PG YG S1-02 (DSC)

TWO YEAR MASTER'S DEGREE COURSE

(CBCS in Accordance with NEP 2020)

SEMESTER - I

HATHA YOGA TEXTS

Guru Prasad Das School of Interdisciplinary and Vocational Studies

KRISHNA KANTA HANDIQUI STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY

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October, 2025

ISBN

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Printed and published by Registrar on behalf of the Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University.

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COURSE INTRODUCTION

This is the Second Discipline Specific Core (DSC) course of the MA Yoga Programme. This course introduces the learners to Hatha Yoga Texts. This course will introduce you with the various topics of Hatha yogic practices and Hatha Yoga Texts. There are fourteen units in this course. The 1st unit introduces you to Introduction of Hatha Yoga; here Meaning and definition, Aims and objectives, Misconception about on Hatha yoga discussed in detail. The 2nd unit deals with Brief introduction of Hatha Yoga Texts. The 3rd unit is about the preparation for the practice of Hatha Yoga - I; here proper place, Season and time for the practice of Hatha Yoga discussed in detail. The 4th unit is about the Preparation for the practice of Hatha Yoga - II; here elements of success and failure in Hatha Yoga, Symptoms of Hatha Siddhi discussed in detail. The 5th unit is about the Preparation for the practice of Hatha Yoga - III; here Diet for Hatha Yogi, Concept of Mitahara discussed in detail. The 6th unit is about the Hatha Yoga practices - Shatkarma. The 7th unit is about the Hatha Yoga Practices- Asana. The 8th unit is about the Asanas in Hatha Yoga Texts.

The 9th unit is about the Hatha Yoga Practices -Pranayama. The 10th unit deals with the Hatha Yoga practices - Pratyahara. The 11th unit is about the Hatha Yoga practices-Mudra and Bandha. The 12th unit is about the Yogic Practices - Dharana and Dhyana. The 13th unit is about the Yogic Practices- Samadhi. The 14th unit is about the Yogic Practices - Nadanusandhan

While going through a unit, you may also notice some text boxes, which have been included to help you know some of the difficult terms and concepts. You will also read about some relevant ideas and concepts in 'LET US KNOW' along with text we have kept 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS' questions in each unit. These have been designed to self-check your progress of study. The hints for the answers to these questions are given at end of the unit. We advise that you answer the questions immediately after finish reading the unit in which these questions occur. We have also included a few books in the 'FURTHER READING' list which will be helpful for further consultation.

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UNIT 1: INTRODUCTION TO HATHA YOGA

UNIT STRUCTURE

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1.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, the you will be able to:

- know about the origins of Hatha Yoga
- know the Meaning and Purpose of Hatha Yoga
- know the relationship between Hatha Yoga and Raja Yoga
- know the common myths and misunderstandings about Hatha Yoga
- know the practices involved in Hatha Yoga

1.2 INTRODUCTION

The Hatha Yoga practice brings balance and harmony to the body and mind through physical, mental, and spiritual practices.

Traditionally, Ha represents the sun (active, masculine energy) and Tha represents the moon (receptive, feminine energy). The goal of Hatha Yoga is to harmonize these opposing forces within us. Hatha Yoga is a foundational branch of yoga that emphasizes physical postures, breath control, and mindfulness in order to create balance in the body and mind. There are many modern yoga styles that are derived from Hatha Yoga, including Vinyasa, Power Yoga, and Iyengar.

1.3 THE ORIGIN OF HATHA YOGA

In Mahayoga, Hatha Yoga is considered an important principle of Yogachatushtaya. Adinath, who is also known as Param Shiva, is considered the supreme Adi Acharya of Hatha Yoga. Shri Adinath himself preached Hathayogavidya. According to Shri Swatmaram, the founder of Hatha Yoga, Shri Adinath was the first preacher of Hatha Yoga and he saluted him at the beginning of *Hatha Pradipika* (the authentic book of Hatha Yoga).

'श्रीआदिनाथायनमोऽस्तुतस्मैयेनोपदिष्टाहठयोगविद्या।'

Lord Shiva says in *Shiv Samhita* that the god himself imparts Yoga Shastra discipline to those who desire self-liberation and have a unique path. According to almost all Hatha Yoga texts, Hatha Yoga originates from

Adinath since the entire creation is believed to be a result of Adinath's action, will, and power. All Nath followers believe that Shiva is the first Nath. In Hatha Yoga, the basic goal is Rajayoga, and only through Rajayoga can the living being reach its ultimate goal, Kaivalya.

"Hatha" is composed of two Sanskrit words: "Ha," which represents the sun or active energies, and "Tha," which represents the moon or passive energies. Thus, Hatha Yoga represents the union of opposing forces within the practitioner to achieve a state of equilibrium and readiness for higher perceptions.

Hatha Yoga derives from ancient Indian texts, including the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika, Gheranda Samhita, Hatha Ratnavali, Siddha Siddhant Paddhati*, which describe techniques for purifying the body, stabilizing the mind, and attaining spiritual liberation. The purpose of Hatha Yoga is to prepare you for Raja Yoga, which emphasizes physical discipline as a means of transcendence, as described by Patanjali.

1.4 MEANING AND DEFINITION OF HATHA YOGA

Hatha is made up of the letters ‘Ha’ and ‘Tha’.As stated in Shri Gorakshanath’s Siddhasiddhantapaddhati, Hakar is supposed to represent Surya Nadi, whereas Thakar is supposed to represent Chandra Nadi. The combination of the Sun and the Moon is known as Hatha Yoga, that is the union of several prana vayus flowing in both nadis.

हकारःकीर्तितःसूर्यष्ठकारश्चन्द्रउच्चते।
सूर्याचन्द्रमसोयोंगाद्हठयोगोनिगद्यते।। (सि. सि. प. 1/69)

In Hatha Ratnavali-

"हकारोहननंदोषैःठकारस्तनुलाघवम्।
हठयोगइतिप्रोक्तःसिद्धिमार्गप्रकाशकः ॥"

- **हकारः (Ha):** Represents the destruction of impurities (physical and mental).
- **ठकारः (Tha):** Represents lightness or steadiness of the body.

Together, “Hatha Yoga” refers to the yogic practices that purify and prepare the body-mind system, paving the way for the realization of higher

spiritual truths and liberation. It is the path that illuminates the attainment of siddhis (perfections).

In addition to the significance stated in *Yogashikhopanishad* and *Siddhasiddhantapaddhati,* it is said that Hatha Yoga eliminates all forms of inertia and faults (Pittaja, Kaphaja, and Vataja) that arise in the human body. The right side of the human body is believed to hold Suryanadi, while the left side, or left section of the nose, is believed to include Chandranadi. Ida is the given name of the left nadi, and Pingala is the name of the right. They are referred to as Shashi and Mihir, respectively, in the Shatchakra representation. In the ancient texts of Hatha Yoga, several types of nadis have been introduced, and these nadis are also considered synonyms for various names.

Thakar	Ida	Surya	Ravi	Mihir	Yamuna	Raj	Shakti	Prana	Adha
Hakar	Pingla	Chandra	Shashi	Man	Ganga	Bindu	Shiva	Apana	Urdhva

1.5 AIM OF HATHA YOGA

Ordinary individuals who are not good communicators cannot achieve Rajayoga Vidya, the best of all the yogas. Therefore, the question of how people with restless minds might achieve Raja Yoga occurs. What might be the most straightforward and rational reply to this important query? Addressing this meaningfully, SwatmaramaYogindra, the author of *Hatha Pradipika,* says:

केवलंराजयोगायहठविद्योपदिश्यते।। ह. प्र. १/२

Hatha Yoga must be practiced for achieving the high wisdom of Raja Yoga, just as a fine staircase is necessary to ascend to a tall building. Hatha Yoga was created with the specific purpose of achieving Raja yoga. In his commentary on *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, Jyotsna commentator Brahmananda Ji said that it is Raja Yoga, not the siddhis (supernatural powers), is the primary fruit (goal) of Hatha Vidya. Siddhis, like the byproducts of sowing, are merely secondary fruits.

हठंबिनाराजयोगोराजयोगंबिनाहठः।
नसिद्धयतिततोनिष्यद्वयन्तेसमभ्यसेत्।। ह. प्र. 2/76

Raja Yoga and Hatha Yoga are interdependent, the two forms of yoga cannot be accomplished without each other. Both forms of yoga should be practiced continuously until Rajayoga is attained. It means that unless Rajayoga is attained, a regular practice of miscellaneous Asanas, Suryabhedana Pranayam, Mahamudra, etc., should be maintained. According to Swatmaram Ji, practitioners who continue to practice simply Hatha Yoga without understanding the purpose of Rajayoga, only waste their time and energy. Swatmaram ji has even mentioned that the Hatha (Asana, Kumbhaka, Mudra, etc.) and rhythmic (Nadanusandhan, Shambhavi mudra, etc.) can be used in the context of Hatha Yoga-Rajayoga. The practitioner who has attained Rajayoga through these measures becomes like one who conquers time.

1.6 BRIEF OVERVIEW OF HATHA YOGIC PRACTICES

शोधनंदृढताचैवस्थैर्यंधैर्यंचलाघवम्।
प्रत्यक्षंचनिर्लिप्तंचघटस्यसप्तसाधनम्।। घ.स.-1/9 ।।

Thee seven components of yoga which contribute to the process of maturation of the body are as follows – Refinement, Determination, Stability, Patience, Smallness, Perception and Detachment.

1.6.1 Shatkarmas (Cleansing Practices)

Shatkarmas, or cleansing practices, refer to six main techniques: **Dhauti**, **Basti**, **Neti**, **Nauli (Lauki)**, **Trataka**, and **Kapalabhati**. These practices are performed to purify the body.

1.6.2 Asanas (Postures)

By “asana,” we mean a steady and comfortable body position that enables prolonged practice. According to several Hatha Yogic scriptures, Lord Adinatha (Shiva) is acknowledged as the knower of all 8.4 million asanas of which 84 asanas are regarded as having the highest power; in other situations, the number may be lowered to

32, 15, 4, or 2. Siddhasana and Padmasana are considered the best among them. Asanas are ranked third by Maharishi Patanjali, although in yogic texts, they are considered as the first or second limb of yoga from a practicing point of view.

1.6.3 Mudras (Gestures or Seals)

The concept of "Mudam Dadati Iti Mudra," which states that whatever brings happiness is a Mudra. In the practice of Hatha Yoga, mudras are important. The *Hatha Pradipika* and *Hatha Ratnavali* mention ten major mudras, but the *Gheranda Samhita* includes twenty-five.

1.6.4 Pratyahara (Sense Withdrawal)

Pratyahara, which refers to "to withdraw" (Prati-Ahar), describes the act of detaching the mind from the senses. In order to regulate the inner self, it entails managing the mind's attachment to sensory items.

1.6.5 Pranayama (Breath Control)

The control of the vital forces in the body is known as pranayama. The practitioner stabilizes the flow of prana within the body's energy channels (Nadis) by using pranayama. Pranayama is necessary to calm the mind's pressure because unstable prana causes the mind to become restless. Puraka (inhalation), Rechaka (exhalation), and Kumbhaka (retention) are the three primary forms of pranayama.

1.6.6 Dhyana (Meditation)

The word Dhyana originates from the root "Dhyai" which means to contemplate. Dhyana refers to complete absorption of the mind in a meditation object. As long as the mind remains focused on the object during meditation, this state is called Dhyana. It is the immovable contemplation of the inner self that yogis practice. It is through memory that all forms of thought can be established, according to

Yogi Gorakshanath.

Dhyana is the pure and detached contemplation of the eternal, attribute-less Absolute. (Alakh Niranjan). In this state, the practitioners achieve complete self-realization and eliminate their mind of mental disturbance. Three kinds of meditation are described in the *Gheranda Samhita*-Jyoti Dhyana (meditation on light), Sukshma Dhyana (subtle meditation), and Sthula Dhyana (gross meditation).

1.6.7 Samadhi (Absorption)

Samadhi is the state in which all mental fluctuations are in equilibrium. Meditation naturally continues into Samadhi when the mind becomes totally absorbed in the object of meditation. The difference between the meditator, the act of meditation, and the object of meditation disappears when the practitioner's mind totally merges with concentration. Samadhi is the result of this union. Liberation (Moksha) is the outcome of the meditation when it connects to the Supreme Self.

1.7 MYTHS AND MISCONCEPTION ABOUT HATHA YOGA

Despite its popularity, Hatha Yoga is still perceived among the general public as a simple yoga practice that is difficult to practice. There is a strong belief that its practice poses a high risk of harm. There is a lack of understanding of the true meaning of the term 'Hatha,' which leads to this misconception. Some people feel offended when they hear the word 'Hatha'. Consider the following misconceptions for example-

1. Hatha Yoga is believed as the science of forceful contemplation.
2. It is thought to be connected with a specific religion.
3. It is supposed to be merely a part of Indian philosophy.
4. Hatha Yoga is misunderstood as a practice of abandoning one's duties, relatives, etc.
5. It is assumed to be a practice only for monks (sanyasi).
6. It is seen as a set of practices just for maintaining health.

7. Hatha Yoga is often reduced to a method for weight loss.
8. It is commonly associated with asanas and pranayama alone.
9. Hatha Yoga can be practiced anytime and anywhere.
10. The meditative techniques are supposed to be its sole focus.
11. It is wrongly believed that only healthy individuals can practice Hatha Yoga.
12. Hatha Yoga is the path to achieve mystical powers.
13. It is also falsely regarded as a form of black magic.
14. It is believed to be exceedingly difficult, with high chances of harm.
15. Upon learning about experimental practices like Basti Kriya, Vaman Kriya, Kunjal (or Gajkarni), Neti, Vajroli, etc., people often label Hatha Yoga as aobjectionable practice.

These misconceptions reflect a lack of understanding of the true essence and purpose of Hatha Yoga.

1.8 SADHAK-BADHAK TATTVA

According to Swami Swatmaram, there are six obstacles that prevent a practitioner from attaining success in yoga. Therefore, one should avoid these factors.

Overeating, overexertion, excessive talking, adhering to rules, company of common people, and unsteadiness are six things that hinder progress in yoga.

अत्याहारःप्रयासश्चप्रजल्पोनियमग्रहः।
जनसगश्चलौल्यंचषडभिर्योगोविनश्यति।। (ह.यो. प्र.१/१५)

1) **Atyahar =** consuming excessive food items. (eating more than expected)
2) **Effort =** doing extremely laborious, useless work.
3) **Prajalp =** speaking more than necessary
4) **Niyamagraha =** Following rules that cause pain to the body.
5) **Janasang =** Practicing yoga where a lot of people reside is called Janas because excessive Janas is productive of lust etc.

6) **Laulya =** The meaning of the word Laulya is restlessness. A yoga practitioner should always remain without restlessness.

उत्साहात्साहसात्धैर्यात्तत्त्वज्ञानाच्चनिश्चयात।
जनसगपरित्यागात्षड्भिर्योगःप्रसिद्धयति।। ह. प्र. 1/१६

Sadhak tattva, which discusses how to achieve success (sadhak) on the yoga path, is actually a way of life.

Enthusiasm, courage, patience, knowledge of reality, resolve and renunciation of public association are the six factors that lead to the perfection of yoga practice, that is, these six are the seeking elements. The yogi should always adopt these seeking elements.

1) **Enthusiasm:** Always making efforts to divert the mind from the subject which is engrossed in various worldly subjects
2) **Courage:** Immediate practice without considering the dualities of achievable, success or failure, etc.,
3) **Patience:** firm practice to achieve success in life
4) **Tattwagyan:** seeker should acquire knowledge through scriptures and Guru's teachings.
5) **Nischay:** have faith and devotion in Sadhna
6) **Janasangaparityaga:** Always abandon the excessive public contact that can affects practice

Hatha Siddhi Lakshan : Swatmaram Yogindra, the author of *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, has explained the characteristics of Hatha Siddhi (skill) by the practice of pranayama in *Hatha Yoga Pradipika.*

वपुःकृशत्वंवदनेप्रसन्नतानादस्फुऽत्वंनयनेसुनिर्मले।।
अरोग्यताबिन्दुजयोऽग्निदीपनंनाड़ीविशुद्धिर्हठयोगलक्षणम्।। (ह.प्र.2/78)

Slimness of the body, happiness on the face, clarity of sound, bright eyes, good health, Bindujaya, good digestive fire, nadi purification, etc. are the symptoms of Hathasiddhi.

1.9 IMPORTANT HATHA YOGIC TEXT

1. ***Hathayoga Pradipika*:** *Hatha Pradipika* is an authentic text of Hatha Yoga. It is divided into four chapters. The author of the text is Swami Swatmaram.

I. **First Chapter :** Asanavidhi – Number of verses is 67. In the first verse of the first chapter itself, it has been told that yoga practice is the means to attain the higher state of Rajayoga. In the first chapter, the names of various Yogasiddhas are mentioned.

हठविद्यांहिमत्स्येद्रगोरक्षाद्याविजानते।
स्वात्मारामोऽथवायोगीजानीतेतत्प्रसादतः।। ह. प्र. 1/9 ।।

Matsyendra Nagorakshanath is considered an expert in Hatha Yoga and with his blessings, Swami Swatmaram also became an expert in Yoga.

In this chapter, the asanas for stability and health of the body, Sadahaka- Badhaka Tatva, concept of Matha have been introduced. After that, the four main meditative postures Siddhasana, Padmasana, Bhadrasana and Simhasana have been introduced and finally Pathy-Apathya has been described.

II. **Second Chapter:** Pranayama Concept- Number of verses is 78. These include Shatkarma, Dhauti, Basti, Neti, Tratak, Nauli and Kapalbhati. Thereafter, there is discussion of Nadishodhana and eight types of Kumbhakas. Along with Pranayam, their effects have also been explained.There are eight Kumbhaks like Suryabhedan, Ujjayi, Sitkari, Shitali, Bhastrika, Bhramari, Murchha and Plavani etc. which have been kept in the category of Sahit Kumbhak. Another Kumbhaka-kevala was also indicated.

III. **Third Chapter:** In the third chapter, concept of Mudra is described in 126 verses in which there is a detailed description of 10 mudras for awakening the Kundalini. These 10 postures are Mahamudra, Mahabandha, Mahavedha, Khechari, Udiyan, Moola and Jalandhar Bandha, Viparitakarani, Vajroli and Shakti-Chalaan.

IV. **Fourth Chapter**: In the fourth chapter, the symptoms of Samadhi have been described in 114 verses.

Note-There are five chapters described in the Kaivalyadhama publication which comprises yoga therapy.

2. ***Gheranda Samhita:*** *Gheranda Samhita* is a well-organized book written on Hatha Yoga, which is believed to have been composed around the 17th-18th century. This book is written in the form of a dialogue between Maharishi Gheranda and Chandakpali. In this text, Hatha Yoga is expressed as 'Ghatastha Yoga' where the word 'Ghat' represents the physical body. *Gheranda Samhita* is divided into seven chapters.

- In the first chapter - Verse 59 - in which in order of Shatkarma Sadhana for body purification - 13 types of Dhauti, 2 types of Basti, 1 type of Neti, 1 type of Tratak, 3 types of Nauli and Kapalbhati are described.
- Chapter II- Verse 45- Concept of Asana-32 types of asanas are described.
- Chapter III - Verse 70- Concept of Mudra- 25 types of Mudrasare described.
- Chapter IV- Verse 7- Concept of Pratyahara
- Chapter V- Verse 91- Eight types of Pranayama, along with Sabeej and nirbeej
- Chapter VI- Verse 22- Three types of Dhyana.
- Chapter VII- Verse 23- Six types of Samadhi.

3. ***Siddha siddhanta paddhati****:* Guru Gorakshanath initiated the way for public welfare by creating the *Siddha siddhanta paddhati* along with the realization of the supreme power. In this text, suffient light has been thrown on Nathyoga. In the six teachings of this book, we find the description of Mahayoga Gyanamrit, in which it has been described how the universe, diverse and consisting of many material substances, has emerged from a dynamic, spiritual ultimate truth. In the six teachings of Siddhasiddhantapaddhiti, 1. Pindotpatti, 2. Pindavichar, 3. Pindasanvitri, 4. Pindaadhar, 5. Pinda-padsamaras bhava and 6. Nityavadhut signs etc., the eternal, unchangeable Supreme Being should be accepted as the pro-pound able for the

yoga seeker. The form or method of interruption has been ensured. Gorakshanath ji has also explained the essence of the Sadhana Kriya of Hatha Yoga in the Siddhasiddhanta method. The practice of Hatha Yoga is actually the practice of life and it becomes fruitful only with the accomplishment of Pranayama. Only by controlling the prana, the nadis are purified, the strength of the body is maintained and the mind remains controlled and stable. When the Prana becomes established in the consciousness, the Yogi controls all the achievements. These nerves originate from Mulakanda. Of the seventy-two thousand nadis originating from Moolakanda, ten nadis are prominent. Among these, Ida Chandra and Pingala Surya Nadi are called. It flows through the left and right nostrils. In between these, Sushumna flows from Brahmandmarg to Brahmarandhra. Originating from Mulkand itself, the nadis named Saraswati, Pusha, Alambusha, Gandhari, Hastijihvaka, Kuhu and Shaini flow.

4. ***Hatha Ratnavali*** **:** This is an important book of Hatha Yoga written by Srinivas Bhatt Mahayogindra in which a detailed introduction of Hatha Yoga has been given by giving examples of Hatha Yoga Pradipika and Shiv Samhita. In this book divided into four chapters, instead of Shatkarmas, Ashtakarmas are discussed and a total of 37 types of asanas are described. In this, examples of yogis like Gorakshanath, Yogiyyavalkya, Dattatreya etc. are found.
   - **I. First Chapter:** There are 87 verses in the first chapter. According to Shri Nivasbhatta, the purpose of Yogavidya discussed in Hatharatnavali is only for the attainment of Rajayoga. Here four types of yogas, Mantrayoga, Layyoga, Rajyoga and Hathayoga, are considered to lead to salvation. In this chapter, there is discussion of Chakrakarma, Nauli, Bahyanauli, Antara Nauli, Dhauti, Basti, Gajakarni, Tratak, Kapalbhati, Pathyapathya and various hatha yogis.
   - **II. Second Chapter:** There are 148 verses in the second chapter. This chapter describes Suryabhedan, Ujjayi, Sitkari, Shitali, Bhastrika, Bhramari, Murchha, Keval Kumbhaka etc. Also, in

this chapter there is a detailed description of 13 types of mudras including Sahajoli and Amroli.

III. **Third Chapter:** There are 99 verses in the third chapter. Asanas are discussed in this chapter. In this, a list of 84 asanas prescribed by Shivodit is given. Many types of asanas are discussed, describing Siddhasana as the best among the asanas, in which meditative asanas like Siddhasana, Padmasana, SimhasanaBhadrasana etc. are described. Also, there is a description of 'Pranayama' at the end of the chapter.

IV. **Fourth chapter:** Samadhi is discussed in the fourth chapter. There is a description of the four stages of Nadanusandhana and Yoga: Aarambhavastha, Ghatavastha, Parichayvastha and Nishpattyavastha.

V. **Shiv Samhita**: This text is the conversation between Lord Shiva and Maa Parwati. Its author is unknown. There are five chapters in total.

I. Chapter One: There are total 96 verses. In this the continuity of knowledge has been discussed. Also, soul, God, world etc. have been discussed and finally the origin of Maya and creation has been discussed. Maya has been called the mother of the world.

मायैवविश्वजननीनान्यातत्त्वधियापरा। (शि.सं.1/64)

It has also been said that a living being is reborn due to his actions.

जीवश्चजीयतेभोगावसानेचस्वकर्मवाः।। (शि.सं.1/96)

II. Chapter Two: In the second chapter, 35,000 nadis have been discussed while explaining the body of the universe. Out of which 14 Nadias are main. The cause of a living being's suffering is its actions and lust is the cause of all types of delusions. Desire ends with the emergence of knowledge.

कामादयोविलयतेज्ञानदेवनचान्यथा।
अभावेसर्वतत्वानांस्वयंतत्त्वंप्रकाशते।(शि.सं.2/54)

III. Chapter Three: In the third chapter, prana and sub-prana are described. In this chapter, the importance of Guru, authority of Yoga, appropriate place for Yoga, Pranayam, Pathyapathya and stages of Yoga practice have been discussed. There is a special explanation of Kakanchu, Shitali and Shitakari Pranayama. Among the asanas, Siddhasana, Padmasana, Vajrasana and Swastikasana are introduced in the same chapter.

IV. Chapter Four: In the fourth chapter there is a description of mudra for awakening the horoscope. There is a specific discussion of Mahamudra, Mahabandha, Mahavedha, Khechari, Jalandhar Bandha, Viparitakarni, Uddiyanabandha, Shaktichalana.

V. Chapter five: In the fifth chapter, Lord Shiva answers the questions of Goddess Parvati and explains the obstacles of the path of yoga.

ईश्वरउवाच।।

श्रृणुदेवीप्रवक्ष्यामियथाविघ्नाःस्थिताःसदा।

मुक्तिप्रतिनराणान्चभोगःप्रबंधनः।। (शि.सं.5/2)



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1 Fill in the blanks

i) "Ha" represents the _____ and "Tha" represents the _____.

Ii) Shatkarmas are Dhauti, Basti, Neti, Nauli, _____ and Kapalabhati

iii) Obstacles are overeating, overexertion, excessive talk, rigid rules, restlessness and _____

Q2. Write the names of any three Hatha Yoga texts.

Q3. What is meditation?

Q4. How many mudra mention in Hatha yoga pradipika?

Q5. Write down any three sadhak tattva.



1.10 LET US SUM UP

Introduction

- Hatha Yoga harmonizes body and mind through physical, mental, and spiritual practices.
- “Ha” represents the sun (active energy), and “Tha” represents the moon (receptive energy).
- Modern yoga styles like Vinyasa and Iyengar have been derived from Hatha Yoga.

Origin of Hatha Yoga

- Rooted in Nath Tradition
- Emphasized in texts like Hatha Yoga Pradipika, Gheranda Samhita, Shiv Samhita etc.
- Adinath (Lord Shiva) is considered the originator of Hatha Yoga.
- Goal: Achieve Raja Yoga and Kaivalya (liberation).

Meaning and Definition of Hatha Yoga

- Combines “Ha” (sun) and “Tha” (moon) energies for balance and purification.
- Aims to eliminate physical/mental impurities and enhance lightness.
- Described in ancient texts like *Siddha siddhanta paddhati* and *Hatha Ratnavali.*

Aim of Hatha Yoga

- Serves as a preparatory path to Raja Yoga.
- Swatmaram Yogindra describes it as a “staircase” to Raja Yoga.
- Both Hatha and Raja Yoga are interdependent and must be practiced together.

Saptanga Yoga:

1. **Shatkarmas (Cleansing Practices)**: Dhauti, Basti, Neti, Nauli, Trataka, Kapalabhati.
2. **Asanas (Postures)**: Emphasizes steady, comfortable postures like Siddhasana and Padmasana.

3. **Mudras (Gestures)**: Techniques for channeling energy; e.g., ten mudras in *Hatha Pradipika.*
4. **Pratyahara (Sense Withdrawal)**: Detachment from sensory objects for inner focus.
5. **Pranayama (Breath Control)**: Stabilizing prana through Puraka, Rechaka, and Kumbhaka.
6. **Dhyana (Meditation)**: Focus on inner self for self-realization and mental clarity.
7. **Samadhi (Absorption)**: Ultimate union of meditator, meditation, and object.

Myths and Misconceptions about Hatha Yoga

- Misunderstood as forceful, religious, or mystical.
- Assumed to be only for health, weight loss, or monks.
- Seen as difficult or risky due to practices like Basti and Neti.
- **Obstacles (Badhak Tattva)**: Overeating, overexertion, excessive talk, rigid rules, restlessness, socializing.
- **Success Factors (Sadhak)**: Enthusiasm, courage, patience, knowledge, faith, renunciation of distractions.
- Sign of Hatha Siddhi- Slim body, cheerful face, clarity of sound, bright eyes, good health, and purified nadis.



1.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Q1. i) Sun and Moon

ii) Tratak

iii) Socializing

Answer to Q2. *Hatha Yoga pradipika, Goraksha Samhita* and *Shiva Samhita*

Answer to Q3. Focus on inner self for self-realization and mental clarity.

Answer to Q4. 10

Answer to Q5. Enthusiasm, courage, patience, knowledge, faith, renunciation of distractions.



1.12 MODEL QUESTIONS

Short Questions

1) Explain Pratyahaara and Dhyana according to *Gheranda Samhita.*
2) Explain the method, benefits and precautions of Maha-Mudra, Maha-Vedh and Vipreetkarni mudra
3) Write a short note on the origin of Hatha Yoga.
4) Write definition and objective of Hatha Yoga.
5) Write down the method of Plawani and Murchha Pranayama.
6) Explain the method, benefits and precautions of Swastik Asana.
7) What do you understand by Hatha Yoga?
8) Write some of misconceptions of Hatha Yoga.
9) Name 'shatkarma' according to *Hatha Ratnavali.*
10) Name and benefits of Saptasadhana given by Maharishi Gheranda.

Essay Questions

1) Write an essay on Symptoms of Hatha Siddhi.
2) Define Nadanusandhan and clarify its different types according to *Hatha Pradipika.*
3) Explain Shatkarma according to *Gheranda Samhita.*
4) Give the general introduction of the Book – *Siddha-Siddhanta Paddhati.*
5) Clarify the meaning of Dhauti. Discuss the technique, benefits and precautions of their different types according to *Gheranda Samhita*.
6) What do you understand by Hathyoga ? Describe the different types of Asana, Pranayama and Mudras mentioned in *Hatha Ratnavali.*

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UNIT 2 : BRIEF INTRODUCTION OF HATHA YOGA TEXTS

UNIT STRUCTURE

2.1 Learning Objectives

2.2 Introduction

2.3 *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* - A Brief introduction

2.4 *Gheranda Samhita* - A Brief Introduction

2.5 *Goraksha Samhita* - A Brief introduction

2.6 *Hatha Ratnavali* - A Brief introduction

2.7 *Siddha Siddhanta Paddhati* - A Brief introduction

2.8 Let us Sum up

2.9 Further Reading

2.10 Answers to Check Your Progress

2.11 Model Questions

2.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- discuss the basic concepts hatha yogic texts.
- explain the importance of hatha yoga.
- highlight the elements of success and failure in hatha yoga
- know about the authors of various hatha yogic texts

2.2 INTRODUCTION

To purify the mind, the entire body must undergo a process of ultimate purification. Hatha yoga is also known as the science of purification, which includes six different forms. The body must be washed six times to remove six different contaminants. When you cleanse your body of these toxins, the Nadis function and energy blocks are released. The energies then travel through the channels of the body like wave frequencies, eventually reaching the brain. Hatha yoga is thus regarded as the foundational practice of tantra,

raja yoga, kundalini yoga, and kriya yoga. When the rishis discovered the knowledge of hatha yoga, they did not intend it for therapeutic purposes. Although yoga has proven to be quite successful in the treatment of many severe and incurable diseases, its therapeutic effect is just accidental. The primary goal of hatha yoga is to achieve perfect equilibrium in the interacting activities and processes of the physical body, mind, and energy. When this equilibrium is achieved, the impulses generate a signal to wake up awakening to the central force, Sushumna Nadi, which is responsible for the evolution of human consciousness. If hatha yoga is not employed for this reason, the fundamental goal is lost.

In yogic literature we have a number of reliable texts on hatha yoga. Among them, the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* by Yogi Swatmarama is a very well-known one. Another by guru Yogi Gorakhnath is known as the *Goraksha Samhita* and *Siddha-Siddhant-Paddhati.* The fourth text is *Gheranda Samhita* by the great sage Gheranda. Besides these there is a fifth major text known as Hatha Ratnavali which was written later by Srinivasa Bhatta Mahayogindra. All these texts are considered to have been written between the 6th and 15th centuries AD. In ancient times Hatha yoga was practiced for many years as a preparation for higher states of consciousness. The word 'Hatha' is made up of two Bija Mantra: 'Ha' and 'Tha'; where 'Ha' represents Sun or Pingala Nadi and 'Tha' represents Moon or Ida Nadi. Basically, the union of these two Nadis is called Hatha Yoga.

2.3 HATHA YOGA PRADIPIKA - A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

The *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* (HYP) is a foundational text of Hatha Yoga, written in Sanskrit in the 15th century by Swami Swatmarama. The text emphasizes the importance of balancing the energies of the body and the mind through yoga practice, with the ultimate goal of achieving spiritual liberation. The text is divided into four sections or Upadeshas: Asana, Shatkarmas and Pranayama, Mudra and Bandhas and Nadanusandhan. It also discusses the importance of proper diet, suitable place of practice and the concept of Mitahara.

The First Upadesha (chapter):

ASANA:

The first limb of *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* is considered to be Asana in Hatha Yoga Pradipika. According to Hatha yoga Asana is a specific position which opens the energy channels and psychic centers. The hatha yogis also found that by developing control of the body through asana, the mind can be brought under control. Therefore, asana practice is foremost in hatha yoga. When you practice asana, steadiness develops. Prana moves freely and there is less chance of disease occurring. The yogic tradition says that in totality, there are eighty-four lakhs of asanas. However, it is impossible to describe all of them. In the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* only fifteen asanas have been discussed. They are as follows: The **Svastikasana, Gomukhasana, Virasana, Kurmasana, Kukkutasana, Uttana Kurmasana, Dhanurasana, Matsyasana, Pascimatanasana, Mayurasana, Savasana, Salvasana, Padmasana, Singhasana, Bhadrasana.**

Characteristics of Hatha-Siddhi:

It is mentioned in the *Hatha yoga Pradeepika* that regular practice of any yoga technique creates a pattern in the body and mind, and after many years of practice, perfection is attained, regardless of the initial circumstances. Perfection results from practical application and can only come by training the body and refining the gross consciousness. When a yogi achieves success in hatha yoga through continuous practice, certain signs of success are shown on the yogi's appearance. These signs are: slimness of the body, cheerful face, hearing of the mystical sound, shining eyes, sense of wellness, Control over bindu, increase in gastric fire, purification of the Nadis.

The Second Upadesha (Chapter)

Shatkarma and Pranayama:

SHATKARMA: It is effective when fat or mucus is in disproportionate quantity. Shatkarma or the six cleansing techniques should be practiced before Pranayama. Others, in whom the doshas, i.e. phlegm, wind and bile, are balanced, should not practice them.

DhautirbastistathanetistramakaCnaulikaCtatha /

Kapala-bhatischaitanicham-karmaGiprachakchate || 2/22 ||

'Karmashatkamidanggopangghatashodhankarkam'

Vichitra-ghuGa-sandhayapujyateyoghi-pungghavai% ll2/23ll

Dhauti, Basti, Neti, Trataka, Nauli and Kapalbhati, these are known as shatkarma or the six cleansing processes. The practice of these shatkarma brings in purification of the body. They have manifold, wondrous results and are held in high esteem by eminent yogis. The shatkarma are very powerful practices that can never be learned from books or taught by inexperienced people. The shatkarma specifically increase the vital capacity of the practitioner. They were never designed for therapy alone, but to create harmony in the body and mind and to prepare one for further practices. As they bring about smooth and perfect functioning of the bodily systems, it is inevitable that through their practice the mind becomes free from turbulence and disturbances and thus becomes enabled to concentrate and to move towards dhyana.

PRANAYAMA: To practice Pranayama, a Yogi should control their senses and eat moderate food. Breathing should be steady and when it stops, the mind becomes still. Purifying the Nadis, which are full of impurities, is necessary for proper regulation of Praòa. The process involves adopting Padmasana, drawing in breath through the Candra, exhaling through Surya, and filling the thoracic cavity with Kumbhak. Pranayama, or inhaling through the nose, is a method that can help eliminate diseases. However, improper practice can lead to various ailments, such as hiccups, asthma, coughs, and eye pain. Purifying the Nadis can lead to improved physical appearance, increased gastric heat, and improved health.

Sûryabhedanamujjâyisitkârîúitalitathâ /

bhastrikâbhrâmarimûrcchâplâvinîtyaºtakumbhakâ%//44/7)

There are eight (kinds of) Kumbhakas; viz. Suiryabhedana, Ujjayi, Sitkari, Sitali, Bhastrika, Bhramari, Murccha and Plavini.

The Third Upadesha (Chapter)

Mudra and Bandha:

Hathayoga Pradipika has listed 10 main mudras which are to be practiced to raise the Kundalini shakti. These 10 mudras are- Maha Mudra, Maha Bandha, Maha Vedha, Khechari, Uddiyana,Moola Bandha, Jalandhara Bandha, Vipareeta Karani Mudra, Vajroli and Shakti Chalana.It is believed that these 10 mudras have been spoken of by Adinath Shiva himself. Adinath said they are the bestowers of the eight divine powers. They are held in high esteem by all the siddhas and are difficult for even the gods to attain. These mudras should be kept secret by every means, as one keeps one's box of jewellery, and just as husband and wife keep their dealings secret.

The Fourth Upadesha (Chapter)

Samadhi:

Nadanusandhan is a technique of Samadhi, a Hatha Yoga practice aimed at attaining ultimate truth. It involves hearing an internally aroused sound without friction, allowing the mind to absorb and experience ecstasy. This method is beneficial for those unable to understand knowledge principles and it is easy to practice.

Process of Nadanusandhan: Nadanusandhan involves sitting in Muktasana or Siddhasana, hearing a sound (nada) inside one's right ear, closed with thumbs, eyes, nose, and mouth. The sound is heard in the cleansed Susumna passage.The four stages of Nada in yogic practices are:Arambha (beginning), Ghata (vessel), Parichaya (increase), and Nishpatti (consumption). In Arambha, the Brahma granthi is pierced, resulting in happiness and Anahat sounds. In Ghata, airs unite, posture becomes firm, and wisdom is experienced. The Vishnu knot is pierced, resulting in the Bheri sound.In the final stage of perception, kundalini pierces the Ajna chakra and Rudra granthi, resulting in the sound of a flute associated with Lord Krishna.

2.4 GHERANDA SAMHITA - A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

Gheranda Samhita is a Sanskrit text on practical Yoga by Sage Gheranda. It is one of the three classical texts of Hatha Yoga (the other two

being *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* and *Shiva Samhita*), and one of the most encyclopaedic treatises in yoga. It is structured as a teaching manual based on a dialogue between Guru Gheranda and his disciple Chanda Kapali. The *Gheranda Samhita* calls itself a book on Ghatastya Yoga, which literally means 'vessel yoga', wherein the body and the mind are depicted as vessels that carry and serve the soul. He mentions that the body is like an earthen vessel. Just as an earthen vessel gets its strength to hold water only after it is burnt in fire, in the same way if the body is burnt in the fire of yoga, only then it becomes strong and purified. He declares his goal to be perfection of an individual's body, mind and soul through a seven-fold lifelong continuous self-development. The text teaches a seven limbed yoga, in contrast to eight limbed yoga in Patanjali's *Yogasutra.*

The yoga taught in *Gheranda Samhita* is known as Saptanga yoga, seven limbs of yoga. *Gheranda Samhita* has mentioned about seven ways in the form of upadesh/advice to achieve fulfilment in life. So, the chapters are named as Prathamupadesh, Dwityaupadesh etc. The contents of the text are:

Chapter 1: Shodhan- 60 slokas
Chapter 2: Asana- 38 slokas
Chapter 3: Mudra- 100 slokas
Chapter 4: Pratyahar- 5 slokas
Chapter 5: Pranayama- 95 slokas
Chapter 6: Dhyana- 22 slokas
Chapter 7: Samadhi- 23 slokas

Gheranda Samhita mentions the seven fold path for the pugation of the body. This method is a part of Haatha yoga. Gheranda believes that the physical body (ghata) is created to cater to karma samskars.

Shatkarmanashodhanshyaasanenbhabedyadhriham
MudrayashthiratasaibaPratyaharendhirata II10II
Pranayamallaghanshyadhyanatpratyakhyamatnani
Samadhinanirliptanshyamuktirevannasangshayaha'II 11 II

In the sloka no 10 and 11 of chapter 1 of Gheranda Samhita, the characteristics of the sevenfold ways have been described.

- Shatkarma for purification of body
- Asana for strengthening
- Mudra for steadying
- Pratyahara for calming
- Pranayama for lightness
- Dhyana for perception
- Samadhi for isolation

According to Sage Gheranda, these seven qualities are essential for the purity of the Ghata.

Chapter 1

Shodhan:

The shatkarmas purify the body. Their purpose, however, is not only physical purification, but inner purification as well. When the body is purified, internal disorders are removed and good health is achieved. Without such purification the body will not be ready for the higher practices of yoga.

Dhautirvastistathaanetihlaulikeetraatakamtathaa;

Kapaalabhaatishchaitaanishatharmaanisamaacharet. // 12 //

Shatkarma is the first of the sevenfold ways mentioned in the *Gheranda Samhita,* purification is obtained by performing Shatkarmas. In the above mentioned verse, the six types of cleansing practices are listed: Dhauti, Basti, Neti,Lauliki (also called Nauli), Trataka and Kapalbhati.

Chapter 2

Asana:

Drihata/strengthening is the second limb mentioned in the *Gheranda Samhita.* One can attain Drihata by performing Asana. Gheranda explains that there are as many Asanas as there are species on the planet, but there is only 84 principal Asanas. However, there is mention of only 32 Asanas in *Gheranda Samhita* as Gheranda believed that these 32 Asanas are the most important to keep a person healthy.

Gheranda Samhita very Cleary mentions 32 Asanas. They are: **Siddhasana, Padmasana, Bhadrasana, Muktasana, Vajrasana, Swastikasana, Simhasana, Gomukhasana, Veerasana, Dhanurasana,**

Mritasana, Guptasana, Matsyasana, Matsyendrasana, Gorakshasana, Paschimottanasana, Utkatasana, Sankatasana, Mayurasana, Kukkutasana, **Koormasana, Utthankoormasana, Mandukasana, Utthanmandukasana, Vrikshasana, Garudasana**, **Vrishasana, Shalabhasana, Makarasana, Ushtrasana, Bhujangasana** and **Yogasana.**

Chapter 3

Mudra and Bandha:

In the third chapter of *Gheranda Samhita,* mudra and bandha are described. Sage Gheranda imparted this knowledge to Chandakapali to bring about mental stability. There are 25 Mudras mentioned in the Gheranda Samhita Lord Shiva mentioned to Goddess Parvati that these Mudras give immense happiness to anyone who practices them and are equally beneficial for the Gods. A dedicated practitioner of these Mudras can attain siddhis. He also mentions that these Mudras are highly secret practices and not everyone should be taught these practices. Maharishi Gheranda mentions several benefits of these Mudras. They are:

- Liberation/Kaivalya/Moksha may be attained by the practice of the Mudras.
- Practice of these Mudras kills three types of fear.
- Diseases of the spleen, leprosy, cough, breathing problems, etc., are diminished by the practice of Mudra.

Gheranda Samhita very cleary mentions 25 Mudras. They are: **Moola Bandha, Jalandhara Bandha, Uddiyan Bandha, Maha Bandha, Parthivi Dharana, Ambhasi Dharana, Agneyi Dharana, Vayviye Dharana, Akashi Dharana, Nabho Mudra, Khechari Mudra, Maha Bheda Mudra, Vipareeta Karani Mudra, Yoni Mudra, Vajroni Mudra, Shakti Chalini Mudra, Tadagi Mudra, Manduki Mudra, Ashwini Mudra, Pashini Mudra, Kaki Mudra, Matangini Mudra, Bhujangini Mudra, Maha Mudra** and **Shambhavi Mudra.**

Chapter 4

Pratyahar:

Among the Saptasadhan mentioned in the *Gheranda Samhita* the fourth limb for attaintment of liberation is Dhairya (calming). This can be attained by the practice of Pratyahar. This has been discussed in the fourth chapter of *Gheranda Samhita.* Pratyahara comes from two Sanskrit root words - Prat/which means against or away and Ahara which means food or inputs. Pratyahara is the practice of withdrawing the senses from the sense objects. When the mind is withdrawn from the external senses, it rests in its own natural state.

In *Gheranda Samhita,* Sage Gheranda explains that the knowledge of Pratyahara destroys the six enemies of man. Here, the sage is referring to the six defects of the mind namely lust, anger, greed, delusion, pride and jealousy which are also known as the shadarivargas. Pratyahara which is commonly translated as "withdrawal of the senses" from the sense objects has additional meanings. Pratyahara also implies an inherent detachment to all external objects as well as internal emotions that take us away from the stillness of the mind. Pratyahara is achieved by the practice of detachment.

Chapter 5

Pranayama:

Pranayama is the fifth limb of the Saptasadhan mentioned in the *Gheranda Samhita.* Pranayama means regulating the life force. Sage Gheranda has compared the human body to a deva sharira, the body of a divine being or God, which is pure, clean, light, free from disease and luminous. He has taught pranayama with the intention of achieving such a divine body. This indicates that many problems can be eliminated by pranayama practice. Pranayama should be practised when the air is mild, slow and cool, not too cold and not too hot and not a close room. In order to practice pranayama, it is essential to follow certain rules. Intense pranayama sadhana cannot be practised under normal conditions.

Classification of Pranayama:

According to *Gheranda Samhita*, Pranayama or Kumbhaka are of 8 types. These 8 Kumbhakas are: **Sahita Pranayama, Surya Bheda Pranayama, Ujjayi Pranayama, Sheetali Pranayama, Bhastrika Pranayama, Bhramari Pranayama, Moorchha Pranayama** and **Kevali Pranayama.**

Chapter 6.

Dhyana:

The 6th limb mentioned in the *Gheranda Samhita* is Pratakshya and it can be attained by Dhyana. The *Gheranda Samhita* speaks of three kinds of dhyana- Sthula Dhyan, Jyotir Dhyan and Sukshma Dhyan.

- **Sthula Dhyana:** When a particular figure, such as one's Guru or Deity is contemplated, it is sthula dhyana. Having closed the eyes, one should contemplate a sea of nectar in his heart in the midst of which, there is an island of precious stones, the very sand of which is pulverised diamonds and rubies.
- **The Jyotirdhyana:** It is known as Jyotirdhyana when Brahma or Prakrti is contemplated as a mass of light. In the Muladhara, there is Kundalini having the form of a serpent and the Jiv Atma is there like the flame of a lamp. To contemplate on this flame as the luminous Brahma is known as the Jyotirdhydna.
- **The Sukshma Dhyana:** When the Absolute (Brahma) in the form of the transcendental point-origin (bindu) and Kundalini force are contemplated, it is known as Sukshma Dhyana If, by a great good fortune, the Kundalini is awakened, it joins with the Atman and leaves the body through the portals of the two eyes. Sage Gheranda explains this process in terms of the awakened Kundalini uniting with the self and rising to the centre at the crown of head.

Chapter 7

Samadhi:

The seventh Sadhana of the Ghatastha Yoga is Samadhi which is the last limb of the well-known seven limbs of Ghatasta Yoga. The Samadhi is the goal of yoga. The Yogi who (1) has confidence in knowledge, (2) has

faith in his own Guru, (3) has faith in his own self and (4) whose mind awakens to intelligence from day to day, quickly attains this most beautiful practice of Samadhi. Among some practices leading to Samadhi, the importance of service to the Guru, his blessings and one's fortune are also recognised here. Separating the Manas from the body and united it with the Paramatma, is known as Samadhi. Samadhi also means mukti from all states of consciousness; i.e ., I am Brahman, nothing else. I am not participator of sorrow, I am Existence, Intelligence and Bliss, always free of one essence.

2.5 GORAKSHA SAMHITA - A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

The *Goraksha Samhita* is an ancient text on Hatha Yoga, attributed to the sage Gorakhnath. It is also known as Goraksha Paddhati. This text is organized into two chapters or Shatak and contains 201 slokas. The purva Shatak or the first chapter contains 100 slokas and uttarshatak or second chapter contains 101 slokas. These chapters discuss in details topics like chakra, nadi, kundalini, gyata, asana, control over prana (prana sanrodha), pratyahara, dhrana, dhyana and samadhi. *Goraksa Samhita* highly emphasizes on purification of the body, prāna and the mind. It is believed that total purification of all impurities on the both physical and pranic levels are absolutely necessary in order to purify the mind. Therefore, Guru Gorakhanath in Goraksa Samhita clearly outlines the various aspects of the Hatha Yoga practices, which serve as the solid foundation for the preparation and practice of Raja Yoga. According to Goraksa Samhita the objective of Hatha Yoga is to create a harmonious balance between the body, prana (the vital energy) and the mind. It is said that when the impulses generated by this harmonious balance stimulate the awakening of the Kundalini Shakti, the union between Siva and Sakti is possible. This attainment is the sole objective of the teaching of *Goraksha Samhita* by Sage Gorakshanatha. *Goraksha Samhita* describes six limbs of yoga.

asanampranasamrodhahpratyahāraśca dharana /
dhyanamsamadhiretäniyogängänivadanti sat//6//

The six limbs are: **Asana, Prana Samrodha, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana** and **Samadhi**.

I. **ASANA:** The first limb of yoga is considered to be asana in *Goraksha Samhita.* The yogic tradition says that there are 84 lakh of asanas. The *Goraksha Samhita* describes siddhasana and padmasana in detail. Siddhasana opens the door of liberation. And Padmasana is said to be the baddha or "bound" lotus posture, or Padmasana, which removes various kinds of diseases.

II. PRANA SAMRODHA:

According to sage Gorakshnatha, before practicing breath control or pranayama, one should adopt nadishodhana for purification of nadis. By purifying the channels, the yogi achieves health, the manifestation of the subtle inner sound (nada), the ability to hold the "prana" according to capacity, and the flaring up of the inner digestive fire.

The Process of Pranayama:

Yogic exhalation, inhalation, and retention are based on the sacred syllable AUM. Breath control involves twelve measures during inhalation, sixteen during retention, and ten during exhalation. Initial, middle, and superior stages involve twelve, 24 and 48 measures respectively.

Signs of pranayama siddhi:

The text outlines the stages of sweating, trembling, and rising from the ground for yogis. It emphasizes breath control, lotus posture, and drawing up the apanavayu with prana, leading it upward with kundalini shakti, and releasing from sins.

III. PRATYAHARA:

The third limb of yoga is considered to be Pratyahara in *Goraksha Samhita.* Withdrawal of the senses, or pratyahara, is a key aspect of yoga, where yogis withdraw their senses from objects, focusing on their soul. This process, similar to a tortoise pulling its limbs into its shell, helps the yogi

become situated in them. Pratyahara, like the sun swallowing the moon's nectar, is a similar concept.

IV. DHARANA:

Yogis have to practice Dharana after uniting with the practice of asana, pranayama and pratyahara.Concentration is explained as steadiness of the mind and concentration upon the five elements in the heart individually. The five elements are: **Earth element, Water element**, **Fire element, Air element** and **Ether or Space element.**

V. DHYANA:

In the **Gorkha Samhita, Dhyana** refers to the practice of **meditative concentration**. It is a key component of spiritual discipline, focusing the mind on a single object, thought, or deity. This meditative state helps individuals transcend the material world and achieve a deeper connection with the divine, promoting inner peace, wisdom, and self-realization.Dhyana is a path to attain spiritual enlightenment and mastery over the mind, helping one gain clarity, serenity, and higher consciousness. It is considered essential in many spiritual practices for personal transformation. Meditation is divided into two types: sakala dhyana (Gross attention) and nishkala (pure attention).

VI. SAMADHI:

The *Goraksha Samhita* describes the concept of Samadhi, a state of profound meditation and union with the divine. Here are some key points about Samadhi according to the *Goraksha Samhita.* Yoga involves concentration and meditation, with Samadhi being achieved after twelve days of control of the life force. Samadhi is the realization of the self and union with the supreme Self, discarding all sanskara and becoming one with the Self. A yogi in Samadhi state is not affected by mantras, yantras, or beings, and is not bound by time or action. The knower of Yoga knows the reality without beginning or end.

2.6 HATHA RATNAVALI - A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

Hatha Ratnavali is an important text of hathayoga written by Srinivasa but not widely known to the students of yoga. The author has undoubtedly received the inspiration like many later writers from Svatmarama's *Hatha Pradipika* which occupies a unique position among the texts of hathayoga. The text of *Hatha Ratnavali* was first critically edited and published in 1982 by M. Venkata Reddy who is to be congratulated for bringing this text to light.In the first chapter, introducing him, srinivasa gives the purpose of his treatise Hatha Ratnavali. He gives various definitions of yoga and explains mahayoga under which he describes mantrayoga, layayoga, Rajayoga and Hathayoga. He gives elaborate description of eightfold purificatory process called Astakarmas in place of usual satkarmas, according to the tradition of his guru.

He gives a great importance to the practice of Cakrikarma. He also provides additional information on the karmas like Nauli, Basti and Kapalabhranti by giving different varieties. Under nauli he describes two types, namely, bahyanauli and antara. But the distinction between the two is not clear. Basti is also described of two types' jalabasti and vayubasti for which the use of cakrikarma is recommended. Chapter II elaborately describes nine kumbhakas and ten mudras. Chapter III, this is mainly devoted to the elaborate description of 84 asanas.

The author starts with the topic of astangayoga, but describes only manasaniyamas and kayakaniyamasHe gives the list of 84 asanas, but explains the techniques of only 36 asanas. Chapter IV, deals with samadhi and the techniques like nadanusandhana, four states of progress in yoga.

Chapter I

Astakarma:

The eight karmas are mentione in Hatha Ratnavali Cakri, Nauli, Dhauti, Neti, Basti, Gajakariṇi, Trataka and Mastakabhrānti.

Chapter II

Kumbhakas and Mudras:

The Hatha Ratnavali, a foundational text of Hatha Yoga, provides detailed guidance on Pranayama, the practice of breath control. Sage Srinivasa has mentioned about ninth Pranayama for attaining state of Manomaya. The nine kumbhakas are: Bhastrika, Bhramari, Suryabheda, Ujjayi, Sitali,Murccha,Sitkara, Kevala and Bhujangakarani Kumbhaka.

There are ten mudras mentioned in the Hatharatnavali. These mudras, propagated by Adinatha, bestow upon one the eight supernatural powers and highly respected by all the siddhas, but are difficult to be achieved even by the great. This is the set of ten mudrs told by Adinatha Sambhu. Each one of them is of great significance, which brings about great siddhis. The ten mudrasare:**Mahamudra, Mahabandha, Mahavedha, Uddiyana, Mulabandha, Jalandhara, Viparitakarani, Vajroli, Sakti-calana** and **Khecari.**

Chapter III

Asanas:

Asana, being the first part of hatha-yoga curriculum, is being narrated here by Sage srinivasa in the Hatha Ratnavali. Practice of asanas alleviates diseases and contributes to stability, health and efficient body. Sambhu has culled only eighty-four asanas representing one from each lac of the eighty-four lacs of species. From among eighty-four pithas, Sage Srinivasa gives the characteristics of a few. These pithas are recommended by Adinatha, and contribute to the sense of wellbeing. Among these asanas, ten are considered important, which are: **Svastikasana, Gomukhasana, Padmasana, Virasana, Siddhāsana, Mayurasana, Kukkutasana, Bhadrasana, Simhasana** and **Muktasana**. Out of these, four are more important. The four asanas are: siddhasana, padmasana, simhasana and bhadrasana. Siddhasana is the best among these four, which one should always adopt.

Chapter IV

Samadhi:

The Hatha Ratnavali have discussed about Samadhi and the techniques of Nadanusandhan. Here, he further discusses about the four states of nadanusandhan, such as Arambha, Ghata, Paricaya and the Nispatti and the experiences during each of these states.The great yogis, who experience the state of samadhi by meditating on nada, experience an inexplicable joy in their heart, which only Sri Gurunatha knows. Through constant practice, being inte restraint, a yogi should take recourse to bring about the state of unmani. A yogi plugs the ears with cotton and listens to the sound (nada). He should focus the mind on that (nada) till he attains steadiness of mind.

Arambhaavastha: During the Arambha state, a yogi experiences subtle sounds like ocean, thunder, drum, and waterfalls, leading to a lustrous body, profound insight, complete wellness, and contentment in the heart.

Ghata Avastha: In the intermediate stage of ghata, yogi's experience sounds like drums, conch, bells, and gongs. In the second state, they gain stability, become cupids, and experience Absolute Bliss through vişnu-gra.

Paricaya Avastha: In the third state, a yogi hears a kettle drum, attaining siddhis and mental happiness, free from disorders, sufferings, old age, death, hunger and thirst.

Nispatti Avastha: In the fourth stage, while in the end, sounds like thong tiny bells, vina and humming of bees are heard.When the anila (prana) courses to the sarvapitha after piercing through the rudragranthi, one attains the state of nispatti in which he hears the notes of finely tuned vina.

2.7 SIDDHA-SIDDHANTA-PADDHATI - A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

Siddha Siddhanta Paddhati is the only text by Goraksanatha which provides elaborate description of the topics presented in a systematic order. It is the most important treatise of the nathayogis. Because of this characteristic feature along with other specialties it has attained a unique position in the natha literature.The text is a mixture of prose and verse form

and is of approximately 350 verses in extent divided into six upadesas or chapters. It deals with topics such as the philosophy of the nathayogis, the nature of the Absolute, the cosmology according to the natha system of thought and the characteristics of an avadhutayogi. It caters to the palate of the advanced strata of the yogis and appeals to a mature intellect.

In this regard, this text of Siddha Siddhanta Paddhati very systematically and convincingly puts forth the basic tenets of natha philosophy of duality, which quintessentially is non-dual. This makes this text a very significant one to understand the very standpoint of this very school on which the hatha tradition of practical yoga is firmly based.

The Origin of Pinda:

The eternal supreme transcendent alone existed as the Nameless One when there was no active doer, no process of causation, no distinction into his dynamic and static phases and no manifestation into his finite and diversified phenomenal forms. He is of the nature of absolute consciousness and as such is also designated as parasamvit. As no world order has separate existence from him, the question of his origination does not arise. He is without origin, self-existent and Infinite. He is endowed with his unique power (Sakti) of the nature of pure will. This Absolute Reality or Supreme Spirit endowed with his inherent power (NijaSakti) which is essentially non-different from him is called as Siva in the Natha doctrine.

The Nija Sakti is the eternal dynamic aspect of the Supreme Spirit, his other aspect being the eternal transcendent aspect. The gradual self-unfolding of the Nija Sakti leads step-by-step to the manifestation of the magnificent cosmic body of Siva and the individual bodies in it as follows. From Nija Sakti emerges the Para Sakti which leads to the emergence of Apara Sakti; from Apara Sakti evolves the Sukcma Sakti which in its turn leads to the emergence of kundalini Sakti. The five characteristics each of the five Saktis i.e., nija, para, apara, sukcmā and kundalini together give rise to the parapinda (Supreme body) Siva, anadi, adi (five gross elements), mahasakara, Prakrti and garbhapindas in gradually and progressively evolving stages. Garbhapinda or the physical body is the last stage in evolution.

Parapinda:

The birth of parapinda means the self-manifestation of the Absolute Spirit as the Supreme Individual with full consciousness of his powers and attributes. Thus, the universe is the self-embodiment of the anama or the Supreme Reality through the Self-unfoldment of his nijasakti. The five forms of spiritual consciousness of the parapinda are aparampara, paramapada, sunya, niranjana and paramatma.

The parapinda is also called the anadyapinda meaning thereby that it is without any origination and without any higher source of existence, and it also implies thereby that adyapinda is the source of all other pindas. The anadipinda is of the five following characteristics: paramananda, prabodha, cidudaya, prakasa and sohambhava. Thus, the Absolute Spirit through the self-unfoldment of his own nijasakti in the transcendental plane reveals himself as a self-conscious, omnipotent and omniscient personality embodied with an ideal universe.

Mahasakarapinda:

From the adyapinda Siva through further self-unfoldment of his own Sakti, evolve the five basic elements in stages of mahakasa, mahavayu, mahatejas, mahasalila and mahaprthvi which together bring forth the physical cosmic body of Śiva called as the mahasakarapinda. This physical cosmic body of Siva is the grossest of the self-manifestations of the Absolute Spirit. Siva becomes immanent in all the diversities of the physical order. The eight principal forms in which the Supreme Spirit reveals to this cosmic order are viz Siva, Bhairava, Srikantha, Sadssiva, Isvara, Rudra, Visnu and Brahma.

Origin of Body or garbhapinda:

From the gaze or Will of Brahma, the last of the astamurtis takes shape the prakratipinda or the male-female form, constituted of the five elements with their twenty-five characteristics/qualities. The prakratipinda is equipped with its antahkarana-pancaka (sattva, rajas, tamas, kala and jiva), vyaktasakti-panc (iccha, kriya, maya, prakrti and vak), pratyaksakarana-

pancaka or five-fold abnormal faculties of personal experience (karma, kama, candra, surya and agni), the network of nadis and the ten vital breaths. The union of male and female at proper season gives rise to the garbhapinda or the mass of embryo of the individual body.Thus, the universe is conceived by Goraksanatha as one Organism or samaşipinda consisting of innumerable orders of vyastipindas or organisms.

Ten Nadis:

- Ida and pingala conduct through the nostrils.
- Gandhari and hastijihvika conduct through the eyes.
- Pusa and yasasvini conduct through the openings of the ears
- Alambusa courses through the mouth.
- Kuhu conducts through the anus.
- Sankhini conducts through the generative organ
- Susumna conducts through the mid-region. She conducts up to the brahmarandhra through the backbone.

Ten Vayus:

- The pranavayu in the heart causes inhalation and exhalation in the form of “ha’ and ‘sa respectively.
- Apanvayu situated in the anus causes recaka(exhalation), kumbhaka (retention) and puraka (inhalation).
- Samana in the navel causes heat and digestion.
- Vyana in the neck region causes desiccation and satiation.
- Udana at the palate causes swallowing, vomiting and articulation.
- Nagavayu pervading all limbs causes release and motion.
- Kurmavayu causes winking of the eyes.
- Krkala causes belching and hunger.
- Devadatta (situated) in the mouth causes yawning.
- Dhananjaya produces nada.

Ashtanga yoga: Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharaṇa, Dhyana and Samadhi form the eightfold yoga.

- **Yama:** Yama is tranquility, restraint all over the sense organs and triumph over food, sleep, cold, wind and heat. These should be gradually accomplished. (2/32)
- **Niyama:** Niyama is control over the functioning of mind. Living in seclusion, eschewing public contact, indifference, contentment with what comes on its own accord, detachment and surrender to the guru are the characteristics of niyama. (2/33)
- **Asana:** Asana is to remain in one's true state. Having adopted any one among the postures viz. svastika, padma or siddha, one should remain alert in that pose. (2/34)
- **Pranayama:** Praṇayama is the steadiness of prana, recaka (exhalation), puraka (inhalation), kumbhaka (retention) and sanghattakarana are the four characteristics of pranayama. (2/35)
- **Pratyahara:** Withdrawing of the senses like controlling of the horses and pacifying the disturbed states and subduing the mental modifications is called pratyahara. (2/36)
- **Dharana:** Dharana is the cultivation of the mental attitude that whatever is inside and outside is only one's own form, accordingly whatever mental modification arises is merged in the formless. Thus, one should keep oneself steady and unwavering like a lamp kept in a place free from drought. (2/37)
- **Dhyana:** It is a state of Absolute Non-duality. One should consider whatever appears before the mind is of the nature of Atman (Self). Thus, one should cultivate an attitude of equanimity. (2/38)
- **Samadhi:** The state of equilibrium of all tattwas, and the absence of efforts which becomes the natural state of samadhi. (2/39)



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1: What is the meaning of Hatha?

Q2: Who wrote the Hatha Pradipika?

Q3: Name the Mudras found in Hatha Ratnavali

Q4: According to Gheranda Samhita, how many Asanas are there?

Q5: Write the names of Ashtanga yoga found in Siddha Siddhata Paddhati.



2.8 LET US SUM UP

Looking at the elaborate contents of *Hatha Pradeepika, Gheranda Samhita, Gorakhsha Samhita, Hatha Ratnavai* and *Siddha Siddhanta Paddati,* we can say that they are immensely helpful for all the learners. Learners have acquired a deep understanding of these texts. These texts are completely authentic and important treatise concerned to the Hathayoga tradition and it will continue to maintain its place in the field of Yoga.We have acquired a good knowledge of different limbs of yoga from different hatha yogic texts. If we summarize the various yogic practices in this treatise, we find that there is description of the types of cleansing techniques (Shatkarmas), Asanas, Kumbhakas, and Mudras-Bandha, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi. In this unit we studied the deep knowledge about the philosophy of the nath yogis, nature of the absolute according to the natha system. Guru Gorakhanatha, with his relentless devotion to the Ishwara, spread the Rishi tradition to new heights and suggested the way of controlling the mind by controlling the body. The Shadanga yoga propounded by him is an amazing tool to gain mastery over the mind by mastering the body.



2.9FURTHER READING

- Saraswati, Swami Y. *Sachitra hatha yoga Pradipika*. Shivananda Yogashram, Kolkata

- Saraswati, Swami B. *Hathayoga Pradipika*. Umachal Prakashani, Guwahati
- Swatmaram Yogindra. (1874) *HathayogaPradipika (Sri Brahmananda BirachitaJyotshnatika and MihitaChandrakritaBhasa Tika Sahita)*, Khyemraj Srikrishna Das, Mumbai.
- Yogendra Swami Swatmaram *Hathayoga Pradipika*
- *Hathayoga Pradipika of Yoga Swami Swatmarama*, forwarded by BKS Iyengar, commentary by Hans Ulrich Ricker, Translated by Elsy Becherer, The Aquarian Press, 1992
- *Gheranda Samhita (Bhasanubadsahita)*. Brahmalin Rastra Guru Sri 1008 Sri Swamiji Maharaj, Sri Pitambar Pith, Madhyapradesh.

2.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Q1: The word 'Hatha' is made up of two Bija Mantra: 'Ha' and 'Tha'; where 'Ha' represents Sun or Pingala Nadi and 'Tha' represents Moon or Ida Nadi. Basically, the union of these two Nadies is called Hatha Yoga.

Answer to Q2: The *Hatha yoga Pradipika* was written by Swami Swatmarama.

Answer Q3: The well-known ten traditional mudras found in *Hatha Ratnavali* are: Mahamudra, Mahabandha, Mahavedha, Uddiyana, Mulabandha, Jalandhara, Viparitakarani, Vajroli, Sakti-calana and Khecari.

Answer Q4: *Gheranda Samhita* very cleary mentions 32 Asanas. They are: Siddhasana, Padmasana, Bhadrasana, Muktasana, Vajrasana, Swastikasana, Simhasana, Gomukhasana, Veerasana, Dhanurasana, Mritasana, Guptasana, Matsyasana, Matsyendrasana, Gorakshasana, Paschimottanasana, Utkatasana, Sankatasana, Mayurasana, Kukkutasana, Koormasana, Utthankoormasana, Mandukasana, Utthanmandukasana, Vrikshasana, Garudasana, Vrishasana, Shalabhasana, Makarasana, Ushtrasana, Bhujangasana and Yogasana.

Answer Q5: The names of Ashtanga Yoga found in *Siddha Siddhata Paddhati* are: Yama, Niyama, Asana, PraGayama, Pratyahara, Dharaṇa, Dhyana and Samadhi.



2.11 MODEL QUESTIONS

Short Questions:

1. Who is the author of *Goraksha Samhita*?
2. How many Mudras are discussed in *Goraksha Samhita?*
3. How many types of Pranayama are there in *Hatha Ratnavali*?
4. Who is the author of *Siddha Siddhata Paddhati*?
5. How many Asanas are there in *Siddha Sddhanta Paddhati?*
6. Which type of yoga is emphasized in *Gheranda Samhita?*
7. What is the first limb of yoga in *Gheranda Samhita*?
8. How many limbs of yoga are described in *Gheranda Samhita*?
9. How many chapters are there in *Hatha Pradipika*?
10. What is the first practice taught in *Hatha Pradipika*?

Long Questions:

1. Discuss the Asanas which are considered to be the most important by the Hatha Pradipika.
2. What is the role of purification techniques in Hatha Yoga?
3. Explain the various type of Dhyana discussed in *Gheranda Samhita?*
4. Explain the seven-step path in the *Gheranda Samhita.*
5. Compare the approaches of *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* and *Gheranda Samhita.*
6. What are the six limbs of yoga according to *Goraksha Samhita?*
7. What are the different types of Shatkarma according to *Hatha Ratnavali?*
8. Explain the Ten Nadis and Ten Vayus found in *Siddha Siddhanta Paddhati.*

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UNIT 3 : PREPARATION FOR THE PRACTICE OF HATHAYOGA - I

UNIT STRUCTURE

3.1 Learning Objectives

3.2 Introduction

3.3 Preparation for Hatha Yogic Practices

3.4 Proper place for the practice of Hatha Yoga

3.5 Season and Time for the practice of Hatha Yoga

3.6 Let us Sum up

3.7 Further Reading

3.8 Answer to check your Progress

3.9 Model Questions

3.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- acquainted with the concept of *matha* (proper place) for *hathayoga*
- acquainted with the knowledge of season and time for *hathayogic* practices
- understand the prerequisites for *hathayoga*

3.2 INTRODUCTION

This is the third unit of Hatha Yoga course. Here, we will basically discuss the process of preparation for Hatha Yogic practices, proper place for the practice of *hathayoga* and proper season and time for the practice of hathayoga. It is also a very important topic before starting the hathayoga practice.

3.3 PREPARATION FOR HATHA-YOGIC PRACTICES

In the previous chapters we have learnt about the meaning and aim of hathayoga i.e., the unification of two nadis, namely Pingala and Ida. When these two nadis are unified, it helps awaken the kundalini which is situated

at Mooladhar Chakra, and with the help of Susumna Nadi, kundalini reaches the Sahashrar, from where it unite with the supreme reality or Paramatma. To awaken the kundalini, a practitioner must do the Hathayogic practices such as Shatkarma, Asana, Pranayama, Mudra - Bandha, Dhyana, etc. By the practice of these hathayogic techniques, a practitioner attains liberation. As a prerequisite of hatha yoga, our ancient sages suggested proper place, suitable time and season for starting the practices, etc. Therefore, before starting the practice a practitioner must be aware of the basic preparations such as selection of place, time and season. The famous hathayogic texts *Gheranda Samhita* and *Hathayoga Pradipika* discussed the following prerequisites of hathayoga:

Aadau sthaanam tathaa kaalam mitaahaaram tathaaporom;
Naadeeshuddhim tatah pashchaatpraanaayaamam cha swadhayet. \\5/2\\
(Gheranda Samhita)

Meaning – First, the practitioner must select the place and time, take moderate diet and purify the nadis (nerve channels). After this, pranayama should be practiced.

Here, it is clearly mentioned that before the practice of pranayama, one must select the suitable place; one must select the suitable time and take moderate diet and purify the nadis.

3.4 PROPER PLACE FOR THE PRACTICE OF HATHA YOGA

According to the Gheranda Samhita one of the important hathayogic text authored by Maharashi Gheranda. In Chapter 5 of *Gherand Samhita,* Maharshi Gheranda describes the various techniques of pranayama, and before the description of the pranayama techniques, he discusses the proper place for the practice of hatha yoga. In order to practice pranayama, it is essential to follow certain guidelines like, a separate place, moderate food and certain rules. Normally, the guidelines advocated for the practice of pranayama are simply to keep the body and mind healthy and balanced, and to focus on the mind. But to gain more benefits, more austere rules must be observed.

Maharshi Gheranda discusses the proper place in Chapter 5, verses no. 3 to 7 :

Dooradeshe tathaa'ranye raajadhaanyaam janaantike,
Yogaarambham na kurveeta kritashchetsiddhihaa bhavet. (5/3)
Avishvaasam dooradeshe aranye rakshivarjitam,
Lokaaranyeprakaashashchatasmaattreenivivarjayet. (5/4)

Yogic practices should not be done in a far-off place, in a forest and in a capital city because far-off places are forbidden, no one can be believed in a distant country. A forest is an insecure place there wild animals may harm the practitioners and in a capital city or crowded city there is excessive population and the practitioner may not easily get a peaceful environment to do the yogic practices, which is very necessary for the success in yoga. Therefore these three places are prohibited for yogic practices.

Sudeshe dhaarmike raajye subhikshe nirupadrave,
Krituaa tatraikam kuteeram praacheeraih pariveshtitam. (5/5)

Yogic practices should be done in a beautiful prosperous and spiritual country; it may create the peaceful and positive environment for the practitioner. The practitioner may select the place, where alms or food items are easily available. And the place is free from any internal or external, physical or mental disturbances. Maharashi Gheranda instructed that a practitioner should construct a hut or hermitage in a peaceful, spiritual place.

Vaapee koopatadaagam cha praacheera madhyavarti cha,
Naatyuchcham naatinimnam cha kuteeram keetavarjitam. (5/6)
Samyaggomayaliptam cha kuteeram tatra nirmitam,
Evamsthaaneshugupteshupraanaayaamamsamabhyaset. (5/7)

Further, it is suggested that there should be a boundary wall around the hut, within the boundary wall there should be a well or a small pond for water supply. This is the main requirement for a practitioner. The ground on which the hut is constructed should be neither too high nor too low. The place should be be polished with cow dung, which is a pure substance that helps keep away insects and keeps the place clean, and it should be away from

noise and disturbances. A practitioner should stay alone here to do the yogic practices. In the present era, when yoga has become quite common, when the population continues to increase, when even pilgrimages are becoming polluted, the place of yoga practice must be selected with much consideration.

In Chapter 1 of Hathayoga Pradipika one of the important treaties of hathayoga written by Swami Swatmarama. The author discusses the proper place for hathayoga from verse no. 12 to 14:

Surajye dharmike dese subhikshe nirupdrawe,
Dhanuh pramanparyantam silaagnijal varjite,
Ekante mathikamadhe sthatavyam hathayogina. *1/12*\\

While describing the suitable place for a Yogi, it is said that a Yogi should practice hathayoga at a place where religious activities take place, where alms or food items are easily available, and which is free from all kinds of disturbances (where no chaotic incidents take place). A practitioner should build a small hut and live in such a country. There should be no pebbles, stones, fire or water source around that hut up to a distance equal to the length and width of a bow. In such a place, a yogi should build a hut and live alone.

Alpadwaramarandhragartavivaram natyuchnichayatam,
Samyagomaysandraliptamamalam nihseshjantujhittam
Bahye mandapvedikooparuchiram prakarsamvestitam,
Proktam yogamathasya lakshanmidam sidhhah hathabhyasibhih.
1/13\\

The entrance (door) of the practitioner's hut should be small, there should not be any kind of hole or pit in it, the land at that place should not be uneven i.e. it should be on a flat ground neither too high nor too low, it should be well plastered with cow dung, it should be completely clean, it should be devoid of all kinds of living creatures so that it can be danger free. There should be a pavilion i.e., a raised platform and a well outside the hut, it should be surrounded by a wall from all sides, these are the characteristics of the residence of accomplished yogis.

Evam vidhe mathe sthitva sarvachinta vivarjitah,
Gurupadistamargen yogmeva sadabhyaset. \\1/14\\
(Hathayoga Pradipika)

The practitioner should stay in the hut which is described above. Swami Swatmarama says that a yogi should also be free from all kinds of worries and stresses and always practice the path of yoga shown by his guru.

3.5 SEASON AND TIME FOR THE PRACTICE OF HATHA YOGA

Friends, after a discussion regarding the proper place for hathayoga practice, Maharshi Gheranda also advocates for the season or time to start Hathayoga practice to attain success in it. Many changes take place in the human body due to the change. You might be aware of the fact that, some seasons are helpful in removing the foreign elements from our body, while in some seasons, due to the low immunity of our body, the diseases may increase. When we start the practice of yoga keeping all these things in mind, we definitely get its results. The general rules regarding seasons are very clear. It is said that one should not start yoga practice in summer, rainy season and extreme cold. When the weather is very hot or it is very cold, or during the rainy season when the weather keeps changing from hot to cold, the practitioner should not start practicing yoga.

There is no restriction for those who are practitioners of yoga, but it is instructed to start yoga practice in spring and winter when the weather is fresh and stable. Yoga done at this time makes the body disease free.

Maharshi Gheranda discussed about the prohibited season for yoga practices in chapter 5, verses no. 8:

Hemante shishire greeshme varshaayaam cha ritau tathaa;
Yogaarambhamnakurveetakriteyogohirogadah. (5/8)

(Gheranda Samhita)

A practitioner should not start practicing yoga in winter, extreme cold, summer and rainy seasons. The possibility of falling sick becomes

more, if one practices yoga in one of the above seasons. If we do not practice according to the weather, then due to the heat generated during yoga practice, complaints like boils, fever, cold, cough etc., will be common.

Maharshi Gheranda discusses the recommended seasons for yoga practices in chapter 5, verses no. 9:

Vasante sharadi proktam yogaarambham samaacharet;
Tadaa yogee bhavetsiddho rogaanmukto bhaveddhruvam. (5/9)

(Gheranda Samhita)

It is suggested that a practitioner should start yoga practice in spring (March –April) and autumn (September - October). A yogi who starts yoga practice at this time definitely becomes disease free and achieves success. It is necessary for the body to adjust to the changes that take place within it through yoga practice. When we start practicing yoga in the right season, it increases our immunity, which enables us to cope with the changes taking place in the body and this change has a positive effect.

Today, all are using Gregorian calendar. To understand properly the meanings of the seasons explained above, one should have knowledge of the Indian months. In *Ghearnda Samhita,* from verse no. 10 to 14 of Chapter 5, Maharshi Gheranda discusses the significance of the Indian months and their associations with the seasons:

Chaitraadiphaalgunaante cha maaghaadiphaalgunaantike;
Dvau dvau maasaavritubhaagaavanubhaavashchatushchatuh. (10)
Vasantashchaitravaishaakhau jyeshthaashaadhaa cha greeshmakau;
Varshaashraavanabhaadraabhyaam sharadaashvinakaartikau;
Maargapaushau cha hemantah shishiro maaghaphaalgunau. (11)
Anubhaavampravakshyaamiritoonaamchayathoditam;
Maaghaadimaadhavaanteshu vasantaanubhavam viduh. (12)
Chaitraadi chaashaadhaantam cha nidaaghaanubhavam viduh;
Aashaadaadichaashvinaantampraavrishaanubhavamviduh.(13)
Bhaadraadi maargasheeshantam sharado'nubhavam viduh;
Kaartikaanmaaghamaasaantam hemantaanubham viduh;
Maargaadeemshchaturo maasaanshishiraanubhavam viduh. (14)

There are twelve months in a year from Chaitra (March) to Phalguna (February), and six seasons, each having two months duration. In practice, each season is experienced for four months, from Magha (January) to Phalguna (February).

There are seasons of two months each and also experiences of four months each. Chaitra to Vaishakha (March-April) is spring (vasanta); Jyeshtha to Ashadha (May-June) is summer (ghrishma); Shravana to Bhadrapada (July-August) is the rainy season (varsha); Ashwina to Kartika (September - October) is autumn (sharada); Marga Shirsha to Pausha (November-December) is winter (hemanta); and Magha to Phalguna (January-February) is extremely cold (shishira). From Magha to Vaishakha (January-April) spring is experienced; from Chaitra to Ashadha (March-June) summer; from Ashadha to the end of Ashwina (June-September) monsoon rains; from Bhadrapada to Marga Shirsha (August-November) autumn; from Kartika to Magha (October-January) winter; and from MargaS hirsha to Phalguna (November- February) extreme cold is experienced.

Vasante vaapi sharadi yogaarambham samaacharet;
Tadaayogobhavetsiddhovinaa'yaasenakathyate. (5/15)

(Gheranda Samhita)

It is prescribed that one attains success by starting yogic practices during spring (March - April) and autumn (September – October).



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1: What is the meaning of 'Ha' and 'Tha' in the word Hatha?

Q2: What are the hathayogic practices?

Q3: Which preparations are important before starting the hathayoga?

Q4: What are the things to keep in mind while choosing a place for yoga practice?

Q5: Which season is good to start yoga practices?



3.6 LET US SUM UP

In this chapter, we have discussed the proper place, season and time to start the Hathayoga practice. It is summarized below:

- Hatha yoga is an important type of yoga. Where 'Hatha' represent two energies, pranic energy and mental energy respectively.
- Through the union of these two energies, kundalini is awakened and prana starts flowing into the susumna nadi and reaches to the sahasrara.
- To achieve this higher stage one should practice all hathayogic practices such as Shatkarma, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Mudra-Bandha, Dhyana etc.
- Maharshi Gheranda said that selection of proper place, suitable season and moderate diet is important for success in hathayoga.
- Practitioner should pay special attention to some important things while selecting the place; the place should be in a prosperous and religious country where food items are easily available and it should be free from all kinds of disturbances.
- A practitioner should make the hut or hermitage at the place mentioned above and and start the yoga practices as directed by the guru.
- There are twelve months in a year from Chaitra (March) to Phalguna (February), and six seasons, each of two months duration.
- The four seasons which are restricted for a practitioner to start practicing yoga are: winter, extreme cold, summer and rainy season. The possibility of falling sick increases if one practices yoga in these seasons.
- Two seasons, i.e., spring and autumn are recommended to start the practice of yoga. A yogi who starts yoga practice at this time definitely becomes disease free and achieves success.



3.7 FURTHER READINGS

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3.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Q1: The word Hatha is made up of two letters- 'Ha' and 'Tha' where 'Ha' represents Pingala Nadi and 'Tha' represents Ida Nadi.

Answer to Q2: Hathayogic practices are Shatkarma, Asana, Mudra-Bandha, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dhyan, Samadhi.

Answer to Q3: Selection of proper place, suitable season and moderate diet is important before the start of Hatha Yoga.

Answer to Q4: a. The place should be in a righteous and religious country,

b. The place where alms are easily available,

c. The place should be free from all disturbances.

Answer to Q5: Spring and autumn are the best seasons to start the yoga practices.



3.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

Short Questions

1. What do you understand by 'Matha'?
2. What are the preparations for Hath Yoga?
3. Which two seasons are recommended for starting yoga practice?
4. How many seasons are mentioned in the calendar according to Gheranda Samhita, and how are they divided?
5. Why is it advised to choose a place free from disturbances for Hatha Yoga practice?
6. How does the environment of a religious and prosperous country support Hatha Yoga?

Essay Questions

1. Explain in detail, the selection of proper place as discussed by Maharshi Gheranda.
2. Describe about the proper place for a 'matha' as explained in *Hathayoga Pradipika.*
3. Throw light on the selection of season for yogic practices as discussed in *Gheranda Samhita*
4. Why should extreme weather seasons like winter and summer be avoided for starting yoga practice?.

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UNIT 4 : PREPARATION FOR THE PRACTICE OF HATHA YOGA II

UNIT STRUCTURE

4.1 Learning Objectives

4.2 Introduction

4.3 Sadhaka Tattwa and Badhaka Tattwa

4.4 Types of Badhaka Tattwa

4.5 Types of Sadhak Tattwa

4.6 Symptoms of Hatha Siddhi

4.7 Let Us Sum Up

4.8 Further Reading

4.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

4.10 Model Questions

4.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Understand the concepts of Sadhaka Tattwa (factors that support yoga practice) and Badhaka Tattwa (factors that obstruct yoga practice).
- Identify different types of Badhaka Tattwas as described in Hatha Yoga texts.
- Learn ways to overcome these obstacles to maintain continuity in yogic practices.
- Learn about the qualities and factors that contribute to a successful yoga practice.
- Recognize the signs and symptoms that indicate attainment or success in Hatha Yoga (Hatha Siddhi).

4.2 INTRODUCTION

Hatha Yoga is one of the various forms of yoga practice, that specifically focuses on the physical dimensions of yoga. Yoga, in its essence, is a process of purification that demands clarity regarding the ultimate aim and a steadfast commitment to practice. While it is crucial to set goals for one's yoga journey, it is equally vital to acknowledge the obstacles that may impede progress. Recognizing these obstacles entails identifying the underlying issues and causes that lead to disturbances and distractions. The revered Sage Patanjali, in his Yoga Sutras, along with Sage Swatmarama in the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, have explored the nature of these obstacles Sadhaka and Badhaka, their contributing factors, and also potential remedies. In today's world, there is a significant need for guidance in pursuing both spiritual and other objectives of life. Thus, an examination of the obstacles and their associated factors in yoga can provide valuable insights, helping practitioners to circumvent these challenges in their daily practice.

4.3 BADHAKTATTWA AND SADHAKTATTWA

Within the framework of Hatha yoga, the principles of sadhaka and badhakatattva provide essential guidelines for the progression of one's yoga practice. These concepts essentially outline the means to achieve success (sadhaka) and the factors that may lead to failure (badhaka) along the yoga path. In Sanskrit, sadhaka denotes an individual committed to sadhana, which represents a specific lifestyle approach. Tattva refers to the core principles that inform this way of living. On the other hand, badhaka is associated with the notion of harm. Together, sadhaka and badhakatattwa articulate six enabling and six obstructive elements pertinent to Hatha Yoga.

4.4 BADHAKTATTWA (OBSTRUCTING ELEMENTS)

In the practice of yoga, certain flaws or detrimental habits can hinder a practitioner’s advancement along the yogic path. These flaws or habits

are referred to as obstructing elements in yoga. Specifically, these elements are those that impede the practitioner's ability to progress effectively in their practice. In the first chapter of *Hatha Pradeepika*, Swami Swatmarama identifies six such obstructing elements.

अत्याहारः प्रयासश्चप्रजल्पोनियमाग्रहः ।
जनसङ्गश्च लौल्यं च षड्भिर्योगो विनश्यति ।। 15।।

1 **अत्याहार** (Overeating)
2 **प्रयास** (Overworking)
3 **प्रजल्प** (Over talking)
4 **नियमाग्रह** (Over insisting)
5 **जनसंग** (Over contact with people)
6 **लौल्यं** (Excessive fickleness of mind)

1. **अत्याहार (Overeating**) Overeating, or consuming an excessive amount of food, presents significant barriers to the practice of yoga. Swami Swatmarama identifies overeating as the foremost obstacle, as it disrupts an individual's digestive system, potentially leading to ailments such as indigestion and obesity. Furthermore, it fosters a sense of lethargy and cultivates an unhealthy attachment to food, which hinders a practitioner's progress in yoga. Consequently, it is essential for both the yogis and the general populace to moderate their food intake, as refraining from overeating is advantageous for all.
2. **प्रयास (Overworking**): Similarly, excessive effort or hard work can impede one's journey in yoga. Engaging in strenuous physical labor depletes the body's energy reserves, which can result in fatigue during yoga practice. When a practitioner expends too much energy on other tasks, they may find it challenging to engage fully in their yoga routine. Therefore, it is advisable for the yogis to refrain from unnecessary physical exertion to maintain their vitality.
3. **प्रजल्प (Over talking):** Additionally, excessive talking, or prajalpa, serves as another hindrance on the path to yoga. Individuals who engage in constant chatter often struggle to maintain mental stability, and this incessant speaking can drain the body's energy. The energy that should

be dedicated to yoga practice is instead squandered on trivial conversations, diminishing the significance of one's words. Thus, it is prudent for a yogi to limit unnecessary dialogue to preserve their focus and energy for their practice.

4. **नियमाग्रह (Excessive insistence):** It is refers to the rigid adherence to rules or guidelines established to achieve specific objectives. While these principles are essential for reaching one's goals, some individuals may become overly stringent in their application, believing that only one particular rule is valid while disregarding others. This inflexible mindset can be likened to obstinacy, similar to a child who demands a toy and reacts with anger when denied. Consequently, it is crucial for yoga practitioners to steer clear of such obstinate behavior and maintain a balanced approach to the rules.
5. **जनसंग (Over contact with people):** Engaging with an excessive number of people can hinder the progress on the path of yoga. The company of others is often viewed as a barrier to spiritual advancement, and thus, yoga practitioners are encouraged to limit their social interactions. A yogi who mingles with too many individuals may find it challenging to make headway in their practice, as people possess varying natures—some embodying Satvik qualities, while others exhibit Rajasik or Tamasik traits. While interaction with those of a Satvik disposition is beneficial, associations with Rajasik and Tamasik individuals can obstruct one's spiritual journey. Therefore, it is imperative for a yogi to minimize contact with numerous people to facilitate success in their yoga practice.
6. **लौल्यं (Excessive fickleness of mind):** It is another significant obstacle in the pursuit of yoga. A restless mind struggles to focus on tasks, leading to a lack of concentration that ultimately hampers the successful completion of any endeavor. Concentration is a critical factor that distinguishes success from failure; when the mind is focused, the likelihood of achieving desired outcomes increases. Conversely, a distracted mind undermines the ability to perform effectively, making it

essential for individuals to cultivate mental stability to enhance their chances of success in their pursuits.

4.5 SADHAKTATTWA (FACILITATING ELEMENTS)

In the practice of yoga, certain qualities and beneficial habits significantly contribute to the practitioner's advancement along the yogic path. These qualities and habits are referred to as Sadhak Tattwa within the context of yoga. Essentially, any attributes that facilitate the practitioner's journey in yoga are classified as Sadhak Tattwa. The following shloka highlights six distinct Sadhak Tattwa.

उत्साहात् साहसाद्धैर्यात्तत्तत्त्वज्ञानात्च निश्चयात् ।
जनसङ्गपरित्यागात् षड्भिर्योगः प्रसिद्धयति ।। 16 ।।

1. उत्साह (Enthusiasm)
2. साहस (Courage)
3. धैर्य (Patience)
4. तत्त्व ज्ञान (Knowledge of principles)
5. दृढ़ निश्चय (Firm determination)
6. जनसंग परित्याग (Abandonment of people)

1. उत्साह (Enthusiasm): Swami Swatmaram has identified enthusiasm as the foremost quality for practitioners on their spiritual journey. This quality embodies both courage and zeal, serving as a crucial foundation for achieving any goal. Enthusiasm acts as a driving force that enables individuals to pursue their aspirations; without it, reaching even the simplest objectives becomes a formidable challenge. When a practitioner approaches their spiritual practice with enthusiasm, they are more likely to experience continuous success in their endeavors.

2. साहस (Courage): It is recognized as the second essential quality for practitioners. Throughout history, no significant achievement has been realized without the presence of courage. This quality often emerges from a foundation of enthusiasm and is vital for effective spiritual practice. Engaging in sadhana with courage not only bolsters one's faith but also enhances the overall experience of yoga practice, making courage an indispensable element in this journey.

3. धैय (Patience): Patience, defined as the ability to remain calm and composed, is crucial not only in yoga but in all aspects of life. Achieving one's goals requires a considerable amount of patience, as it serves as the key to unlock opportunities that may otherwise remain inaccessible. New practitioners often exhibit impatience, desiring rapid results, which can hinder their progress in yoga. It is essential for every practitioner to approach their practice with a sense of patience, as the adage suggests, "the fruit of patience is sweet." Thus, patience is a vital component in the successful pursuit of yoga practice.

4. तत्त्व ज्ञान (Knowledge of Principles): Its refers to the quality of possessing accurate and profound knowledge regarding any subject or entity. Without such understanding, one cannot grasp the true essence of that subject or entity. Consequently, to attain success in any endeavor, it is imperative to first acquire accurate information about the matter at hand. Lacking genuine knowledge leads to a form of affliction known as ego, which diverts individuals from the path of yoga. Thus, for successful engagement in yoga practice, it is crucial to possess an understanding of the fundamental elements.

5. दृढ़ निश्चय (Firm Determination): is a term that evokes a sense of self-assurance in individuals. It signifies a firm resolve to accomplish a particular task. When one commits to a specific goal or remains steadfast in their determination, this is what constitutes true determination. Many individuals hold the belief that if success is not achieved through one avenue, they should pursue an alternative path. However, resorting to other options in the face of challenges reflects a lack of determination and faith. When one shifts focus to different alternatives, it often results in incomplete endeavors. Therefore, determination is vital for achieving success. It serves as the critical factor that distinguishes success from failure, making it essential for a yoga practitioner to cultivate strong determination.

6. जनसंग परित्याग (Abandonment of the company of People): The company of people refers to engaging with numerous individuals, which is often viewed as a hindrance on the path of yoga. Consequently, a yoga practitioner is advised to distance himself from the company of others. A

yogi who maintains frequent contact with a variety of people may find it challenging to advance in their yoga practice, as individuals possess diverse natures. While interacting with those of a Satvik nature may not be harmful, associating with individuals of Rajasik and Tamasik natures can create significant obstacles.

4.6 SYMPTOMS OF HATHA SIDDHI (हठ सिद्धि लक्षण)

In the Second chapter of Hatha Pradipika Swami Swatmaram wrote about some super natural symptoms during Hatha Sadhana. All of these symptoms become visible during perfection of kumbhaka. The shloka is given below:

वपुःकृशत्वं वदने प्रसन्नता नादस्फुटत्वं नयने सुनिर्मले ।
अरोगता बिन्दुजयोऽग्निदीपनम् नाडीविशुद्धिर्हठसिद्धिलक्षणम् ।। 78 ।।

The symptoms associated with Hatha Siddhi are characterized by a sense of lightness throughout the body, a joyful expression on the face, and the ability to perceive the Anahat Naad clearly. Additionally, individuals may experience enhanced vision, a notable absence of ailments, mastery over the mind, stimulation of the digestive fire, and thorough purification of the nervous system. Collectively, these indicators signify the attainment of success in Hatha Yoga.

The detailed meaning of Hatha Siddhi is that through practicing Yogasadhana, the body rejuvenates itself by building muscles and bio memory on regeneration mode. The biological immunity and healing power automatically become rhythmic and harmonised. Deep and advance practice of Yogasadhana gives cellular and neural effects making the skin shine and full of luster. The deep state of pranayama generateds the sound of silence and brings the mind to cosmic sound realization. The eyes of the Sadhaka become more enlightening and pure, with holistic wellness attained in the forms of somatic, psychological, intellectual, sensual and spiritual excellence. Also, the sadhaka attains the Ojas or the control over the sexual energy and ability to transform it to divine energy or creative energy. During

the perfection of Hatha Yoga Sadhana, the practitioner's vital energy channels ge purified. All the impurities of the Nadi are cleansed by different purification assets of yogasadhana. These are the secretes of Hatha Yoga sadhana as explained in the *Hatha Yogapradipika* by Swami Swatmaramji.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1. Who wrote the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*?

Q2. Write down any three obstructing elements.

Q3. Write down six distinct Sadhak Tatwas.



4.7 LET US SUM UP

1. The teachings of Hatha Yoga, as articulated by Swami Swatmarama in the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, provide a comprehensive roadmap for practitioners seeking both physical and spiritual advancement. The identification of obstacles (*BadhakTattwa*) and enablers (*SadhakTattwa*) offers invaluable insights into the factors that determine success or failure in yoga practice.
2. The six hindrances—overeating, overworking, excessive talking, rigid adherence to rules, over-socialization, and mental restlessness—highlight the importance of moderation, focus, and balance in one's approach to yoga. Conversely,
3. The six positive attributes—enthusiasm, courage, patience, knowledge, determination, and social detachment—underscore the virtues necessary for steady progress on the yogic path.
4. The attainment of *Hatha Siddhi* marks the pinnacle of physical and spiritual refinement, characterized by a healthy, rejuvenated body, clarity of mind, and mastery over internal energies. These symptoms reflect the transformative power of Hatha Yoga in fostering holistic well-being, including somatic, psychological, intellectual, and spiritual excellence. The cleansing of energy channels (*nadis*) and the harmonization of vital forces enable practitioners to transcend ordinary experiences, achieving higher states of consciousness.

5. In essence, the practice of Hatha Yoga is not merely a physical discipline but a profound journey of self-discovery and inner purification. By embracing the principles and practices outlined in the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, practitioners can overcome challenges, cultivate essential qualities, and realize the ultimate goal of yoga—union with the self and the cosmos.



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4.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Q1: Sage Swatmarama wrote the *Hatha Yoga Pradipi*ka

Answer to Q2: Overeating, overworking, over talking

Answer to Q3: Sadhak Tattwas:

1. उत्साह (Enthusiasm)
2. साहस (Courage)
3. धैय (Patience)
4. **तत्त्व ज्ञान** (Knowledge of Principles)
5. **दृढ़ निश्चय** (Firm Determination)
6. **जनसंग परित्याग** (Abandonment of the company of People)



4.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

Objective Questions:

1. This is not under comes to successful element:
   A. Overeating B. Spiritual Knowledge C. Patience
   D. Firm Determination
2. This is not included in Hatha siddhi:
   A. Lustre B. Wellness
   C. Attainment of sexual energy D. Fluctuation of Mind

Short Questions

1. What is meant by 'Sadhaka Tattwa' in the context of Hatha Yoga?
2. List any four qualities of a good sadhaka (yoga practitioner).
3. Why are the qualities of a sadhaka important for the success of Hatha Yoga?
4. What is meant by 'Badhaka Tattwa' in Hatha Yoga?
5. Name any four types of Badhaka Tattwa that hinder progress in Hatha Yoga.
6. Why is over-eating considered a Badhaka Tattwa?
7. What is the impact of excessive talking and socializing on yogic progress?
8. What is meant by 'Hatha Siddhi'?
9. Mention any three symptoms of Hatha Siddhhi.

Long Questions:

1. Discuss elaborately the symptoms of Hatha Sidhhi?
2. Explain the basics of Sadhak and Badhak tattwa with their respective types in detail?
3. In what ways do the six Sadhak Tattwa contribute to a balanced and successful yoga practice?

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UNIT 5 : PREPARATION FOR THE PRACTICE OF HATHA YOGA III

UNIT STRUCTURE

5.1 Learning Objectives

5.2 Introduction

5.3 The Concept of Mitahara

5.4 Diet for Hatha Yogi

5.5 Let Us Sum Up

5.6 Further Readings

5.7 Answers to Check Your Progress

5.8 Model Questions

5.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- defines the Diet for Hatha Yogi during Yoga practices
- discuss the concepts of Mitahara in light on classical Hatha Yoga texts.

5.2 INTRODUCTION

Food, referred to as "Ahara," is characterized as any material that is chewed and ingested to provide nourishment and energy to our body. This encompasses all consumable items including solids, liquids, and items that can be licked. The significance of Ahara is paramount; without it, life cannot be sustained for an extended period. In Indian texts, food is revered as a manifestation of the divine, encapsulated in the phrase "Annam para Brahma swarupam," which can be translated as "Food is a form of the supreme being, the Lord of Creation."

आहारशुद्धौ सत्त्वशुद्धिः, सत्त्वशुद्धौ ध्रुवा स्मृतिः।
स्मृतिलम्भे सर्वग्रन्थीनां विप्रमोक्षः।

छान्दोग्य उपनिषद - 7.26.2.

5.3 THE CONCEPT OF MITAHAR

The word Mitahara is derived from the Sanskrit terms Mita (मित, meaning moderate) and Ahara (आहार, referring to food or diet), collectively signifying "moderate diet," which emphasizes the importance of moderation in eating. According to Indian scriptures, particularly yogic texts, this concept links dietary practices to the overall health of the body, mind, and spirit. It embodies a form of self-discipline that encourages individuals to avoid both excessive and insufficient food intake, as well as to make mindful choices about what to consume. Mitahara is fundamentally satvik, characterized by freshness, palatability, and ease of digestion. It is grounded in the principles of quality and the benefits of food, distinguishing between conducive food (Pathya), which supports health, and non-conducive food (Apathya), which is detrimental to good health. The essence of Mitahara lies in achieving a balanced diet that fosters harmony between the body and mind. When both are in optimal health and equilibrium, consciousness can elevate to a higher state. India, known for its Vedic heritage, has a long-standing tradition of spirituality, with its people being seekers of knowledge and worshippers of nature. Mitahara is not only a quantitative approach of diet but it is related to quality as Well. Sometime it is also called Vedic diet, balanced diet, moderate diet or adequate diet.

The significance of satvik food or Mitahara is highlighted in numerous Indian scriptures, especially within yogic texts and the Bhagavad Gita, where a moderate diet is referred to as "Mitahara" and satvik food is emphasized. The concept is described in the First chapter of *Hatha Pradipika.*

ब्रह्मचारी मिताहारी त्यागी योगपरायणः ।
अब्दादुर्ध्वं भवेत् सिद्धो नात्र कार्या विचारणा ।। 59।।

Those who observe celibacy, and control their dietary habits by eating in moderation, relinquishing pleasures, and devoting themselves fully to Yoga, are assuredly on the path to achieving excellence in Yoga within a year or just beyond that time frame.

सुस्निग्धमधुराहारश्चतुर्थांशविवर्जितः ।
भुज्यते शिवसंप्रीत्यै मिताहारः स उच्यते ।। 60।।

Mitaahaar is defined as a diet that is wholly smooth, predominantly sweet, and incorporates ghee, with the stipulation that one-fourth (¼) of the stomach is left empty. This dietary practice is aimed at enhancing the happiness of the soul.

The seventeenth Chapter shloka highlights the principle of Mitahara, denoting moderation in food consumption. Esteemed yoga teachers and sages have consistently advised yogis to embrace Mitahara. For yoga practitioners aiming for success, adherence to Mitahara is essential. Success in yoga cannot be realized without the practice of Mitahara. As a result, the benefits of Mitahara have been thoroughly discussed by the yogis in their writings.

The following shloka discusses Mitahara in detail. The concept embodies moderation in eating. Emiyent yoga teachers and sages have emphasized the importance of Mitahara for practitioners of yoga. Individuals who seek to succeed in their yoga journey must incorporate Mitahara into their lifestyle. Success in yoga cannot be realized without the adherence to Mitahara. Thus, the benefits of Mitahara have been thoroughly explored by the yogis in their writings.

आहारस्त्वपि सर्वस्य त्रिविधो भवति प्रियः ।
यज्ञस्तपस्तथा दानं तेषां भेदमिमं श्रृणु ।। 7 ।।

“Just as every individual has preferences for three distinct types of food based on their unique tastes, yajna, tapasya, and daan can also be categorized into three different distinctions. Allow me to elaborate on these distinctions.”

Satvik Diet: In Bhagavad Geeta Lord Krishna explains the sentient nature of diet with their modality and qualities in support of Satwa Guna in mental temperament and this diet in modern approach is related to alkaline nature or natural hygienic nature of diet which is related to a health oriented, and not a taste oriented food habit:

आयुः सत्त्वबलारोग्यसुखप्रीतिविवर्धनाः ।
रस्याः स्निग्धाः स्थिरा हृद्या आहाराः सात्त्विकप्रियाः ।। 8 ।।

" Such foods that increase longevity, intelligence, strength, health, happiness and love, which are juicy, smooth, stable, and pleasing to the mind, are liked by the sattvic nature"

Rajasik Diet: In the Bhagavad Geeta Lord Krishna speaks at length about the hyper nature of diet that stimulates the Rajo Guna in mental temperament and creates acidic nature in the body, and subsequently, the body becomes very hyper. The ayurvedic texts too mention Lord Krishna's perspective on acidic nature of taste which affects the body and the mind as well:

कट्वम्ललवणात्युष्णतीक्ष्णरूक्षविदाहिनः ।
आहारा राजसस्येष्टा दुःखशोकामयप्रदाः ।। 9 ।।

"Food that are bittter, sour, very salty, exceedingly heating, very pungent, dry and burning, are all dear to one having rajas; they produce pain, sorrow and disease."

Individuals with Rajasik Prakriti tend to favour foods that are characterized by bitterness, sourness, excessive saltiness, intense heat from ingredients such as garlic and ginger, spiciness from an abundance of chillies and spices, and dryness, whether from lack of moisture or dehydration. These foods may also induce a burning sensation in the body and are associated with feelings of sadness, grief, and illness.

Tamasik Diet: In the *Bhagavad Geeta* Lord Krishna mentions the dull nature of diet that leads to the Tamo Guna in mental temperament. According to Lord Krishna, this diet is not appropriate for Yoga practices.

यातयामं गतरसं पूति पर्युषितं च य ।
उच्छिष्टमपि चामेध्यं भोजनं तामसप्रियम् ? ।। 10 ।।

A Tamasik individual tends to prefer food that is half-cooked, devoid of moisture, has an unpleasant odour, is stale, consists of leftovers, and is considered impure.

5.4 DIET FOR HATHA YOGI

Swami Swatmaram mentions that during the practice of Yogasadhana, some diets are avoidable:

कट्वम्लतीक्ष्णलवणोष्णहरीतशाकं
सौवीरतैलतिलसर्षपमद्यमत्स्यान् ।
अजादिमांसदधितक्रकुलत्थकोल
पिण्याक हिङ्गुलशुनाद्यमपथ्यमाहुः ।। 61।।

Unhealthy or prohibited foods are those that obstruct the practice of sadhana. The Hatha Pradeepika identifies several food items as unhealthy or forbidden, including bitter foods like bitter gourd, sour foods such as tamarind, excessively spicy or astringent items, overly salty dishes, and hot spices like nutmeg, which can elevate bile levels. Furthermore, green leafy vegetables, kanji, oils such as mustard and sesame, alcoholic drinks, meats from animals like fish and goat, dairy products including curd and buttermilk (lassi), horse gram, black pepper (kol), oil cake, asafoetida, and garlic are also listed. The intake of these foods is regarded as prohibited on the yogic path, leading to their classification as unhealthy.

भोजनमहितं विद्यात् पुनरप्युष्णीकृतं रुक्षम् ।
अतिलवणमम्लयुक्तं कदशनं शाकोत्कटं वर्ज्यम् ।। 62 ।।

Additionally, one should refrain from consuming reheated and dry foods, those with high salt content, sour foods, and spoiled items. Thus, these categories of food are considered harmful or not permissible during yoga practice.

वह्नि स्त्रीपथिसेवानामादौवर्जनमाचरेत् ।। 63 ।।

In addition to the aforementioned points, during the initial phase of yoga practice, it is advised that the practitioner refrains from engaging with fire, associating with women, and undertaking long-distance travel. Therefore, these activities should be avoided by the yogi.

Diet for Yogi (Pathya Aahar): In the following verses Swami Swatmaram talks about what type of food should be taken by a yogi, which is appropriate for weather, taste and mental as well as physical temperament.

गोधूमशालियवषष्टिकशोभनान्नाम्
क्षीराज्यखण्ड नवनीतसितामधूनि ।
शुण्ठीपटोलकफलादिकपञ्चशाकं
मुद्गादिदिव्यमुदकं च यमीन्द्रपथ्यम् ।।64 ।।

The Pathya diet refers to foods that are easily and rapidly digested by the body. According to the *Hatha Pradeepika,* the following items are classified as part of the Pathya diet: wheat, ripened rice, and barley, various types of rice including sathi rice, kheer (a type of milk pudding), milk, ghee, sugar, butter, honey, dry ginger, and five specific vegetables such as parval, bottle gourd, ridge gourd, cucurbits, and cucumber. Additionally, green gram, lentil pulses, and pure rainwater are also included in this category, all of which are characterized by their quick digestibility.

पुष्टं सुमधुरं स्निग्धं गव्यं धातु प्रपोषणम् ।
मनोऽभिलषितं योग्यं योगी भोजनमाचरेत् ।।65 ।।

Additionally, a yogi should prioritize a diet that includes nourishing foods that strengthen the body, sweet-flavored items, smooth foods such as those made from ghee, *Gavya*, which refers to foods derived from cow's milk, as well as foods that enhance mineral strength and those that are pleasing to the mind. This dietary approach is both nutritious and beneficial.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1. The following is not a feature of Satvik Aahar according the *Bhagavad Geeta*:
A. Health B. Cheerfulness C. Unctuous D. Bitter

Q2. Mitahara means:
A. Weather diet B. Under diet C. Over diet D. Moderate Diet

Q3. What is Pathya Diet?

Q4. What types of food are favoured by an individual who follows a Satvik lifestyle?

Q5. Which characteristics define Satvik food?



5.5 LET US SUM UP

1. The significance of Ahara is paramount; without it, life cannot be sustained for an extended period. In Indian texts, food is revered as a manifestation of the divine, encapsulated in the phrase "Annam para Brahma swarupam," which translates to "Food is a form of the supreme being, the Lord of Creation."
2. This encompasses all consumables, including solids, liquids, and items that can be licked. The significance of Ahara is paramount; without it, life cannot be sustained for an extended period.
3. Mitahara is derived from the Sanskrit terms Mita (मित, meaning moderate) and Ahara (आहार, referring to food or diet), collectively signifying "moderate diet," which emphasizes the importance of moderation in eating.
4. Mitahara is not only to a quantitative approach of diet; it is related to quantity as well as quality approach of diet. Sometime it is also called Vedic diet, balanced diet, moderate diet or adequate diet
5. The significance of satvik food or Mitahara is highlighted in numerous Indian scriptures, especially within yogic texts and the *Bhagavad Geeta*, where a moderate diet is referred to as "Mitahara" and satvik food is emphasized. These concepts are described in the First chapter of *Hatha Pradipika.*
6. In essence, Yogic diet is based on Health, weather, quality and quantity of the food. During Yoga sadhana, a yogi should strictly follow thee regimens of Pathya and Apathya diet for self-development.
7. The concept of Mitahara embodies moderation in eating. Eminent yoga teachers and sages have emphasized the importance of Mitahara for the practitioners of yoga. Individuals who seek to succeed in their yoga journey must incorporate Mitahara into their lifestyle. Success in yoga cannot be realized without the adherence to Mitahara. Thus, the benefits of Mitahara have been thoroughly explored by the yogis in their writings.

8. A yogi should prioritize a diet that includes nourishing foods that strengthen the body, sweet-flavoured items, smooth foods such as those made from ghee, Gavya, which refers to foods derived from cow's milk, as well as foods that enhance mineral strength and those that are pleasing to the mind. This dietary approach is both nutritious and beneficial.



5.6 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Q1: D. Bitter

Answer to Q2: D. Moderate Diet

Answer to Q3: The Pathya diet refers to foods that are easily and rapidly digested by the body. According to the Hatha Pradeepika, the following items are classified as part of the Pathya diet: wheat, aged rice, and barley, various types of rice including sathi rice, kheer (a type of milk pudding), milk, ghee, sugar, butter, honey, dry ginger, and five specific vegetables such as parval, bottle gourd, ridge gourd, cucurbits, and cucumber. Additionally, green gram, lentil pulses, and pure rainwater are also included in this category, all of which are characterized by their quick digestibility.

Answer to Q4: Foods that promote longevity, enhance intellect, boost physical strength, improve health, and foster happiness and joy.

Answer to Q5: Sattvik food is characterized by its juiciness, smooth texture, and its ability to remain stable within the body for an extended period.



5.7 FURTHER READING

1. Digambarji Swami Kokaje Raghunatha Shastri Hathapradipika of Svatmarama, Kaivalayadham Shriman Madhav Yogamandir Samiti, Lonavla, 2 ndedi., 1998

2. Muktibodhananda Swami, *Hatha Yoga Pradipika: Light on Hatha Yoga*: including the original Sanskrit text of the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* with translation in English, Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, 4th edition, 2012
3. *Chhandogya Upanishad*, by Geeta Press, Gorakhpur, 2003
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5.8 MODEL QUESTIONS

Short Questions

1. What does the term Mitahara mean in the context of Hatha Yoga?
2. Write the qualities of Mitahara according to Hatha Pradipika.
3. What are the key principles of Mitahara as mentioned in Gheranda Samhita?
4. What is Rajasik Aahar?
5. Write down the concept of Satvik Aahar.

Long Questions:

1. Discuss in detail about Apathya Aahar for Hatha Yogi.
2. Explain the basics concept of Yogic diet for a Yogi in the light of *Hatha Pradipika*.
3. What type of food is recommended for a Hatha Yoga practitioner?
4. Which types of food are to be avoided by a Hatha Yogi, and why?

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UNIT 6 - HATHA YOGA PRACTICES SHATKARMA

UNIT STRUCTURE

6.1 Learning Objectives

6.2 Introduction

6.3 The Concept of Shatkarmas

6.4 Need of Shatakarma

6.5 Objective of Shatkarma

6.6 Types of Shatakarma according to *Hatha Pradipika*

6.7 Let us Sum up

6.8 Further Reading

6.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

6.10 Model Questions

6.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Objective of this unit is to show the kriyas with their great therapeutic values. They bring about an increased range of adaptability of the tissues. Voluntary control is established on different reflexes through the kriyas. The emphasis of the kriyas is on establishing psycho-physiological balance.

6.2 INTRODUCTION

The **Shatkarmas** (Sanskrit: षटकर्म satkarma, literally six actions), also known as **Shatkriyas**, are a set of Hatha yoga purifications of the body, to prepare for the main work of yoga towards moksha (liberation). The *Hatha Ratnavali* mentions two additional purifications, Cakri and Gajakarani, criticising the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* for describing only the other six. Shuddhikriya specially increases the vital capacity of the practitioner or sadhak. They were never designed for only therapy but for prevention of diseases, attainment of health and harmony and delaying old age. It creates harmony between the body and the mind and prepares a yoga aspirant for further practices. They bring smooth and perfect of functioning in the bodily

system; the mind also becomes free from turbulence and disturbances and thus becomes able to concentrate and to move towards dhyana(meditation).It would be difficult to concentrate on Asana, Pranayama or Dhyana(meditation) if you were suffering from allergic rhinitis which can be improved by Neti, parasite infection (basti used to remove parasites of the colon) or constipation (improved by the nauli).

6.3 NEED OF SHATKARMA

Shatkarmas serve a significant role in our lives, particularly in safeguarding us against various diseases. Currently, the global expenditure on research aimed at preventing and treating serious illnesses amounts to billions of dollars. However, a permanent solution to any disease remains elusive. A primary factor contributing to this issue is the failure to address the root causes of illnesses.Most medical systems focus on treating diseases based on their symptoms. Without addressing the underlying causes, achieving a lasting resolution to any health issue is impossible. As a result, numerous medical systems have emerged, new technologies have been developed, and many hospitals have been established. Yet, rather than witnessing a decline, the incidence of diseases and the number of patients continue to rise. Two principal factors contribute to this situation: irregular routines of our day to day life, and neglect of the underlying causes of diseases.

To address the first factor, yoga provides guidance on conduct, thought processes, and dietary habits, which can lead to a sustainable resolution of erratic daily routines. For the second factor, Hatha Yoga advocates the practice of Shatkarma. In essence, diseases manifest when the body creates a conducive environment for them. While modern medical systems attribute diseases to germs, traditional Indian medical practices such as Ayurveda, Naturopathy, and Yoga Therapy assert that the true cause of illness lies not in the germs themselves, but in the foreign elements (toxins) that facilitate their proliferation. Thus, these traditional systems focus on addressing the root causes of diseases.

Germs may be the origin of various illnesses, but there are underlying reasons for their emergence. However, modern medical approaches primarily aim to eliminate the germs without addressing these foundational issues.

6.4 OBJECTIVE OF THE SHATKARMA

Shatkarmasbvhave various purposes. such as :

1. To balance the Tridoshas (Vata, Pitta and Kapha).
2. To create physical and mental balance.
3. To flow Prana in Sushumna by balancing Ida and Pingala Nadi.
4. To remove unnecessary wastes from the body (to get out of the body).
5. To keep the body healthy by purifying it internally.
6. To strengthen the internal systems of the body such as - digestive system, circulatory system and respiratory system.

6.5 CONCEPT OF SHATKARMA

The term Shatkarma is formed from two components: Shat, which signifies six (6), and Karma, meaning work. Consequently, Shatkarma translates to 'six works.' In this context, Shatkarma refers to six specific practices aimed at purifying the body. Within Hatha Yoga, these six purification techniques are collectively known as Shatkarma, or six body cleansing processes in English. Maharishi Gheranda outlines the six Shatkarmas as the foundational aspect of Yoga in the *Gheranda Samhita*. He asserts that without engaging in Shatkarma, no individual can attain success in the path of yoga. The initial step involves the purification of the body, as a lack of bodily purity hinders the practitioner's progress in other Yoga disciplines. Thus, Maharishi Gheranda regards Shatkarma as the essential starting point of Yoga.Shatkarma holds a significant position within Hatha Yoga practice. The execution of Shatkarma not only cleanses the body but also purifies the mind. Achieving both physical and mental purity facilitates a smoother journey along the spiritual path.

According to *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, Shatkarmas(6 kriyas) are Dhauti, Basti, Neti, Trataka, Nauli and Kapālabhāti - these are said to be the six purifying processes.

धौतिर्बस्तिस्तथानेतिस्त्राटकंनौलिकंतथा।
कपालभातिश्चैतानिषट्कर्माणिप्रचक्षते卐 ।।22।।

Benefits of the Shatkarmas:

The six cherished processes mentioned above, which purify the body and yield wonderful results, are held in high esteem by the leading of the yogis.

6.6 TYPE OF SHATAKARMA

Shatkarmas are given are as below.

1) Dhauti – it is the cleansing of the whole digestive tract.

Technique –

चतुरगुलविस्तारंहस्तपञ्चदशायतम्।
गुरूपदिष्टमार्गेणसिक्तंवस्त्रंशनैर्ग्रसेत卐 ।
पुन:प्रत्याहरेच्चैतदुदितंधौतिकर्मतत卐 ।।24।।

The *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* (ii.24) describes the length of the cloth to be 15 cubits 4 fingers in width.

Benefit - It cures asthma, spleen diseases, skin and 20 other varieties of diseases caused by excess of phlegm.

2) Basti – It is the cleaning of the bowels. The *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, describes only 1 type of Basti i.e., Jalabasti

Technique –

नाभिदधजलेपायुन्यस्तनालोत्कटासन:卐 ।
आधाराकुचनंकुर्यात्क्षालनवस्तिकर्मतत् ।।२७।।

Inserting a tube into the anus and adopting the Utkamāsana pose in water coming up to the navel; one should wash (the interior) by contracting (and relaxing after the tube is removed) This process is known as Basti.

Benefit :

As a result of practicing Basti, all diseases are cured like disorders of the spleen and other glands and dropsy originating from other disorders of 'Vata', 'Pitta' (yellow bile) and 'Kapha' (phlegm).

3) Neti – It is the process of nasal cleaning

Technique :

सूत्रंवितस्तिसुस्निग्धंनासानालेप्रवेशयेत।
मुखान्निर्गमयेच्चैषानेति:सिद्धैर्निगद्यते।।30।।

The *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, mentions the size of a thread of 9 inches and the *Hatha Ratnavali,* mentions the size of thread of 6 vitasti (1 vitasti = 12 digits) and prescribes the techniqui of inserting the thread to the nostril and pulling it out through the mouth.

Note: Svātmārāma has not mentioned “JalaNeti”. A rubber tube is now used instead of thread.

Benefit:

Neti cleanses the frontal sinuses, bestows perfect vision, and soon destroys the multitude of diseases of the region above the shoulders.

4) Trataka – It is the exercise of gazing at a fixed point.

Technique:

निरीक्षेन्निश्चलदृशासूक्ष्मलक्ष्यंसमाहित:।
अश्रुसंपातपर्यन्तमाचार्यस्खाटकंस्मृतम्।।32।।

Keeping the eyes steady, one should attentively stare at a small object until tears come out. This is called Trātaka.

Benefit:

Trataka cures eye diseases and wards off sloth. It is mentioned that this practice should be preserved with the effort of preserving a casket of gold.

5) Nauli : A self-administered abdominal massage, using only the muscles of the abdominal wall.

As per the *Hatha Yoga Pradikipa* and *Hatha Ratnavali*, Nauli is the CROWN of all Hatha Yoga practices.

In *Hatha Yoga Pradikipa*, Nauli is also known as LAULIKI and it mentioned one type of Nauli

Technique:

अमन्दावर्तवेगेनतुन्दं卐 सव्यापसव्यत: ।
नतांसोभ्रामयेदेषानौलि:सिद्धै:प्रचक्ष्यते ।। 34 ।।

With shoulders bent forward one should rotate the abdomen right and left with the speed of a fast-rotating whirlpool. This is called Nauli.

Benefit:

Nauli intensifies weak (gastric) heat and restores (good) digestion etc.; it invariably brings a feeling of well-being and completely destroys all disorders and diseases.

6) Kapalbhati: In *Hatha Yoga Pradikipa*, only one technique is mentioned as Kapalbhati while in *Hatha Ratnavali*, there are two techniques of Kapalbhati and instead of Kapalbhati, Kapalbhastrika or Kapalbhranti term is used.

Gheranda Samhita, three types of Kapalbhati are mentioned i.e., Vatakrama, Vyutkrama and Sitkrama.

Technique:

भस्त्रावल्लोहकारस्यरेचपूरोससंभ्रमो ।
कपालभातिविख्याता卐 कफदोषविशोषणी ।।36 ।।

Rapid performance of Recaka (exhalation) and Püraka (inhalation), like (emptying and filling up of) the bellows of a blacksmith is Kapâlabhâti, well-known as the destroyer of disorders caused by phlegm.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1: Write down the basic concept of Shatkamra.

Q2: What are objectives of Shatkarma?

Q3: Explain the types of Shatkarma.

Q4: What is Neti? Write down its benefits.

Q5: Discuss the concept of Dhauti and its benefits.

Q6: Explain the concept of Basti with its merits.

Q7: What is Nauli? What are its benefits?

Q8: Explain the concept of Tratak and its benefits.

Q9. What is Kapalbhati? Write about its benefits.



6.7 LET US SUM UP

These six cherished processes, which purify the body and yield wonderful results, are held in high esteem by the great yogis.

1 Dhauti (Digestive Tract Cleansing)

- Technique: Swallowing a cloth strip to cleanse the stomach.
- Benefits: Cures asthma, spleen diseases, skin disorders, and mucus-related issues.

2 Basti (Intestinal Cleansing)

- Technique: Using a tube in the rectum while sitting in water (*JalaBasti*).
- Benefits: Helps with spleen disorders, glandular issues, and balances *Vata, Pitta,* and *Kapha*.

3 Neti (Nasal Cleansing)

- Technique: Passing a lubricated thread through the nostrils and out of the mouth.
- Benefits: Cleanses sinuses, improves vision, and prevents diseases above the shoulders.

4 Trataka (Gazing)

- Technique: Staring at a small object until tears appear.
- Benefits: Improves vision, enhances focus, and combats laziness.

5 Nauli (Abdominal Massage)

- Technique: Rotating abdominal muscles left and right.
- Benefits: Improves digestion, boosts gastric heat, and enhances overall well-being.

6 Kapalbhati (Breathing Exercise)

- Technique: Forceful exhalations and passive inhalations.

- Benefits: Clears mucus, boosts lung function, and enhances mental clarity.



6.8 FURTHER READING

1. Digambaraji Swami Kokaje Raghunatha Shastri *Hathapradipika of Svatmarama*, Kaivalayadham Shriman Madhav Yogamandir Samiti, Lonavla, 2 ndedi., 1998
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5. स्वामी दिगंबरजी और झा, पीताम्बर, हठप्रदीपिका स्वात्माराम कृत, कैवल्यधाम श्रीमन्माधव योगमंदिर समिती, लोनावला, २ रा संस्क.,२०११



6.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Q1: The Shatkarmas (Sanskrit: षटकर्म satkarma, literally six actions), also known as Shatkriyas, are a set of purification practice of the body, to prepare a yogi for the main work of yoga towards moksha (liberation).

Answer to Q2: Shatkarmas have various purposes. Such as-

1. To balance the Tridoshas (Vata, Pitta and Kapha).
2. To create physical and mental balance.
3. To flow Prana in Sushumna by balancing Ida and Pingala Nadi.
4. To remove unnecessary wastes from the body (to get out of the body).
5. To keep the body healthy by purifying it internally.
6. To strengthen the internal systems of the body such as – digestive system, circulatory system and respiratory system

Answer to Q3: The *Hamha Ratnavali* mentions two additional purifications, Cakri and Gajakarani, criticising the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* for mentioning only the other six. Shuddhikriya specially increases the vital capacity of the practitioner or sadhak. They are not designed for only therapy but for prevention of diseases, attainment of health and harmony and freedom from old age. It creates harmony between the body and the mind and prepares an aspirant for further practices.

The execution of Shatkarma not only cleanses the body but also purifies the mind. Achieving both physical and mental purity facilitates a smoother journey along the spiritual path. According to *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, Shatkarmas(6 kriyas) are Dhauti, Basti, Neti, Trāmaka, Nauli and Kapālabhāti - these are said to be the six purifying processes.

धौतिर्बस्तिस्तथानेतिस्त्राटकंनौलिकंतथा।
कपालभातिश्चैतानिषट्कर्माणिप्रचक्षते卐 ।।२२।।

Answer to Q4: Neti is the process of nasal cleansing or nasal irrigation for cleansing the nasal passage of the upper respiratory track. The method is given below:

Technique :

सूत्रंवितस्तिसुस्निग्धंनासानालेप्रवेशयेत।
मुखान्निर्गमयेच्चैषानेतिःसिद्धैर्निगद्यते।।३०।।

The *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, mentions the size of thread in 9 inches and the *Hatha Ratnavali*, mentions the size of thread is 6 vitasti (1 vitasti = 12 digits) and prescribes the method of inserting the thread to the nostrils & pulling it out through the mouth.

Note: Svātmārāma has not mentioned '"JalaNeti", in which a rubber tube is used instead of thread nowadays.

Benefit :

Neti cleanses the frontal sinuses, bestows perfect vision, and soon destroys the multitude of diseases of the region above the shoulders.

Answer to Q5: It is the cleansing of the whole digestive tract or Gastro Intestinal tract. It cleanses and eliminates all the diseases related to the accumulation of bile. The method is mentioned below:

Technique :

चतुरगुलविस्तारंहस्तपञ्चदशायतम्।
गुरूपदिष्टमार्गेणसिक्तंवस्त्रंशनैर्ग्रसेत्॥ ।
पुन:प्रत्याहरेञ्चैतदुदितंधौतिकर्मतत्॥ ।।२४।।

The *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* (ii.24) describes the length of the cloth to be of 15 cubits, and 4 fingers in width.

Benefit : It cures asthma, spleen diseases, skin and 20 varieties of diseases caused by excess of phlegm.

Answer to Q6: It is the cleaning of the bowels, specially it is related to the large colon of gastro intestine. The *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* (HYP), describes only 1 type of Basti, that is Jalabasti.

Technique :

नाभिदधजलेपायुन्यस्तनालोत्कटासन:॥ ।
आधाराकुचनंकुर्यात्झालनवस्तिकर्मतत् ।।२३।।

This practice is done by inserting a tube into the anus and adopting the Utkamāsana pose in water coming up to the navel; one should wash (the interior) by contracting (and relaxing after the tube is removed). It is known as Basti.

Benefit :

As a result of practicing Basti, diseases like the disorders of the spleen and other glands and dropsy originating from other disorders of 'Vata', 'Pitta' (yellow bile) and 'Kapha' (phlegm), are cured.

Answer to Q7: Nauli is a self-administered abdominal massage, using only the muscles of the abdominal wall. As per the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* and *Hatha Ratnavali*, Nauli is the crown of all Hatha practices.

In *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, Nauli is also known as LAULIKI.

Technique :

अमन्दावर्तवेगेनतुन्दं॥ सव्यापसव्यत:।
नतांसोभ्रामयेदेषानौलि:सिद्धै:प्रचक्ष्यते।।३४।।

With the shoulders bent forward, one should rotate the abdomen right and left with the speed of a fast-rotating whirlpool. This is called Nauli.

Benefit

Nauli intensifies weak (gastric) heat restores (good) digestion etc., and invariably brings a feeling of well-being and completely destroys all disorders and diseases.

Answer to Q8: Tratak is the practice of gazing at a fixed point, which is also known as concentration technique.

Technique

निरीक्षेत्रिश्चलदृशासूक्ष्मलक्ष्यंसमाहितः।
अश्रुसंपातपर्यन्तमाचार्यस्खाटकंस्मृतम्।।३२।।

Keeping the eyes steady, one should attentively stare at a small object

until tears come out. This is called Trātaka.

Benefit

Trataka cures eye diseases and wards off sloth; it is also mentioned that this practice should be preserved with the effort guarding a casket of gold.

Answer to Q9: In Hatha Yoga Pradipika, only one technique of Kapalbhati is given, whereas in Hatha Ratnavali, there are two techniques of Kapalbhati and instead of Kapalbhati, the term Kapalbhastrika or Kapalbhranti is used. In *Gherand Samhita*, three types of Kapalbhati are mentioned i.e., Vatakrama, Vyutkrama and Sitkrama.

Technique :

भस्त्रावल्लोहकारस्यरेचपूरोससंभ्रमो।
कपालभातिविख्याता卐 कफदोषविशोषणी ।। 36।।

Rapid performance of Recaka (exhalation) and Püraka (inhalation) like (emptying and filling up of) the bellows of a blacksmith is Kapālabhāti, well-known as the destroyer of disorders caused by phlegm.

Benefit: It purifies All Kapha Doshas related disease and heal all abdominal disease.



6.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

Objective Questions:

1. The meaning of Shatkarma is related to:

   A. Purification B. Cleansings C. purity of vital nadis

   D. All of the above
2. Vasti is :

   A. Jal Basti B. Sthal Basti C. A and B both D. None of the above
3. How many Shatkarmas are described in the Hatha Yoga Pradipika?
4. The main purpose of Shatkarmas is to _____.
5. What is the practice of cleansing the nasal passages called?
6. Which Shatkarma is used for cleansing the intestines using water?

Short Questions:

1. What are Shatkarmas in yoga?
2. State any two objectives of performing Shatkarmas.
3. Why are Shatkarmas considered important before starting Pranayama?
4. What is Trataka and what is its benefit?
5. Write down the objective of Shatkarma with their significance.

Essay type Questions:

1. Describe the need and objectives of Shatkarmas in yogic practice.
2. Write about and its benefit in detail.
3. Write about the qualities of Nauli according to Hatha Pradipika.
4. Write about the concept of Tratak with its technique and benefits?
5. What is Kapalbhati? Write about its benefits.
6. Define Dhauti and explain its techniques and benefits?
7. Discuss in detail the features of Dhauti according to *Hathayoga Pradipika* for Hatha Yogi.
8. Explain the basic concepts of Shatkarma for a Yogi in the light on *Hatha Pradipika?*

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UNIT 7: HATHA YOGA PRACTICES- ASANA

UNIT STRUCTURE

7.1 Learning Objectives

7.2 Introduction to Hatha Yoga Practices

7.3 Meaning and Definition of Asana

7.4 Pre requisites of Asanas

7.5 Special Features of Asanas

7.6 Let us Sum up

7.7 Further Reading

7.8 Answers to Check your Progress

7.9 Model Questions

7.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you will be able to :

- discuss the meaning and definition of Asanas
- highlight the prerequisites of Asanas
- describe the special features of Asanas
- explain the benefits of Yoga Practice

7.2 INTRODUCTION OF HATHA YOGA PRACTICES

The practice of yoga dates back to thousands of years. It eventually split off in several directions. Hatha Yoga is one of these branches. Hatha Yoga is a form of yoga that was developed by the Nath Yogis. Adinatha, the "First of all Nathas," founded the Nath Sect. It is known as the Adinath Sampradaya and is also considered the father of Hatha Yoga. Both Gorakhnath and Matsyendranath are regarded as significant figures in the development of Hatha Yoga. They both share the credit of popularizing Hatha Yoga as a method of achieving spiritual enlightenment. Hatha yoga is a broad term that includes many different traditions and styles. Hatha Yoga was developed and maintained by the Nath Gurus. It is well known that

Hatha yoga balances the sun and moon's energies. Since "Ha" stands for the sun and "Tha" for the moon, the name "Hatha" itself is taken from Sanskrit and symbolizes the balance of opposing powers. According to Hatha Yoga philosophy, the human body system regardless of gender, comprises of three main nadis or energy channels: Ida, Pingala and Sushumna. The prana, or vital force, travels through nadis. Numerous yoga texts mention the existence of seventy-two thousand nadis. Ida nadi represents the energy of the moon on the left side of the spine, whereas Pingala nadi represents the energy of the sun on the right. The Sushumna flows in the centre of merudanda between these two nadis. When ida and pingala nadi are in perfect harmony, Prana enters in Sushumna, resulting in a state of ultimate joy. Hatha yoga is therefore developed to balance the ida and pingala nadis and to facilitate free travel of prana in sushumna for the highest level of happiness. This equilibrium is essential to Hatha Yoga, which uses a variety of methods to balance the body and mind. According to Swatmarama, "the author of *Hatha Pradipika*", Shabar, Anandbhairav, Chaurangi, Meen, Charpati, and many more are the celebrated practinioners of Hatha Yoga. In *Gherand samhita* it is mentioned that, the human body deteriorates with every second, much like an unbaked pot that decays continuously when water is poured into it. By being heated in the fire of yoga, the body becomes completely pure. Accordingly, Maharishi Gheranda incorporated seven facets of yoga into the *Gheranda Samhita* to strengthen and cleanse the body. These seven limbs are Shatkarma, Asana, Mudra, Pratyahara, Pranayama, Dhyana and Samadhi. Shatkarma (Dhauti, Basti, Neti, Nauli Trataka and Kapalbhati) is the observance of six purifying practices, strength via asana practice, stability through mudras, patience through pratyahara, lightness through pranayama, realization through meditation, and detachment (freedom) through samadhi. Swatmarama emphasises Hatha Vidya solely for the achievement of Raja Yoga in the well-known Hatha Yoga text, the *Hatha Pradipika*. While Hatha Yoga focuses on physical postures and breath control, Raja Yoga concentrates on mental discipline and meditation. Swatmarama describes Hatha Yoga as the physical facet of the same discipline, while Raja Yoga is its mental aspect. Establishing complete

equilibrium between the body and the mind is the primary goal of Hatha yoga. For those who want to ascend to the highest peak of Raja Yoga, Hatha Yoga might therefore be compared to a ladder. In simple terms, Hatha Yoga serves to purify the body to enable a more focused Raja Yoga practice and the ultimate goal of Raja Yoga is to achieve Samadhi or union with the divine.

7.3 MEANING AND DEFINITION OF ASANA

Asana, the third limb of Ashtanga yoga, is defined by Maharshi Patanjali as the practice of physical postures that prepare the body for meditation. The well-known statement *"Sthir sukham asanam"* by Maharshi Patanjali describes asana as sitting in a comfortable, relaxed, and firm position. There are as many asanas in the world as there are animals, according to Maharishi Gherand. Lord Shiva initially stated that there are 84 lakh asanas, with 84 being the greatest. In his well-known Hatha Yoga work, the *Gheranda Samhita,* Maharishi Gheranda had instructed King Chandakpali to practic thirty-two asanas for his physical stability. Swami Swatamrama considered Asana as the first part of Hatha Yoga in *Hatha Pradipika*. Swatmarama described the four parts of Hatha Yoga as Asana, Kumbhaka, Mudra and Nadanusandhana respectively but specified only 15 asanas for Hatha yoga sadhna. Swami Swatamrama in Hatha Pradipika defines asana as;

Hamhasya prathama-aEgatvâd-âsanaA pûrvam-ucyate.
kuryât- tad- âsanaC sthairyam-ârogyaC ca-aEga-lâghvam. 1/17 HYP

By practicing Asana, one experiences stability, health and lightness in the body.

Asana practice, according to *Hatha Ratnavali* (Srinivasa Yogi), promotes stability, health, and an efficient body while also reducing sickness. Asanas are meant to relieve the body from both physical and mental ailments. Asanas improve the functions of internal organs and eliminate toxins from the body, which promotes wellness. The practice of asanas with ease and steadiness is a good way to build strength and flexibility that prepare the body for higher levels of energy and possibilities.

7.4 THE PRE REQUISITES OF ASANAS

The asanas have received particular attention in Hatha Sadhana. The asanas must be mastered before the Hatha Sadhana may progress. A state of total mastery over the body and the absence of bodily pain or discomfort are the goals of asanas. Gheranda Rishi believes in performing certain purifying procedures, known as Shatkarma, to improve the body before practicing asanas. Saptanga Yoga is the style of yoga taught in the well-known Hatha Yoga text, the *Gheranda Samhita* in which Shatkarma serves as the most important and fundamental pillar of practice. Shatkarma, which includes Dhauti, Basti, Neti, Lauliki, Tratak, and Kapalbhati, is a practice to remove the imbalances in tridoshas and to make the body free from disorders. Thus, it is recommended that all yoga practitioners perform these Shatkarmas before the practice of asanas. Swami Swatmarama has emphasised the practice of Shatkarmas to achieve equilibrium in tridoshas in cases of obesity and an excess of phlegm in the body. These Shatkarmas are not necessary for those whose tridoshas are in balance. The following prerequisites must be met in order to practice asanas;

- In Ashtanga yoga, yama and niyama are the foundational practices that give the practitioners the necessary and compulsory position before they may begin practicing asana. The five yamas (social ethics) and five niyamas (personal observances) are two of these eight limbs of Patanjali yoga sutras and a way of right living. Asana practice does not produce the intended outcomes without them. Ten Yamas and ten Niyamas are listed in the *Vasistha Samhita*, one of the primary texts of Hatha Yoga, by the sage Vasistha. Yama and niyama are addressed in numerous different Hatha Yoga literatures to indicate that they should be prioritized and given particular attention before performing asanas. Although Swatmarama has not listed Yama and Niyama as components of yoga, he acknowledges their expected value in the practice of yoga.
- It is recommended to empty the bladder and the bowels prior to performing asana. Asana should never be performed prior to bladder and stomach cleanse.

- It is best to perform Āsanas on an empty stomach. One or two glasses of lukewarm water can be consumed before defecation if this proves to be challenging. Āsanas can be performed one hour after a very light meal or three hours after a heavy one. Light food can be consumed approximately an hour after the practice.
- Since yoga has been shown to lower stress, release tension, and relax the body, it's a great activity to do at any time of day. It is stated in the *Srimad Bhagavatam* that Brahma-muhurtha, which occurs one and a half hours before sunrise, has a higher impact than any other time of the day the when it comes to spiritual activity. Because of the calm and serene environment during Brahma-muhurtha, doing yoga in that time is a great way to start the day and to boost your internal energy for various bodily processes and daily needs. The practice of yogasanas makes us inhale more deeply, which allows oxygen to enter the body. Evening yoga might help us prepare for a restful night's sleep. For people who have been standing or walking all day, stretching is a great way to release tension in their legs and thighs. For people who have been sitting all day, it can help relax their back muscles. Thus, the best time to practice yogasana is either early in the morning or in the evening.
- In the first chapter of the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* there is a specific description of place where Yoga should be practiced. In order to succeed in yoga, practitioners should practice asanas at a place which is free from obstacles and the social system and rules are well followed in that particular place. The Hatha Yogi should reside in a secluded hut four cubits away from any fire, stones and water in a nation that is well-administered, religious and full of wealth. The room for spiritual practice should have a tiny door, without any openings for rats, snakes, etc. being neither too high nor too low. It should be completely clean, wiped with cow dung and free from animals or insects and embellished with a well, an elevated platform, and an arbour.

A peaceful, comfortable area free from dust and insects with

lots of natural light and fresh air, free from the movements of living beings within a few feet, is the ideal setting for yoga practice. The most important factor is you feel at ease in that place and be able to focus on your practice.

- It is recommended that Āsanas be practiced on a mat or thick cushion. Although they are supposed to be done on a mat, most of them are composed of non-biodegradable materials, particularly PVC. Thus, it is necessary to use more environment friendly options for yogasana practice, such as cushion made of jute, natural fibre, and natural cotton.
- As per the *Gheranda Samhita*, it is not advisable to begin practicing yoga during Hemant, Shishir, Grishma, or Varsha Ritu. Vasant or Sharad Ritu is appropriate season to start practicing because it gives you success and cures illnesses.
- The yogic methods known as Sukshma vyayama or simply warm up exercises, which should be performed before any yogasana, include rhythmic, repeating stretching movements that help release energy blockages, loosen joints, and enhance general well-being.
- A healthy diet is essential for re-establishing equilibrium on all levels and fostering general well-being, according to yoga texts. The yogic philosophy lays a strong emphasis on sattvic meals that support detoxification, clarity, and peace.
- Yoga clothes should be breathable, flexible, and loose by nature because sweating happens during yoga practice, so the fabric should be able to absorb moisture. Because the body's organs and components are hyperextended during different yoga postures, it is necessary to wear loose, comfortable, and well-fitted yoga clothing.
- People with particular medical conditions need to practice only specific āsanas with caution and need to avoid some, which will be informed by the yoga teacher. Contraindications or limitations for each of the āsanas should be kept in mind otherwise addressed by Yoga teacher to each practitioner during the practice.

7.5 SPECIAL FEATURES OF ASANAS

The author of *Hatha Ratnavali*, Srinivasa Yogi, lists eighty-four asanas but does not explain the techniques of all of them. Instead, he considers ten important asanas. Muni Gherand, on the other hand, goes into details about thirty-two asanas. In *Hatha Pradipika*, Swatmaram lists fifteen different types of asanas. Every asana targets a different body component. Yoga practice is a holistic approach that includes physical, mental and spiritual aspects. The techniques of certain asanas that cure physical and mental ailments were developed by our ancient rishis to prepare the body for more advanced spiritual practices. Some of the features driven by practicing yogasanas are given below.

A. Physical benefits of Asana

B. Psychological benefits of Asana

C. Spiritual benefits of asana

D. Other health benefits of asana

A. Physical benefits of Asanas: Yoga poses enhance physical well-being in numerous ways. Studies reveal that asanas increase blood circulation and oxygen consumption, as well as improve the functioning of muscles, bones, joints, skin, and entire body. Asanas also provide numerous other health benefits, such as

- **Creates Flexibility:** Different yoga poses target different body muscles, improving their range of motion and reducing stiffness. Your joints experience less stress and strain since your body is supported by stronger muscles. In addition to strengthening ligament and tendon function and increasing lubrication in the joints, yoga poses also strengthen bones and prevent age-related weakness by reducing inflammation and enhancing blood flow to the selected organs.
- **Develops Strength:** Asanas prepare the body to hold yoga poses for extended periods of time while also calming the mind and body. Maintaining the final position of any yoga pose strengthens the core, and the stretching effects of the yogasana enhance muscular tone and strength while also improves the functional capacity of various organs.

- **Balance and coordination:** Balancing asanas such as Tadasana and Garudasana require greater focus to execute whereas conscious movement in various yoga poses like Surya-namaskar, Chandra-namaskar, etc. bring balance and harmony to the body and mind. Any asana practiced consistently over an extended period of time improves neuromuscular coordination. Focussed attention during asana practice develops balance and coordination. Because asanas build key muscles like your legs and core, they help improve your balance.
- **Strengthening of bones and joints:** Daily yoga practice can improve bone density and strengthen the skeletal system while lowering the chance of bone deterioration. Dhanurasana, setubandhasana, mayurasana, bhujangasana, and many other poses improve the functioning of the wrist, arms, elbows, shoulders, ribs, and spine, as well as enhance flexibility and blood circulation. Standing postures like trikonasana and veerbhadrasana work on the major bones of the hips and legs. Additionally, asana practice strengthens and regulates ligaments and tendons. Through asana practice, different endocrine glands release the appropriate quantity of hormones for strong bones.
- **Reduction in bodily pain or chronic pain and physical discomfort:** Physical discomfort or chronic pain can lower a person's quality of life and increases their vulnerability to stress anxiety and depression. On the other hand, the practice of various asanas on a regular basis can improve the range of motion and help those with chronic pain conditions. Asana can also help strengthen muscles and improve flexibility. Additionally, the asanas can help alleviate body pain or physical discomfort caused by poor posture through improving body alignment. At the end of an asana practice, the practice of Shavasana decreases inflammatory markers of numerous diseases and acts as a sponge to produce energy. Asanas also stimulate the body's endocrine system, which helps people feel better by releasing hormones that reduce pain and enhance their quality of life.
- **Increases Body awareness:** Breathing and movement of body-parts should be coordinated when performing asanas. Regular asana

practice improves overall bodily awareness and coordination while fostering mental clarity and calmness. Various body parts must move in coordination and control during yoga poses. In order to effectively activate muscles and be more present during the practice, attention is purposefully drawn to particular body parts. This can aid in preventing injuries and identifying health issues early.

- **Helps in weight loss:** Yoga asanas such as Surya-namaskar burn calories by stimulating the body's metabolic processes and support a healthy weight. Like other twisting yoga poses, Ardhamatsyendrasana can aid in weight loss by enhancing detoxification and digestion. Certain yogasanas improve the functional capacity of various organs by regulating visceral fat, and provides multiple health benefits. Practicing yoga for weight loss reduces cortisol levels, making it easier to lose extra weight.
- **Enhances energy and fitness:** According to Maharshi Patanjali, asanas were designed for enhancing the capacity of the body and mind so that a person could sit in meditation for longer duration of time. Asanas improve blood circulation and increase the flow of oxygen throughout the body by stimulating and relaxing various muscles, tissues and other parts of the body. Stress and other mental disorders can obstruct the flow of energy and the practice of asana removes blockages and frees the energy. Asanas also harmonize and strengthen the nervous system and thus create a happy state of mind.
- **Psychological benefits of Asana:** Yogasana can improve your mental health in a number of ways, including improving your mood, reducing the symptoms of depression, and improving the practitioner's ability to think. Some poses ease mental tension, encourage relaxation, and prepare the body for sound sleep. There are numerous mental health benefits associated with yoga poses, such as:
- **Management of Stress:** Gamma-Aminobutyric Acid (GABA) level in the brain has been shown to rise with regular asana practice, and this is linked to improved mood and a reduction in anxiety and other mental health issues. GABA is known for producing a calming effect on the

brain. Furthermore, asana practice lowers level the of stress hormones like cortisol and raises the level of happy hormones like serotonin and dopamine, hence preventing the onset of stress symptoms. Some yoga poses promote deep relaxation and calmness by inhibiting the sympathetic nervous system and activating the parasympathetic nervous system.

- **Improves Sleep:** Yoga poses like Shavasana is a kind of asana that promotes better sleep by calming the body and mind, which lowers anxiety and enhances general wellbeing. Practice of certain asanas with mindful breathing also promotes deep and sound sleep. Furthermore, asanas help relieve tension in the thighs, hips, and spine and encourage sleep. Regular yoga practice stimulates the parasympathetic nervous system, which elevates mood and promotes better sleep.
- **Builds Confidence and self esteem:** Practice of asanas increases self-esteem and confidence. Asanas improve alignment and make the body sound, and thus creates confidence in the practitioner. Asana cultivates a positive mindset which improves confidence and self esteem.
- **Promotion of Mental Health:** Asana promotes mental health by reducing stress, anxiety and depression and by inducing emotional balance. Practice of asana with breath awareness can lower the cortisol levels, the hormone associated with stress. Asana helps to calm the nervous system and hence the mind. The brain releases “feel-good” hormones in response to specific asanas.

C. Spiritual benefits of asana: The purpose of asanas was to promote spiritual well-being. Asana has an inevitable role in all forms of yoga, whether it is Maharshi Patanjali’s Ashtanga yoga or any of the sadhana techniques of Hatha yoga. Asana practice calms the mind and brings inner happiness. Perfection in asana equips the practitioner to perform more complex spiritual sadhans to attain kaivalya. By focussing on the breath during yoga poses, the practitioner develops self-love, self-acceptance, and self-realization, which in turn helps them connect with their inner self.

D. Other health benefits of asana: Regular yogasana practice has several other health advantages, as listed below;

- **Increases Immunity:** Performing yogasanas helps us improve the immune system and strengthen various muscles of the body. The immune system's ability to function at its best is compromised by chronic stress and other chronic illnesses. Yogasana not only controls stress but also fight against various infections of the body. The practice of asana associated with breathing increases levels of natural killer cells, which are the chief fighting agents of our immune system. Yoga poses also help to increase the functioning of the lymphatic system and in turn improve the immunity.
- **Ease in various ailments:** It has been shown that yoga poses can help with both physical and mental health issues. Yoga poses help to strengthen and enhance the functioning of the heart by balancing cholesterol levels and regulating blood pressure. Regular yogasana practice benefits the brain, spinal cord, liver, kidney, and many other vital organs. Additionally, asana strengthens the immune system of the body by lowering stress and inflammation. Asanas also has beneficial effects on a number of other psychosomatic illnesses. Asanas also increase the practitioner's lung capacity by widening the chest, which enhances respiratory system performance. Additionally, Asanas have a favourable effect on the secretion of our endocrine system.
- **Improves Quality of Life:** The practice of asana promotes physical, mental, social and spiritual well being. By reducing the symptoms of both physical and mental distress, asana practice transforms the mind and body. Some postures improve the body's muscles, ligaments, tendons, and skeletal system by directing oxygenated blood flow to specific areas and fostering flexibility and strength. Other positions promote sound sleep and alleviate the symptoms of stress, anxiety, and depression. A person can strengthen the body's vital organs by practicing certain therapeutic yoga poses. In doing so yoga poses also increase social cognition. Regular yoga practice balances the mental and physical aspects of health, which in turn opens the door to wisdom

and spiritual well-being. Hence yogasana has been proved to be a valuable tool for improving one's quality of life.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1: Who is known as the father of Hatha Yoga?

Q2: What does 'Ha' refer to in Hatha Yoga?

Q3: Who authored the renowned Hatha Yoga text, *Hatha Pradipika?*

Q4: How many asanas did Maharishi Gherand instruct to King Chandakpali?

Q5: If Yamas are social ethics, what are niyamas?



7.6 LET US SUM UP

In this chapter, we discussed the following topics:

- Hatha Yoga is a form of yoga that was developed by the Nath Yogis.
- Adinatha, the "First of all Nathas," founded the Nath Sect.
- Hatha yoga balances the sun and moon's energies. Since "Ha" stands for the sun and "Tha" for the moon.
- The human body system comprises of three main nadis or energy channels: Ida, Pingala and Sushumna.
- When ida and pingala nadis are in perfect harmony, Prana enters sushumna, resulting in a state of ultimate joy.
- Asana is the practice of physical postures that prepare the body for meditation and/or higher spiritual practices.
- Asanas improve the functions of internal organs and eliminate toxins from the body, which promotes wellness.
- When practicing asanas, it is important to remember the prerequisites. Before performing yoga poses, one should be well-informed about diet, place, time, personal hygiene, attire, age, and a host of other factors.
- Yoga is a holistic approach that has physical, psychological, and spiritual advantages when done regularly.



7.7 FURTHER READINGS

1. Digambaraji, S &. Kokaje, RS (2018). *Hatha Pradipika of Svatmarama*. Kaivalyadhama Samiti Lonavla.



7.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Q1: Adinath

Answer to Q2: Sun

Answer to Q3: Swatmarama

Answer to Q4: Thirty-Two

Answer to Q5: Personal observances



7.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

Objective Questions:

Q1. Whose opposing powers does Hatha Yoga symbolise?

Q2. In which side of the spine does Ida nadi reside?

Q3. How many asanas did Lord Shiva state?

Q4. The main goal of Hatha Yoga is to _____.

Q5. Which ancient text defines Asana as “Sthira Sukham Asanam”?

Short Questions:

Q1. Write a short note on the meaning and definition of asana.

Q2. Write briefly about the spiritual benefits of asana.

Q3. State two prerequisites for practicing Asanas.

Essay type Questions:

Q1. Explain in detail, the prerequisites of asana.

Q2. Explain the meaning and definition of Asana according to yogic texts.

Q3. Discuss the special features of Asanas that distinguish them from ordinary physical exercises.

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UNIT 8: ASANAS IN HATHA YOGA TEXTS

UNIT STRUCTURE

8.1 Learning Objectives

8.2 Introduction of Asanas in Hatha Yoga Texts

8.3 Asanas in *Hatha Pradipika*

8.4 Asanas in *Hatha Ratnavali*

8.5 Asanas in *Gheranda Samhita*

8.6 Let us Sum up

8.7 Further Reading

8.8 Answers to Check your Progress

8.9 Model Questions

8.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you will be able to :

- describe the various asanas of Hatha Yoga Texts
- discuss the importance of asanas
- explain the methods of performing asanas

8.2 INTRODUCTION OF ASANAS IN HATHA YOGA TEXTS

A broad overview of Hatha Yoga texts, particularly *Hatha Pradipika, Gherand Samhita,* and *Hatha Ratnavali* with reference to asanas, will be covered in this section. Hatha yoga is the union of two energies of the sun and the moon that exist within every living being. Hatha Yoga refers to the practice of asanas for achieving the mastery over the body and to prepare the body for higher bliss. Swami Swatamrama has considered asana as the first limb of Hatha Yoga in *Hatha Pradipika* while Muni Gherand in *Gheranda Samhita* stressed the importance of performing shatkarma prior to asana practice. Although Srinivasa Yogi, the author of *Hatha Ratnavali*, acknowledges the asanas as the initial component of the Hatha yoga

curriculum, he also mentions the eight purifying processes known as astakarmas. Irrespective of the order of asanas in which they are described in different Hatha Yoga texts, asanas occupy a significant position in Hatha Yoga. Without practicing asanas one cannot attain success in yoga. Swatmarama describes fifteen important asanas while Gherand and Srinivasa yogi describe thirty two and eighty four asanas respectively. Although Srinivasa Yogi lists eighty four asanas, he describes only a few of them. Practice of asana alleviates physical and mental ailments on the one hand, and on the other hand it prepares the practitioner suitably for performing the complex spiritual practices of Hatha Yoga in order to achieve ultimate bliss.

8.3 ASANAS IN *HATHA PRADIPIKA*

In *Hatha Pradipika*, Swami Swatmarama outlines the four limbs of Hatha Yoga namely asana, kumbhaka, mudra and nadanusandhan. Swami Swatmarama goes on to say that Hatha Yoga is a necessary and preparatory step towards achieving Raja Yoga. Asana practice influences pranic flow, and when prana flows freely, the body becomes more supple, reducing stiffness and fatigue. The *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* is a textbook that teaches how to do Hatha Yoga, a type of yoga that focuses on asana, mudra, kumbhaka, and nadanusandhan. *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* is a detailed description of Hatha Yoga practice and principles designed to take the practitioner from bodily awareness to Self awareness. Swatmarama describes asanas as the first part of Hatha Yoga. Regular practice of asanas results in physical and mental stability, health and lightness in the body. Yogasanas provide numerous health benefits, including physical, mental, and emotional. *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* contains 15 asanas including Swastikasana, Gomukhasana, Veerasana, Kurmasana, Kukkutasana, Uttanakurmasana, Dhanurasana, Matsyendrasana, Paschimottanasana, Mayurasana, Shavasana, Siddhasana, Padmasana, Simhasana and Bhadrasana. Asanas are performed slowly and comfortably with certain techniques. The risk of harm is certain if you do not know how to practice

yogasana correctly. The techniques to practice various asanas according to Swami Swatmarama are as follows;

1. **Swastikasana:** Bend your knees and bring your feet towards each other by placing the sole against the inner thigh of each leg. In this position, sitting in a balanced manner by keeping the body straight is called swastikasana.
2. **Gomukhasana:** The seated pose Gomukhasana involves placing the right ankle close to the left buttock and the left ankle next to the right buttock. A shape that resembles a cow's mouth is formed in this gomukhasana pose.
3. **Veerasana:** Placing one foot on top of other thigh, and the second foot under the opposite thigh makes the pose of veerasana.
4. **Kurmasana:** In order to practice kurmasana, press the anus with two heels and ankles reverted. During this pose the front of the feet are kept extended outwards.
5. **Kukkutasana:** In order to practice kukkutasana, one must perform padmasana, placing both hands appropriately between the knees and thighs, keeping the palms steady on the floor, and using them to support the body in the air.
6. **Uttanakurmasana:** Perform kukkutasana first. Now, lie on your back in tortoise pose while holding your neck by the hands in a finger lock.
7. **Dhanurasana:** Lying down on the stomach, clasp the toes of both the feet with both the hands and pulling them from the back till the ears, making a shape like a bow is called dhanurasana.
8. **Matsyendrasana:** Twist the body by placing the right foot on the base of the left thigh and encircling the left foot on the outside of the right knee. Then both feet should be held firmly with opposite hands. This is matsyendrasana.
9. **Paschimottanasana:** Spreading both legs out on the floor like a stick, gripping both thumbs with the hands, and resting the head on the knees creates paschimottanasana.
10. **Mayurasana:** Mayurasana is a pose that involves standing up in the middle like a stick with both hands firmly planted on the floor and both

elbows on either side of the navel. It simply entails holding the body horizontal to the floor by balancing on the hands.

11. **Shavasana:** Shavasana is a pose in which the practitioner rests flat on their back, resembling a corpse.
12. **Siddhasana:** Keep the heel of one foot firmly between the genitals and the anus, and the other foot directly above the organ of generation. Press your chin into your chest, control your senses, stay still, and look steadily between your eyebrows. The name of this asana for achieving salvation is siddhasana.
13. **Padmasana:** Place the right foot on the left thigh and the left foot on the right thigh. Take both hands backwards; firmly hold the right thumb with the right hand and the left thumb with the left hand. Now place the chin on the heart area and focus the gaze on the tip of the nose. This is padmasana.
14. **Simhasana:** Place the left foot beneath the right buttock so that the heel of the left leg gently rests against the right side of the perineum. Likewise, fold the right leg and tuck the right foot beneath the left buttock so that it presses against the right side of the perineum. Now place both hands on the knees and spread all the fingers. Fix your gaze at the tip of the nose and open your mouth wide and remain stable. This is simhasana.
15 **Bhadrasana:** Position the left ankle on the left side and the right ankle on the right side of the perineum beneath the genitals. Hold the front portion of both the feet with your hands to remain stable. This is bhadrasana.

8.4 ASANAS IN *GHERANDA SAMHITA*

Gheranda muni described the seven limbs of yoga, often known as Saptanga Yoga. Sage Gheranda refers to his yoga as “Ghatastha Yoga,” where “Ghata” literally means an earthen pot and represents the human body-mind complex. According to the *Gheranda samhita*, the human body deteriorates with each passing second, much like an unbaked pot that decays continuously when water is put within. However, the body becomes entirely

purified when heated in the fire of yoga. This is Ghatastha yoga. In Saptanga yoga of *Gheranda samhita*, Gherand muni describes Shatkarma for body cleansing and asana for strengthening the body. Gherand muni described 25 mudras for retaining prana within the body and achieving siddhis. Mudra makes the body steady and controls the mind and energy. Pratyahara is for withdrawing the senses from external objects to calm the mind, and pranayama is used to control and channel vital energy, meditation techniques to achieve concentration and mental clarity and samâdhi for self liberation and bliss. This ancient work explores deeply into the yoga practice and provides excellent information to people seeking spiritual and physical well-being. In the Saptanga Yoga principle described by Maharishi Gherand, the asanas are described after the Shatkarmas. Asanas are practiced for physical stability and strength. Maharishi Gherand has described 32 asanas in Gherand Samhita. The most useful and effective 32 asanas are as follows:

Siddhasana, Padmasana, Bhadrasana, Muktasana, Vajrasana, Swastikasana, Simhasana, Gomukhasana, Veerasana, Dhanurasana, Mritasana (Shavasana), Guptasana, Matsyasana, Matsyendrasana, Gorakshasana, Paschimottanasana, Utkatasana, Sankatasana, Mayurasana, Kukkutasana, Kurmasana, Uttanakurmasana , Manduakasana, Uttanamandukasana, Vrikshsana, Garudasana, Vrishasana, Shalabhasana, Makarasana, Ushtrasana, Bhujangasana, and Yogaasana.

Asanas must be practiced on an empty stomach to achieve proper benefits, coupled with the right techniques listed below:

1. **Siddhasana:** The technique of siddhasana is same as described by Swatmarama. For detail see the section “Asanas in *Hatha Pradipika”.*
2. **Padmasana:** The same as mentioned by Swatmarama. See the section under *“Asanas in Hatha Pradipika*”.
3. **Bhadrasana:** Turn both heels and place them beneath the scrotum. Hold both thumbs towards the back, as in padmasana. After performing jalandhar bandha, focus the tip of the nostrils. This bhadrasana cures all diseases.
4. **Muktasana:** Place the heel of the left foot below the anus and the

heel of the right foot above it. Sit with the body straight, keeping the head and neck straight. This muktasana provides success to Yogis.

5. **Vajrasana:** Tighten the thigh and place the legs on either side of the anus. This is known as the vajrasana.
6. **Swastikasana:** For technique see the section under "Asanas in Hatha Pradipika".
7. **Simhasana:** Cross the heels of both feet under the scrotum. Place both hands on your knees and spread your fingers. Keep your attention fixed on the tip of your nose while opening your mouth wide and remaining stable.
8. **Gomukhasana:** For technique see the section under "Asanas in Hatha Pradipika".
9. **Veerasana:** Veerasana is performed by keeping one leg near the thigh of the other leg while moving the other leg backwards.
10. **Dhanurasana:** Same technique as described by Swatmarama.
11. **Mritasana or Shavasana:** For technique see the section under "Asanas in *Hatha Pradipika*".
12. **Guptasana:** Place both feet beneath the thigh so that the toes, heels, and calves are hidden. This is guptasana.
13. **Matsyasana:** Sitting in padmasana, bend backwards with the help of your elbows, keeping your head on the ground, and then hold your toes with both hands. The feet and thighs remain on the ground in padmasana. This is matsyasana.
14. **Matsyendrasana:** For technique see the section under "Asanas in *Hatha Pradipika*".
15. **Gorakshasana:** In gorakshasana, you sit with your feet together and knees on the ground. In this pose, the pelvic region, buttocks and reproductive organs remain behind the heel. You turn your feet upwards between your knees and thighs, hide your ankles with your hands, and look at the tip of your nose.
16. **Paschimottanasana:** The technique of paschimottanasana is same as described by Swatmarama. For detail see the section "Asanas in *Hatha Pradipika*".

17. **Utkatasana:** Sit with the support of the toes on the ground and do not let the heels touch the ground and keep the anus on the heels. This is called utkatasana.
18. **Sankatasana:** Keep the left foot on the ground till the knee and wrap the left foot with the right foot. Then place both hands on both knees. This is called sankatasana.
19. **Mayurasana:** The same as mentioned by Swatmarama. See the section under "Asanas in *Hatha Pradipika*".
20. **Kukkutasana:** Same as mentioned by Swatmarama under the section "Asanas in *Hatha Pradipika*".
21. **Kurmasana:** For technique see the section under "Asanas in *Hatha Pradipika*".
22. **Uttanakurmasana:** Perform kukkutasana first. Now, lie on your back in tortoise pose while holding your shoulders by the hands.
23. **Manduakasana:** Bend your knees and sit with your feet under your buttocks. Separate the knees and keep the big toes together. Rest each hand on the knees.
24. **Uttanamandukasana:** Hold your head by the elbows in mandukasana. This is uttanamandukasana.
25. **Vrikshsana:** Place your right foot at the base of left thigh and stand straight like a tree. This is called vrikshasana.
26. **Garudasana:** Firmly fix the legs and thighs on the ground, maintaining the body steady with kness, and place your hands on the knees. This is called garudasana.
27. **Vrishasana:** Place the anus on the right heel and place the left heel on the left side of the anus. The opposite side of the soles should remain on the ground.
28. **Shalabhasana:** You have to lie on your stomach with your face towards the ground. Both hands must be kept near the chest. The palms should be firm on the ground. In this position you have to raise your legs. This is what is known as shalabhasana.
29. **Makarasana:** Lie down on your stomach, the chest touching the ground and the two legs stretched out. Put your hands under your

chin. This is makarasana.

30. **Ushtrasana:** Lie on your stomach with both legs crossed, placed on the back, and held in the hands, and firmly contract the abdomen and the mouth at the same time.
31. **Bhujangasana:** Allow the lower body, from the toes to the navel, to touch the floor. Place the palms on the ground and elevate the head like a snake.
32. **Yogaasana:** Turn the feet upwards and place them on the opposite knees, while keeping both hands on the seat. Stay in this position with palms facing upwards. Inhale deeply and focus your eyes on the tip of the nose. This is yogasana.

8.5 ASANAS IN *HATHA RATNAVALI*

Hatha Ratnavali is a treatise on Hatha Yoga written by Srinivasa Bhatt. Lord Shiva has enumerated eighty-four lakh asanas by considering the eighty-four lakh species of creatures. Likewise, Srinivasa Yogi has enumerated eighty-four asanas in his famous text *Hatha Ratnavali*. Although Srinivasa Yogi mentions the names of 84 asanas, he does not describe the techniques for all of them. Ten asanas are considered to be important out of eighty four, including Swastikasana, Gomukhasana, Padmasana, Virasana, Siddhasana, Mayurasana, Kukkutasana, Bhadrasana, Simhasana, and Muktasana. Out of ten asanas, Srinivasa Yogi considered four asanas to be more important.These are; Siddhasana, Padmasana, Simhasana and Bhadrasana.

1. **Siddhasana:** The technique to practice siddhasana is same as described by Swatmarama. For detail see the section “Asanas in *Hatha Pradipika*”.
2. **Padmasana:** Same technique as described by Swatmarama. See the section “Asanas in *Hatha Pradipika*”.
3. **Simhasana:** Same technique as described by Swatmarama. See the section “Asanas in *Hatha Pradipika*”.
4. **Bhadrasana:** Same technique as described by Swatmarama. See the section “Asanas in *Hatha Pradipika*”.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1: Which two energies does Hatha Yoga unite?

Q2: How many asanas does Swatmarama discuss in *Hatha Pradipika*?

Q3: Who is the author of *Hatha Ratnavali*?



8.6 LET US SUM UP

In this chapter, we discussed the following topics:

- Hatha Yoga is the union of two energies of the sun and the moon that exists within every living being.
- Swami Swatamrama has considered asana as the first limb of Hatha Yoga in *Hatha Pradipika* while Muni Gherand in *Gheranda samhita* stressed the importance of performing shatkarma prior to asana practice.
- Swatmarama describes 15 important asanas while Gherand and Srinivasa Yogi describe 32 and 84 asanas respectively.



8.7 FURTHER READING

1) Digambaraji, S &. Kokaje, RS (2018) *Hathapradipika of Svatmarama.* Kaivalyadhama Samiti Lonavla.

2) Digambaraji, S & Gharote, ML (1997) *Gheranda Samhita.* Kaivalyadhama Samiti Lonavla.

3) Gharote, ML, Devnath, P & Jha, VK (2014) *Hatha Ratnavali.* The Lonavla Yoga Institute.



8.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Q1: Solar and Lunar

Answer to Q2: 15

Answer to Q3: Srinvasa Yogi



8.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

Objective Questions:

Q1. How many asanas does Muni Gheranda discuss in *Gheranda Samhita?*

Q2. How many asanas are considered to be more important by Srinivasa Yogi out of ten asanas?

Q3. Yogasana is described by which text of Hatha Yoga?
a) *Hatha Pradipika* b) *Gheranda Samhita* c) *Hatha Ratnavali*

Q4. True or False: Gheranda Samhita classifies Asanas under the first step of Saptanga Yoga.

Q5. What is unique about the number of Asanas listed in Hatha Ratnavali?

Short Questions

Q1. Describe the technique of swastikasana by Swatmarama in brief.

Q2. Describe the technique of siddhasana by Muni Gheranda in *Gheranda Samhita.*

Q3. Write a short note on gorakshasana.

Q4. Mention one goal of practicing Asanas as per these classical texts.

Q5. According to Srinivasa Yogi what asanas are considered as most important?

Essay Types Questions:

Q1. Explain in detail the asanas described by Muni Gheranda in *Gheranda Samhita.*

Q2. Discuss the importance and number of Asanas in the Hatha Yoga Pradipika.

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UNIT 9: HATHA YOGA PRACTICES- PRANAYAMA

UNIT STRUCTURE

9.1 Learning Objectives

9.2 Introduction to Pranayama

9.3 The Concept of Prana

9.3.1 Meaning & Importance of Prana

9.3.2 Meaning of Pranayama

9.3.3 Definitions of Pranayama

9.4 Phases and Stages of Pranayama

9.4.1 Phases of Pranayama

9.4.2 Stages of Pranayama

9.5 Pranayama according to the *Hatha Pradipika*

9.6 Pranayama according to the *Gheranda Samhita*

9.7 Pranayama according to the *Shiva Samhita*

9.8 Let us Sum up

9.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

9.10 Further Reading

9.11 Model Questions

9.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you will be able to –

- Understand the meaning of Pranayama clearly.
- Learn about Pranayama through various definitions.
- Study the different types of Pranayama.
- Explain the purposes of Prana and Pranayama.
- Analyze the various types of Pranayama.
- Study the Pranayama practices described in *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* or *Hatha Pradipika*.

- Become familiar with the precautions to take while practicing Pranayama.
- Gain the various benefits of practicing Pranayama.

9.2 INTRODUCTION TO PRANAYAMA

Dear learners, since ancient times, Hatha Yoga has been considered an important aspect of yoga. If we look into its tradition, it is believed that Lord Shiva first taught this practice to Goddess Parvati. Later, the Nath tradition expanded it, with Gorakshanath and Matsyendranath playing leading roles.

In Hatha Yoga, while the six cleansing techniques (Shatkarmas) and postures (asanas) hold great importance, pranayama (breath control) is also discussed in detail. There are eight types of pranayama described in this system, collectively called "AshtaKumbhaka."

In this unit, you will study the AshtaKumbhakas as described in the Hatha Pradipika and learn more about them. Before starting any kumbhaka practice, it is essential to thoroughly understand its method and then begin. Some types of kumbhaka can be harmful to beginners if practiced incorrectly. Therefore, it is important to learn these practices under proper guidance and only then begin practicing.

9.3 THE CONCEPT OF PRANA

9.3.1 Meaning & Importance of Prana

The word **"Prana"** originates from the prefix **"Pra"** and the root **"An"**. **"Pra"** means "already present" or "prior," and **"An"** refers to "life force" or "conscious energy." Thus, the literal meaning of Prana is "the life force that is inherently present." It is also referred to as the **latent heat** or **psychic force**. The term **Prana** signifies the vital energy or life force of the body. The *Upanishads* have acknowledged the superiority of Prana by equating it to Brahma, Prajapati, Rudra, Mitra-Varuna, Vayu, Angiras, Indra, and other divine entities.

Prana is present in every cell of the body. While the sensory and motor organs may rest or become inactive, this life force never sleeps or takes a break. It operates tirelessly, day and night, embodying the principle of **"CharaivetiCharaiveti"** (keep moving forward). Life exists as long as Prana functions. When this life force ceases to operate within the body, life comes to an end. A being is alive as long as Prana is active; once it stops, the person is considered deceased. Prana is central to the functioning of the body and is the most powerful and essential life-giving element in the entire universe. Therefore, life depends entirely on Prana.

This invisible energy is responsible for the functioning of the entire world. Our body, too, is powered by the energy of Prana. The **Annamaya Kosha** (physical body) is sustained by the **Pranamaya Kosha** (the ethereal or energy body). A person can survive for an extended period without food, but without Prana, thatexistence ends quickly. The **Pranic energy** (aura) is the foundation of our life force and immune system. It keeps vital glands, the heart, lungs, brain, spinal cord, and the entire body healthy and energetic.

It is because of the Prana's energy that:

- The eyes have the power to see.
- The ears have the ability to hear.
- The nose can smell.
- Speech becomes expressive.
- The face radiates with glow, vitality, and brilliance.
- The mind acquires knowledge.
- The stomach can digest food effectively.

Thus, the *Upanishads* declare:

"Pranasyaidamvashesarvamtridiveyatpratishthitam. Maatevaputranrakshasva, shri cha prajna cha vidhehinaiti."(Prashna Upanishad – 2/13)

(प्राणस्येदं वशे सर्वं त्रिदिवे यत्प्रतिष्ठितम्। मातेव पुत्रान् रक्षस्व श्रीश्च प्रज्ञां च विधेहि न इति)

This means, “Everything in the three worlds—earth, heaven, and the space between—is governed by Prana. O Prana! Just as a mother lovingly protects her children, may you protect us.Grant us material prosperity (Shri) and intellectual and spiritual wisdom (Prajna).”

9.3.2 Meaning of Pranayama

The word *Pranayama* is derived from two Sanskrit words: *Prana* (life force or vital energy) and *Ayama* (control or regulation). Together, *Pranayama* means the regulation or control of vital energy. Our breathing process, which is an involuntary activity, is constantly ongoing without interruption. When we consciously regulate this involuntary activity, controlling the inhalation, retention, and exhalation of breath, it is called Pranayama

9.3.3 Definitions of Pranayama

1. <u>According to *Patanjali Yoga Sutras*</u>

“Tasmin sati shwasaprashwasayorgativicchedahpranayamah”
(Yoga Sutras 2/49)

(तस्मिन सति श्वासप्रश्वासयोर्गतिविच्छेदः प्राणायामः)

Meaning: Pranayama is the process of regulating the movements of inhalation (shwasa) and exhalation (prashwasa). It is a means to attain physical and mental stability.

2. <u>According to *Hatha Pradipika*</u>

“Chalevaatechalamchittam, nishchalenishchalambhavetd
Yogi sthanutvamapnoti, tatovayumnirodhayet” (Hatha Pradipika 2/2)

(चले वाते चलं चित्तं, निश्चले निश्चलं भर्वेत् । योगी स्थाणुत्वमाप्नोति, ततो वायूं निरोधर्येत्)

Meaning: When the breath (vital energy) is controlled, the mind also becomes controlled. When the breath is steady, the mind becomes steady as well. Therefore, a yogi should regulate the breath.

3. <u>According to the *Bhagavad Gita*</u>

"Apanejuhvatipranamprane'panamtathapared
Pranapanagatiruddhva pranayama parayanah" (Bhagavad Gita 4/29)

(अपाने जुह्वति प्राणं प्राणेऽपानं तथापरे। प्राणापानगती रुद्ध्वा
प्राणायामपरायणाः)

Meaning: Some yogis merge the upward-moving breath (*Prana*) with the downward-moving breath (*Apana*) and vice versa. This process of controlling the flow of *Prana* and *Apana* is called Pranayama.

4. <u>According to *Shiva Samhita*</u>

"Pranayamamtatahkuryatdhyanamyatranirantaram" (Shiva Samhita 3/55)

(प्राणायामं ततः कुर्यात् ध्यानं यत्र निरन्तरम्)

Meaning: Pranayama is practiced to focus the mind and maintain a continuous state of meditation.

5. <u>According to *Gheranda Samhita*</u>

"Shwasochhwasayohsandharanampranayamah" (Gheranda Samhita 5/53)

(श्वासोच्छ्वासयोः सन्धारणं प्राणायामः)

Meaning: Pranayama is the process of retaining or pausing between inhalation (shwasa) and exhalation (uchhwasa).

9.4 PHASES AND STAGES OF PRANAYAMA

Pranayama, a significant aspect of yoga, involves controlled breathing techniques to harmonize the mind and the body. It has various phases and stages, each contributing to physical, mental, and spiritual well-being.

9.4.1 Phases of Pranayama

1. Puraka (Inhalation)

- Slow, deep, and conscious breathing in.

- Focuses on drawing in vital energy (Prana) and expanding the lungs.
- Symbolizes receiving life energy.

2. Kumbhaka (Retention)

- Holding the breath after inhalation or before exhalation.
- Enhances focus, calms the mind, and increases lung capacity.
- Divided into two types:
  - Antar Kumbhaka: Breath retention after inhalation.
  - Bahir Kumbhaka: Breath retention after exhalation.

3. Rechaka (Exhalation)

- Controlled and conscious breathing out.
- Focuses on expelling toxins and negative energy.
- Represents relaxation and letting go.

9.4.2 Stages of Pranayama

Pranayama practice progresses through different stages, starting with basic awareness of breathing and moving toward advanced techniques.

1. Preparation Stage

- Developing awareness of natural breathing.
- Learning to sit in a comfortable posture (e.g., Padmasana, Sukhasana).
- Relaxation and mindfulness are emphasized.

2. Basic Stage

- Introduction to controlled breathing rhythms.
- Techniques like AnulomVilom (alternate nostril breathing) and Ujjayi (victorious breath) are practiced.
- Focus on balancing the breath and calming the mind.

3. Intermediate Stage

- Incorporation of Kumbhaka (breath retention).
- Pranayama practices like Kapalabhati (cleansing breath) and Bhastrika (bellows breath) are introduced.

- Practitioners learn to control the breath with greater precision.

4. Advanced Stage

- Prolonged Kumbhaka with increased awareness.
- Advanced techniques like Sitali (cooling breath), Sitkari, and Surya Bhedana (right nostril breathing) are practiced.
- This stage involves harmonizing Prana and achieving meditative states.

5. Spiritual Stage

- The practice transcends the physical and mental realms.
- Leads to heightened awareness, inner peace, and spiritual awakening.
- Practitioners experience the unison of Prana (life force) and the higher self.

9.5 PRANAYAMA ACCORDING TO THE *HATHA PRADIPIKA*

In the text *Hatha Pradipika*, the practice of pranayama is explained in detail in the second chapter. This chapter provides a comprehensive explanation of pranayama along with related verses. In *Hatha Pradipika*, eight types of pranayama are described: Surya Bhedana, Ujjayi, Sitkari, Shitali, Bhastrika, Bhramari, Murchha, and Plavini. These have been referred to by Swami Swatmarama as the "variations of Kumbhaka" (breath retention). The explanation of all these eight types of Kumbhakas is as follows:

Sūryabhedanamujjāyīsītkārīśītalītathā d/
Bhastrikābhrāmarīmūrcchāplāvinītyacmakumbhakā%||H. P. 2/44||

सूर्यभेदनमुज्जायी सीत्कारी शीतली तथा ।
भस्त्रिका भ्रामरी मूर्च्छा प्लाविनीत्यष्टकुम्भका।।

Swami Swatmaram described the practice of NadiShodhana Pranayama before explaining the different types of Kumbhak. This is because it is said that our body has 72,000 nadis (energy channels), and their purification happens through NadiShodhana Pranayama. Once these nadis are purified,

one should practice the eight types of Kumbhak, which helps the practitioner gain maximum benefits. The description of NadiShodhana Pranayama is as follows:

NadiShodhana Pranayama:

Baddhapadmasanam yogi prāGamcandreGapūrayetd
Dhārayitvāyathāśaktibhūya%sūryeGarecayete //(H. P. 2/7)

(बद्ध पद्मासनो योगी प्राणं चन्द्रेण पूरयेत् । धारयित्वा यथाशक्ति भूयः सूर्येण रेचयेत्)

Meaning: While seated in Padmasana, the practitioner should inhale through the left nostril (Chandra Nadi) and, after retaining the breath according to their capacity, exhale through the right nostril (Surya Nadi).

In the subsequent sutra, Swatmarama provides a detailed explanation of this pranayama:

Prānamcediayāpibenniyamitambhūyo'nyayārecayetd/
Pītvāpingalayāsamīranayathobaddhvāvyajedvāmayāe//
Sūryā-candramasoranenavidhinābhyamsādatanvatām/
Śuddhānādiganābhavantiyaminām māsa-trayādūrdhvatah//
(H. P. 2/10)

(प्राणं चेदिडया पिबेन्नियमितं भूयोऽन्यया रेचयेत्। पीत्वा पिङ्गलया समीरणमथो बद्ध्वा त्यजेद्वामया)

(सूर्याचन्द्रमसोरनेन विधिनाभ्यासं सदा तन्वतां । शुद्धा नाडिगणाः भवन्ति यमिनां मासत्रयादूर्ध्वतः)

Meaning: When inhaling through Ida (the left nostril), the breath should be retained (Kumbhaka) and then exhaled through the other nostril. Similarly, inhale through Pingala (the right nostril), retain the breath, and exhale through the left nostril. By consistently practicing this method of alternating breath through the right and left nostrils, the nadis (subtle energy channels) of yogis become purified within a little over three months.

In the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, this pranayama is not given a specific name, but in modern times it is commonly known as Anulom-Vilom Pranayama. However, there is a key distinction: Anulom-Vilom is typically practiced with a natural breathing rhythm, whereas NadiShodhana Pranayama involves not only inhalation (Puraka) and exhalation (Rechaka)

but also the incorporation of internal retention (AntarKumbhaka) and external retention (BahyaKumbhaka).

The current prevalent method of NadiShodhan Pranayama:

First, sit in a meditative posture (such as Padmasana, Sukhasana, or Swastikasana) with your spine and neck straight. Begin by inhaling (Puraka) through the left nostril, holding the breath inside for a short while (AntarKumbhaka), and then slowly exhale (Rechaka) through the right nostril. Next, inhale through the right nostril (Puraka), hold the breath inside (Kumbhaka), and then exhale through the left nostril. This process of NadiShodhan is described with the use of AntarKumbhaka (internal retention).

Dear students, this method can also be performed with both AntarKumbhaka (internal retention) and BahyaKumbhaka (external retention). However, practicing both types of Kumbhaka is appropriate only after achieving mastery in AntarKumbhaka. Otherwise, it may cause harm. Therefore, do not practice any method of Pranayama by merely reading it from a book. It is essential to begin Pranayama practice under proper guidance.

Benefits:

- Regular practice of NadiShodhan Pranayama brings a divine aura to the body.
- The negative thoughts in the mind gradually decrease.
- Insomnia and stress gradually diminish.
- With the purification of the nadis, the awakening of the Kundalini happens.

1. Surya Bhedana Pranayama:

"ÂsanesakhandedyogîbaddhvachaivâsanaAtata%.
***DakciGâyâsamâk[cyabahisthaApavanaAœanai%.* ||*H. P. 2/48*||**
Âkeúâdânakhâgrâcchanirodhâvadhikumbhayet.
***Tata%œanai%savyanâ'yarecayetpavanaAœanai%."* || *H. P. 2/49* ||**

(आसने सखनदे योगी बदद्ध्वा चैवासनं ततः । दक्षनाड्या समाकृष्य बहिस्थं पवनं शनैः ।।)

(आकेशादानखाग्राच्च निरोधावधि कुम्भयेत् । ततः शनैः सव्यनाऽया रेचयेत् पवनं शनैः ।।)

Yoga practitioners sit comfortably with a pleasant posture and perform the following technique: they sit on a comfortable mat or seat, placing their seat properly, and gently inhaling air through the right nostril. They hold the breath in as much as possible, and then slowly exhale through the left nostril.

Current Popular Method

- Sit in a meditative posture with your back and neck straight.
- Inhale through the right nostril and hold the breath for a moment (Kumbhaka).
- Then, slowly exhale through the left nostril (Rechaka).
- Repeat the process in the same manner. This is the technique for Suryabhedana Pranayama.

Benefits:

- Regular practice of Suryabhedana Pranayama during the winter season prevents feeling cold.
- It helps in eliminating worms from the body.
- It is beneficial for individuals with low blood pressure.
- It balances the Vata and Kaphadoshas and energizes the body.
- Asthma patients benefit from practicing this pranayama.

2. Ujjayi Pranayama:

"MukhāAsuyamyanā
ībhyaAāk[cyapavanaAśanai%.
***YathālagatikaGmhātūh[dayāvadhīsāsvanam."* ||*H. P. 2/ 51* ||**

मुखं संयम्य नाडीभ्यामाकृष्य पवनं शनैः ।
यथा लगति कण्ठात्तु हृदयावधि सस्वनम् ॥

Meaning: The mouth should be closed gently, and the breath should be drawn through both nostrils slowly, with a slight sound, so that you can feel the flow of air from the throat to the heart.

Current Popular Method

- First, sit in a meditative posture.

- Now, create a sound in the throat similar to snoring, so that the throat becomes constricted.
- After that, while placing the chin on the jugular notch, perform Jalandhar Bandha and hold for as long as comfortable.
- Then, release the Bandha (Jalandhar Bandha) and return to the normal position.
- This is one practice. Repeat the process from 5 to 7 times.

Benefits:

- This pranayama has a direct effect on the throat, influencing the thyroid and parathyroid glands. It helps in treating thyroid disorders (both hyperthyroidism and hypothyroidism).
- It also has a positive effect on people who stutter, stammer, or have a harsh voice. The voice becomes smoother, and stuttering and stammering are eliminated.
- It regulates menstrual irregularities in women.
- It strengthens the nervous system.

3. <u>Sitkari Pranayama:</u>

SitkaamKuryatTathaVaktreGhraanenaiwaVijrmbhikaam

EvamAbhyasYogena Kamadeva Dwitiyaakah||(H. P. 2/54) ||

सीत्कां कुर्यात्तथा वक्त्रे घ्राणेनैव विजृम्भिकाम् ।

एवमभ्यासयोगेन कामदेवा द्वितीयकः ।।

Meaning: One should practice inhaling with a “seet” sound from the mouth and exhale only through the nostrils. By practicing in this way, the practitioner becomes like the second Kamadeva (God of Love).

Current Practice Method:

- First, sit on a mat with the back and neck straight.
- Any suitable meditation posture can be used for pranayama, depending on the practitioner’s comfort.
- Next, close the teeth together and inhale through the mouth while making a “seet” sound, and hold the breath for a while (internal kumbhaka).
- After holding the breath, exhale through both nostrils.

- Repeat the process to gradually increase the practice. This is the basic method for Sitkari Pranayama.
- The best time to practice this pranayama is in the morning, as the inhalation process is done through the mouth.

Benefits:

- Regular practice of this pranayama helps in controlling hunger and thirst.
- It is generally believed that this pranayama is done to reduce physical heat.
- It helps in relaxing the muscles and calming the mind.
- This pranayama is especially beneficial during the summer season.
- It reduces high blood pressure and also calms acidity in the stomach.
- For people who sweat excessively during the summer, this pranayama is highly beneficial.

4. Sheetali Pranayama:

Jihvayavayumāk[cyapūrvavatkumbhasādhanamd
Śanakai%ghāGarandhrābhyāArecayetpavanamsudhī%||H. P. 2/57||

जिह्वया वायुमाकृष्य पूर्ववत् कुम्भसाधनम्।
शनकैर्घाणरन्ध्राभ्यां रेचयेत् पवनं सुधीः ।।

Meaning: It means that the tongue should be folded on both sides, positioned in a special way like a pipe, and then air should be drawn in through it, just like performing kumbhaka (breath retention). Afterward, the intelligent practitioner should slowly exhale through the nostrils.

Current Popular Method: There is no change between the traditional method of Sheetali Pranayama and the currently practiced method. Dear students, so far, you have seen some variations in the techniques you've studied, but some techniques remain unchanged, and Sheetali Pranayama is one of them. The method is as follows:

- First, sit on a mat, keeping the back and neck straight, and close the eyes.
- Now, stick the tongue (or *jihvama*) out, making it like a pipe.

- Then, inhale air through the mouth, and practice kumbhaka (breath retention). Afterward, slowly release the kumbhaka and exhale through the nostrils.

Benefits: This pranayama calms mental and emotional stress and facilitates the uninterrupted flow of prana throughout the body.

- It is beneficial in curing indigestion, cough, and bile-related diseases.
- Regular practice of Sheetali Pranayama helps in controlling hunger and thirst.
- All the benefits of Sitkari Pranayama are also achieved through this practice.

5. Bhastrika Pranayama:

SamyakpadyāsanaAbaddhvāsamagrīvodaraAsudhī% |
MukhaAsaAyamyayatnenaprāGaAghrāGenarecayet || H. P. 2/60||

सम्यक् पद्यासनं बद्ध्वा समग्रीवोदरं सुधीः ।
मुखं संयम्य यत्नेन प्राणं घ्राणेन रेचयेत् ।।

Meaning: Sitting properly in Padmasana (Lotus Pose), the wise practitioner should keep the neck and abdomen straight. Keeping the mouth closed, they should gently exhale air through the nose with a slight sound, allowing the air to touch and be felt in the heart centre, throat, and head. Afterward, they should forcefully inhale the air back into the heart centre with a sound, and then exhale again. In this way, the practitioner should repeatedly perform inhalation (Puraka) and exhalation (Rechaka).

Current Methodology: Nowadays, there are three types of Bhastrika Pranayama, which are as follows:

- **Fast Pace:** Practice is done quickly.
- **Medium Pace:** Practice is done at a normal speed.
- **Slow Pace:** Practice is done gently.

The method for all three is the same; the practitioner can adjust the pace of inhalation and exhalation according to their physical condition.

Steps:

1. Sit in any comfortable asana, keeping the back and neck straight, and gently close the eyes.

2. Touch the tip of the index finger to the thumb.
3. Inhale and exhale at the same pace. The ratio of inhalation (Puraka) and exhalation (Rechaka) should be equal.
4. If practicing at a fast pace, the process should resemble the forceful breathing of a blacksmith's bellows.
5. Afterward, rub your palms vigorously and massage your eyes before slowly opening them.

Benefits of Bhastrika Pranayama:

- It is beneficial for treating asthma and other lung-related diseases.
- People with low blood pressure also benefit from this pranayama.
- It helps reduce pain during childbirth for women.
- It is considered highly effective in curing skin diseases.
- Regular practice helps alleviate throat-related swelling and congestion.
- It improves digestion and boosts energy levels in the body.

6. Bhramari Pranayama:

VegâdaCghocaCpûrakaCbh[EganâdamBh[EgînâdaCrecakaCmandamandam YogîndrâGâmevamabhyâsayogâtCittejâtâkâcidânandalîlâ|| H. P. 2/68 ||

वेगाद घोषं पूरकं भृङ्?गनादम् भृङ्गीनादं रेचकं मन्दमन्दम् ।
योगीन्द्राणामेवमभ्यासयोगात् चित्ते जाता काचिदानन्दलीला।।

Meaning: One should inhale (pūraka) rapidly, creating a sound like the buzzing of a bumblebee. Then, exhale (recaka) slowly, also producing a sound similar to the buzzing of a bumblebee. By practicing in this way, advanced practitioners experience a unique and profound play of bliss in their minds.

Current Popular Method:

- First, sit in a meditative posture with your eyes comfortably closed.
- Focus your mind on the process of inhalation (shwas) and exhalation (prashwas).
- Now, close both ears well with the thumbs of your hands so that no outside sound is heard.

- Place the index fingers on the forehead and the remaining three fingers gently over the eyes.
- Slowly inhale through the nose, then exhale through the nose while making the sound of "Om" (Nada) with the mouth closed.
- Repeat this process five to ten times.

Benefits:

- It helps introvert extroverted individuals.
- It is beneficial for stress-related conditions such as high blood pressure, insomnia, etc.

7. MoorchhaKumbhaka:

PūrakāntegāhataraAbaddhvājālandharaAśanai%,
RecayetmūrcchānāavyeyaAmanomūrcchāsukhapradā.|| H. P. 2/ 69 ||

पूरकान्ते गाढतरं बद्ध्वा जालन्धरं शनैः ।
रेचयेन्मूर्च्छानारव्येयं मनोमूर्च्छा सुखप्रदा ।।

Meaning: After completing inhalation (pūraka), firmly apply the Jalandhara Bandha (throat lock) and then exhale the breath gradually. This kumbhaka, known as MoorchhaKumbhaka,brings about a calming state of mind and provides a sense of peace and bliss.

Current Practical Method:

- The best posture for practicing any pranayama is *Padmasana* (lotus pose). Therefore, one should sit in Padmasana while practicing this pranayama.
- Sit with the spine and neck straight, close your eyes gently, and relax the body.
- Then, begin a slow inhalation (pūraka), tilting the head slightly upward toward the ceiling, and gradually open the eyes until they are fully open at about a 40-degree angle.
- Now, focus the gaze on the *Ajna Chakra* (the point between the eyebrows) and hold the breath (kumbhaka).
- Subsequently, release the kumbhaka and exhale slowly (rechaka) while bringing the head and eyes back to the original position. Close the eyes completely at the end of exhalation.

- Repeat this process 4-5 times. However, if a sensation of faintness (moorchha) begins to occur, stop the practice, calm the mind, and slowly open the eyes.

Note: The current prevalent method is similar to the method described in the *Gheranda Samhita*. However, dear students, it is requested that you do not practice this pranayama alone or merely by reading a book. Practice it only under proper guidance, as it falls under the category of advanced practices. For this reason, this pranayama is not very widely practiced at present. Typically, yoga instructors focus on eight primary pranayamas in their teachings. Hence, your caution is absolutely essential.

Benefits

- It is an excellent practice for turning extroverted individuals inward.
- This is a powerful pranayama; a practitioner who masters it experiences constant bliss.
- Regular practice provides relaxation to the brain region.
- Those who practice this pranayama consistently and become proficient in it naturally transcend materialism.
- The practice of Moorchha Pranayama calms the mind naturally, and over time, worries gradually dissolve into nothingness.

Plavani Pranayama:

Anta%pravartitodāramārūtāpūritodara%

Payasyagādhe'pisukhātplavatepadmapatravat|| *H. P. 2/70* ||

अन्तः प्रवर्तितोदारमारूतापूरितोदरः ।
पयस्यगाधेऽपि सुखात् प्लवते पद्मपत्रवत् ।।

Meaning: Fill the abdomen fully with an ample amount of air through the respiratory passage. Such a practitioner floats effortlessly on deep water, like a lotus leaf.

Current Method:

- This is a type of *Vayu Dhauti* (air cleansing technique).
- Just as water is drunk through the mouth, in this Pranayama, air is "drunk" or inhaled.
- The air is inhaled in such a way that the stomach (abdomen) is completely filled.

- Afterward, a burp is taken in a manner that the impure air inside is expelled.
- To repeat this Pranayama, the process should be performed again.

Benefits:

- It is a beneficial Pranayama for maintaining a healthy digestive system.
- It expels impure air, making the abdomen light.
- Helps in curing all abdominal diseases and is also useful in relieving hysteria.

Stimulates the digestive fire (*Jatharagni*) and helps in eliminating parasitic infections.

9.6 PRANAYAMA ACCORDING TO THE GHERANDA SAMHITA

The *Gheranda Samhita* also provides a detailed explanation of Pranayama. In its fifth chapter, Pranayama is explained along with verses. The *Gheranda Samhita* describes eight types of Pranayama: Sahita (both *Sagarbha* and *Nirgarbha*), Suryabhedi, Ujjayi, Shitali, Bhastrika, Bhramari, Moorchha, and Kevali. These are also referred to as the "types of Kumbhaka" by Sage Gheranda. A detailed explanation of these eight types of Kumbhaka is given below.

Sahita%Sūryabhedaśya Ujjāyī Śītalī Tathā,
BhastrikāBhrāmarīMūrcchāKevalīChācmakumbhakā%.
(G. S. 5/46)

Meaning: There are eight types of Pranayama: Sahita, Surya Bhedana, Ujjayi, Sheetali, Bhastrika, Bhramari, Moorchha, and Kevali.

1. Sahit Pranayama: Sahit Pranayama can be practiced in two ways: **Sagarbha (with seed mantras)** and **Nirgarbha (without seed mantras)**.

(a) Sagarbha Pranayama: In Sagarbha Pranayama, attention is focused on Brahma, Krishna, and Shiva using the seed sounds "A", "U", and "M". These are commonly referred to as seed mantras. This type of Pranayama involves chanting mantras while performing the breathing techniques.

(b) Nirgarbha Pranayama: Nirgarbha Pranayama does not involve the use of mantras. Instead, it is practiced by counting during the breathing process. It is divided into three levels: **superior (Uttam)**, **medium (Madhyam)**, and **inferior (Adham)**. The ideal ratio for practicing this Pranayama is 1:4:2.

2. Suryabhedana Pranayama: In Suryabhedana Pranayama, inhalation (Puraka) is done through the right nostril. After that, the chin lock (Jalandhara Bandha) is applied, and the breath is held (Kumbhaka). Finally, exhalation (Rechaka) is performed through the right nostril.

3. Ujjayi Pranayama: In Ujjayi Pranayama, inhalation is done through both nostrils while producing a soft snoring sound, similar to that of a baby. After inhalation, the breath is held (AntarangaKumbhaka) with the chin lock (Jalandhara Bandha). Finally, slow exhalation (Rechaka) is performed.

4. Sheetali Pranayama: According to Maharishi Gheranda, Sheetali Pranayama involves the use of both the mouth and the nostrils, unlike other Pranayamas that involve only the nostrils. The tongue is extended and rolled like a tube. Inhalation (Puraka) is done through the mouth (as if drinking water), the breath is held for a while, and then exhalation (Rechaka) is done slowly through the nostrils.

5. Bhastrika Pranayama: According to the Gheranda Samhita, Bhastrika Pranayama involves rapid and rhythmic inhalation and exhalation. The breath is drawn in and expelled with equal intensity and rhythm. Other texts also mention the use of breath retention (Kumbhaka) after inhalation and exhalation.

6. Bhramari Pranayama: Maharishi Gheranda describes two methods of Bhramari Pranayama:

Method 1: Sit in a meditative posture (like Padmasana, Siddhasana, or Siddhayoni Asana). Bend your elbows and use your index or middle fingers to close your ears. Relax your jaws so that vibrations are audible. Inhale through the nostrils and exhale slowly while producing a humming sound like a bee.

Method 2: Sit in a meditative posture. Close your ears with your thumbs to block external sounds. Place your index fingers on your forehead, your middle and ring fingers on your eyes, and the little fingers beside your

nostrils. Inhale deeply through the nostrils and, during exhalation, chant "Om" or produce a humming sound like a bee. This calms and stabilizes the mind.

7. Murchha Pranayama: Sit in a meditative posture, keeping the body stable and the mind calm. Inhale deeply, gently close your eyes, and slowly lift your head upward to an angle of about 45–50 degrees. While lifting your head, open your eyes slightly and fix your gaze (Sambhavi Drishti). Retain the breath (Kumbhaka), keeping your elbows straight on your knees. Then return to the original position and close your eyes again.

8. Kevali Pranayama: Maharishi Gheranda describes Kevali Pranayama as the final stage of Pranayama. It involves **Ajapa Japa** (effortless chanting). During inhalation (Puraka), the practitioner feels that the vital energy (Prana) rises from the base (Muladhara) and passes through the heart to reach the nostrils. During exhalation (Rechaka), it is experienced that the vital energy moves from the tip of the nostrils back downward. This is the general method of Kevali Pranayama.

9.7 ACCORDING TO THE SHIVA SAMHITA, THE EXPLANATION OF PRANAYAMA

Dear students, you have understood the explanation of Pranayama in *Hatha Pradipika* and *Gheranda Samhita*. Similarly, *Shiva Samhita* also provides an explanation of Pranayama. In the third chapter of *Shiva Samhita*, the topic of Pranayama is discussed. At the beginning of this chapter, five main life forces (*Prana*) and five subsidiary life forces (*Upaprana*) are mentioned. The five main *Pranas*are Prana, Apana, Samana, Vyana, and Udana, while the five subsidiary *Upapranas* are Naga, Kurma, Krikala, Devadatta, and Dhananjaya.It is advised to practice *Kumbhakas* (breath retention) during the early morning, noon, sunset, and midnight. The characteristics of a yogi who attains perfection in yoga are also described in this chapter. Pranayama destroys obstacles and grants the eight powers, or siddhis. The *Shiva Samhita* primarily focuses on *NadiShodhana Pranayama* (alternate nostril breathing). From the study of *Shiva Samhita*, it becomes evident that other types of Pranayama are not discussed. Dear

learners, let us now understand the Pranayama as described in *Shiva Samhita*.

❖ A person practicing yoga should receive guidance from a knowledgeable guru and practice with firm determination according to their prescribed methods. The practitioner should choose a suitable place for practice, preferably a clean and neat monastery with small openings in the walls. In such a place, the practitioner should sit in Padmasana and begin practicing Pranayama. ***(Shiva Samhita 2/21, 22)***

❖ First, the practitioner should keep their body straight, fold their hands, and bow respectfully to the guru. Then, they should bow to Lord Ganesha (the remover of obstacles), the guardian of the area (Kshetrapala), and the universal mother, Goddess Ambika. Next, using the thumb of the right hand, they should block the PingalaNadi (right nostril) and inhale air gently through the Ida Nadi (left nostril) to their capacity. Hold the breath for a moment, then exhale slowly through the PingalaNadi (right nostril). This means:

1. **Inhalation (Puraka)**: Drawing breath in through the left nostril.
2. **Retention (Kumbhaka)**: Holding the breath for a while.
3. **Exhalation (Rechaka)**: Releasing the breath gently through the right nostril.

These three processes—Puraka, Kumbhaka, and Rechaka—are essential and inseparable parts of Pranayama. ***(Shiva Samhita 2/23, 24)***

❖ Repeatedly inhale through the Pingala Nadi (right nostril) to begin the process of Pranayama. Then, draw the air inward through the Ida Nadi (left nostril) and hold the breath, completing the practice of Kumbhaka Pranayama (breath retention). Afterward, exhale slowly through the Ida Nadi (left nostril), ensuring not to rush while exhaling. By practicing in this manner, without laziness, and repeating the process twenty times, the practitioner frees themselves from all conflicts and dualities. The idea is to gradually increase mastery over kumbhaka pranayama through regular practice. With dedication, one overcomes all forms of distress and obstacles. ***(Shiva Samhita 2/25, 26)***

❖ The practitioner should perform pranayama four times a day: in the morning, at noon, in the evening, and at midnight. ***(Shiva Samhita 2/27)***

❖ The statements mentioned above explain that by practicing pranayama regularly and diligently, without laziness, for two months, the practitioner's impurities in the nadis (subtle energy channels) are purified. ***(Shiva Samhita 2/28)***

❖ When the yogi who perceives the truth purifies their nadis (energy channels), all their ailments are removed, and the path of yoga practice becomes clear. I will briefly describe the signs that appear in a yogi after the purification of the nadis. ***(Shiva Samhita 2/29, 30)***

❖ After the purification of the nadis (energy channels), the yogi's body attains a state of balance. This means there is no heaviness, weakness, or irregularity in the body, and all parts appear uniform. A natural fragrance emanates from the body, and the face glows with a radiant brilliance. In this state, the yogi's voice also becomes sweet and melodious. Along with these initial signs, the yogi attains complete knowledge of yoga. This state is referred to as *yoga avastha* or the state of yoga. ***(Shiva Samhita 2/31, 32)***

❖ When one attains mastery over the life forces (praGa-vayu), all the previously mentioned signs are observed during the initial stages. Now, I will describe the benefit that destroys all sorrows. Such a yogi experiences an increase in digestive fire, physical strength and harmony, the ability to digest food well, a sense of joy, and mental happiness. ***(Shiva Samhita 2/ 33, 34)***

❖ Now, I will describe the obstacles that a yogi must avoid to cross the ocean of worldly existence. For a yogi, it is prohibited to consume sour, dry, sharp, salty, and mustard-like foods, eat bitter substances, wander excessively, bathe early in the morning, or apply oil to the body. ***(Shiva Samhita 2/35, 36)***



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1: What is the meaning of “Prana”?

Q2: What are the three main phases of Pranayama?

Q3: Why is it important to learn Kumbhaka under proper guidance?

Q4: What does Pranayama mean?

Q5: What is the role of Prana in the body?

Q6: What is Pranayama according to the *Hatha Pradipika*?

Q7: What are the eight types of pranayama mentioned in the *Hatha Pradipika*?

Q8: What is the purpose of NadiShodhana Pranayama?

Q9: How is NadiShodhana Pranayama practiced?

Q10: What is the main benefit of Surya Bhedana Pranayama?

Q11: What is the difference between Sitkari and Sheetali Pranayama?

Q12: What does the *Gheranda Samhita* explain about Pranayama?

Q13: What are the eight types of Pranayama mentioned in the *Gheranda Samhita?*

Q14: What is Sahita Pranayama?

Q15: How is Sheetali Pranayama different from other Pranayamas?

Q16: What is the purpose of Bhramari Pranayama?

Q17: What are the five main life forces (Pranas) mentioned in the *Shiva Samhita*?

Q18: What is the suggested posture for practicing Pranayama according to the *Shiva Samhita*?

Q19: How many times should the Pranayama process be repeated daily?

Q20: What happens to the body after the purification of the nadis (energy channels)?



9.8 LET US SUM UP

- **Introduction to Pranayama:**Hatha Yoga is an important part of the ancient yoga tradition, with its origin attributed to Lord Shiva, who taught it to Goddess Parvati. It was further developed by the Nath sect, with notable figures like Gorakshanath and Matsyendranath. Hatha Yoga focuses on Shatkarmas (cleansing techniques), Asanas (postures), and Pranayama (breathing exercises). Pranayama includes eight types, known as Ashtakumbhaka. It is essential to learn and practice these techniques under proper guidance, as some practices may be harmful to beginners.
- **Meaning and Importance of Prana:** The word Prana, derived from the Sanskrit words "प्र"(pre-existing) and "अन्" (life force or consciousness), represents the life energy that drives all bodily functions and cosmic activities. It is always active and never rests, ensuring that life continues. Prana sustains the body, mind, and spirit, making it the most powerful and vital element in the universe. Without Prana, life cannot exist, even if there is physical sustenance.
- **Functions and Influence of Prana:** Prana is a vital energy that supports the organs, glands, and nervous system, and helps the body stay healthy. It also affects the mind and spirit by improving the senses, intellect, energy, and resistance to illness. This energy sustains the body's aura and boosts its immune strength. On a larger scale, Prana governs the workings of the universe, linking the individual to the greater cosmos.
- **Definitions of Pranayama:**
    - ***Patanjali Yoga Sutras:*** Control over inhalation (Puraka), exhalation (Rechaka), and retention (Kumbhaka) to achieve physical and mental stability.
    - ***Hatha Yoga Pradipika:*** Breath control leads to mental stability, helping yogis achieve a steady and focused state.
    - ***Bhagavad Gita:*** Pranayama harmonizes the Prana (inhalation) and Apana (exhalation) energies.

- ***Shiva Samhita:*** Pranayama facilitates concentration and continuous meditation.
- ***Gheranda Samhita:*** It is the process of holding the breath between inhalation and exhalation.

- **Phases of Pranayama**
  - **Puraka (Inhalation):** Slow, deep, and conscious breathing that draws in vital energy (*Prana*), expands the lungs, and symbolizes receiving life energy.
  - **Kumbhaka (Retention):** Holding the breath after inhalation or before exhalation enhances focus, calms the mind, and increases lung capacity, with two types: AntarKumbhaka (retention after inhalation) and Bahir Kumbhaka (retention after exhalation).
  - **Rechaka (Exhalation):** Controlled and conscious breathing out focuses on expelling toxins and negative energy, representing relaxation and letting go.
- **Stages of Pranayama**
  - **Preparation Stage:** Awareness of natural breathing, learning a comfortable posture (e.g., Padmasana, Sukhasana), and focusing on relaxation and mindfulness.
  - **Basic Stage:** Controlled breathing rhythms, including AnulomVilom (alternate nostril breathing) and Ujjayi (victorious breath), balance the breath and calm the mind.
  - **Intermediate Stage:** It includes breath retention (Kumbhaka), practices like Kapalabhati (cleansing breath) and Bhastrika (bellows breath), and helps develop precise control over breathing.
  - **Advanced Stage:** Prolonged Kumbhaka with greater awareness, along with advanced techniques like Sitali, Sitkari, and Surya Bhedana, focuses on balancing Prana and reaching meditative states.
  - **Spiritual Stage:** It transcends both physical and mental realms, leading to greater awareness, inner peace, and spiritual awakening, while uniting the life force with the higher self.

- The *Hatha Pradipika* describes pranayama techniques in its second chapter, detailing eight types of pranayama, including Surya Bhedana, Ujjayi, Sitkari, Shitali, Bhastrika, Bhramari, Murchha, and Plavini, all of which are variations of Kumbhaka (breath retention). Before practicing these, Swami Swatmarama advises the purification of the body's 72,000 energy channels (nadis) through NadiShodhana Pranayama. This practice alternates breathing between nostrils to cleanse the nadis, and it is widely known as Anulom-Vilom today. Only after mastering internal breath retention should external retention be practiced.
- Benefits of NadiShodhana include reduced negative thoughts, stress, and insomnia, and the awakening of Kundalini energy. Surya Bhedana helps warm the body, balances doshas, and aids those with low blood pressure or asthma. Ujjayi improves thyroid function and strengthens the voice. Sitkari and ShitaliPranayamas cool the body, reduce hunger and thirst, and relax the mind. Bhastrika strengthens the lungs, improves digestion, and boosts energy. Bhramari calms the mind, helps with stress, and improves focus. Murchha Pranayama induces deep calm and bliss, while Plavini is beneficial for digestion and can cure abdominal diseases.Each pranayama has specific benefits, and it is crucial to practice them under proper guidance, especially advanced techniques.
- According to the *Gheranda Samhita,* Pranayama is explained in detail in its fifth chapter, where it describes eight types of Pranayama, also referred to as "types of Kumbhaka" by Sage Gheranda. These eight types are:

  Sahita Pranayama: Sagarbha involves the use of seed mantras ("A," "U," "M") with a focus on Brahma, Krishna, and Shiva, while Nirgarbha is performed without mantras, relying on breath counting and following a 1:4:2 ratio for superior, medium, and inferior levels.

  Suryabhedana Pranayama: Inhale through the right nostril, apply the chin lock (Jalandhara Bandha), hold the breath (Kumbhaka), and exhale through the right nostril.

Ujjayi Pranayama: Inhale through both nostrils with a soft snoring sound, hold the breath with the chin lock, and exhale slowly.

Sheetali Pranayama: Inhale through the rolled tongue (as if drinking), hold the breath briefly, and exhale slowly through the nostrils.

Bhastrika Pranayama: Involves rapid, rhythmic inhalation and exhalation, often followed by breath retention (Kumbhaka).

Bhramari Pranayama: Close your ears with your fingers, relax your jaw, inhale deeply, and exhale while humming like a bee. Alternatively, you can close your ears with your thumbs, place your fingers around your face, inhale deeply, and exhale while chanting "Om" or humming like a bee.

Moorchha Pranayama: Inhale deeply, lift the head slightly upward with eyes half-open, retain the breath, and return to a stable position to calm the mind.

Kevali Pranayama: The highest stage of Pranayama, involving effortless breathing (AjapaJapa). During inhalation, vital energy (Prana) rises from the base (Muladhara) to the nostrils; during exhalation, it moves back downward.

- In the *Shiva Samhita,* Pranayama (breathing exercises) is explained with a focus on NadiShodhana, or alternate nostril breathing. Here's a simple summary:

  Preparation for Practice: A yoga practitioner should practice under the guidance of a skilled teacher in a clean and quiet space. The practitioner should sit in a comfortable position like Padmasana (lotus posture) and bow to the guru, Lord Ganesha, the guardian of the place, and Goddess Ambika.

  Pranayama Process: The technique involves three steps: first, inhale through the left nostril (Ida Nadi); next, hold the breath for a short moment; and finally, exhale slowly through the right nostril (PingalaNadi). This process alternates between nostrils and focuses on keeping the breathing controlled and unhurried.

Regular Practice: Practicing Pranayama four times a day (morning, noon, evening, and midnight) is recommended. After two months of regular practice, the subtle energy channels (nadis) get purified.

Signs of Progress: After purification, the yogi experiences a balanced body, a glowing face, a sweet voice, and a natural fragrance. They feel physically stronger, more joyful, and mentally at peace.

Obstacles to Avoid: A yogi should avoid certain foods and habits, like sour, salty, or sharp foods, excessive wandering, early morning baths, and oil applications.



9.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Q1: Prana means the life force or energy that is present in every living being. It keeps the body and mind active and alive.

Answer to Q2: The three main phases are:Puraka(Inhaling breath), Kumbhaka (Holding the breath) and Rechaka(Exhaling breath).

Answer to Q3: Some types of Kumbhaka can be harmful to beginners if done incorrectly, so it is important to practice with guidance for safety.

Answer to Q4: Pranayama means controlling and regulating the breath to balance the body and mind.

Answer to Q5: Prana helps the eyes see, the ears hear, the mind think, and the body stay alive and healthy.

Answer to Q6: Pranayama is a practice explained in detail in the second chapter of the Hatha Pradipika. It describes eight types of pranayama that focus on breath control and purification of energy channels (nadis).

Answer to Q7: The eight types are: Surya Bhedana, Ujjayi, Sitkari, Shitali, Bhastrika, Bhramari, Moorchha and Plavini.

Answer to Q8: NadiShodhana Pranayama helps purify the 72,000 nadis (energy channels) in the body, preparing practitioners for advanced Pranayama techniques.

Answer to Q9: Sit in a meditative posture. Inhale through the left nostril (Chandra Nadi), hold the breath, and exhale through the right nostril

(Surya Nadi). Then, inhale through the right nostril, hold the breath, and exhale through the left nostril.

Answer to Q10: Surya Bhedana Pranayama warms the body, helps eliminate worms, balances Vata and Kaphadoshas, and is beneficial for low blood pressure and asthma.

Answer to Q11: In Sitkari Pranayama, the breath is inhaled through the mouth while making a "seet" sound. In Sheetali Pranayama, the tongue is rolled into a pipe shape, and the breath is also inhaled through the mouth. Both are cooling Pranayamas but have slightly different techniques.

Answer to Q12: The Gheranda Samhita explains eight types of Pranayama in its fifth chapter, which are also called "types of Kumbhaka."

Answer to Q13: The eight types are Sahita, Suryabhedana, Ujjayi, Sheetali, Bhastrika, Bhramari, Moorchha, and Kevali.

Answer to Q14: Sahita Pranayama can be practiced in two ways: Sagarbha (with mantras) and Nirgarbha (without mantras). Sagarbha involves chanting seed mantras, and Nirgarbha involves counting during breathing.

Answer to Q15: Sheetali Pranayama involves inhaling through the mouth by rolling the tongue like a tube, while most other Pranayamas involve only the nostrils.

Answer to Q16: Bhramari Pranayama calms the mind by producing a humming sound like a bee during exhalation, helping to focus and relax.

Answer to Q17: The five main life forces are Prana, Apana, Samana, Vyana, and Udana.

Answer to Q18: The practitioner should sit in Padmasana (lotus pose) in a clean and quiet place.

Answer to Q19: Pranayama should be practiced four times daily: in the morning, at noon, in the evening, and at midnight.

Answer to Q20: The body becomes balanced, free from heaviness and weakness and emits a natural fragrance with the face glowing radiantly.



9.10 FURTHER READING

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9.11 MODEL QUESTIONS

SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

1. What are the three main phases of Pranayama, and what does each represent?

2. According to the *Bhagavad Gita,* how is Pranayama described?

3. What is the significance of NadiShodhan Pranayama in *Hatha Pradipika?*

4. Name the eight types of Pranayama described in *Hatha Pradipika.*

5. What are the benefits of Sheetali Pranayama?

6. What are the two methods of performing “Sahita Pranayama” as described in the *Gheranda Samhita?*

7. Explain the process of “Surya Bhedan Pranayama” as per Gheranda Samhita.

8. What is the primary purpose of "Bhramari Pranayama," and how is it performed?
9. According to the *Shiva Samhita,* at what times and how many times should one practice Kumbhaka during pranayama?
10. What the characteristic changes in the body of a yogi are after the purification of the nadis as described in the *Shiva Samhita*?

LONG ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

1. Explain the meaning and significance of "Prana" as described in ancient texts. How does Prana influence physical and mental well-being?
2. Describe the different stages of Pranayama practice. How does one progress from the basic stage to the spiritual stage?
3. Describe the process and benefits of Sheetali Pranayama as explained in *Hatha Pradipika.*
4. Explain the significance of NadiShodhan Pranayama and its role in preparing for advanced Pranayama practices.
5. Describe the process and benefits of Ujjayi Pranayama as explained in *Hatha Pradipika.*
6. Explain the different types of Pranayama as described in the *Gheranda Samhita* and their significance in Yogic practices.
7. Elaborate on the technique and benefits of Bhramri Pranayama as per the teachings of Maharishi Gheranda.
8. Discuss the technique of Kevali Pranayama as mentioned in the *Gheranda Samhita.* How is it practiced?
9. Explain in detail the purification of nadis through the practice of pranayama as described in the *Shiva Samhita,* and the physical and mental changes that occur in a yogi after nadi purification.
10. Explain the process of Kumbhaka pranayama described in the *Shiva Samhita,* and discuss the mental and physical benefits a person can experience with regular practice of this technique.

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UNIT 10 : HATHA YOGA PRACTICES - PRATYAHARA

UNIT STRUCTURE

10.1 Learning Objectives

10.2 The Concept of Pratyahara

10.3 The Importance of Pratyahara

10.4 Techniques of Pratyahara

10.5 Benefits of Pratyahara

10.6 Let Us Sum Up

10.7 Further Reading

10.8 Answers to check your Progress

10.9 Model Questions

10.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this unit, you will be able to :

- Know about the Pratyahara and its importance
- Understand the Pratyahara as explained in *Patanjala Yoga Sutra*
- Explain the technique of Pratyahara as discussed in *Gheranda Samhita*
- Illustrate the benefits of Pratyahara

10.2 THE INTRODUCTION CONCEPT OF PRATYAHARA

Pratyahara is made up of two words 'Prati' and 'Ahaar'. 'Prati' means the opposite and 'Ahara' means food, that is, to make the senses which are their objects in contrast to their object or food, is Pratyahara. The senses are subject, they receive the object. These subjects are Pancha Tanmatras (Sahbda, Sparsh, Rupa, Rasa and Gandha). Consciousness wants to acquire knowledge and the mind becomes its medium. When the subject is more, the mind gets lost in it and this knowledge is obtained through the

senses. Pratyahara occurs when the senses turn in the opposite direction leaving the objects. That is, the introversion of the extroversion of the senses is Pratyahara. Pratyahara is the fifth limb of Patanjali's Eight Limbs of Yoga, outlined in the Yoga Sutras. Pratyahara is essential for the higher limbs of yoga, i.e., for dharana, dhyana and samadhi.

Maharshi Patanjali says-

स्वविषयासम्प्रयोगेचित्तस्यस्वरूपानुकारइवेन्द्रियांणाप्रत्याहारयोगसूत्र ढ्ढढ्ढ 2/54

Meaning, When there is no connection of the senses with its objects; to become acquainted with the nature of the mind is pratyahara. Or when all the senses are not related to their respective functions, they follow the same (mind) according to the actual nature of mind. Then it is called the state of pratyahara.

The senses have to be completely subdued by pratyahara. It refers to the process of withdrawing the senses from external stimuli and focusing inward, detaching oneself from distractions of the outside world. This practice is often seen as a bridge between the outer and inner aspects of yoga, leading the practitioner toward deeper states of concentration and meditation.

10.3 THE IMPORTANCE OF PRATYAHARA

In the modern world, we are constantly bombarded with sensory stimuli, from visual distractions like screens and advertisements to sounds, smells, and physical sensations. Pratyahara helps an individual withdraw from these external distractions, creating a space for deeper mindfulness and self-awareness. Through this practice, one gains mastery over the senses, making it easier to focus the mind and progress toward higher states of meditation (Dharana), and ultimately, enlightenment (Dhyana and Samadhi).

Pratyahara and the Five Senses:

Pratyahara involves controlling the five senses: sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. By disengaging from sensory inputs, we redirect our focus toward our inner consciousness.

Sight (Drishti): Learning to turn the eyes inward or close them helps in reducing visual distractions.

Sound (Shabda): By practicing silence or focusing on subtle sounds (like a mantra), one can reduce the impact of external noise.

Touch (Sparsha): Being mindful of physical sensations and reducing their impact on the mind can help in detaching from the body's urges.

Taste (Rasa): Reducing the desire for external pleasures, including food, fosters inner contentment and control.

Smell (Gandha): Minimizing the influence of smells helps in bringing the mind's attention away from the sensory world.

10.4 TECHNIQUES OF PRATYAHARA

Maharishi Gheranda was a famous Hatha Yogi and he has described Pratyahara in the fourth chapter in his text *Gheranda Samhita.* He considered Pratyahara as the fourth part of Yoga. By following Pratyahara, the seeker attains patience.

Not because of its fickle nature, it keeps moving somewhere. So where-ever this fickle mind goes. By stopping him from there, he should always be kept under his control. Whether it is respect or humiliation, praise (good) or condemnation (bad) for the ears, all these should be kept under control by keeping the mind away. Whether it is fragrance or deodorant, both are absorbed by the nostrils. The mind goes away by itself in both the fragrance and the deodorant. Therefore, the mind should be removed from there and kept under its control. When our mind goes into sweet, sour, pungent tastes, etc., then he should be removed from these also and should be kept under his control.

Maharshi Gheranda explains the Pratyahara techniques in chapter four, verses no. 1-7 as following –

Athaatah sampravakshyaami pratyaahaarakamuttamam;
Yasya vijnaanamaatrena kaamaadiripunaashanam (1)
Yato yato nishcharati manashchanchalamasthiram;
Tatastato niyamyaitadaatmanyeva vasham nayet. (2)
Yatrayatragataadrishtirmanastatraprayachechati,

Atahpratyaaharaedetadaatmanyevavashamnayet.(3)
Puraskaaram tiraskaaram sushraavyam vad bhayaanakam;
Manastamaanniyamyaitadaatmangeva vasham nayet. (4)
Sheetam chaapi tathaa choshnam yanmanassamsparshayogatah,
Tasmaatpratyaaharedetadaatmanyeva vasham nayet. (5)
Sugandhe vaa'pi durgandhe mano ghraaneshu jaayate;
Tasmaatpratyaaharedetadaatmanyeva vasham nayet. (6)
Madhuraamlakatiktaadirasam gatam yadaa manah;
Tasmaatpratyaaharedetadaatmanyeva vasham nayet. (7)

By practicing Pratyahara, enemies like lust, etc., are destroyed:

1. Wherever this restless mind travels, bring it back, putting it under the control of the self, the soul or spirit.
2. Wherever one looks the mind follows; therefore withdraw it and put it under the control of the self.
3. Take the mind off words which are respectful or insulting, pleasing or displeasing to the hearing and put it under the control of the self.
4. Cold and heat affect the mind through the sense of touch; therefore withdraw it and put it under the control of the self.
5. Take the mind from both the fragrant and the obnoxious odours that distract it and put it under the control of the self.
6. If the mind becomes attracted towards tastes which are sweet, alkaline, sour, etc., take it away from these and place it under the control of the self. This is Pratyahara.

Sage Gheranda said that knowledge of Pratyahara eliminates the enemies of human beings such as selfish wishes, greed, desires, etc. He says that one who has to face dishonor or receive praise should not allow that to influence the mind. It is a Pratyahara sadhana to maintain a normal state of mind even in difficult or adverse situations. One does not have to feel proud at the time of fame, or display happiness at the time of pleasure, or feel sad while in pain, or become angry in a situation of disgrace.

10.5 BENEFITS OF PRATYAHARA

In *Patanjali's Yoga Sutra,* Pratyahara is explained in Ashtanga Yoga. It makes the bridge between Bahiranga Yoga including Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama and Antaranaga Yoga including Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi. Pratyahara is the practice by which the practitioner prepares the mind and senses to do the higher practices. In Sadhana Pada of Patanjali's Yoga Sutra, the benefits of Pratyahara is discussed as :

ततः परमावश्यतेइन्द्रियाणाम्। ।पातंजलयोगसूत्र 2/55

With that Pratyahara, the senses become supremely controlled.

When a Yogi seeker attains the accomplishment of Pratyahara, then all the senses comes under his control. He gets mastery over all the senses. The freedom of the senses is lost forever. Pratyahara is a practice that involves withdrawing from the senses and external stimuli. It can help in relaxation, improve concentration, and develop a stronger connection between mind and body.

It has some another benefits like:

1. **Improved concentration**: Pratyahara helps you focus on what you want, like a mantra, breath, or image.
2. **Reduced stress**: Pratyahara helps you relax and unwind, and can help you feel more peaceful.
3. **Better emotional control**: Pratyahara can help you reduce impulsive emotions and react more thoughtfully.
4. **Increased mindfulness**: Pratyahara can help you become more aware of your emotions, thoughts, and bodily sensations.
5. **Improved mental resilience**: Pratyahara can help you handle daily challenges more easily.
6. **Preparation for meditation**: Pratyahara can help you prepare for deeper meditation practices.
7. **Improved mind-body connection**: Pratyahara can help you develop a stronger connection between your mind and body. You can practice Pratyahara by "mind-fasting" from impressions that come through your

senses. This can include memories, unprocessed stimuli, or unhealthy visual images.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1: What is Pratyahara?

Q2: Write the name the five senses?

Q3: In which chapter of *Gheranda Samhita* Maharishi Gheranda explains pratyahara?

Q4: In which Pada of Patanajali's Yoga Sutra discussed about the Pratahara?



10.6 LET US SUM UP

In this chapter, we discussed the following points:

1. Pratyahara is a powerful practice that helps individuals disconnect from the constant noise and distractions of the external world, allowing them to turn inward.
2. Pratyahara is control the mind through the five senses.
3. It refers to the process of withdrawing the senses from external stimuli and focusing inward, detaching oneself from distractions of the outside world.
4. It control the senses and place it under the control of the mind.
5. It serves as a critical step on the path to mental clarity, emotional stability, and spiritual growth.
6. Pratyahara helps practitioners can enhance their overall well-being and foster a deeper connection to their inner selves.
7. Pratyahara gives the connection between mind and body.
8. This helps to reach the higher state of consciousness i.e. Samadhi.
9. Sage Gheranda said that knowledge of Pratyahara eliminates the enemies of human beings such as selfish wishes, greed, desires, etc.
10. When a Yogi seeker attains the accomplishment of Pratyahara, then all the senses comes under his control.



10.7 FURTHER READING

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10.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Q1: Withdraw the senses from their respective subjects are called as Pratyahara.

Answer to Q4: Sight, Sound, Touch, Taste and Smell.

Answer to Q3: Chapter 4 of *Gheranda Samhita.*

Answer to Q4: In Sadhana Pada of *Patanajali's Yoga Sutra.*



10.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

Q1: Pratyahara is the _____ limb of Ashtanga Yoga.

Q2: Pratyahara helps to control the _____ from external distractions.

Q3: Pratyahara serves as a bridge between _____ and _____ in Ashtanga Yoga.

Q4: Pratyahara is the practice of withdrawing the _____ from external objects.

Q5: How does Pratyahara benefit a yoga practitioner?

Q6: What role does Pratyahara play in the transition from external to internal yoga practices?

Q7: Name any two techniques used for practicing Pratyahara.

LONG ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

Q1: Explain the concept of Pratyahara in detail.

Q2: Discuss the techniques of Pratyahara as discussed in *Gheranda Samhita* in detail.

Q3: Explain the benefits of Pratyahara in detail.

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UNIT 11 : MUDRA AND BANDHA

UNIT STRUCTURE

11.1 Learning Objectives
11.2 Introduction
11.3 The Concept of Mudra and Bandha in Yoga
11.4 Mudra and Bandha in Hathayogic Texts
11.5 Physiological and Psychological Benefits of Mudra and Bandha
11.6 Mudra and Bandha in Daily Yoga Practice
11.7 Let us Sum up
11.8 Further Reading
11.9 Answer to Check Your Progress
11.10 Model Questions

11.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to :

- understand the Concept of Mudras and Bandhas
- define Mudras (gestures) and Bandhas (energy locks)
- explain the significance of Mudras and Bandhas in yoga
- identify different types of Mudras and their Benefits
- learn the techniques for practicing mudras
- explore the Physiological and Psychological Benefits of Mudra and Bandha
- identify the precautions for Mudra & Bandha
- know the importance of Mudras and Bandhas in daily yoga practice

11.2 INTRODUCTION

In Hatha Yoga Sadhana, there are seven main practices for achieving yogic perfection, and Mudra is the third among them. A Mudra is a specific technique in which a part of the body is held in a particular position to influence

energy flow. The word "Bandha" means "to bind" or "to lock". In yoga, it refers to contracting and holding certain body parts with controlled effort. This is an internal process that helps regulate nerves, organs, and energy pathways (Nadis) in the body. Practicing Mudras and Bandhas not only keeps the body healthy but also enhances inner strength. They help in focusing the mind, awakening Kundalini energy and lead to Pratyahara (the withdrawal of senses). Although their main purpose is spiritual growth, they also have significant benefits for mental and physical health.

The term "Mudra"(मुद्रा) originates from the Sanskrit word "Mud"(joy or delight) and "Ra" (to give or produce), meaning "that which brings joy" or "a gesture that produces energy and transformation". Mudras are special gestures or postures used in yoga and meditation to facilitate the pranic (vital energy) flow within the body.

"Bandha" (बन्ध) means "to bind, to lock, or to hold." Bandhas are energy locks applied to different parts of the body to control internal energy flow, nervous system function, and organ activity. These techniques are essential for enhancing concentration, inner-strength, and higher states of consciousness.

11.3 THE CONCEPT OF MUDRA AND BANDHA IN YOGA

In yogic philosophy, the human body is considered a tiny energy system where life force (Prana) flows through Nadis (subtle energy channels). Mudras act as a bridge between the physical, mental, and spiritual dimensions by manipulating this pranic flow. Mudras are used in meditation, pranayama, and spiritual practices to deepen focus, calm the mind, and stimulate different parts of the brain and body. They help in:

- Chakra activation and energy balance
- Enhancing meditation and mindfulness
- Therapeutic benefits for stress, anxiety, and digestion
- Detaching the senses from temptations (Pratyahara)

Bandhas are advanced yogic techniques that help in controlling and re-directing Prana. They involve muscular contractions that regulate internal

organs, energy movement, and mental focus. The three primary Bandhas are: Jalandhar Bandha, Uddiyan Bandha, and Moola Bandha, which helps in :

1. Controlling throat muscles, stimulating the thyroid, and preventing energy leakage.
2. Engaging the diaphragm, massaging the digestive organs, and increasing lung capacity.
3. Activating the pelvic floor, strengthening the reproductive organs and stimulating Kundalini energy.

When these three Bandhas are practiced together, it is called Maha Bandha which enhances the flow of energy through the Sushumna Nadi (central energy channel). Mudras and Bandhas work together to re-direct and refine Prana, leading to deeper meditative states. While Mudras guide energy flow, Bandhas act as locks that control and intensify this energy in advanced yogic practices.

11.4 MUDRA AND BANDHA AS DISCUSSED IN HATHA YOGIC TEXTS

Mudras are most commonly known as hand positions, which are believed to affect the flow of energy in the body and chakras by clearing the psychic centers and energy channels. The significance of mudra is greater than asana and pranayama, because mudra influences the pranamaya and manomaya koshas. In yoga, mudra is used for the controlling the sensations and stimulation of the nervous system. The main aim of mudra is to attain an inner realization. There are various types of mudras and each type has a specific effect on the body and mind.

1. Mudra and Bandha in *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* :

Hatha Yoga Pradipika is an important text of Hathayoga written by Swami Swatmarama. The complete content of the text is divided into four chapters namely Asana, Kumbhaka, Mudra and Bandha and

Nadanusandhan. Swami Swatmarama explains the techniques and benefits of ten mudras in the third chapter. Also he discussed that mudras are helpful for managing and regulating the pranic and mental energies. These Mudras, as explained by Swami Swatmarama are:

Mahamudra Mahabandho Mahavedhascha Khechari,
Uddiyana Moolabandhastato Jalandhara Bhidha|| (3/6)
Karni Viparitaakhya Vajroli Shakti Chalanam,
IdamHiMudraDashakamJaramaranananashanam|| (3/7)

Mahamudra, Mahabandha, Mahavedha, Khechari, Uddiyana Bandha, Moolabandha, Jalandhar Bandha, Viparitakarani, Vajroli and Shaktichalan are the ten mudras. By practising these mudras, all the diseases of the practitioner are destroyed and along with that all the causes responsible for death are also destroyed.

2. Mudra and Bandha in Gheranda Samhita :

Mudra and Bandha are the third part of Saptanga Yoga, after the physical stability Maharshi Gheranda teaches the knowledge of mudra and bandha for mental stability and he said that "**मुद्रयास्थिरताचैव**" that is, by the practice of mudra one can attain steadiness and stability.

Mahamudranabhomudrauddiyananjalandharam.
Moolabandham, Mahabandham, Mahavedhshchkhechari. (3/1)
Viparitakariyonirvajrolishaktichalini.
Tadagimandukimudrashambhavipachandharana (3/2)
Ashwinipashinikakimatangichbhujangini.
Panchvinshatimudranisiddhaanihyoginam. (3/3)

There are total number of 25 Mudras are explained in the *Gheranda Samhita*, where 16 Mudras, 04 Bandhas (Locks) and 05 Dharanas (Concentration Practices) are explained.

The name of the 16 mudras and 4 bandhas are- MahaMudra, Nabho Mudra, Uddiyana Bandha, Jalandhara Bandha, Moola Bandha, Maha Bandha, Maha Vedha, Khechari Mudra, Viparita Karani,Yoni Mudra,Vajroli Mudra, Shakti Chalini Mudra,Tadagi Mudra, Mandavi Mudra, Shambhavi Mudra, Pavan Dharana, Ashwini Mudra, Pashini Mudra, Kaki Mudra, Matangi Mudra, Bhujangini Mudra. These mudras channelize energy and help in

spiritual growth, mental clarity, and physical well-being.

1. Mahamudra (3/6-7 *Gheranda Samhita*) :

Technique- Put the heel of the left foot on the root part of the anus, press it with the heel. Now while spreading the right leg in front, hold the toe of the right foot with both hands. After this, while contracting your groin, look at the middle of your two eyebrows. It is called Mahamudra.

Benefit (3/8 *Geranda Samhita*) : Tuberculosis, kapha disorders, constipation, enlarged spleen, prolonged fever and other diseases are cured by the practice of Mahamudra and body attains health.



Fig – www.yogicwayoflife

2. Nabhomudra (3/9 *Gheranda Samhita)* : Drink the air, while holding the tongue upwards towards the sky, while being stationary in one place. This is called Nabhomudra. By practicing this, all the diseases of yogi, seekers are destroyed.

3. Uddiyan Bandha(3/10-11 *Gheranda Samhita*) : Pulling the navel region located in the stomach, and above it backwards is called Uddiyana Bandha. Through Uddiyana Bandha, the life energy continuously moves upward. This Uddiyana bandha is considered to be the most important of all the bandhas. By practicing Uddiyana Bandha, the seeker attains liberation or salvation on his own without any special effort.

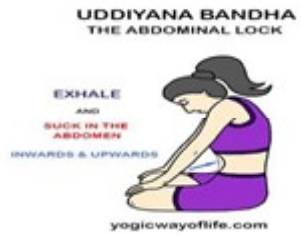


Fig- www.yogicwayoflife

4. Jalandhar Bandha (3/12-13 *Gheranda Samhita*) - Sitting in any meditative posture, contracting your groin and applying the chin on the chest is called Jalandhara Bandha. Even death is destroyed by the practice of the Jalandhara Bandha. If Jalandhara Bandha is practiced continuously for six months, it gives all kinds of siddhis to the seeker.



Fig- www.yogicwayoflife

5. Moola Bandha(3/ 14-17 *Gheranda Samhita*) - The seeker should first keep his navel region and spinal cord (backbone) straight while pressing the yonisthan (the place under the scrotum) with the heel of the left foot, close to the anal passage. Contract the anal muscles. This is called Moolbandha which is supposed to delay the old age of the seeker. By the practice of this mudra, all the bondages of the seeker are destroyed and the accomplishment of Prana Vayu is attained.

6. Mahabandha(3/18-20 *Gheranda Samhita)* - By pressing the anus with the heel of the left foot, pressing the anus with the heel of the right foot, press the vagina with effort. After this, slowly contract the anus and vagina. Along with this, apply Jalandhara Bandha while stopping Pranavayu inside the body. This method is called Mahabandha. Old age and death are destroyed by the practice of Mahabandha Mudra. Mahabandha is considered to be the best of all the bonds.



Fig- www.yogicwayoflife

7. Mahavedha Mudra (3/22 *Gheranda Samhita*) : First the practitioner should sit in the position of Mahabandha Mudra, after that practice Kumbhaka (blocking out Pranavayu) while applying Maha Bandha (Jalandharbandha, Uddiyanbandha and Moolabandha). The gaze is focused on nose tip. Thus it is called Mahavedha Mudra. Which gives siddhi to yogis.

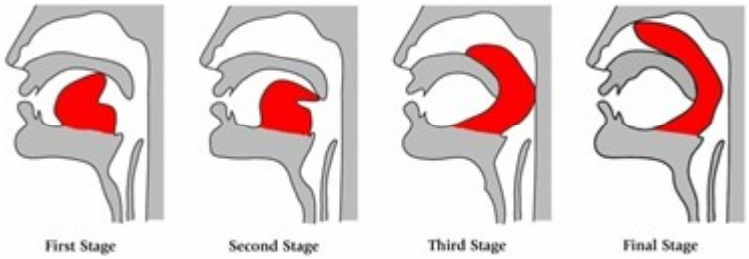
Benefit (3/23-24 *Gheranda Samhita*) : A yoga practitioner who practices Mahavedha mudra daily along with Moolabandha and Mahabandha, he is called a master of yoga or a great yogi. The one who never gets old, nor is he ever afraid of death. That's why all the best yogis have talked about keeping the method of Mahavedha mudra with utmost effort and confidentiality.



Fig –www.yogicwayoflife

8. Khechari Mudra(3/25-27 *Gheranda Samhita*) : By practicing the cutting and pulling the tongue, try to touch the tongue between the two eyebrows, then khechari starts proving itself. After this, slowly inverting the tongue, make it enter (its entry) into the hole located behind the palatine region (in the middle of the throat) and fix the vision between the two eyebrows i.e. looks between the two eyebrows. This is called Khechari Mudra.

Benefits (3/28-32 Gheranda Samhita) - The seeker who practices Khechari Mudra never loses consciousness or becomes unconscious, neither does hunger and thirst bother him, nor does he ever feel lethargic, nor does he ever get any disease, nor does he ever grow old nor does he ever attain death. Rather, his body becomes like a deity.



https://www.google.com/search

9. Viparitkarni Mudra (3/33-35 Gheranda Samhita) – In the human body, the Sun resides in the center of the navel and the Moon resides in the palatine region, that is, in the eyebrow center. The sadhak dies only after the sun has absorbed the juices (flows) from the moon.

Taking your sun (navel region) upwards and moon (palate region) downwards is called Viparitakarani mudra, which is the secret in all the texts of Tantra.

Benefits (3/36 Gheranda Samhita) - The yogi who practices Viparita Karani Mudra daily, attains accomplishment in this. As a result of this, he is called a perfect person the whole world. Old age and death also perish in front of him. He does not experience sorrow even at the time of pralaya, that is, the destruction of the universe.



10. Yoni Mudra (3/37-42 *Gheranda Samhita*) :

Technique: For Yonimudra, sit in Siddhasana, and adopt Sanmukhi mudra. Now the wise seeker fills Pranavayu inside with Kakimudra (making lips like a crow's beak) and mixes it in Apana Vayu. After this, the seeker should work to awaken that sleeping Bhujangini i.e. Kundalini Shakti by meditating on the six chakras (Muladhara, Swadhisthana, Manipura, Anahata, Vishuddhi and Ajna Chakra) located in his body. The seeker should feel the ecstasy of the union of Shiva and Shakti.

Benefits (3/43-44 *Gheranda Samhita*)- By practicing yonimudra, the seeker becomes free from all these sins like Brahmahatya, abortion, drinking alcohol (drinking alcohol) and he does not have any kind of involvement (participation) in all these sins.

11. Vajroli Mudra (3/46 Gheranda Samhita) :

Technique : Keeping both the hands on the ground, raising both the legs

and the head up towards the sky. To awaken the power and to attain longevity (long life), yogis have spoken of practicing Vajroli Mudra.

Benefits (3/46-48 Gheranda Samhita)- Vajroli Mudra is said to be the best in yoga practices. Yogis get salvation by its practice. Along with this, this mudra is beneficial and providing accomplishment for the yogis.

12. Shaktichalani Mudra (3/53-56 *Gheranda Samhita*) : After applying Siddhasana, filling Pranavayu into the body through both the nostrils, forcefully combine it with Apana Vayu by contracting the anus region so that prana and apana mixed together. The seeker becomes aware that both Prana and Apana Vayu have entered the Sushumna Nadi. After this, while practicing Bahyakumbhak, stop the Pranavayu from outside. With this, the Kundalini energy gets awakened and starts climbing upwards in the body, that is, due to this the Kundalini power becomes upward..

Benefits (3/59-60 *Gheranda Samhita*) : The Shaktichalani mudra is extremely confidential. It is the destroyer of old age and death. Therefore, the seekers who want to achieve perfection in yoga practice, they should practice it.

13. Tadagi Mudra (3/61 *Gheranda Samhita*) : By doing Paschimottanasana, making abdomen i.e. stomach like the shape of a pond is called Tadagi Mudra. This mudra is the destroyer of old age and death.



https://www.evaveda.com

14. Manduki Mudra (3/62 *Gheranda Samhita*) : Close your mouth and move the root part of the tongue back and slowly drink the nectar juice that is secreted from the moon. Scholars have called it Manduki Mudra.

Benefits (3/63 Gheranda Samhita) - The seeker who practices Manduki mudra regularly, his skin never shrinks nor does his skin ever get wrinkled. His youth remains forever, that is, he remains young forever. Also his hair never becomes grey.



Fig- www.yogicwayoflife

15. Shambhavi Mudra (3/64 *Gheranda Samhita*) : Shambhavi mudra is said to contemplate the self through the mind while looking between the two eyebrows with both the eyes. In all the scriptures this mudra is said to be a secret.

Benefits (3/65-67 *Gheranda Samhita*) : All the Vedas, Shastras and Puranas are considered as common courtesans (ordinary prostitutes), or easily available, in front of Shambhavi mudra. The seeker who knows the Shambhavi mudra is Adinath i.e., Lord Shiva, he is the form of Narayan himself and he is the same as Brahma, the creator of the universe.



Fig- www.yogicwayoflife

16. Ashwini Mudra (3/82-83 *Gheranda Samhita*) : The repeated contraction (pulling in) and spreading (pushing outwards) of the anus or anus is called Ashwani Mudra. Ashwani Mudra works to awaken Kundalini Shakti. This specific mudra destroys all secret diseases and makes the body strong and developed (nourishing). Apart from this, the seeker never dies prematurely (at a young age) by practicing it.

17. Pashinee Mudra (3/84-85 *Gheranda Samhita*) : Establishing both the legs firmly on the back of your neck is called Pashinee Mudra. This Pashinee mudra also awakens our Kundalini power.

This excellent posture called Pashinee, increases strength while nourishing the body. Those seekers who wish to attain siddhi in yoga, should practice Pashinee Mudra with full effort.

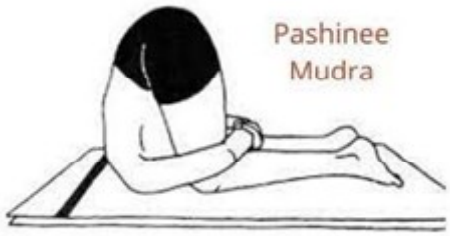


Fig- www.google.com

18. Kaki Mudra (3/86-87 *Gheranda Samhita*) : By making the lips like the shape of the beaks of a crow, slowly suck air from outside. This Kaki Mudra is supposed to destroy all diseases.

This excellent mudra called Kaki mudra has been described as a secret in all the Tantra texts. By practicing this, the seeker becomes healthy like a crow.



Fig- www.yogicwayoflife

19. Matangini Mudra (3/88-91 *Gheranda Samhita*) : Stand in deep water to the level of the throat. After this, drink water from both the nostrils and take it out through the mouth. After this, drinking water through the mouth, it should be thrown out through both the nostrils. This is called Matangini Mudra. By practicing this excellent mudra repeatedly, one can prevent old age and death. The seeker also becomes as powerful like an elephant. The yogi who practices this mudra, enjoys supreme happiness wherever he resides.

20. Bhujangini Mudra (3/92-93 *Gheranda Samhita*) : Open the mouth wide enough and drink air from throat, i.e., take the air inside the body. This is called Bhujangini Mudra. It destroys both old age and death.

This practice tones the whole abdomen area, indigestion and abdominal disorders etc., which causes of many diseases; as a result of practicing this mudra, all of them are destroyed.

11.5 PHYSIOLOGICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL BENEFITS OF MUDRAS AND BANDHAS

Mudra and Bandha are helpful for developing the Physiological and Psychological dimensions of health. They are helpful for regulating and rejuvenating the both pranic as well as mental energies, such as :

1. **Improve Digestion & Metabolism :** By activating abdominal organs, enhancing good health, and boosting energy levels.
2. **Balances Hormones :** By stimulating glands like the thyroid, pituitary, and reproductive organs for better hormonal regulation.
3. **Strengthen Nervous System :** By Enhancing brain functions, sharpening memory, and improving concentration.
4. **Reduce Stress &Anxiety :** By Calming the mind, controlling emotions, and promoting inner peace.
5. **Enhances Lung Capacity :** By Improving breathing efficiency and oxygen intake, also benefiting overall health.
6. **Increase Energy Flow :** By Helping channelise pranic energy for vitality and spiritual growth.
7. **Support Emotional Stability :** By Reducing negativity, enhancing positivity, and improving self-awareness.

11.6 MUDRAS AND BANDHAS INTO DAILY YOGA PRACTICE

To make the most of mudras and bandhas, they should be integrated seamlessly into daily yoga practice. Start by sitting in a comfortable meditative posture and focusing on your breath to bring awareness to your body and mind. During meditation, use simple mudras like Gyan Mudra for mental clarity or Yoni Mudra to deepen concentration. While practicing pranayama (breathing exercises), combine mudras such as Kaki Mudra or Shambhavi Mudra to enhance breath control and energy

flow. Bandhas can be applied during breath retention-Mula Bandha strengthens the pelvic muscles, while Uddiyana Bandha activates abdominal organs and improves digestion. These techniques should be practiced gradually, starting with short durations, and increasing over the passage of time. Consistent practice not only boosts physical health but also enhances mental stability, energy regulation, and spiritual growth.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1: What are Mudras and Bandhas in yoga?

Q2: Name any three Mudras and their benefits.

Q3: What is the purpose of Jalandhara Bandha?



11.7 LET US SUM UP

Mudras and Bandhas are essential yogic techniques that help control energy flow, enhance focus, and improve overall well-being. Mudras are specific hand, face, or body gestures that influence the mind and body, while Bandhas are energy locks that regulate the movement of prana (life force) within the body.

This chapter explores various mudras, such as Yoni Mudra, Vajroli Mudra, Shambhavi Mudra, and Ashwini Mudra, etc., each with unique benefits for mental clarity, digestion, and emotional balance. It also covers bandhas like Jalandhara Bandha (Throat Lock), Mula Bandha (Root Lock), Uddiyana Bandha (Abdominal Lock), and Maha Bandha (Great Lock), which strengthen the nervous system and direct energy upwards.

Practicing these techniques regularly, along with pranayama and meditation, enhances concentration, boosts energy levels, and supports spiritual growth. With proper guidance and consistency,mudras and bandhas can become powerful tools for physical health, mental peace, and self-awareness.



11.8 FURTHER READING

- Muktibodhananda, (2000). *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, Yoga Publication Trust, Munger, Bihar, India.
- Kumar, K., (2008). *Super Science of Yoga*, Standard Publishers, New delhi, India
- Digambarji & Jha, P., (1980). *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, Kaivalyadham Srimanmadhav Yog Mandir Samiti, Lonavala, Pune.
- Saraswati, N., (2012). *Gheranda Samhita,* Yoga Publication Trust, Munger, Bihar, India.



11.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Q1: Mudras are specific hand, facial, or body gestures that influence energy flow and enhance focus, while Bandhas are energy locks that regulate the movement of prana (life force) within the body.

Answer to Q2:

- Yoni Mudra-Improves concentration and calms the mind.
- Shambhavi Mudra-Enhances focus and strengthens the nervous system.
- Ashwini Mudra -Boosts digestive health and awakens Kundalini energy.

Answer to Q3: Jalandhara Bandha (Throat Lock) controls energy in the throat region, stimulates the thyroid gland, and helps in deepening meditation.



11.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

Q1: According to the Hatha Yoga Pradipika, how many Mudras are described?

Q2: Define Bandha in the context of yogic practice.

Q3: What is the basic purpose of a Mudra in yoga?

Q4: Name any two Hatha yogic texts that describe Mudras and Bandhas.

Q5: Mention two physiological benefits of practicing Bandhas.

Q6: Why are Mudras and Bandhas considered important in advanced yoga practices?

Q7: List any two Bandhas and mention the area of the body they affect.

LONG ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

Q1: Explain the concept of Mudras in yoga. Discuss different types of Mudras and their benefits.

Q2: What are Bandhas? Describe Jalandhara Bandha, Mula Bandha, and Uddiyana Bandha in detail, including their techniques, benefits, and precautions.

Q3: Describe the physiological and psychological benefits of practicing Mudras and Bandhas regularly.

Q4: What is Maha Bandha? How is it performed, and what are its benefits?

Q5: Discuss the integration of Mudras and Bandhas into daily yoga practice. How can they enhance overall health and well-being?

Q6: Describe the connection between Mudras, Chakras, and Pranayama. How do they work together in the practice of yoga?

Q7: What is the significance of Yoni Mudra and Vajroli Mudra in yogic practices? Explain their methods and benefits in detail.

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UNIT 12 : YOGIC PRACTICES - DHARANA AND DHYANA

UNIT STRUCTURE

12.1 Learning Objectives

12.2 Introduction

12.3 The Concept of Dharana and Dhyan

12.4 Traits and State of Practice: From Dharana to Dhyana

12.5 Relevance of Dharana and Dhyana in Yogic Tradition

12.6 Dharana in *Gheranda Samhita*

12.7 Dhyan in *Gheranda Samhita*

12.8 Let Us Sum Up

12.9 Further Reading

12.10 Answers to Check Your Progress

12.11 Model Questions

12.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to :

- define the concepts of Dharana and Dhyana within Yogic philosophy.
- highlight the significance in achieving higher states of consciousness.
- explore the presentation of Dharana and Dhyana as stated in the *Gheranda Samhita*.
- integrate these practices into the broader context of spiritual development.

12.2 INTRODUCTION

Yoga, as a holistic science for physical, mental, and spiritual well-being, provides a structured path for self-discipline and inner transformation. Among the most refined and advanced practices within the Yogic tradition are *Dharana* (concentration) and *Dhyana* (meditation). These techniques

enable the practitioners to master the mind, leading ultimately to *Samadhi*, or the state of supreme consciousness and union with the divine.

Dharana and *Dhyana* form essential steps in the broader journey of *Ashtanga Yoga* (the eightfold path) as described by Maharshi Patanjali in the *Yoga Sutras*. They are also elaborated upon in Hatha Yoga texts such as the *Gheranda Samhita*, where practical techniques are outlined. Understanding these practices, both conceptually and practically, is the key to progressing toward mental tranquillity, spiritual insight, and liberation.

This chapter delves into the theoretical foundations of Dharana and Dhyana, their significance, and their detailed presentation in the *Gheranda Samhita*. The exploration reveals how these practices foster mental focus, transcendence of mundane thoughts, and ultimate spiritual enlightenment.

12.3 CONCEPT OF DHARANA AND DHYANA

The *Yoga Sutras of Patanjali,* one of the prime yoga texts, describes Dharana (concentration) and Dhyana (meditation) as central to the practice of Yoga. Together, they make up the eightfold path (Ashtanga Yoga) and are preparatory stages leading to the ultimate absorbtion or union with the divine state of Samadhi. Maharshi Patanjali includes Dharana and Dhyana under the Antaranga Sadhana; though inter-related, Dharana and Dhyana are different levels of mental concentration and spiritual refinement. Sage Gheranda also emphasises the importance of Dharana and Dhyana for managing the fluctuations of the mind and the senses and thereafter, one is able to attain the higher practices Samadhi.

Dharana (concentration)

The word Dharana is derived from the root “dhri”, meaning to hold or sustain. It therefore, means the act of holding the mind steady on one point through which a seeker may overcome distractions and any other form of restlessness.

The sixth limb of Patanjali’s Ashtanga Yoga is that of Dharana, which is an exercise of concentration; it helps your mind focus on one point. It is the very first step in practice to overcome the wild, roaming nature of the mind. When successfully completed, it serves as the foundation upon which

meditation and higher spiritual practices rest. A practitioner can choose the Dharana objects externally or internally from the world. And, with continuous focus on these objects Dhyana is attained. For Dharana -

- External objects are: A flame, idol of God, the moon, or a yantra.
- Internal objects are: A breath, chakra, or mantra.

Characteristics of Dharana:

1. Dharana is the deliberate choice of bringing the wandering mind back to the object of focus: this requires discipline and persistence.
2. It trains the mind to refuse distractions and build the capacity to hold its focused attention for long periods of time. It is very important in controlling the scattered, opportunistic nature of the mind.
3. The practice of Dhyan helps the Transition to inner awareness. By narrowing one's attention, the practitioner reduces the noise of the mind, observing inner thoughts and sensations more easily.

Dhyana (Meditation)

Dhyana, being the seventh limb of Ashtanga Yoga, follows Dharana and refers to the next level of concentration in an individual. Unlike in Dharana, where concentration is achieved at the expense of effort, Dhyana is the flow of awareness required of the mind without any effort being made at all. It is said that it denotes a state of complete absorption into the object on which one is focusing, where the practitioner reaches such deep absorption that he/she becomes one with the object on a subtle level.

Under Dhyana, the focus on the chosen object becomes unbroken and continuous, like the unhindered flow of oil from one vessel to another. So steady and tranquil does the trained mind become, through intense concentration, that distractions disappear and there remains only an intense awareness.

Significant aspects of Dhyana:

1. Uninterrupted Awareness: Dhyana is the constant and effortless connection with the object of meditation, unlike Dharana, wherein from time to time, the mind moves away from focus.
2. Inner Stillness: The mind becomes utterly still like the bottom of an ocean that is not disturbed by fluctuation (vrittis) and hence not disturbed in clarity.

3. Unity with the Object: The practitioner begins to experience the merging of the mind's consciousness into a moment of pure awareness with the object of meditation, for the observer has merged with the observed.
4. Insight and Intuition: Within Dhyana arises the insight, as this mind connects with the highest degree of consciousness and understanding. Dhyana brings the practitioner one step closer to the final realization of Samadhi. In this stage of consciousness, there remains even the disappearance in the awareness of meditating; thus the practitioner tastes the whole awareness, the divine consciousness or oneness of the creator and its creation.

12.4 TRAITS AND STATE OF PRACTICE: FROM DHARANA TO DHYANA

This change happens slowly, though 'Dharana' and 'Dhyana' are two very different processes:

1. Activity and Passivity: In Dharana, concentration implies such effort like training the mind to remember to come back. In Dhyana, concentration becomes effortless and the experience flows naturally.
2. Interruption and Flow: In Dharana, a practitioner attempts to bring back the wandering mind-a practice which involves the stopping and starting of attention. In Dhyana, attention flows like a continuous stream.
3. Separation and Unity: In Dharana, an observer-object separation is present. In Dhyana, this separation dissolves to a state of unity with the object of meditation.

Imagine, a practitioner meditating on a flame (trataka). At the Dharana stage, the practitioner impelled the mind to concentrate on the flame, almost mindlessly, because he could concentrate on it. They will see the flame in its brightness, shape, and movement, working to hold the attention. Over time, when they become more skilled, they will slip into the state of Dhyana. Now the flame is not merely an object of focus, but it is the centre of their experience. They will feel at one with it, sensing its energy, its light as though it is part of them; they are no longer acting upon the flame. There is now a sense of transcendence of doing. One shifts to effortless meditation.

12.5 RELEVANCE OF DHARANA AND DHYANA IN YOGIC TRADITION

- Dharana and Dhyana are both key elements in the process of spiritual-truth fulfilment and realization in this regard. Combined together, they are in an inner sensibility-in relation to the state of one's mind that not only brings insight into thoughts and feelings but also into the very core of "self" inside. This instils calmness so that the practice becomes incredibly clear and focused. The end of these practices is the final preparation for Samadhi, wherein the practitioners shed individuality and merge into universal consciousness, liberation or Moksha. Accordingly, Dharana and Dhyana are not mere facets of the yogic journey but bloom-lit to attain the heights of mystical experiences and profound wisdom and consciousness. Maharshi Patanjali mentions "**trayam ekatra –sanyamah" (3/4) Patanjal Yoga Sutra,** which means the three entity, that is, dharana, dhyan and samadhi, united together on the same object is called Samyama. Dharana itself turns into Dhyana, and Dhyana itself turns into Samadhi. Samyama means complete mastery over the psychic process or a complete control of mental concentration.

12.6 DHARANA IN GHERANDA SAMHITA

The *Gheranda Samhita*, a key text of Hatha Yoga, presents a sevenfold path to spiritual perfection, emphasizing physical, mental, and spiritual disciplines. Dharana, as described in this text, serves as a crucial preparatory practice for higher meditative states.

Dharana is included in the third chapter of *Gheranda Samhita* i.e., Mudra and Bandha. Maharshi Gheranda explained about twenty five (25) types of Mudra and Bandha. Further, he divided the third chapter into three criteria – Sixteen Mudras, Four Bandhas and Five forms of Dharana (Concentraion Practices), each focusing on five elements to enhance concentration viz., Parthivi, Ambhasi, Agneyi, Vayavi and Akashi.

PARTHIVI DHARANA (concentration on earth)

Yattatvam haritaaladesharachitam bhaumam lakaaraanvitam,
Vedaasram kamalaasanenasahitam kritvaa hridisthaapitam;
Praanamtatra vileeya panchaghatikaashchittaanvitam dhaarayet;
Aishaa stambhakaree sadaa kshitijayam kuryaadadhodhaaranaa. (3/17)
Paarthiveedhaaranaamudraam yah karoti tu nityashah;
Mrityunjayah svayam so'pi sa siddho vicharedbhuvi. (3/18)

From the feet to the knees is said to be the region of the Prithvi. It is four-sided in shape, yellow in colour and has its Varna the Sanskrit letter 'Lam' along the region of earth, i.e., from the feet to the knees. Its deity is Brahma Dev. Contemplating upon this, one should perform Dharana there for a period of two hours daily. He then attains mastery over the earth. Death does not trouble him since he has obtained mastery over the 'earth' element.

2. AMBHASI DHARANA (concentration on water)

Shankhendupratimam cha kundadhavalam tattvam kilaalam shubham; Talpeeyooshavakaarabeejasahitam yuktam sadaa vishnunaa;
Praanam tatra vileeya pancha ghatikaashchittaanvitaam dhaarayet; Eshaduhsahataapapaapaharineesyaadaambhasee dhaaranaa. (3/19)
Aambhaseem paramaam mudraam yo jaanaati sa yogavit,
Jale cha ghore gambheere maranam tasyanobhavet. (3/20)
Iyam tu paramaa mudraa gopaneeyaa prayatnatah;
Prakaashaatsiddhihaanihsyaatsatyam vachmi cha tattvatah. (3/21)

The region of Apas is said to extend from the knees to the anus. Apas is semi-lunar in shape and white in colour. It has the letter 'Vam' for its Bijakshara-seed-letter. Carrying up the breath with the letter 'Vam' along the region of Apas, one should contemplate on God Narayana or Vishnu, having four arms, a crowned head, dressed in orange-colour clothes and as inperishable. Practising Dharana daily for a period of two hours, he is freed from all sins. Then he has no fear from water.

3. AGNEYI DHARANA (concentration on fire)

Yannaabhisthitamindragopasadrisham beejam trikonaanvitam,
Tattvam vahnimayam pradeeptamarunam rudrena yatsiddhidam;
Praanam tatra vileeya panchaghatikaashchittaanvitam dhaarayet
Eshaa kaalagabheerabheetiharinee vaishvaanaree dhaaranaa. (3/22)
Pradeepte jvalite vahnau patito yadi saadhakah;
Etanmudraa prasaadena sa jeevati na mrityubhaak. (3/23)

From the anus to the heart is said to be the region of Agni. Agni is triangular in shape, red in colour and has the letter 'Ram' along for its Bija. Raising the breath with the letter 'Ra' along the region of fire, one should contemplate on Rudra, who has three eyes, who grants all wishes and who is of the colour of mid-day sun. Practising Dharana there daily for a period of two hours, he is not burnt by fire, even though his body enters into the fire-pit.

4. VAYVIYE DHARANA (concentration on air)

Yadbhinnaanjanapunjasannibhamidam dhoomraavabhaasam param,
Tattvam sattvamayam yakaarasahitam yatreshvaro devataa;
Praanam tatra vileeya panchaghatikaashchittaanvitam dhaarayet;
Eshaa khe gamanam karoti yaaminaam syaadvaayavee dhaaranaa.(3/24)
Iyam tu paramaa mudraa jaraamrityuvinaashinee;
Vaayunaabhriyate naapikhe cha gatipradaayinee. (3/25)
Shathaaya bhaktiheenaaya na deyam yasyakasyachit;
Datte cha siddhihaanih syaatsatyamvachmi cha chandate. (3/26)

From the heart to the middle of the eyebrows is said to be the region of Vayu. It is black in colour and shines with the letter 'Yam'. Carrying the breath along the region of Vayu, one should contemplate on Isvara, the omniscient. Its quality is Sattvik. The Yogi who gets mastery on this Dharana , does not meet his death through Vayu, can travel in the space and it destroys old age and death.

5. AKASHI DHARANA (concentration on space or ether)

Yatsinddhau varashuddhavaarisadrisham vyemaakhyamudbhansate,
Tattvam devasadaashivena sahitam beejam hakaaraanwitam;
Praanamtatra vileeya panchaghatikaashchitlaanvitom dhasrayet,
Eshaa mokshakapaatabhedanakaree kuryaanna bhodhaaranan, (3/27)
Aakaasheedhaaranaa mmudraam yo vettisayogavit;
Na mrityurjaaya tetasya pralaye naavaseedati. (3/28)

From the centre of the eyebrow to the top of the head is said to be region of Akasa. It is circular in shape, smoky in colour and shines with the letter 'Ham'. Raising the breath along the region of Akasa, one should contemplate on Sadasiva. By practising this Dharana one obtains the power of levitation. The Yogi gets all the Siddhis.

There are 20 other Mudras and Bandhas are mentioned in **Gheranda Samhita** , which are described in the mentioned verses of this text.

1. MAHA MUDRA (the great attitude) Verses 29-31
2. NABHO MUDRA (sky mudra) Verse 32
3. KHECHARI MUDRA (space mudra) Verses 33-40
4. MAHA BHEDA MUDRA (great piercing attitude) Verses 41-44
5. VIPAREETAKARANIMUDRA (inverted psychic attitude) Verses 45-48
6. YONI MUDRA (attitude of the source) Verses 49-56
7. VAJRONI MUDRA (thunderbolt attitude) Verses 57-60
8. SHAKTI CHALINI MUDRA (attitude of moving the energy) Verses 61-72
9. TADAGI MUDRA (water pot mudra) Verse 73
10. MANDUKI MUDRA (frog mudra) Verses 74-75
11. SHAMBHAVI MUDRA (attitude for arousing superconsciousness) Verses 76-81
12. ASHWINI MUDRA (horse mudra) Verses 82-83
13. PASHINEE MUDRA (noose mudra) Verses 84-85
14. KAKI MUDRA (crow mudra) Verses 86-87
15. MATANGINI MUDRA (elephant mudra) Verses 88-91

16. BHUJANGINI MUDRA (serpent mudra) Verses 92-93
17. MOOLABANDHA Verses 6-9
18. JALANDHAR BANDHA Verses 10-11
19. UDDIYAN BANDHA Verses 12-13
20. MAHABANDHA Verses 14-16

Benefits of Dharana

Practicing Dharana improves mental stability, sharpens focus, and calms the turbulence of the mind. It prepares the practitioners for deeper absorption of meditation by training the mind to resist distractions. Dharana not only cultivates intellectual clarity but also enhances will power and emotional balance. Regular practice of Dharana fosters a heightened state of awareness that serves as a stepping stone to profound meditative experiences.

12.7 DHYAN IN GHERANDA SAMHITA

A continuous focus or thinking of any object is called Dhyan. In the *Gheranda Samhita*, Dhyan represents a more advanced state of Yogic practice, focusing on sustained meditation. The text emphasizes meditative absorption as a transformative tool for self-realization. Dhyana in the *Gheranda Samhita* is mentioned in sixth chapter. The author described the three types of Dhyan as follows :

Sthoolam jyotisthaasookshmam dhyaanasya trividhamviduh;
Sthoolam moortimayam proktam jyotistejomayam tathaa;
Sookshmam bindumayam brahma kundalee paradevataa. (6/1)

Meditation is of three types: sthoola dhyana, jyoti dhyana and sukshma dhyana. Sthoola dhyana (gross or physical meditation) is that in which one meditates on the physical form (of one's ishta deva or deity). Jyotirmaya Dhyana (dhyana full of light) is that in which one meditates on or visualizes the brilliant flame form of Brahman. Sukshma dhyana (subtle meditation) is on Brahman as bindu, as kundalini shakti.

1. Sthoola Dhyana:

Sthoola means gross and dhyan means meditation in which a practitioner can meditate on the gross or physical from of guru or deity in their heart.

Maharishi Gheranda explained the two methods to perform the sthoola dhyan.

1. Meditation on the physical form of guru or deity in the heart.
2. Meditation on the physical form of guru or deity in the sahasrara.

Method 1 - Meditation on physical form of guru or deity in the heart

Svakeeyahridayedhyaayetsudhaasaagaramuttamam;
Tanmadhyeratnadveepamtusuraratnavaalukaamayam. (2)

Chaturdikshuneepatarumbahupushpasamanvitam;
Neepopavanasankulairveshtitamparikhaaiva. (3)

Maalateemallikaajaateekaisaraishchampakaistathan,
Paarijaataihsthalapadmairgandhaamoditadinmukhaih. (4)

Tanmadhyesamsmaredyogeekalpavrikshammanoharam;
Chatuhshaakhaachaturvedamnityapushpaphalaanvitam. (5)

Bhramaraahkokilaastatragunjantinigadanti cha;
Dhyaayettatrasthirobhootvaamahaamaanikyamandapam. (6)

Tanmadhyetusmaredyogeeparyankamsumanoharam;
Tatreshtadevataamdhyaayedyaddhyaanamgurubhaashitam. (7)

Yasyadevasyayadroopamyathaabhooshanavaahanam;
Tadroopamdhyaayatenityamsthooladhyaanamidamviduh. (8)

Imagine that in the heart region there is a great ocean of Nectar. In the middle of the ocean a splendid island of gems is situated, where the sand is also like pearls. This island is enveloped with a forest of tall fruit-laden trees along with flowers like Malati, Mallika, Jati, Kesara, Champaka, Parijata, and Sthalapadma making the quarters fragrant with the sweetness of their perfume. In the midst of this imagine there a beautiful Kalpavrksha having four branches representing the four vedas. It is always laden with flowers and fruits. There is buzzing of bees and the singing of cuckoos around the ocean. Focus your mind there and contemplate a mantapa made of precious stones. In that beautifu mantapa, imagine a throne it is very beautiful. On that, the specific Deity should be meditated upon, as taught

by the Guru. The vision of that deity's form, ornaments, and vehicle should be meditated upon. This is Sthula Dhyana.

Method 2 - Meditation on physical form of guru or deity in the sahasrara

Sahasraaremahaapadmekarnikaayaamvichintayet;
Vilagnasahitampadmamdalairdvaadashabhiryutam. (9)

Shuklavarnammahaatejodvaadashairbeejabhaashitam;
Ha saksha ma la vara yum ha sa kha phremyathaakramam. (10)

Tanmadhyekarnikaayaamtuakathaadirekhaatrayam;
Ha la kshakonasamyuktampranavamtatravartate. (11)

Naadabindumayampeethamdhyaayettatramanoharam;
Tatroparihamsayugmampaadukaatatravartate. (12)

Dhyaayettatragurumdevamdvibhujam cha trilochanam;
Shvetaambaradharamdevamshuklagandhaanulepanam. (13)

Shuklapushpamayammaalyamraktashaktisamanvitam;
Evamvidhagurudhyaanaatsthooladhyaanamprasidhyati. (14)

Sthooladhyaanamtukathitamtejodhyaanamshrinushvame;
Yaddhyaanenayogasiddhiraatmapratyakshameva cha. (15)

Imagine in the pericarp of the great thousand-petalled lotus there is a lotus with 12 petals. White in colour, very luminous, Consisting of 12 Bija letters - ha, sa, ksha, ma, la, va, ra, yum, ha, sa, kha, phrem. Now in this pericarp of the smaller lotus draw three lines forming a triangle-A, Ka, Tha. The angles are, Ha, La, and Ksha. In the middle of this triangle put the Pranava-Om. Contemplate on the beautiful seat having Nada and Bindu. On this seat, there are two swans, two wooden sandals. There meditate on his Guru Deva, who is two-armed and three-eyed. The Deity is dressed in pure white, with white sandal paste and a garland of white flowers, to the left of whom stands Shakti of blood red colour. By thus contemplating the guru, one comes to attain Sthoola Dhyana.

2. Jyotirmaya Dhyana: Contemplating on Brahma or Prakrti as a mass of light

Moolaadhaare kundalinee bhujangaakaararoopinee;
Tatra tishthati jeevaatmaa pradeepakalikaakritih;
Dhyaayettejomayam brahma tejodhyaanam paraatparam. (16)

Bhroovormadhye manaoordhve yattejah pranavaatmakam;
Dhyaayejjvaalaavaleeyuktam tejodhyaanam tadeva hi. (17)

The Kundalini is situated in Muladhara in the form of a Serpent. Jivatma sits there in the form of the flame crest. Try to think of that flame to be the radiant Brahman. This constitutes Jyotir Dhyana, which is the first way of contemplation of light. Meditate upon the middle of the eye-brows that is Teja with very fine rays, which is Pranava, beyond the reach of Manas; this is one more method of Light contemplation. Finally: the Yogi acquires success of his own vision.

3. Sukshma Dhyana: Contemplating on Brahma as kundalini shakti and Bindu

Tejodhyaanam shrutam chanda sookshmadhyaanam shrinushua me;
Bahubhaagyavashaadyasya kundalee jaagratee bhavet. (18)

Aatmanaa saha yogena netrarandhraadvinirgataa;
Viharedraajamaarge cha chanchalatvaanna drishyate. (19)

Shaambhavee mudrayaa yogo dhyaanayogena sidhyati;
Sookshmadhyaanamidam gopyamdevaanaamapi durlabham. (20)

Sthooladhyaanaachchhatagunam tejodhyaanam prachakshate;
Tejodhyaanaallakshagunams ookshamadhaanam paraatparam. (21)

Iti te kathitam chanda dhyaanayogam sudurlabham;
Aatmasaakshaadbhavedyasmaattasmaaddhyaanam vishishyate. (22)

Suksma Dhyana (Subtle contemplation) : Here, When by great, vast good fortune, the Kundalini gets awakened, becomes one with Atman, rises a little above the level of the sockets of the eyes, and vibrates in the Brahmarandhra. In Yoga, success is attained through Dhyanayoga along

with Shambhavi Mudra. This Sukshma-Dhyana, is very difficult to achieve even by the Devas.

Comparative analysis of the three types of Dhyana: Tejo Dhyana is one hundred times superior to Sthuladhyana. Sukshma Dhyana is the superior to all, being one hundred thousand times superior to Tejodhyana.

Results of Dhyana - The practice of Dhyana leads to profound inner tranquillity, intuitive understanding, and liberation from dualistic perception. It enhances spiritual wisdom and brings the practitioner closer to the realization of unity with cosmic consciousness.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1. What is dharana?

Q2. How many types of Dharana in the Gheranda Samhita?

Q3. What is Dhyana?



12.8 LET US SUM UP

This chapter has explored the Yogic practices of Dharana and Dhyana:

- Dharana is focused concentration, laying the groundwork for deeper meditation.
- Maharshi Gheranda explained Dharana in the third Chapter of *Gheranda Samhita,* where he discussed the twenty-five Mudras and Bandhas in which he mentioned 16 mudras, 4 bandhas and 5 dharanas. These Dharanas are the concentration points where the practitioner focused his/her mind without any distractions.
- Pancha Dharanas or five elements to enhance concentrations are – Parthivi, Ambhasi, Agneyi, Vayavi and Akashi.
- Dhyana is continuous meditation, resulting in spiritual awareness and peace.

- Maharshi Gheranda discussed Dhyan in the sixth Chapter of *Gheranda Samhita.* He explained three types of dhyan – Shtoola, Jyoti and Sukshma Dhyan for the unwavering flow of thoughts.
- The *Gheranda Samhita* provides practical instructions for these disciplines, highlighting their transformative potential.
- Dharana and Dhyana together, guide the practitioner from mental control to spiritual transcendence, forming an integral part of the path to enlightenment.



12.9 FURTHER READINGS

- Saraswati, S., (1974). *Meditations from the Tantras*, Yoga Publication Trust, Munger, Bihar, India.
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12.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Q1 : Dharana is the practice of concentration, while Dhyana is meditation.

Answer to Q2 : Types of Dharana in the *Gheranda Samhita* include Parthivi, Ambhasi, Agneyi, Vayavi and Akashi.

Answer to Q3: Dhyana differs from Dharana by being effortless and continuous



12.11 MODEL QUESTIONS

SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

Q1: Dharana is the _____ limb of Ashtanga Yoga.

Q2: What is the difference between Dharana and Dhyana?

Q3: Why is Dharana essential before entering into Dhyana?

Q4: What is the significance of Dharana in the yogic path to self-realization?

Q5: In which chapter of the Gheranda Samhita is Dharana discussed?

Q6: Name the Pancha Dharanas to enhance concentration.

Q7: List the three types of Dhyana mentioned by Maharshi Gheranda

Q8: What is the main purpose of practicing Dhyana?

LONG ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

Q1: Define Dharana and its importance in Yoga.

Q2: Describe the teachings of the Gheranda Samhita on Dharana and Dhyana.

Q3: Discuss the techniques of Dhyana as described in the *Gheranda Samhita*.

Q4: Explain the methods of Sthoola Dhyan in detail, as discussed by Maharshi Gheranda.

Q5: Explain the difference between Jyoti and Sukshma Dhyana.

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UNIT 13 : YOGIC PRACTICES SAMADHI

UNIT STRUCTURE

13.1 Learning Objectives

13.2 Introduction

13.3 The Concept of Samadhi

13.4 Samadhi in *Gheranda Samhita*

13.5 Types of Samadhi in *Gheranda Samhita*

13.6 Steps towards Samadhi

13.7 Let us Sum up

13.8 Further Reading

13.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

13.10 Model Questions

13.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to :

- understand the concept and significance of Samadhi in Yogic practices.
- explore the perspective of Samadhi as described in the *Gheranda Samhita.*
- explain the different types of Samadhi detailed in *Gheranda Samhita.*
- appreciate the spiritual and practical implications of attaining Samadhi.

13.2 INTRODUCTION

Samadhi, often regarded as the ultimate aim of Yogic practices, represents the unification of the individual self with the universal consciousness. It is a state of absolute stillness and bliss, where the fluctuations of the mind cease, allowing the practitioner to transcend the physical and mental planes of existence.

In the realm of Yogic philosophy, Samadhi is the eighth and final limb of Patanjali's Ashtanga Yoga. While various Yogic traditions highlight its significance, this chapter focuses on the concept of Samadhi, its interpretation in the *Gheranda Samhita*, and the path that leads to this supreme state of being.

In Yogic literature, Samadhi is often described as the culmination of meditation (Dhyana), where the practitioner experiences unbroken focus and ultimately reaches a point of pure consciousness. This state is beyond the grasp of ordinary perception, as it involves dissolving the ego and all mental modifications.

Samadhi is not a sudden occurrence but a gradual process that requires dedication, discipline, and mastery over the mind and body. It is the fruit of consistent practice and unwavering devotion to the path of Yoga.

13.3 THE CONCEPT OF SAMADHI

The term “Samadhi” is derived from two Sanskrit roots: “Sam,” meaning together or complete, and “Adhi,” meaning to hold or absorb. It signifies a state where the mind becomes one-pointed and fully absorbed in the object of meditation. In this state, the individual self merges with the universal consciousness, transcending duality and achieving a state of unity and infinite awareness.

The fourth point of view of samadhi is given in the *Bhagavad Gita* in answer to Arjuna’s question. Arjuna asks Lord Krishna

Sthita-prajñasya kā bhāchā samādhi-sthasya keśhava
Sthita-dhī% kiA prabhācheta kim āsīta vrajeta kim || (Bhagavad Gita 2:54)

What is the description of one who has a steady mind and is merged in the superconscious state? How does he speak, how does he sit, how does he walk? Lord Krishna defines samadhi as a state in which one is liberated from bondage. In this state, worldly bondages such as likes and dislikes, greed and delusion, cunning and ignorance, no longer have any influence; the same attitude is maintained in every situation. In that

equipoised state there is evenness of mind or indifference to both pleasure and pain, equal freedom in both good and bad situations.

That state of samadhi is *atmashuddhi*, purity of the self. This is also discussed in Ramacharitamanas and the Upanishads. The Shanti mantra of the *Ishavasya Upanishad* expresses the same feeling:

Om poornamadah pooramidam poornaatpoornamudachyate;
Poornasya poornamaadaaya poornamevaa vashishyate ||

When fullness is taken from fullness, even then fullness remains. It does not become incomplete. This feeling describes *Brahma Avastha*, the supreme state. When one takes birth and assumes the form of an individual soul, then one is complete in that and has the capacity to recognize one's real basic form inside. When that recognition comes, one's own completeness is perceived. Even when one does not recognize oneself, one still remains complete.

13.4 SAMADHI IN *GHERANDA SAMHITA*

The *Gheranda Samhita*, one of the foundational texts of Hatha Yoga, offers a unique perspective on the journey toward Samadhi. It presents Yoga as a sevenfold path, known as Saptanga Yoga, which encompasses purification (Shatkarma), physical postures (Asanas), breath control (Pranayama), sensory withdrawal (Pratyahara), concentration (Dharana), meditation (Dhyana), and Samadhi. The text emphasizes that Samadhi is the culmination of these sequential practices. Sage Gheranda also mentioned that **'Samadhina Nirliptam Cha'** means through Samadhi one can attain non-involvement or liberation.

The state of samadhi can be understood in this simple form Sage Gheranda speaks on samadhi in the following verses 1-4 in chapter 7

Samaadhishchaparoyogobahubhaagyenalabhyate;
Gurohkripaaprasaadenapraapyategurubhaktitah. (7/1)
Vidyaaprateetihsvaguruprateetiraatmaprateetirmanasahprabodhah;
Dine
dineyasyabhavetsayogeesushobhanaabhyaasamupaitisadyah
(7/2)

Ghataadbhinnam manahkritvaachaikyamkuryaatparaatmani;
Samaadhim tam vijaaneeyaanmuklasanjnodashaadibhih (7/3)

Aham brahma nachaanyo'smibrahmaivaahamnashokabhaak;
Sachchidaanandaroopo'hamnityamuktahsvabhaavavaan (7/4)

According to the *Gheranda Samhita*, Samadhi is the stage where the practitioner transcends the limitations of the body, mind, and senses. It is not merely a mystical experience but a state that results from systematic effort. By mastering the earlier stages of Saptanga Yoga, the practitioner prepares the body and the mind for profound stillness and unity of Samadhi.It is not a simple practice. Not all practitioners can reach this high state. Only due to having some special qualities and as a result of the guru's blessings can one attain samadhi. In fact, this is essential for everything. If one wants to become a yogi, then one should have the qualities of a yogi. If one wants to steal, then one should have the qualities of a thief. If one wants to be nonviolent, then one should have the qualities of non-violence. In the same manner, qualities are required in the life of a practitioner in order to achieve samadhi, and as long as the guru does not identify and develop these qualities, samadhi cannot be attained, since a sadhaka or a practitioner one may not know oneself or one's qualities. It is only the guru who has the knowledge regardiing the qualities which are essential for Samadhi and who gives guidelines to the disciples after having identified their personality, weaknesses and achievements.

The *Gheranda Samhita* highlights the importance of mental concentration (Dharana) and meditation (Dhyana) as essential prerequisites for Samadhi. These practices enable the practitioner to withdraw from external distractions and focus inward, paving the way for the mind to become still and unified.

13.5 TYPES OF SAMADHI IN GHERANDA SAMHITA

The *Gheranda Samhita* mentions six distinct techniques or states of samadhi, described in verses 5 and 6 of the text:

Shaambhavyaachaivabhraamaryaakhecharyaayonimudrayaa;
Dhyaanamnaadamrasaanandamlayasiddhishchaturvidhaa (7/5)
Panchadhaa bhakti yogenamanomoorchhaa cha shadvidhaa;
Shadvidho'yamraajayogahpratyekamavadhaarayet. (7/6)

According to the *Gheranda Samhita*, these six techniques include Dhyana Yoga Samadhi, Nada Yoga Samadhi, Rasananda Samadhi, Laya Siddhi Samadhi, Bhakti Yoga Samadhi, and Manomoorcha Samadhi. Each technique is unique, requiring specific mudras, pranayama, and mental focus. Together, these six types of samadhi constitute the Raja Yoga tradition described by Sage Gheranda. Practitioners are advised to progress through them sequentially, beginning with Dhyana Yoga Samadhi.

1. Dhyana Yoga Samadhi

Shaambhaveemmudrikaahkritvaaaatmapratyakshamaanayet;
Bindu brahmamayamdrishtvaamanastatraniyojayet. (7/7)

Khamadhyekuruchaatmaanamaatmamadhye cha kham kuru;
Aatmaanamkhamayamdrishtvaanakinchidapibudhyate;
Sadaanandamayobhootvaasamaadhisthobhavennarah. (7/8)

Dhyana Yoga Samadhi is achieved through the practice of Shambhavi Mudra. In this technique, the practitioner focuses on perceiving the self (atma) and the Supreme (Brahman). The mind is then directed toward bindu, the point of spiritual focus.

The process involves merging the individual soul (jivatma) into the infinite space (kham) and further into the Supreme Self (Paramatma). When this union is realized, the yogi transcends all mental activities, attains perpetual bliss, and enters samadhi.

2. Nada Yoga Samadhi

Anilammandavegenabhraamareekumbhakam charet;
Mandammandamrechayedvaayumbhrinnaadamtatobhavet. (7/9)

Antahsthambhramareenaadamshrutvaatatra mano nayet;
Samaadhijaaryatetatrachaanandahso'hamityatah. (7/10)

Nada Yoga Samadhi emphasizes the use of sound as a tool for attaining the superconscious state. Practitioners perform bhramari pranayama by inhaling slowly, producing a humming sound resembling a black bee during exhalation.

As the sound (nada) resonates within, the practitioner focuses the mind on it. The continuous awareness of the inner sound leads to samadhi, accompanied by a profound realization of "I am That" (So'ham).

3. Rasananda Samadhi

Khechareemudraasaadhanaatrasanordhvagataayadaa;
Tadaasamaadhisiddhihsyaaddhitvaasadhaaranakriyaam (7/11)

In Rasananda Samadhi, the practitioner uses Khechari Mudra, a technique where the tongue is folded upward to touch the soft palate. This practice directs energy upward, bypassing ordinary sensory activities. Through dedicated practice, the yogi perfects this simple but powerful method, leading to the attainment of samadhi and an experience of transcendental bliss.

4. Laya Siddhi Samadhi

Yonimudraamsamaasaadyasvayamshaktimayobhavet;
Sushringaararasenaivaviharetparamaatmani. (7/12)
Aanandamayahsambhootvaaekyambrahmanisambhavet;
Aham brahmetichaadvaitasamaadhistenajaayate. (7/13)

Laya Siddhi Samadhi is practiced through Yoni Mudra, which involves activating inner Shakti (energy) and merging it with the Supreme Consciousness (Paramatma). This union results in an overwhelming experience of blissful oneness.

The practitioner, immersed in the rasa (essence) of divine love, transcends duality and realizes the non-dual state of "I am Brahman." This deep sense of unity with the infinite is the hallmark of Laya Siddhi Samadhi.

5. Bhakti Yoga Samadhi

Svakeeyahridayedhyaayedishtadevasvaroopakam;
Chintayedbhaktiyogenaparamaahlaadapoorvakam. (7/14)
Aanandaashrupulakenadashaabhaavahprajaayate;
Samaadhihsambhavettenasambhavechchamanonmanee. (7/15)

Bhakti Yoga Samadhi involves devotional surrender and intense love for one's chosen deity (ishta deva). By meditating on the deity's form in the heart with utmost devotion, the practitioner experiences divine ecstasy. This state is often accompanied by tears of bliss, a trembling sensation in the body, and the thrilling awareness of divine presence. As the mind becomes completely absorbed in devotion, it transcends all distractions, leading to samadhi and the state of manonmanee (transcendence of mind).

6. Manomoorcha Samadhi

Manomoorchchhamsamaasaadya mana aatmaniyojayet;
Paramaatmanahsamaayogaatsamaadhimsamavaapnuyaat. (7/16)

Manomoorcha Samadhi is achieved through manomoorchakumbhaka, a breath-retention practice that quiets the mind and stabilizes awareness. The mind is then merged with the individual self (atma), and further united with the Supreme Self (Paramatma). This deep state of meditation culminates in samadhi, where the yogi experiences oneness with the universal consciousness.

Each of these six types of samadhi, as outlined in the *Gheranda Samhita,* represents a unique pathway to the ultimate goal of Yoga—self-realization and unity with the Supreme. By following these practices sequentially, the practitioner attains not only mastery over the mind and body but also liberation and eternal bliss.

13.6 STEPS TOWARDS SAMADHI

Attaining Samadhi is a transformative journey that requires physical, mental, and spiritual preparation. The *Gheranda Samhita* outlines several practices that support this journey:

- Shatkarma (Purification): Cleansing techniques that purify the body and remove toxins, creating a foundation for higher practices. Through six purificatory techniques such as Dhauti, Basti, Neti, Nauli, Trataka and Kapalbhati, a practitioner can purify their internal as well as external body and get a disease free body and good health.

- Asanas (Postures): Physical postures that enhance flexibility, strength, and stability, preparing the body for prolonged meditation. Maharshi Gheranda explains 32 Asanas which are listed by Lord Shiva; through the practice of these asana a sadhaka gets firmness in the physique.
- Pranayama (Breath Control): Techniques to regulate breath and control the flow of prana (life force energy) within the body. For this Maharshi Gheranda discussed the eight pranayama, which purify the prana and enhances the lung capacity.
- Pratyahara (Sensory Withdrawal): Practices that enable the practitioner to withdraw attention from external distractions and focus inward. This helps to control the sensory and motor organs.
- Dharana (Concentration): Techniques to develop one-pointed focus and control over the mind. Maharshi Gheranda discussed the five Dharana by which sadhakas can fix or concentrate their mind.
- Dhyana (Meditation): Sustained meditation that deepens awareness and prepares the practitioner for the stillness of Samadhi. A continuous unwavering flow of thoughts and thinking is Dhyan. After completing this process practitioners can control their mind and body and be ready for the spiritual upliftment.
- These practices, when performed with dedication and consistency, create a harmonious balance between the body, mind, and spirit, enabling the practitioner to transcend the limitations of the physical and mental realms.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1. Define the concept of Samadhi.

Q2. What are the two types of Samadhi mentioned in the *Gheranda Samhita*?

Q3. Differentiate between Savikalpa and Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

Q4. What are the preparatory practices for attaining Samadhi as described in the *Gheranda Samhita*?



13.7 LET US SUM UP

In this chapter, we explored the concept of Samadhi as the ultimate goal of Yogic practices. We examined its philosophical foundations, its detailed treatment in the *Gheranda Samhita*, and the preparatory practices that lead to this state.

The chapter highlighted the two main types of Samadhi-Savikalpa and Nirvikalpa-underscoring the transformative journey from duality to unity. By understanding and applying the teachings of the *Gheranda Samhita*, practitioners can embark on a path of self-realization and spiritual liberation.

The Yogic text *Gheranda Samhita* discusses the Six Types of Samadhi, which help the sadhak to attain the ultimate aim of life that is, Liberation.



13.8 FURTHER READING

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13.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Q1: Samadhi is a state of total absorption and unity with the universal consciousness, achieved through meditation and Yogic practices.

Answer to Q2: Savikalpa Samadhi and Nirvikalpa Samadhi.

Answer to Q3: Savikalpa Samadhi involves focused awareness on an object with duality, whereas Nirvikalpa Samadhi represents complete absorption and the dissolution of duality.

Answer to Q4: The preparatory practices include Shatkarma (purification), Asanas (postures), Pranayama (breath control), Pratyahara (sensory withdrawal), Dharana (concentration), and Dhyana (meditation).



13.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

Q1: Samadhi is the _____ limb accoding to Gheranda Samhita.

Q2: In which chapter does Gheranda Samhita discuss Samadhi?

Q3: Name the types of Samadhi according to Gheranda Samhita.

Q4: What is Savikalpa Samadhi?

Q5: What is Nirvikalpa Samadhi and how does it differ from Savikalpa?

Q6: Mention one key difference between Dhyana and Samadhi.

LONG ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

Q1: Discuss the concept of Samadhi as the ultimate goal of Yogic practices.

Q2: Explain the role of *Gheranda Samhita* in introducing and explicating the process of attaining Samadhi.

Q3: Elaborate on the preparatory practices for achieving Samadhi as described in the *Gheranda Samhita.*

Q4: How does the *Gheranda Samhita's* approach to Samadhi differ from the other Yogic texts?

Q5: Describe the types of Samadhi as per the Gheranda Samhita. How do they reflect the evolution of spiritual awareness?

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UNIT 14 : YOGIC PRACTICES - NADANUSANDHAN

UNIT STRUCTURE

14.1 Learning Objectives

14.2 Introduction

14.3 Shat-chakra

14.4 Kundalini

14.5 Nadanusandhan in *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*

14.6 Let us Sum up

14.7 Further Reading

14.8 Answers to Check Your Progress

14.9 Model Questions

14.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to :

- understand the concept and significance of Nadanusandhan in yogic practices.
- explain the Shat-chakras and their role in spiritual awakening.
- describe the process of Kundalini awakening.
- analyze the description of Nadanusandhan as presented in the *Hatha Pradipika.*

14.2 INTRODUCTION

The science of yoga encompasses a profound understanding of the human body, mind, and spirit. Among the many techniques and philosophies in yoga, the concepts of Shat-chakras, Kundalini, and Nadanusandhan stand as pillars of higher yogic practices. These principles, deeply rooted in ancient texts like the *Hatha Pradipika*, guide practitioners toward spiritual enlightenment and self-realization. Nadanusandhan, or the search for the inner sound, forms a meditative pathway that aligns one's

inner vibrations with cosmic energy, leading to a transcendental state of consciousness.

Yoga, as a holistic science, aims at the harmonious integration of the body, mind, and spirit. Within its vast repertoire of practices and philosophies, Nadanusandhan, Shat-chakras, and Kundalini awakening stand as effective techniques for inner exploration and spiritual ascension. Rooted in ancient scriptures like the *Hatha Pradipika*, these concepts guide practitioners on a transformative journey from mundane existence to transcendental awareness. Nadanusandhan, translating to "investigation of sound," focuses on inner auditory experiences to quiet the mind and align it with the universal vibration, facilitating a state of deep meditation and unity with cosmic energy.

14.3 SHAT-CHAKRA

The term "Shat-chakra" refers to the six subtle energy centres in the human body, as described in traditional yogic literature. Each chakra governs specific physical, emotional, and spiritual functions:

1. **Muladhara Chakra**: Located at the base of the spine, associated with stability and survival.
2. **Swadhisthana Chakra**: Situated in the lower abdomen, linked to creativity and sensuality.
3. **Manipura Chakra**: Positioned at the navel, representing power and self-confidence.
4. **Anahata Chakra**: Found in the heart region, connected to love and compassion.
5. **Vishuddha Chakra**: Located at the throat, symbolizing communication and truth.
6. **Ajna Chakra**: Positioned between the eyebrows, associated with intuition and insight.

The activation and balancing of these chakras are central to various yogic and meditative practices. "Shat-chakra" refers to the six major subtle energy centres located along the spinal column. Each chakra represents a

nexus of nadis (energy channels) that influence the physical, mental, and spiritual dimensions of a being.

Proper activation and alignment of these chakras are essential for maintaining physical vitality and progressing spiritually. Practices such as pranayama, meditation, and specific asanas are recommended for chakra balancing.

In the Chakra system, **Muladhara**, located at the base, represents the Gross Body, while **Sahasrara**, at the top, symbolizes the Causal Body. Between these two lie five Chakras associated with the Subtle Body, highlighting the vastness of the Subtle Body system compared to the physical body. Although **Sahasrara**, the highest Chakra, is singular, it signifies the absolute and encompasses all aspects of the Gross and Subtle Bodies, unifying all seven Chakras. Awareness at **Sahasrara** leads to the union of Shiva and Shakti, symbolizing the perfect balance of masculine and feminine energies.

The Chakras are subtle energy centers aligned with the **Sushumnā Nā**

ī, the central channel of the Kundalini system. There are seven Chakras, each with distinct characteristics and effects are discussed below -

1. Muladhara Chakra – Root Chakra



- **Location**: Base of the spine, between the a
- **Colour**: Red
- **Element**: Earth
- **Attributes**: Represents survival, stability, ambition, and self-sufficiency.
- **Imbalance**: Causes instability, fear, insecurity, and frustration.
- **Balance**: Brings stability, confidence, energy, and independence.
- **Seed Mantra (Beej Mantra)**: *Lam*

Muladhara Chakra is located at the base of the spine between the anus and the genitals. It radiates the colour red and represents the element earth.

It is characterized by the emotions of survival, stability, ambition and self sufficiency. When this chakra is out of balance, a person might feel unstable, ungrounded, lack of ambition, lack of purpose, fearful, insecure and frustrated. However when Muladhara Chakra is balanced, a person feels stable, confident, balanced, energetic, independent and strong.

The seed mantra (beej mantra) of Muladhara Chakra is 'Lam'.

2. Svadhishthana Chakra – Sacral Chakra



- **Location**: Lower abdomen, four fingers belo
- **Colour**: Orange
- **Element**: Water
- **Attributes**: Governs sexuality, desires, creativity, and self-worth.
- **Imbalance**: Leads to irritability, lack of energy, or obsession with sexual thoughts.
- **Balance**: Encourages positivity, vitality, satisfaction, and compassion.
- **Seed Mantra (Beej Mantra)**: *Vam*

The second chakra, Svadishthana Chakra, is located at the lower abdomen, about four fingers below the navel. It radiates the colour orange and represents the element of water.

The attributes of Sacral Chakra are the basic needs for sexuality, desires, creativity and self-worth. When imbalanced, a person might feel emotionally explosive and irritable, lacking of energy and creativity, manipulative or obsessed with sexual thoughts. When Svadhishthana Chakra is balanced, a person might feel positive, vital, satisfied, compassionate, and intuitive.

The seed mantra (beej mantra) of Svadhishthana Chakra is 'Vam'.

3. Manipura Chakra – Solar Plexus Chakra



- **Location**: Solar plexus, between the navel an
- **Colour**: Yellow
- **Element**: Fire
- **Attributes**: Associated with energy, ego, anger, and confidence.

- **Imbalance**: Manifests as digestive issues, depression, or perfectionism.
- **Balance**: Enhances productivity, focus, and self-esteem.
- **Seed Mantra (Beej Mantra)**: *Ram*

Manipura Chakra or Solar Plexus Chakra is located above the navel at the solar plexus (between the navel and the bottom of the rib cage). It represents the element of fire and thus radiates the colour yellow.

This chakra is characterized by energy and emotions like ego, anger and aggression. An imbalance of Manipura Chakra can manifest itself physically by digestive problems, liver problems or diabetes. On an emotional level one might struggle with depression, lack of self-esteem, anger and perfectionism. By bringing the chakra into balance one might feel energetic, confident, productive and focussed.



The seed mantra (beej mantra) of Manipura C

4. Anahata Chakra – Heart Chakra

- **Location**: Heart region
- **Colour**: Green
- **Element**: Air
- **Attributes**: Symbolizes love, compassion, trust, and balance.
- **Imbalance**: Causes anger, jealousy, anxiety, or fear.
- **Balance**: Promotes optimism, understanding, and caring.
- **Seed Mantra (Beej Mantra)**: *Yam*

Anahata Chakra, or the Heart Chakra, as the name implies, is located at the heart region. Its colour is green and the element is air.

This fourth Chakra is the seat of balance within the body, characterized by emotions of love, attachment, compassion, trust and passion. When Anahata Chakra is out of balance a person might deal with emotional issues like anger, lack of trust, anxiety, jealousy, fear and moodiness. By harmonizing this chakra, one feels compassionate, optimistic, friendly, motivated, understanding and caring.

The seed mantra (beej mantra) of Anahata Chakra is 'Yam'.

5. Vishuddha Chakra – Throat Chakra



- **Location**: Base of the throat, near the thyroid
- **Colour**: Bright blue
- **Element**: Space
- **Attributes**: Encourages expression, faith, and communication.
- **Imbalance**: Results in timidity, lack of creativity, or weak self-expression.
- **Balance**: Fosters positive communication and satisfaction.
- **Seed Mantra (Beej Mantra)**: *Ham*

The fifth Chakra, Throat Chakra, is located at the base of the throat, coinciding with the thyroid gland. Its colour is bright blue and the element is space.

Vishuddha Chakra represents inspiration, expression, faith and the ability of communication. Imbalance of the Throat Chakra may lead to timidity, quietness, a feeling of weakness or inability to express one's thoughts. Balance of the Throat Chakra can manifest itself by creativity, positive self expression, constructive communication and satisfaction.

The seed mantra (beej mantra) of Vishuddha Chakra is 'Ham'.

6. Ajna Chakra – Third Eye Chakra



- **Location**: Between the eyebrows
- **Colour**: Indigo blue
- **Element**: Beyond elements
- **Attributes**: Represents intuition, intelligence, insight, and self-awareness.
- **Imbalance**: Causes fear of failure, egoism, or physical issues like headaches.
- **Balance**: Enables liberation, intuition, and mastery over material attachments.
- **Seed Mantra (Beej Mantra)**: *Om*

Ajna Chakra (pronounced as 'Agya Chakra') is located in between the eyebrows. It is free of element but does have a colour: indigo blue.

The Third Eye Chakra is often used as a point of focus during asana practice to bring more concentration and awareness. It is said that meditation on Ajna Chakra destroys the karma of past lives and gives liberation and intuitional knowledge. Its attributes are intelligence, intuition, understanding, insight and self knowledge. When this chakra is out of balance, one might feel non-assertive, afraid of success, or on the contrary, be egoistical. Imbalance of Ajna Chakra can manifest itself on a physical level by headaches, blurry vision and eye strain. When Ajna Chakra is balanced, one is his own master without fear of death and free of attachment to material things.

The seed mantra (beej mantra) of Ajna Chakra is 'Om'.

7. Sahasrara Chakra – Crown Chakra



- **Location**: Crown of the head
- **Colour**: Violet or white
- **Element**: Beyond elements
- **Attributes**: Centre of spirituality, enlightenment, and cosmic consciousness.
- **Imbalance**: Leads to frustration, lack of joy, or destructive thoughts.
- **Balance**: Brings wisdom, inner peace, and a connection with the Divine.
- **Seed Mantra (Beej Mantra)**: *Aum*

The seventh Chakra, Sahastrara Chakra, is located at the crown of the head. Also this chakra does not represent an element. It is violet and/or white in colour.

Sahastrara Chakra is the centre of spirituality, enlightenment, dynamic thought and energy. It allows the inward flow of wisdom and brings the gift of cosmic consciousness. When out of balance, one might suffer from a constant sense of frustration, no spark of joy and full of destructive feelings.

The seed mantra (beej mantra) of Sahastrara Chakra is 'Aum'.

The discernment sheath is capable of directing awareness outwardly to the mind or inwardly to the divine. It is called buddhi, the refined ability to discern what is truly good and helpful for our inner development from that

which is distracting and harmful. If clear, it can convey Divine wisdom to the lower mind

14.4 KUNDALINI

Kundalini, derived from the Sanskrit word *Kundal* meaning “coil,” refers to a dormant spiritual energy that resides within every human being. In most individuals, this energy remains inactive, coiled three and a half times at the perineum. While many people are unaware of its existence, Kundalini is a familiar concept to serious spiritual seekers. Most yoga traditions place great importance on awakening the Kundalini, as it is considered the essential force required to achieve the ultimate spiritual goal, that is, union with the divine, also known as Yoga.

Traditionally, it is believed that once awakened, the Kundalini has the power to:

1. Remove the knots (granthis) that block the major chakras.
2. Cleanse, open, and develop the chakras.
3. Transform each chakra into a fully developed, lotus-like form.

As Kundalini ascends through the energy system, it works sequentially, starting from the lowest chakra **Muladhara** and moving upward. When it reaches the **Sahasrara Chakra**, the crown chakra at the top of the head, the practitioner attains the highest state of spiritual realization—Yoga.

The Challenge of Awakening the Kundalini

Awakening the Kundalini is a profound and challenging process, often requiring years of disciplined practice. Many dedicated practitioners spend decades striving for this awakening without success. It is believed that only a rare few achieve this extraordinary feat.

Even for those fortunate enough to awaken Kundalini, the process of spiritual cleansing and transformation remains arduous and time-intensive. Key aspects of this journey include:

- Kundalini works methodically, spending years cleansing and developing each chakra, starting from **Muladhara** and progressing upward in a sequential manner.

- The energy must fully develop one chakra before moving to the next, making the process gradual and time-consuming.

Given the length of time required, which may span decades, many individuals may not complete the journey within a single lifetime. Reaching the **Sahasrara Chakra** and attaining the ultimate spiritual goal often remains an aspiration that transcends the limitations of a single incarnation.

Kundalini awakening and its journey through the chakras symbolize a deeply transformative process, emphasizing perseverance, dedication, and the timeless quest for union with the Divine.

Kundalini is a form of primal energy believed to be coiled at the base of the spine. In yogic tradition, Kundalini awakening is a process where this energy rises through the Shat-chakras to reach the crown chakra (Sahasrara). The awakening can be achieved through dedicated practices like pranayama, meditation, and mantra chanting. The journey of Kundalini through the chakras brings heightened states of awareness, spiritual growth, and profound bliss. However, it requires guidance and disciplined practice to ensure safe and effective results.

Stages of Kundalini Awakening

1. **Purification**: Cleansing the nadis (subtle energy channels) through pranayama.
2. **Awakening**: Activation of the Kundalini energy.
3. **Ascent**: The energy rises through the chakras, leading to expanded consciousness.
4. **Union**: The merging of Kundalini with cosmic consciousness at the Sahasrara chakra.

Kundalini refers to dormant spiritual energy coiled at the base of the spine, often compared to a serpent waiting to be awakened. In yogic traditions, awakening this latent power is considered a pivotal step toward self-realization.

The journey of Kundalini energy involves:

- **Preparation**: Cleansing of the nadis through practices like Nadi Shodhana (alternate nostril breathing).

- **Awakening**: The process may be initiated by intense meditation, pranayama, or mantra chanting.
- **Ascent**: As Kundalini rises, it activates successive chakras, enhancing consciousness and spiritual insight.
- **Union with Sahasrara**: The culmination at the crown chakra leads to the experience of divine bliss and enlightenment.

Careful guidance from an experienced teacher is crucial, as improper awakening can result in physical or emotional imbalance.

Benefits of Kundalini Awakening

- Heightened perception and intuition.
- Improved mental clarity and emotional stability.
- A profound sense of spiritual unity and bliss.
- Union with supreme consciousness.

14.5 NADANUSANDHAN IN *HATHA YOGA PRADIPIKA*

The *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* significanivest attention to the practice of Nadanusandhan, which involves focusing on inner sounds (Nada) to attain a meditative state. According to this text:

Āsanam kumbhakam citrammudrākhyam karaṉamtathāl
Atha nādānusandhānama bhyāsānukra mohathe ||

Meaning: Āsana-s, and various kinds of Kumbhaka-s (Prānāyāma), Mudra and Nādānusandhāna, it is in this sequence, that practice of Hatha should be done.

The process of yoga illustrated in *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* of Swami Svatmarama is known as Chaturanga Yoga. The content matter is divided into for chapters Asana, Kumbhakas, Mudra and Nadanusandhan. The first three chapters outline the *Hathayoga* practices that prepare the aspirant for the attainment of *Rajayoga* (Samadhi). The fourth chapter elaborates on the method of achieving *Rajayoga* through *Nadanusandhana*, one of the most profound *Laya* practices.

Nadanusandhan, often referred to as the science of inner sound, is a profound practice within the yogic tradition that guides a practitioner toward spiritual awakening through the exploration of *Nada*, the eternal sound. The term *Nadanusandhan* is derived from two Sanskrit words: *Nada* (sound or vibration) and *Anusandhan* (inquiry or investigation). Together, they signify the focused inquiry into the inner sound that resonates within the subtle layers of consciousness.

This practice finds mention in several classical yogic texts, including the *Hatha Pradipika* and *Nada Bindu Upanishad*, and holds a significant place in Nada Yoga, the path of union through sound. It is considered a highly refined meditative practice aimed at merging the individual self with the universal consciousness.

The Philosophy of Nadanusandhan

According to yogic philosophy, the entire universe is said to originate from *Nada Brahma*, the cosmic sound or vibration that underlies all creation. This primordial sound is eternal and pervasive, and its vibration can be experienced within the human body when the mind is calm and the senses are withdrawn.

The practice of Nadanusandhan involves turning one's attention inward to listen to this subtle, unstruck sound (*Anahata Nada*). Unlike external sounds, which are heard through the ears, the *Nada* experienced in Nadanusandhan arises spontaneously and is perceived within the mind and subtle energy channels. It is believed that by focusing on this sound, one can transcend the distractions of the physical world and access higher states of consciousness.

Practice of Nadanusandhan

The practice of Nadanusandhan requires discipline, focus, and a gradual refinement of perception. Below are the steps involved in the practice:

- Preparation:

  The practitioner adopts a comfortable meditative posture (such as Padmasana or Siddhasana) in a quiet environment. The spine is

kept erect, and the mind is calmed through initial breathing exercises or *Pranayama*.

- Withdrawal of Senses (*Pratyahara*):
  The practitioner withdraws attention from external stimuli, directing the awareness inward. This withdrawal helps quieten the mind and creates receptivity to subtle inner experiences.
- Focusing on Inner Sound:
  With closed eyes, the practitioner begins to focus on the inner sound, which may initially resemble a buzzing, humming, or ringing sensation. This sound often originates from within the subtle energy channels (*nadis*).
- Progression through Sound:
  As the practice deepens, the sound evolves, becoming finer and subtler. The practitioner's focus shifts from the external to the internal, moving through the stages of *Nada*.
- Union with *Nada Brahma*:
  In the advanced stages, the practitioner transcends all forms of sound and enters a state of silence, which is the essence of all vibration. This silence leads to self-realization and unity with the cosmic vibration.

Nadanusandhan in Classical Texts

- *HathaYogaPradipika:*
  The *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* describes *Nada Sadhana* as a means to achieve liberation. It emphasizes listening to the unstruck sound and merging the mind with it to transcend the limitations of the physical body and mind.
- *NadaBinduUpanishad:*
  This Upanishad elaborates on the importance of sound in meditation. It describes *Nada* as the bridge between the individual and the universal, stating that by meditating on the inner sound, one attains liberation (*moksha*).

Four Stages of Nadanusandhana

ärambhasca ghatascaiva tathä paricayastathä
nispattih sarvayogesuyogävasthä bhavanti täh (4/69)

The four stages of yoga are -

- **Arambhavastha (Commencement)**
- **Ghatavastha (Consolidation)**
- **Paricayavastha (Introduction to Higher Stages)**
- **Nishpattiavastha (Culmination)**

1. Arambhavastha – First stage of Nadanusandhan

brahmarandhre bhavedbhedoyo nädah süryasambhavah,
vicitrakvanado dehe 'nähatah srüyate dhvanih (4/70)

divyadehah sutejasvi divyagandhastvarogavän,
sampürnahrdaye sünye tvärambhe yogavän bhavet (4/71)

In the initial stage or Arambhavastha, a yogi develops a luminous body, deep insight, overall health, beautiful fragrance, contentment in the heart, enjoying emptiness. He has pierced the Brahmarandhra, the sound emanating from the Sun and he hears a divine, untouched tinkling sound.

2. Ghatavastha – Second stage of Nadanusandhan

dvitlyäyärn ghatlkrtya väyurbhavati madhyagah,
drdhäsano bhavedyogl kämadevasamastadä (4/72)

visnugranthestathä bhedah paramänandasücakah,
atisünye vimardasca bherlsabdastathä bhavet (4/73)

In Ghatavastha, air enters the Sushumna, stability is achieved in the asana and the yogi becomes like Kamadeva. Further, when the Vishnugranthi is pierced, various sounds like kettle drum etc. are heard, giving complete pleasure.

3. Parichayavastha – Third stage of Nadanusandhan

trtiyäyärn tato nityarn äviskäro marddaladhvanih,
mahäsünyam tato yäti sarvasiddhisamäsrayah (4/74)

cidänandamtatojitväparmänandasambhavah,
dosaduhkhajarämrtyuksudhänidrävivarjitah (4/75)

In the Parichayawastha the prana reaches Mahashunya (between the eyebrows), the person hears the sound of the kettle drum, resulting in the attainment of all siddhis. The yogi attains mental happiness, which arises from complete bliss and is freed from disorders, suffering, old age, death, hunger and thirst.

4. Nispattiavastha – Last stage of Nadanusandhan

rudragranthim tato bhitvä sarvapithagato 'nilah,
nispattau vainavah sabdah kvanadvinäkvano bhavet (4/76)

When the Prana penetrates the Rudragranthi and moves towards the Sarvapeetha, the person attains the state of Nishpatti, in which he hears the sound of a subtle veena.

Ultimately, the mind merges with the sound and the practitioner enters the state of Unmani, which ultimately leads to Samadhi and produces inexpressible joy in the heart of the Yogi.

Nadanusandhan is a deeply transformative practice that opens the door to higher states of consciousness through the exploration of inner sound. By progressing through the stages of *Nada*, the practitioner transcends the material world, discovers the subtle dimensions of existence, and ultimately merges with the eternal vibration of the cosmos. Rooted in the timeless wisdom of yogic traditions, Nadanusandhan is not merely a practice but a journey toward self-realization and union with the Divine.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q1. What is Shat chakara?

Q2. What is Kundalini?

Q3. What is Nadanasandhan?



14.6 LET US SUM UP

- The Concepts of Shat-chakra, Kundalini, and Nadanusandhan - each of these plays a vital role in the journey of spiritual awakening.

- There are six energy centres in our body called Chakras; they are – Mooladhara, Swadisthan, Manipur, Anahat, Vishuddhi and Ajna, and the end of these chakra point is Sahasrara.
- Kundalini is the serpent power, situated in the Mooladhara Chakra at the base of the body. This is in the form of coil. It awakens through the different hathayogic practices.
- The concept of Nadanusandhan, is explained by Swami Swatmarama. He states that there are four stages of Nadanusandha. By practicing these stages, a sadhaka can attain the higher consciousness.
- The *Hatha Pradipika* provides a foundational framework for understanding and practicing these techniques. Through disciplined practice and proper guidance, practitioners can experience transformative states of consciousness.



14.7 FURTHER READINGS

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14.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answer to Q1: Shat-chakras refer to the six subtle energy centres in the body, namely Mooladhara, Swadhisthana, Manipura, Anahata, Vishuddhi, and Ajna.

Answer to Q2: Kundalini is primal energy located at the base of the spine, which, when awakened, ascends through the chakras, leading to spiritual enlightenment.

Answer to Q3: Nadanusandhan, as described in *Hatha Pradipika*, involves meditative concentration on inner sounds, progressing through four stages to achieve transcendental awareness.



14.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

Q1: How many chakras are generally mentioned in Hatha Yoga?

Q2: Which chakra is located at the crown of the head?

Q3: True or False: Nadanusandhana is the practice of concentration on inner sound.

Q4: What is meant by 'Shat-Chakra' in yogic tradition?

Q5: Name any three chakras and their locations in the body.

Q6: What is Kundalini, and where is it said to reside in the body?

Q7: Briefly describe the concept of Nadanusandhana.

Q8: Name the four stages of Nada as per Hatha Yoga Pradipika.

Q9: How does Nadanusandhana help in yogic meditation?

LONG ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS

Q1: Define and explain the concept of Shat-chakras.

Q2: What is Kundalini, and how is it awakened?

Q3: Discuss the practice of Nadanusandhan according to *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*.

Q4: Describe the stages of Nada as presented in yogic philosophy.

Q5: Analyze the importance of inner sound (Nada) in meditative practices and its role in achieving higher consciousness.

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