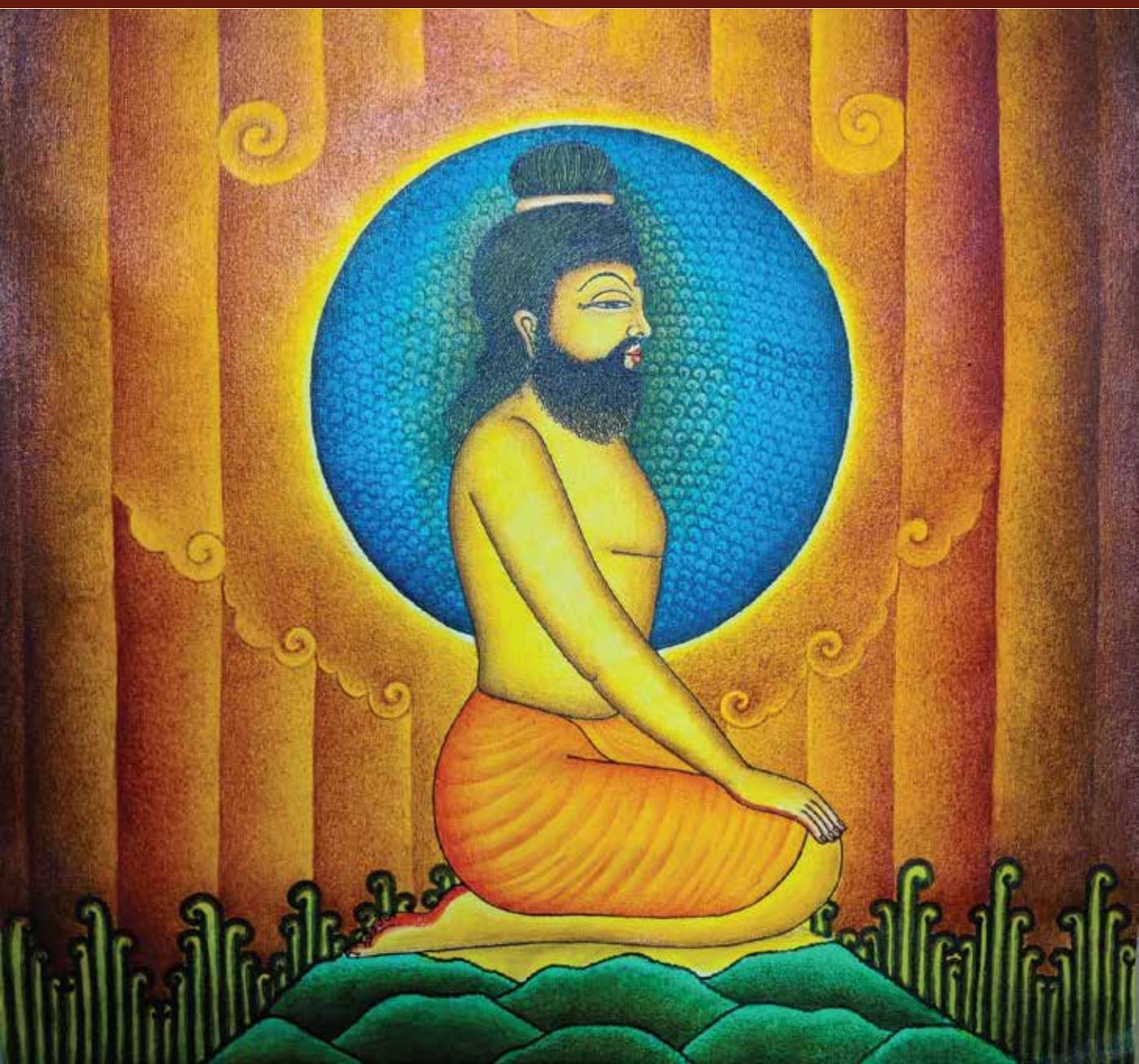
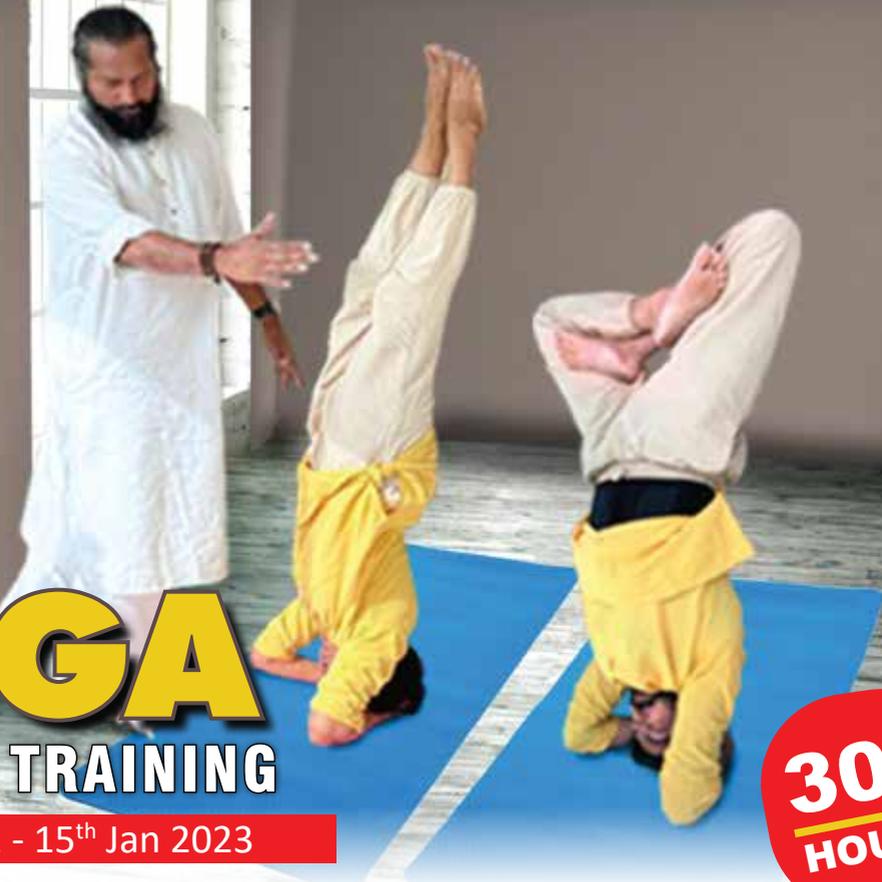


# Hatha Vidya

April 2022

An exclusive e-magazine on traditional yoga





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**Rupa Saini (Online)**

Layout  
**Noufal Dubex**

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Email: [tbp@hathavidya.org](mailto:tbp@hathavidya.org)



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

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

# *From* **The Editor's Desk**

If we prudently analyze the methods of yoga being practiced in the contemporary world, we can comprehend the height of deviation of such practices from the traditional yogic system and methods. If we accept the principle that everything changes as time passes, how can we ever understand the 'truth' that exists beyond time (past, present and future)?

The realm of yoga which leads to self – actualization or Unma (reality) is passed on to us by our ancient masters who had the experiential knowledge. For the 'sake of change', if we dilute this time-tested system and diverge from the traditional practices, we would be diminishing the potency of the practices and thereby doing injustice to the future generation of seekers of Yoga.

For the Yogic practices to be not merely reduced to asana methods, we need to introduce Yoga Darshanas and similar traditional yogic scriptures and texts to the genuine seekers of yoga. One way to achieve it is by including them in the curriculum of Yoga institutions. It can be fulfilled only by responsible yoga teachers and yoga enthusiasts who have tasted the fruits of yogic practices. Hatha Vidya Traditional School of Yoga is ardently bringing such an approach to the forefront.

Acharya *Bala*

# Yoga Sannahanopayo - A Process of Involution



“Life is beautiful” is a term that most of us would have come across at least once if not quite often. While this is the expectation, is it true that everyone experiences life as always beautiful? Life is a combination of experiences which ranges from one extreme of pleasure to the other extreme which is sorrow. All the efforts of human being are to be happy and comfortable, yet most get drowned in these efforts. One pursues various worldly objects and activities to gain pleasure. Unfortunately, none of these provides everlasting happiness and we continue to seek more. Yet we are never contented with the results and from time to time we are thrown into the sea of sadness, sorrow, and pain.

This raises the question as to whether there is a way to live this life differently with eternal bliss which is totally free from sorrows? Our ancient masters have explored this idea centuries ago in many dimensions and took the path of Yoga to find solution to sufferings. They came to a common understanding that the only way to overcome sorrows is to turn inwards into one’s own being through the practice of Yoga. “Yoga Sannahanopayo” simply reflects this profound truth.



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Thus, the fundamental aim of Yoga is to overcome the distresses faced in human life i.e., it seeks to attain a peaceful and contented life. Unfortunately, Yoga nowadays is understood in a very limited way and is being viewed merely as a physical exercise and lifestyle management activity.

### **Yoga Sannahanopayo**

Yoga Sannahanopayo literally translates as “Yoga is a means to equip oneself with” which implies that “Yoga is a process of involution”.

Yoga as a process of involution can be explained and interpreted in many dimensions according to the maturity level of one’s understanding of what yoga is. Involution means to turn inwards. In practical terms, it can be explained as a process to understand and gain control over the various layers that constitutes the individual’s body, life & existence. This begins with the human body in its gross form and moving internally beyond the physical realms into one’s mental and further subtler aspects to reach the one’s inner self.

The term “Yoga Sannahanopayo” is an extract of a verse from Sidha Siddhanta Pathati (SSP) one of the most important traditional texts on Hathayoga by Yogi Gorakshanatha (refer SSP 5.22). This verse is stated in the context of understanding “Pindanda” (one’s material body & existence) and moving inwards to unite with the “Brahmanda” (the ultimate and the absolute super consciousness).

***Yoga Sannahanopayo literally translates as “Yoga is a means to equip oneself with” which implies that “Yoga is a process of involution”.***

### **Why turn inwards?**

Internal changes from within can influence external changes around us. Life perception can be changed, and sorrows can be overcome if we change ourselves from within. In fact, what changes is the way one perceives the life and not necessarily the surroundings and environment in which one lives. We can change life experiences by changing our own understanding about it.

Life is experienced through senses, and conditioning that one goes through since birth. We constantly assimilate information gained through the senses leading to continuous thoughts, judgements, and experiences. Our experience constitutes our life, which is through the senses, and therefore it is important to get out of sensual perception and conditioning to understand life as it is. The process of yoga is about moving inwards and purifying the self so that it radiates in its fullest. As we progress within and begin to control our thought processes, the way we perceive

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the outside world will change.

While Yoga as a process is to seek solace from problems, it does not necessarily mean that problems will disappear or cease to occur, nor does it give direct solutions to the problems. Rather it will enable one to have a broader understanding and enhanced perception of life that will enable one to unclutch from the problems. It gives absolute freedom and inner peace as one is not affected by external occurrences, yet conducts activities and experiences life as it is without getting affected.

### **Traditional yogic approach**

Traditional Hatha Yogic practices provides systematic techniques and methods that helps one move inwards. We start working with body, breathing, prana (vital force) and so forth into more subtler aspects of the mind and beyond to identify and understand one's own true nature. Mentioned below are the main limbs of Hatha Yoga as prescribed under traditional texts:

- **Asanas** works on the body and helps focus on the body parts more effectively.
- **Shodhana Kriyas** purify the internal organs and helps the practitioner control the pranic flows.
- **Pranayama** works on the breathing to gain control over the prana (vital force) and to purify the pranic channels.
- **Mudras and Bhandas** comprising of psychic gestures and locks which works as a bridge between mind and body.

Besides, there are further advanced practices like **Pratyahara, Dhyana, Nada-nusandana** which will eventually lead one to **Samadhi**, being the state of equipoise.

### **Conclusion**

The essence of involution is moving from gross element, body to subtle element, mind. Yoga is a process to understand one's own self. It is a profound truth that is so totally misunderstood in these modern days and being applied at a superficial level.

Our ancient masters have left us with the wealth of knowledge to explore life in its fullest through the practice of Yoga. The traditional yogic practices should be only learned under an eminent acharya (teacher) or a guru who has accomplished in such practices. One can progress in the practice only through the grace of the guru and the lineage of the masters who have established the yogic tradition.

Fortunate are those who have proper understanding of Yoga; blessed are those who have got a Guru to guide and they can make their own destiny.

# Chakras

## Some Misconceptions



The terms Chakras and Adharas will be quite familiar to the aspirants of Yoga. Most of us might have come across these words in subject related books and heard from experts in this field. The knowledge thus acquired usually leads to a lot of misconceptions as most of these information is based on various philosophies presented by different school of thoughts. For example, while Shaiva Aagamas discusses about 144 chakras, Baudha Tantras mentions about five chakras and Shakteya Tantras refers to six chakras. However, there is no mention about chakras or adharas in Yoga Darshanas.

As per the Hatha yogic system, there are sixteen adharas (or focal points) and six chakras in the human

body. Chakras and adharas will help the aspirant to achieve yogic goals. Among the various adharas in the human body, starting from the big toe up to the crown of the head, the focal points from the middle part of the body to the mid eyebrows have significant importance. The Sadhak can experience various stimulis precisely at these points while performing subtle practices. Since these stimulis are cyclical in nature, these adharas are called chakras.

We can see the influence of tantra in all the hatha yogic philosophies, as these were derived from Tantra Shastra. Sir John Woodroffe (known by his pen name Arthur Avalon) had written the famous book 'Serpent Power' explaining the

*Nada*  
Sound of eternity

WORKSHOP ON LAYA YOGA

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chakras, based on the excerpts of ‘Shad Chakra Niroopanam’ and ‘Paduka Panchakam’ taken from Sri Tatvachinthamani written by Poornananda Natha. ‘Serpent Power’ has received popularity amongst the yoga enthusiasts all over the world. Unfortunately, due to the lack of understanding about the basic facts and specific purpose of the subject, it led to many misinterpretations. Sir John Woodroffe, in the introductory note of the book “Mysterious Kundalini” by “Rene” has clarified that he had not written the book based on practical experience.

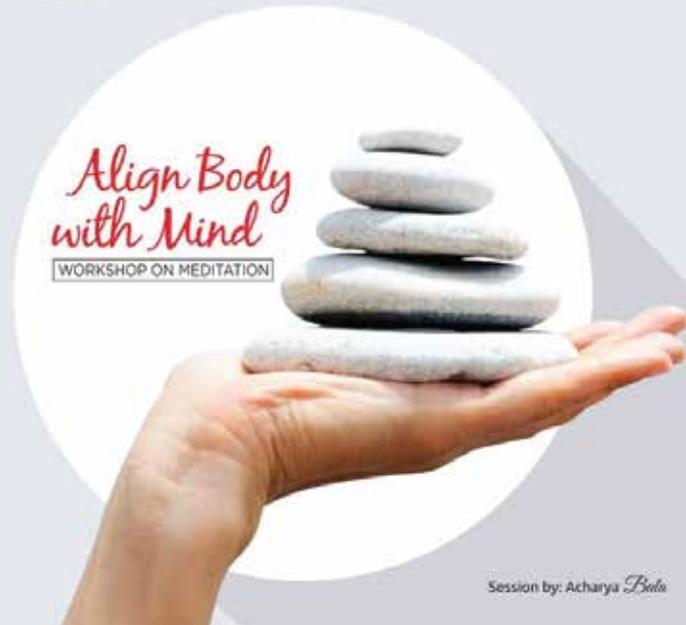
When the content of the book ‘Serpent Power’ was further interpreted, due to the limited knowledge about the subject, the six chakras turned out to seven chakras. This was because Sahasrara was given significant importance and its source was ignored. Out of the six

chakras, five of them are connected to the five elements and five senses. The sixth chakra represents the Bodha Mandala (seat of the seer) is the base of all actions. It becomes imperative at this stage to specify the area in the body where the life force remains dormant and the area it reaches, when awakened. This area where the energy originates is called ‘Kula Sahasrara’ and where it culminates is called ‘Akula Sahasrara’. The uniqueness of this manifested energy is known as ‘Shakti’ or ‘Kula’ and that which is being expressed through, is known as ‘Shivam’ or ‘Akula’. The Mooladhara chakra is situated in the Kula Sahasrara and the upper portion of the Sushumna (Brahmarandra) is situated in the Akula Sahasrara.

To be continued

## Ritam Vadishyāmi ॐ

Please watch the video on *Awakening Kundalini* below 📺



12<sup>th</sup> June 2022

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# Hatha Pradipika

A Contemplation



For all those who consider Yoga Shastra a significant subject, Hatha Pradipika is one of the ancient texts which clearly and extensively details on the systematic techniques and methods of Yogic practices. This profound text, which was written by Yogi Svatmarama, still holds its magnificence after all these centuries only due to the efficacy of the time-tested practices which is invaluable.

Hatha Pradipika, written in 1350 AD by Yogi Svatmarama is in accordance with the Natha tradition. Beginning from Hatha Yoga's first expounder Adinatha - Lord Shiva, Svatmarama who is the descendant of Sahajananda Natha who belonged to Siddhas Natha lineage, wrote Hatha Pradipika during the time when there were varying opinions concerning the practices of Yoga. Svatmarama has presented Hatha Pradipika, which is lucid, non-confusing, unambiguous and therefore highly convincing.

## Special Features of Hatha Pradipika

We can enumerate some of its special features to understand why it is being considered as one of the most important texts.

Svatmarama has divided Hathayoga into four limbs or components. They are Asana, Kumbhaka Pranayama, Mudra and Nadanusandhana. Not only that he mentions four limbs but also has made it very clear that these limbs have sequential relationship (H.P.1/56).

Hathayoga, as the name suggests is Yoga through Hatha. Brahmananda, who wrote the Sanskrit commentary on Hatha Pradipika named JYOTSNA, has given deep insights on the meaning of "HATHA". Hatha means control and balance of 'Ha' and 'Tha'. 'Ha' stands for sun or Pingala nadi or right nostril and 'Tha' stands for moon or Ida nadi or left nostril. Yogi Svatmarama has aptly justified the title of the text by elaborating eight varieties of the Sahita Kumbhaka, which results into Kevala Kumbhaka (H.P.2/71).

Hathayoga should be practiced with a goal to attain Rajayoga – this has been reminded frequently by Svatmarama in Hatha Pradipika (H.P 1/1, 2/76, 4/79). It suggests that even at the time of Svatmarama, people were engaged in practicing Hathayoga for physical purpose, which was condemned by him as he says – 'they are only Hathakarmin'

or are only asana practitioners of hatha. He considered the effort of such practitioners are without yielding fruit as he gave utmost importance to attainment of Rajayoga through Hathayoga.

He has tried to establish a connection between the traditions of Muni and Yogi. Regarding Asanas, Svatomarama states that Asana accepted by the traditions of Munis and Yogis both are being described here (H.P 1/18). Svatomarama believed in establishing an understanding between these two traditions. Perhaps, that is why he has selected the asanas which were accepted by both traditions.

The description of dos and don'ts (H.P.1/15,16) are very important contribution of Svatomarama. It is often said that Hathayoga has no consideration for Yamas and Niyamas. By mentioning the Sadhaka tatva and Bhadhaka tatva, Svatomarama has made the practitioners aware about certain code of conduct to be followed essentially for the success in their Yogic journey without mentioning the term Yamas and Niyamas.

Yogic texts have special consideration for Mitahara. In yogic literature, Mitahara means balanced diet, which is in accordance with the yogic norms. Modern nutritionist also makes prescription of balanced diet depending on the individual structure and nature of their activity. The idea is to provide necessary quantity of nutrition such as protein, vitamin, fat, calories etc. to maintain the health. But when yoga talks about

Mitahara, it takes into consideration the requirements of the practice as well as a selection of the food. Svatomarama has given elaborate description of Mitahara.

Consideration of Nadanusandhana as an independent limb of Hathayoga is also Svatomarama's contribution. We do not see Nadanusandhana as having independent status in other Hathayogic literature. Even Gheranda Samhita (G.S. V/73,74) has not given an independent status and has included it under Bhramari Kumbhaka. Nadanusandhana has been described very elaborately by Svatomarama and has considered it best among all the methods of Laya Yoga (H.P. 4/66).

### **Hathayoga for Rajayoga**

After getting acquainted with the special feature of Hatha Pradipika, it is also important to know the concept of Rajayoga according to Svatomarama.

In the opening verse of Hatha Pradipika, he has mentioned that Hathayoga should have the goal to attain Rajayoga (H.P.1/1). In the fourth chapter, he enumerates various synonyms of Rajayoga in which he mentions Samadhi also as a synonym of Rajayoga.

Generally, the word Rajayoga is applied for Patanjali's yoga. According to Patanjali's scheme, Rajayoga is nothing but Samadhi. Patanjali himself has not used the word 'Rajayoga' but later commentators have used this word as the goal of Patanjali's yoga and therefore, Rajayoga is understood as Samadhi.

We must not forget that Hathayoga has its definite technique for the attainment of Samadhi, which is different from the methods described by Patanjali. According to Hatha Pradipika, when Vayu (Prana) starts coursing through Sushumna, then mind attains the state of Manomani, a synonym of Samadhi (H.P.2/42). Further Svatmarama inscribes “to attain the stage, knower of the technique of Hathayoga, practice various types of Kumbhaka i.e., retention of breath (H.P.2/43).

But retention of Vayu or proper regulation of Vayu is not possible until the nadis are purified through Nadi-

sodhana Pranayama (H.P.2/10). Thus, the Hathayogic process of Samadhi proceeds with Asana – Mitahara (H.P.2/1) – Nadishodhana Pranayama – purification of Nadi – various Kumbhakas – coursing of Vayu into Sushumna – Manomani (Samadhi).

### Conclusion

Due to its explicit, and systematic presentation of Hatha yoga practices, Hathayoga Pradipika commands great respect among the Hatha practitioners throughout the Yogic world and would remain to be the most profound text.



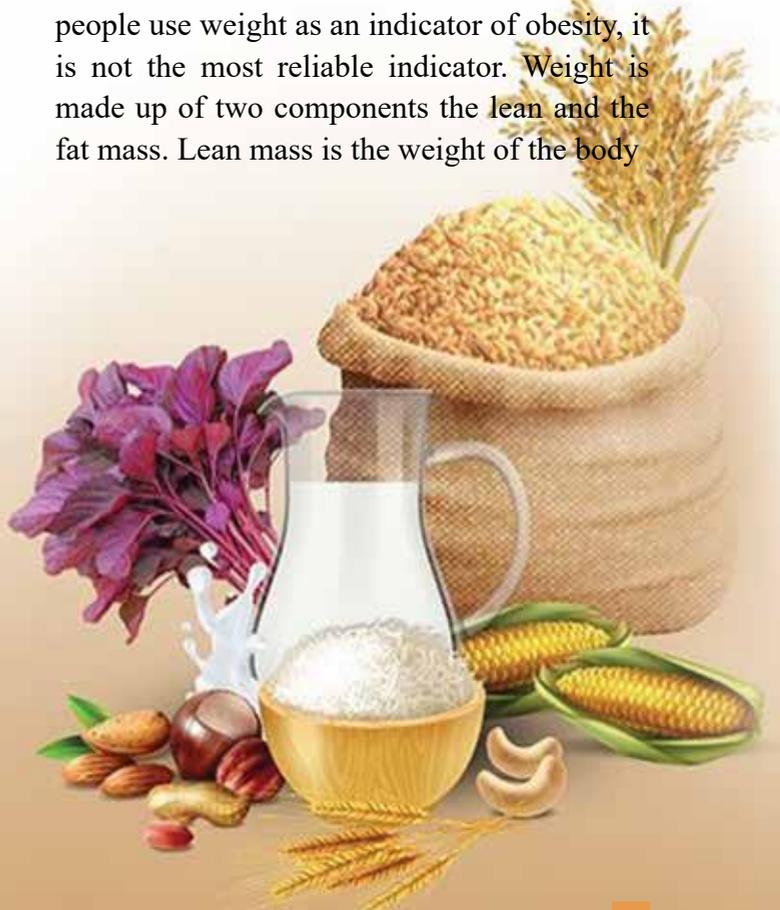
# Obesity and Yogic Diet



We live in a very dynamic society today, one that is constantly changing, change is good, but is it really? We need to sit back and ask ourselves this question with respect to our diet, health, and overall wellbeing. The health issues we face today are a result of the advancements society has witnessed over the years. Well, the reason is that our bodies have not been able to adapt as rapidly to the changes and advancement of our external worlds. Our bodies are still working on the mechanisms of the stone age. When there was no guarantee of the next meal, when and where it will come from, as a result the body adapted to the scarceness by saving up till the next meal. In today's world, where there is abundance of food available and no effort needs to be made to procure it, where we eat (sometimes), even without being hungry, our body still works on that mechanism. As a result, we suffer from diseases which are now commonly called lifestyle diseases. The most rampant among them is Obesity. It has become so common that

people have stopped getting disturbed by it. However, Obesity is a chronic health disease which has been linked to several conditions like heart disease, diabetes, strokes, hormonal imbalances, gall stones, liver disease, arthritis and even some type of cancer.

Health authorities around the globe lay out a standard expected weight for adults and it is accepted that being 10% - 20% over that range is overweight while any individual who is more than 20% above is obese. While most people use weight as an indicator of obesity, it is not the most reliable indicator. Weight is made up of two components the lean and the fat mass. Lean mass is the weight of the body



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tissues, organs, bones, muscles fluids etc. This is crucial to our existence and cannot be lost. The fat mass is the variable component, while some of it is critical for the smooth functioning of our body, the rest is the storage form of fat. The increase in this fat is a critical predictor of obesity and is dangerous for our health and thus we should focus on reducing the total body fat percentage when we are trying to become healthy.

One of the banes of technological advancement has been that now most of our food is processed, laden with chemicals and devoid of essential nutrients. These foods are designed to make the consumer eat way beyond their body's capacities. As a result, over the years the weight just keeps piling on and before we realize it, we are categorized as obese. To overcome this, most people resort to the dieting by eliminating a complete food group or just starving themselves with the hope of losing the weight. These diets cannot be sustained for very long, they soon give up frustrated, piling up more weight than they started with. As the obesity pandemic grows so do the number of diets and solutions which claim to have a permanent and quick solution for this problem. The drawback with these approaches is that they focus on only giving quick fixes often at the cost of the overall health of the person following them. One needs to understand that a lifestyle change which can be sustained is the only way to achieve the goal of health.

Calorie counting and starving

oneself are not required, eating a balanced and varied diet which provides all the essential nutrients when eaten in moderation will help to lead a person towards a sustained weight loss. The following are some of the important approaches which needs to be practiced-managing obesity.

- Eat a variety of fruits and vegetables, increasing the fiber content of the diet.
- Eat freshly prepared wholesome food at most times.
- Restrict the use of processed and packaged foods.
- Limit the use of refined carbohydrates and sugars.
- Eat mindfully.
- Get plenty of exercise.
- Adequate sleep.
- Stress management.

If you look at all these interventions closely you realize that these are interwoven naturally into the practice of yoga. The yogic way of eating i.e. Mitahara laid down by our sages centuries ago lists all these interventions as a must for anyone hoping to achieve success in the path of yoga. Our society has forgotten this ancient wisdom in a quest to become modern and paid the price through poor health.

Chandrayanam is an ancient Indian austerity practice observed to reduce impurities in body and mind, followed based on the lunar cycle. The benefits of these practices have been time tested and include weight loss, improvement in bio-chemical parameters, reduction in chronic aches and

improvement of breathing quality. Stress relief and improvement in quality of sleep are also observed. At Hatha Vidya, we aim to preserve the ancient wisdom and present it in a form that can be easily adapted by the modern man. Our program “Chandrayanam - Move along the moon” is designed for those who are struggling with their weight and would like to lose it systematically using the correct yogic practices. The program focuses on simple breathing techniques, asanas, cleansing practices and diet regulation. This program is individualized as we believe that each person is unique and what works for one may not

work for another.

Even with all the diets and weight loss solutions available, the number of people falling in the obese range is increasing each year, clearly indicating that only an integrated approach focusing on the whole individual is required. Thus, getting in sync with our bodies, eating mindfully, adding activity and movement into our lives are simple solutions within the reach of every individual that may aid in getting them back on path of health and tackling the obesity pandemic.

# Ritam Vadishyāmi ॐ

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*“Gurosthu mounam vyakhyanam  
sishyasthu chinna samshayah”*



The Guru preaches through silence  
which dispels all the doubts of student

13<sup>th</sup> JULY 2022

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# Origin of Yoga

Pre-Classical Period



Yoga essentially a spiritual discipline is the greatest gift to mankind. However the fruits of Yoga continued to remain confined only to the selected few for ages. In this article we will explore Yoga during the Pre-Classical or Vedic period and references to Yoga in the relevant important scriptures. The development of Yoga in the Pre-Classical period highlights the significance of Yoga since time immemorial which can be attributed to the splendid effects it has produced in bringing forth human's latent potentialities.

Source of this stream of yoga comes from Hiranyagarbha, reference of which can be found in the Rigveda.

***"Hiranyagarbha yogasya nanyah vakta puratanah"***

*'Yoga started from the golden womb, that which was never talked about before'.*

Hiranyagarbha is the source of manifested Universe. There is a full hymn comprising of ten mantras in RigVeda, whose seer (drshta) is Hiranyagarbha. Hiranyagar-

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bha proves to be a seer, who directly experienced the reality.

The Vedas have been divided into four styles of texts:

- The Samhitas (mantras and benedictions).
- The Brahmanas (text on rituals, ceremonies, sacrifices, and symbolic sacrifices).
- The Aranyakas (commentaries on rituals, ceremonies, and sacrifices).
- The Upanishads (text discussing meditation, philosophy, and spiritual knowledge).

A collective study of Vedas and later text suggests that the compilation of Samhitas and associated Vedic texts were far larger than currently available. However, most have been lost over a period of time.

There are four "Vedic" Samhitas: the Rig-Veda, Yajur-Veda, Sama-Veda and Atharva-Veda. The Samhitas are sometimes identified as Karmakanda (action/ritual-related section), also

referred to as Purva Mimamsa (Prior Study). While the Vedanta deals with the later portion of Vedic literature called the Upanishads, identified as Jnanakanda (knowledge or spirituality-related section) also referred to as Uttara Mimamsa (Posterior Study). The Aranyakas and Brahmanas are sometimes classified as the ceremonial Karmakanda, and also at times as Jnanakanda.

Prasthanathrayi, includes the Upanishads, the Bhagwad Gita and Brahmasutras, which are the main texts of the Vedanta School. Upanishads constitute the Sruti Prasthanana –starting point of ‘heard’ scriptures, the Bhagwad Gita constitutes the Smriti Prasthanana – starting point of ‘remembered’ scriptures and the Brahmasutras define the base of whole existence.

Among the Upanishads there are twenty Upanishads which deal with the theory and practice of Yogic techniques with emphasis on methodology and meditation, discussing different aspects of Yoga ranging from postures, breathing exercises, dhyana (meditation) and nada (sound).

The Vedic Samhitas have described the word Yoga in the context of yoking the horse to the chariot, derived from the root word ‘yuj’, meaning to unite. Verses 1.3.3–11 of Katha Upanishad deal with the allegoric expression of human body as a chariot. The body is equated to a chariot where

the horses are the senses, the mind is the reins, and the driver or charioteer is the intellect. The passenger of the chariot is the Self (Atman). Through this analogy, it is explained that the Atman is separate from the physical body, just as the passenger of a chariot is separate from the chariot. The verses conclude by describing control of the chariot and contemplation on the Self as ways by which the intellect acquires Self Knowledge.

“The Bhagwad Gita” also called as the summation of Vedas – Vedanta, presents a synthesis of ideas describing dharma, bhakti and yogic ideals of moksha. The text covers Jnana, Bhakti, Karma and Raja Yoga, also incorporating ideas from the Sankhya yoga darshana.

In this text, Lord Krishna explains yoga as, “*Yogah Karamsu kuashalam*”, literally translating to Yoga as skill in action. Skill means the ability to do an action without getting attached to the result, because every action done by mind, speech and physic is bound to create an imprint. Imprints create tendencies, which leads to another action and it becomes a vicious cycle. Person who is not bound by the results will not get to create any new tendencies.

Sage Kapila, the Rigvedic seer, is regarded as the founder of Samkhya Darshana. The word “Samkhya” is composed of two terms, namely “sama”

meaning equal and “khya” meaning knowledge of reality (“Samyak khyayate iti Samkhya”).

Samkhya Darshana talks about finding out a way from the three kinds of sufferings known as Dukhatraya – *Aadhi Daivika*, *Aadhi Bhautika* & *Aadhyatmika*.

Adi Daivika - This is the pain that we get from unseen sources like gods, fate (daiva) and nature.

Adi Bhautika - These are the miseries that are caused by Bhutas or other living beings.

Adhyatmika - These are the sufferings that are caused by our body and mind.

The misidentification of the seer – The Purusha (the consciousness), in presence of Prakriti (the manifest), becomes the basic cause of suffering or sorrows. Purusha is the witness, and although the actions are performed through the power of gunas i.e., Prakriti, the neutral witness – Purusha appears to be performing the actions. The end of this misinterpretation of Purusha to Prakriti is called liberation or kaivalya.

It’s noteworthy to remark about the development of Yoga particularly in the Indian continent earlier known as Jambudvipa, as mentioned in the Puranas.

The geographical and environmental conditions of this place led to the development of civilization at a very early stage of human history and also supported in providing the best opportu-

nity for the development of the discipline of yoga. The earliest verifiable traces of yoga dates back to the Indus Valley Civilization. Archaeological excavations from the region uncovered numerous seals and motifs carrying yogic significance. The yogic content of the seals and terracotta figurines can be classified in different groups, bearing out many levels of the practice of yoga. The terracotta figurines represent the preliminary stage of yoga through the postures of asanas. The Indus people were so much steeped in the practice of yoga that they not only considered the cryptic indications to it lying embedded in the Veda & represented the same in the form of the engravings on the seals, but also tried to inculcate interest in their children through embodiments displaying several yogic asanas.

All these tangible explanations bring light to the fact that the knowledge of Yoga existed much before the existence of the popularly available doctrines of Yoga such as Patanjali Yoga Sutra, and thus the misidentification of the origin of Yoga can be cleared.

## Ritam Vadishyāmi ॐ

Please watch the video on *Tratakam* below 📌



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# Mandukasana

Traditional Approach



Continuing with our series on ‘Insight into Asanas’, we will be discussing the traditional approach of performing, ‘Mandukasana’ in this edition.

## About Insights into Asanas

Asana, in the contemporary era is equated to a physical posture to gain the subtlety in the limbs, but Asanas have a higher purpose in Yoga.

## What is Asana?

According to Patanjala Yoga Sutra, Asana has been defined as ‘Sthiram-Sukham- Asanam’ [Verse 2.46]. Here, ‘Sthiram’ and ‘Sukham’ is used to indicate the stability in the body and comfortness in the mind respectively while practicing asana.

While performing asanas, one needs to keep the following five essential points in mind:

- Vinyasa – The art of mounting to an asana and demounting from an asana.
- Shwasa – The breath synchronisation while performing an asana.
- Stithi – The steadiness achieved during an asana.
- Drishti – The focal points to be focused while maintaining the asana.
- Vishranti – The state of asana should lead to relaxation.

## Mandukaasana as per traditional text

Let us start with understanding how Mandukaasana is described in traditional yogic text. For this, we refer to Gheranda Samhita, one of the popular traditional text on Hatha Yoga.

Verses 34 and 35 of Gheranda Samhita explains Mandukaasana as follows:

*pādatalau pṛṣṭhadeśe aṅguṣṭhau dvau  
ca saṁsprśet |*

*jānuyugmaṁ puraskṛtya sādhayen  
maṇḍūkāsanam || 34 ||*

*maṇḍūkāsanabandhasthaṁ  
kūrparābhyāṁ dhṛtaṁ śiraḥ |  
etad bhekavad uttānam etad  
uttānamaṇḍukam || 35 ||*

- Gheranda Samhita, Chapter 2, Verse 34 & 35

*Carry the feet towards the back, the toes touching each other and place the knees forward. This is called Frog Posture (34).*

*Assume the frog posture, hold the head by the elbows and stand upright like a frog. This is called Uttan Mandukasana (35).*

## Practice Method for Mandukaasana

To perform Mandukasana, follow the steps mentioned below:

- Sit in Vajraasana.
- Rest hands in front of the body and

- keep the knees apart as much as possible.
- Keep the trunk straight.
  - Take both arms to the back, place the left palm behind the right shoulder and right palm behind the left shoulder.
  - Keep both elbows pointing upward.

### Benefits and Contra Indications

Mandukasana has immense physiological as well as spiritual benefits. It enhances the range of pelvic movements and stretches the hip joints. Enhances the flexibility of shoulders. Helps in improving the quality of pulmonary functions, which can aid in asthmatic conditions. Also, it enriches the pancre-

atic health. The asana effects the heart region, activating the anhatta chakra.

Practitioners with shoulder, ankle and knee pain or injuries should avoid this asana.

Please watch the video on *Mandukasana* below 📺



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# PCOS

Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) is a condition that can affect periods, fertility, hormones and aspects of appearance.

PCOS affects 5–20% of women of reproductive age worldwide. The condition is characterized by hyperandrogenism, ovulatory dysfunction and polycystic ovarian morphology (PCOM) — with excessive androgen production (testosterone) by the ovaries being a key feature of PCOS.

PCOS increases the risk for type 2 diabetes mellitus, gestational diabetes and other pregnancy-related complications, venous thromboembolism, cerebrovascular and cardiovascular events and endometrial cancer. Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) is a complex condition that is most often diagnosed by the presence of two of the three following criteria: hyperandrogenism,

ovulatory dysfunction, and polycystic ovaries.

The following symptoms are associated with PCOS, but not all are seen in every patient:

- Irregular or missed periods
- Weight gain (especially around the waist)
- Excess growth of hair on the body or face (hirsutism)
- Persistent acne (usually unresponsive to conventional treatment) or oily skin
- Thinning scalp hair
- Difficulty with conception / fertility
- Dark skin patches (acanthosis nigricans)
- Skin tags
- Pelvic pain
- Mood swings, anxiety or depression

The cause of PCOS is not yet known but it often runs in families. If any of your relatives (mother, aunts,

---

sisters) are affected with PCOS, your risk of developing PCOS may be increased.

The symptoms are related to abnormal hormone levels:

- Testosterone is a hormone that is produced in small amounts by the ovaries in all women. Women with PCOS have slightly higher than normal levels of testosterone and this is associated with many of the symptoms of the condition.
- Insulin is a hormone that controls the level of glucose (a type of sugar) in the blood. If you have PCOS, your body may not respond to insulin (this is known as insulin resistance), so the level of glucose is higher. To try to prevent the glucose levels becoming higher, your body produces even more insulin. High levels of insulin can lead to weight gain, irregular periods, fertility problems and higher levels of testosterone.

A diagnosis is made when you have any two of the following:

- irregular, infrequent periods or no periods at all.
- an increase in facial or body hair and/or blood tests that show higher testosterone levels than normal.
- an ultrasound scan that shows polycystic ovaries.

When a diagnosis is made, you may be referred to a gynaecologist or an endocrinologist.

If you have PCOS, you are at greater risk of developing some long-term health problems like :

### **Insulin resistance and diabetes**

If you are diagnosed with diabetes, you will be given advice about your diet and may be prescribed tablets or insulin injections.

### **High blood pressure**

Women with PCOS tend to have high blood pressure, which is likely to be related to insulin resistance and to being overweight. High blood pressure can lead to heart problems and should be treated.

### **Depression and mood swings**

The symptoms of PCOS may affect how you see yourself and how you think others see you. It can lower your self-esteem.

### **Snoring and daytime drowsiness**

PCOS can lead to fatigue or sleepiness during the day. It is also associated with snoring.

### **Cancer**

If you have fewer than three periods a year, the lining of the womb (endometrium) can thicken and this may lead to endometrial cancer in a small number of women.

The risk of PCOS can be reduced by:

#### **Maintaining a healthy lifestyle**

- Eat a healthy balanced diet, avoid junk food.
- Exercise regularly (30 minutes at least three times a week).
- Keep a healthy BMI (between 19-25)

Given below are the asanas and breathing techniques which can be practiced:

- Asanas – Supta Vajrasana, Marjariasana, Bhujangasana, Naukasana, Paschimottanasana, Kandharasana
- Breathing and other techniques – Nadi Shudhi, Anulom Vilom, Uddiyana Bandha, mild Kapalabhati, Brahmari.

Please note the practices mentioned should be done under the supervision on a trained yoga teacher.

**Have regular health checks like blood sugar, ultrasound evaluation of your pelvic organs.**

There is no cure for PCOS. Medical treatments aim to manage and reduce the symptoms or consequences of having PCOS. Healthy life style changes (weight loss and exercise) are always better than using drugs. Many women with PCOS successfully manage their symptoms and long-term health risks without medical intervention. They do this by eating a healthy diet, exercising regularly and maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

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# Meditation

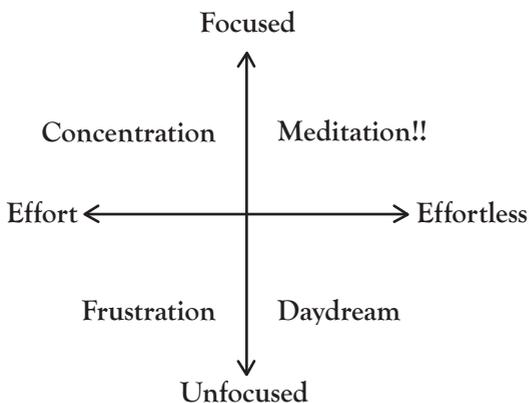


The practice of meditation forms an integral part of many traditions. It is the most effective way to approach divinity, rather than ritual and belief. Each person's reason to meditate is different, for example stressful lifestyle, emotional imbalance etc. They approach meditation with a wide spectrum of aims but are often surprised to experience a profound sense of spiritual well-being, a state of inner joy.

So why meditate? The answer is complex, the goal changes as we practice meditation. As we meditate, we get a better understanding about ourselves, which will help us to respond to the external world in a better way.

## What is meditation:

“Effortless focus upon a profound/divine/ infinite object” is meditation. Meditation is not the goal; it is



the vehicle or tool to spiritual transformation.

As seen on the graph which depicts your mind,

Focused+Effortless= Meditation

Focused +Effort= Concentration

Unfocused + Effortless = Daydreaming

Unfocused + Effort = Frustration

## Why a profound object?

We all know how to meditate, we do it every day unknowingly. For example, effortlessly studying a subject you like, you meditate upon that, when you are in love with someone, you meditate upon that person, when you play video games, you are again effortlessly focusing upon that. What matters is the object of meditation.

## Object of Meditation:

A profound object gives a profound consciousness while a mundane object gives us a mundane consciousness. For instance, if you are effortlessly studying a subject you like, then the object of meditation is your studies which is a profound object, or when you play video games, the object of meditation is the game which is a mundane object.

At Hatha Vidya, as students of NISHTHA program, we meditate on objects we understand and relate to. They can be:

*External-*

- Mango, leaf, mountains, moon, and sun.

*Internal-*

- Heart, breathing, navel and bridge of nose among others.

We have practiced external and internal types by performing Object Meditation and Deha Dharana.

### **Deha Dharna:**

Meaning: Deha means body and Dharana is derived from the Sanskrit word 'Dhar' which means to hold something in a resting position. In this practice, we focus our mind on different parts of the body.

### **Posture for Meditation:**

Before meditation we do "eye

closure", which is where we look at a far point and very slowly bring our gaze to ourselves. Once we observe the flickering and heaviness of our eyelids, we let our eyes close. Eye closure is important to internalize the mind.

The golden rule for meditation is "Sama Kaya Shiro Grivam" which means your head, neck and spine are in one line. Swastikasana, Siddhasana, Padmasana, Sukhasana and Ardha Padmasana are recommended. When your spine is erect, it creates a closed circuit for your body and allows energy to move into your body.

At present times, we are distracted very easily, and our attention span is less due to which our efficiency is reduced. Meditation is the best way to restore it and bring out the hidden capabilities in us.

*Reference: 'The Heartfulness Way' by Kamalesh D Patel & Joshua Pollock*



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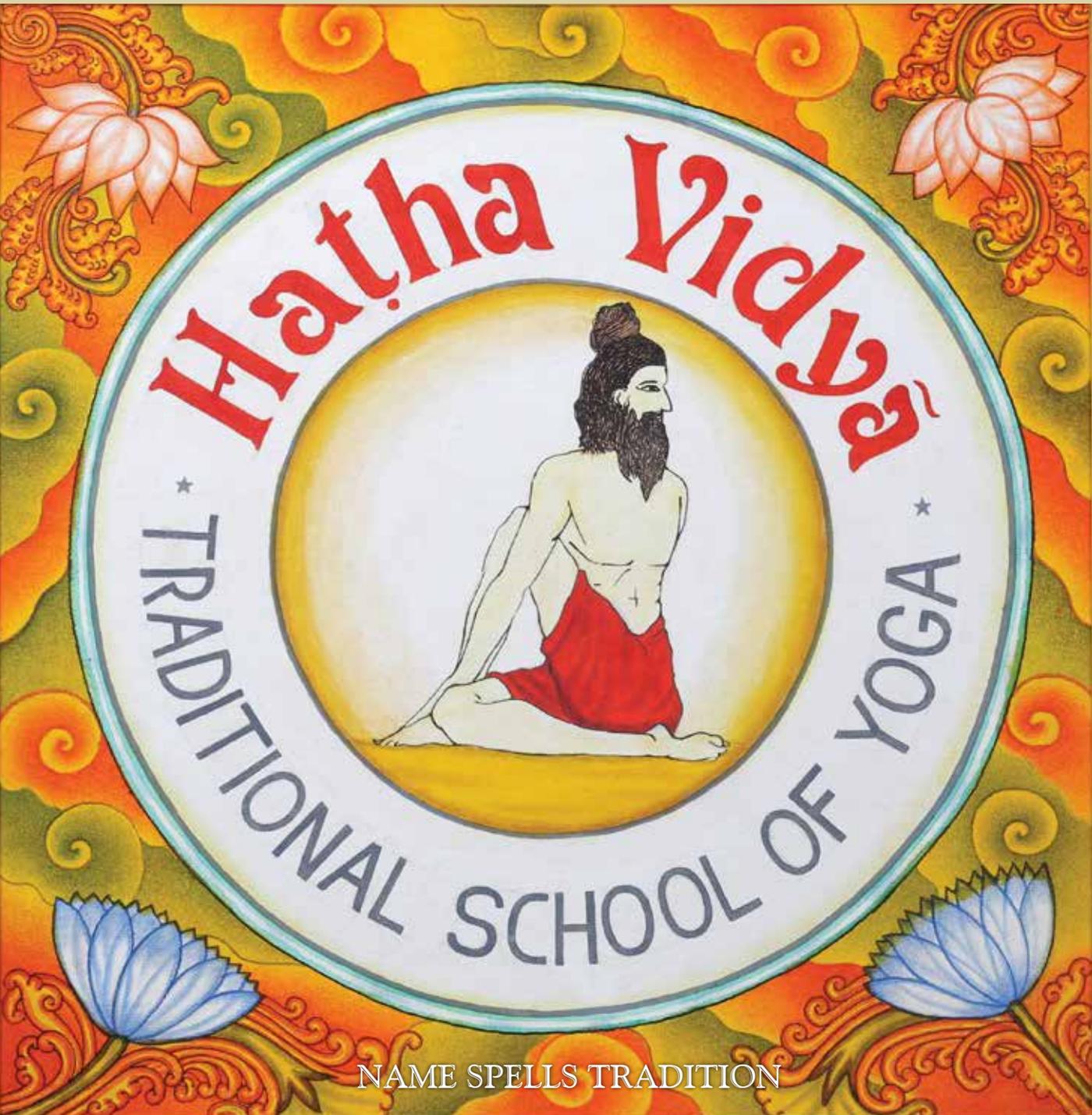


## Release of Musical Album 'Kulam Akulam'



## Release of book - 'The Mould' (Yoga for children)





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