the threads.

Same way Prakriti is also the manifested form of Purusha itself.

Sankhya Karika, begins with understanding the Trivitha Dukha, the three types of sorrows - Aadhi Daivika (sorrows beyond one's control, like natural disasters), Aadhi Bhautika (sorrows from surroundings) and Aadhyatmika (sorrows from one's own body and mind).

Once Viveka Khyati or discriminative knowledge is reached with the help of Yoga sadhana then one goes beyond to understand the reality of what is real and unreal.

In the classical period when Sage Patanjali authored the systematic presentation of Yoga through 195 sutras around 3000 years ago, he refers to Yoga as a process of separation – Viyoga. Here by using the term 'Viyoga', he means separation from sorrows.

Sage Patanjali codified the knowledge of Yoga through Sutras. He explained the system of the discipline of Yoga by providing some ideas to follow for further understanding of the same.

Patanjala Yoga Sutra is based on the below 4 pillars:

- Hanam - Removal.
- Hanopaya - Method of elimination of sorrow.
- Heyam - Pain or sorrow.
- Heyahethu - Cause of sorrow.

The concept of Yoga has existed

long before the same was compiled by Sage Patanjali. They are a compilation of previously known practices handed down from an unbroken lineage of Gurus to their disciple by the word of mouth.

The Yoga sutras are organized in 4 chapters which are as below:

Samadhi Pada – This first chapter provides the definition and purpose of yoga along with various approaches one can use to achieve the objectives.

Sadhana Pada – The second chapter includes the practical approach to attaining the goals of yoga. The eight limbs of Yoga called Ashtanga Yoga are also stated in this chapter. These 8 steps of Ashtanga Yoga are meant for anyone who is seeking the ultimate goal of yoga.

Vibhuti Pada – This chapter elaborates the results, psychic powers and manifestations acquired by Yoga.

Kaivalya Pada – This last chapter discusses the ultimate goal of yoga and how to sustain in the state to achieve liberation.

The ultimate aim of Yoga is Kaivalya, which as per Sage Patanjali is a gradual process of refinement of one's own Chitta by removing the latent impressions and by avoiding new patterns or tendencies that leave karmic impressions on the Chitta.

Once these vasanas or tendencies are removed, the possibility of them creating a new karmic cycle is dimin-

ished. However, yet the latent impressions from the past cycles come forward creating a necessity to overcome them as well. Once a state of Nirbija Samadhi is achieved the Karmic Mala (or the bondage of past actions) is diminished, enabling the aspirant to reach a state of Viveka Khyati which eventually leads to Kaivalya.

Though Yoga Sutras can be applied into practice through the guidance of an eminent Guru, the information on practical application is not elaborated. Therefore, it led to the emergence of the Post Classical period of Yoga where more emphasis is given on the practical application of yoga.

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Ushtraasana

Traditional Approach

Asana is one of the ancient yogic practices, which forms the base for all other practices in Yoga. The goal of Yoga is Raja Yoga, but to reach Raja Yoga, one needs to go through the bodily austerities through asana practice to strengthen and purify the body. As per Yoga sutras of Patanjali, the characteristic feature of asana is stability and comfort i.e., *sthira sukham asanam*. Though asana is practiced bodily but when an asana is practiced to the final posture with ease, it should bring the tranquilizing effect on the mind. When asana is performed in synchronisation with breath, mind gains stability.

To reach to the final posture of any asana with ease, one should formulate the body in a progressive manner. Asana practice needs step by step preparation, by working on the lower and upper limbs. It's a continuum of *sukshma sthula vyayam* (subtle gross movements), which starts with the physical aspect of flexing and stretching the upper and lower extremities and then gradually progressing to performing asanas. Asana should be completely effortless, ending in the steadiness of body and mind.

Let's have an insight into one of the classical asanas Ushtrasana.

Ushtraasana

Ushtrasana, is famously known as "Camel Posture", as in the final position



of the asana, the body position in the asana resembles that of a camel.

One of the classical texts, Gheranda Samhita mentions Ushtrasana as a part of its 32 asanas. The verse 41 of Chapter 2, describes Ushtrasanas as below:

adhyaśya śete padayugmavyastam
 pṛṣṭhenidhāyāpi dhṛtaṃkarābhyām /
 ākuñcya samyagdhryudarāsyagāḍhaṃ
 auṣṭraṃ ca pīṭhaṃ yatayo vadanti //41//

The above verse when translated, means –

“Lie prone with legs turned up towards the back and hold with hands. Contract the abdomen vigorously. Raise the head and contract the mouth also”.

The asana finds its mention in few other texts as well. For instance, the text, 'sri-yoga-kaustubha' (SYK-83) by Sharma Shri Nathrama, describes the asana with the name 'ustra-nisadanasana'

And the other text where one can find the mention is 'nagojibhatta-vrtti' (NBV II-46) – a commentary on yoga sutra of Patanjali, 1930. It has described 100 asanas, and one those is Ushtrasana.

As per Gheranda Samhita, the practice method is different as described in the verse 41 of Chapter 2. The Encyclopaedia of Traditional Asanas, by M.L. Gharotahas described the asana method

as per different classical texts in a different manner than Gheranda Samhita.

In Hatha Vidya Tradition, we perform Ushtrasana as below:

- Sit in Vajraasana.
- Distance the knees to about 15 cm (approximately 2 fist distance) and stand on the knees.
- Feet should also be equidistant apart as knees.
- Keep the arms on the shoulder level in front of the body.
- Raise the left hand and lean backward by pushing the hip forward and hold the left foot with left hand.
- Repeat the same on right side.
- Drop the head backward and push the hips forward keeping the thighs vertical.
- The body weight should be evenly distributed between the legs and the arms.
- Maintain the final position till comfortable.
- Return to the starting position by slowly releasing the hands to the shoulder level one after another and sit back in Vajraasana.

When one attains the final position of Ushtrasana, with ease, one needs to focus on the stretch on lower abdomen, contraction on lower back. As all yogic asanas yield physical along with psychosomatic results, Ushtrasana also has many health benefits, as mentioned below:

- Increases the vital capacity of lungs, as it stimulates breathing and blood circulation to head and cardiac region, thus helps in restoring energy.
- It mainly works on internal organs like kidneys, pancreas, and adrenal glands.
- Improves the functioning of heart as heart presses against the sternum.
- It is a backbend asana that confronts gravity, results in the stretching of chest and abdominal muscles.
- It makes thoracoabdominal region flexible and provides strength to the vertebral column.

The asana should be avoided by people with slip disc and cervical spondylitis issues. Hypertensive patients can also avoid this asana. People with hernia and abdominal issues and vertigo should also abstain from performing Ushtrasana.

To watch the video on *Ushtrasana*





Menopause

Menopause ('Meno' means month and 'Pause' means stop) is a normal transitional stage in the life of women where monthly period stops and hormones which support femininity start depleting. Menopause is a natural part of aging and marks the end of the female fertile reproductive years. Menopause occurs when 12 consecutive months pass without a menstrual period. Menopause typically occurs in late 40s to early 50s. However, people who have their ovaries surgically removed will undergo "sudden" surgical menopause. Reducing levels of female hormones made in the ovaries such as estrogen and progesterone, leads to symptoms of menopause. Since the life expectancy of women has increased, they spend more than one third of their lifetime in menopause, which is a normal physiological event.

Cause

As women grow older, their ovarian

follicles diminish in number. There is a decline in granulosa cells of the ovary, which are the main producers of estrogen. As estrogen production reduces, follicle-stimulating hormone (FSH) and luteinizing hormone (LH) production increases. The decline in estrogen levels disrupts the hypothalamic - pituitary - ovarian (HPO) axis. As a result, a failure of endometrial development occurs causing irregular menstrual cycles, until they stop altogether.

Menopause may occur due to surgical removal of uterus and ovaries. It also occur by the treatment for certain conditions, like endometriosis and breast cancer with antiestrogens, and other cancers due to chemotherapy.

Stages of Menopause

Natural menopause transition is a gradual process and is described in three stages -

1. Perimenopause or "menopause transition": Perimenopause can begin eight to 10 years before menopause when the ovaries gradually produce less estrogen. It usually starts in 40s.
2. Menopause: Menopause is the point when women no longer have menstrual periods. At this stage, your ovaries have stopped releasing eggs and so estrogen level reduce.
3. Postmenopause: This is the name given to the time, where there is no period for an entire year.

Menopause that occurs before the age of 45 is called early menopause. If that occurs at 40 or younger, it is considered premature menopause. When there is no medical or surgical cause for premature menopause it's called primary ovarian insufficiency.

Symptoms

Around 20% of the women suffer from severe menopausal symptoms, 60% suffer from mild symptoms and 20% may have no symptoms at all.

Some of the symptoms include:

- Hot flashes (a sudden feeling of warmth that spreads over the body).
- Night sweats and/or cold flashes.
- Vaginal dryness; discomfort during sex.
- Urinary urgency (a pressing need to urinate more frequently).
- Difficulty sleeping (insomnia).
- Emotional changes (irritability, mood swings, mild depression).
- Dry skin, dry eyes or dry mouth.
- Breast tenderness.

- Worsening of premenstrual syndrome (PMS).

Some people might also experience:

- Racing heart or palpitations.
- Anxiety and Headaches
- Joint and muscle aches and pains.
- Changes in libido (sex drive).
- Weight gain.
- Hair loss or thinning.
- Urinary tract infections (UTIs).
- Memory problems
- Reduce bone mass
- Increased hair growth in body parts

Health Risks

- Osteoporosis is a major health risk to women after menopause, as age-related bone loss speeds up in the years surrounding menopause.
- Menopause is also linked to the increased risk of cardiovascular diseases.
- Among all the other changes that a woman undergoes during this time, the menopausal belly fat can cause severe long term consequences with an increased risk for heart disease, breast cancer, uterine cancer, diabetes, hypertension, stroke, sleep apnea, and many other serious and life-threatening diseases.

Managing Menopause

Menopause is an ideal time to begin or reinforce healthy changes in your life. Here are some areas of your health that might need attention:

- Keeping a menstrual calendar can help women determine what's normal or abnormal. Women should consult a

healthcare provider right away if signs of abnormal bleeding patterns occur after menopause.

- Proper diet, exercise and maintaining healthy weight or lose weight, if overweight.
- Controlling blood pressure, cholesterol, and triglycerides.

Yoga In Managing Menopause

Yoga is effective in managing menopausal symptoms and can be considered as a holistic package of self-care in menopause. It can reduce stress and relieve symptoms of insomnia, hot flushes, weight gain and improve quality of life in women going through menopause, promote a healthy lifestyle, create a positive attitude and regulate and balance the endocrine and hormonal systems make it an excellent therapy to soften the transition into menopause.

Meditation increases plasma melatonin levels naturally and melatonin effectively improves sleep quality. While asana may not directly influence estrogen

production, specific postures can help control unpleasant symptoms. It can relax the nervous system and improve the functioning of the endocrine system (especially the hypothalamus, the pituitary gland, the thyroid, and the parathyroid gland), which helps the body adapt to hormonal fluctuations. Makarasana, Parvatasana, Shithilikarana Vyayama along with breathing practices like Chandrabhedan, Sheetal, Shitkari practice would be extremely beneficial.

Sage Patanjali in Patanjala Yoga Sutra rightly points out, *“Heyam Dukham Anagatam”* - Stop any potential suffering before it arises. This is the purpose of yoga. The most successful approach to achieving a smooth transition is to start now—no matter what age you are. Honor your womanhood and give yourself time and space for self-care no matter how busy you are. Prioritize your self-care when you are young to prevent distress in later years.



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Workshop on

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24th Sep 2022



Singapore.

Yogic Games



Namaste! My name is Saya, and I am a student of the Nishtha program at Hatha Vidya. Nishtha is an integrated yoga program for kids where we get to learn yoga holistically. We learn asanas, pranayama, meditation, Sanskrit language, and many more in this program according to our level of progress. This article briefs you on my favourite element of Nishtha program at Hatha vidya, which is the yogic games.

The segment of yogic games is definitely what we most look forward to in our Nishtha classes. While games might sound like fun, there are better reasons for its addition to the syllabus. These games are curated to help us improve certain qualities like concentration, focus, balance, etc.

Let me now explain to you how to play a couple of these games.

The Om game

This is a game where firstly, the teacher chooses a number and ensures all students know the multiplication table of the selected number. Then, starting from 1, each student is asked to say

out loud the succeeding number. For example the first student says number “1”, then the second student says number “2” and so on. Now the trick of this game is when it's time to say a multiple of the numeral the teacher chose, the concerned student must say ‘Om’. For instance, continuing with the above example, assuming the selected number is 3, then the third student should say ‘Om’ instead of saying 3. Similarly the students who get the numbers 6, 9 etc should be saying ‘Om’ as these are multiples of 3. If the student does not say ‘Om’, they are out of the game. This way, the game continues until the last one left wins. This game helps improve concentration, and mathematical skills and when played in Sanskrit, it can improve linguistic skills.

Rekha Gati

In this game, there is a starting and an ending point which forms a straight line. The student must look only straight and keep his/her heel in front of the toes to walk. The challenge here is to walk straight without looking down. An advanced version of this game is where

you keep your eyes closed. Rekha Gati can help improve focus and balance.

There are many more games that we play such as the clock game, name the asana, tapping game, memory game, visualisation game, etc. Nishtha classes are always fun and because of these games we get to learn many things.

I hope to share more on these games in the future edition of our magazine.

To watch the video on *Yogic Games*



Onam Celebration

8th September 2022

@

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EVENTS CONDUCTED

Inauguration of Hathavidya Traditional Yoga, Malaysia



Indian Retreat at Thopobhoomi, Kerala



OM Workshop in Dubai



International Yoga Day Celebration



Workshop on Insight into Yoga Asanas in Malaysia



Tradition Speaks Workshop in Malaysia



10th Anniversary celebration in Dubai



Inauguration of YAI, Malaysia Division

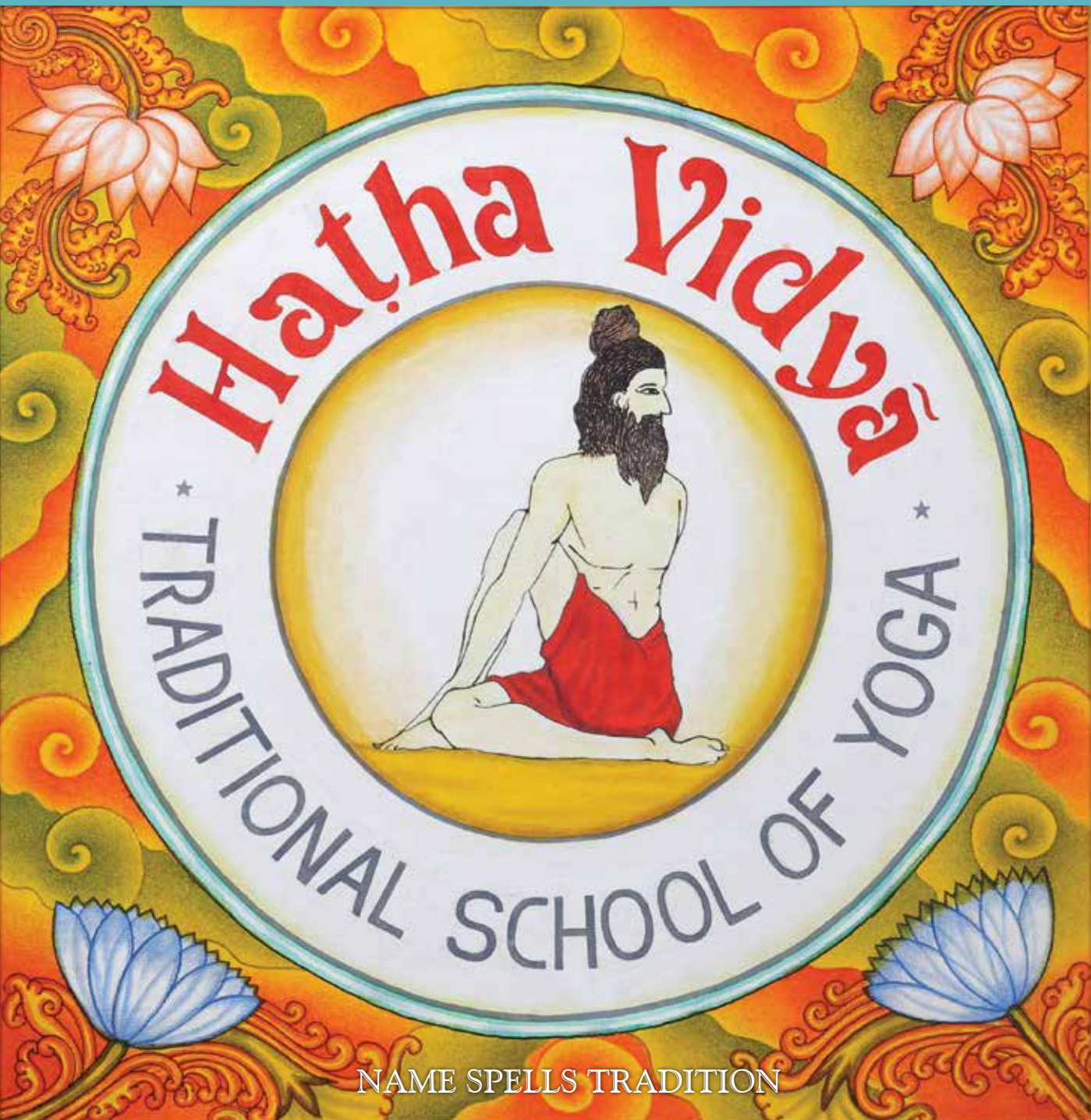


Guru Purnima Celebration in Dubai



Corporate events in Dubai





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