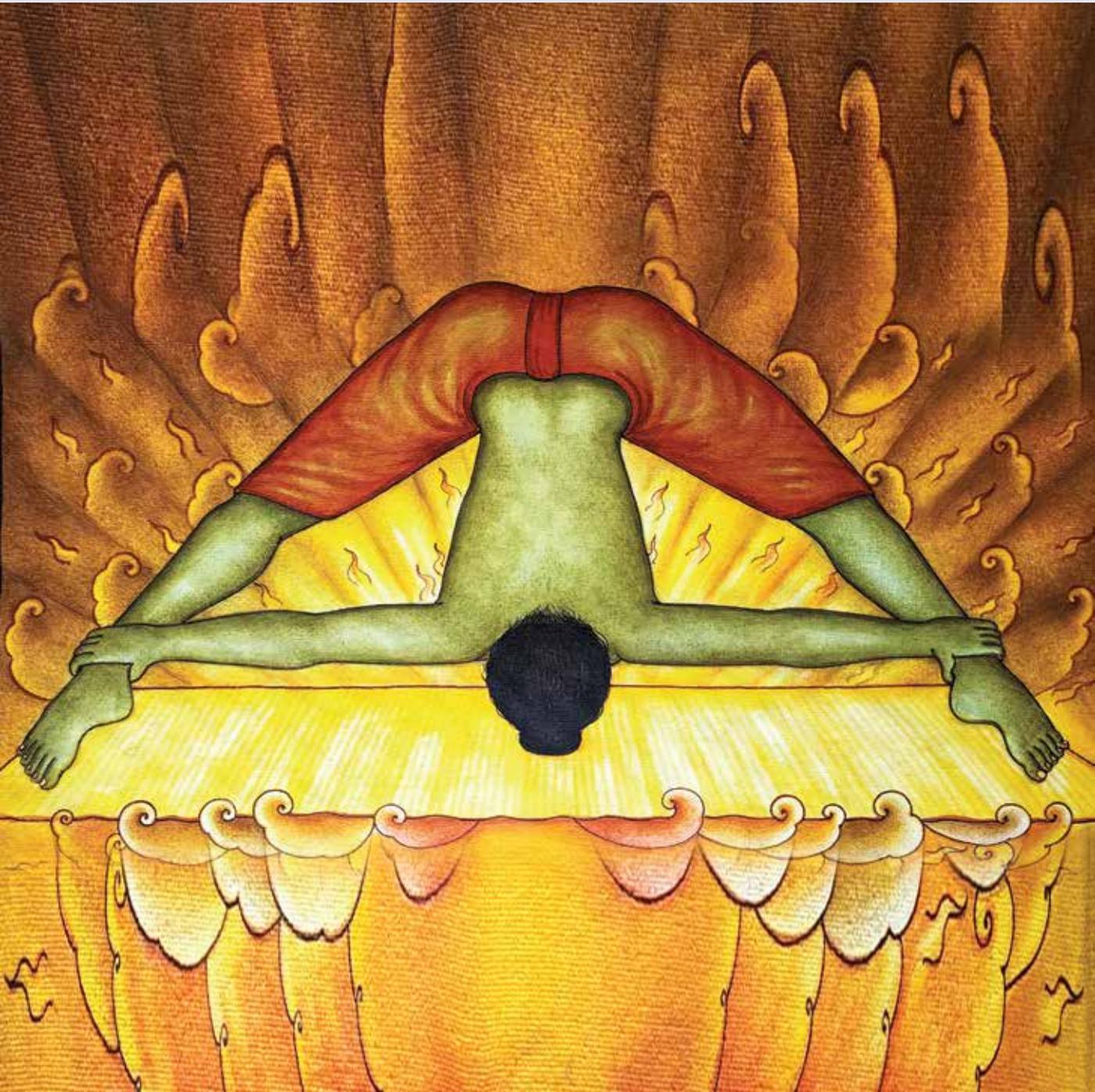
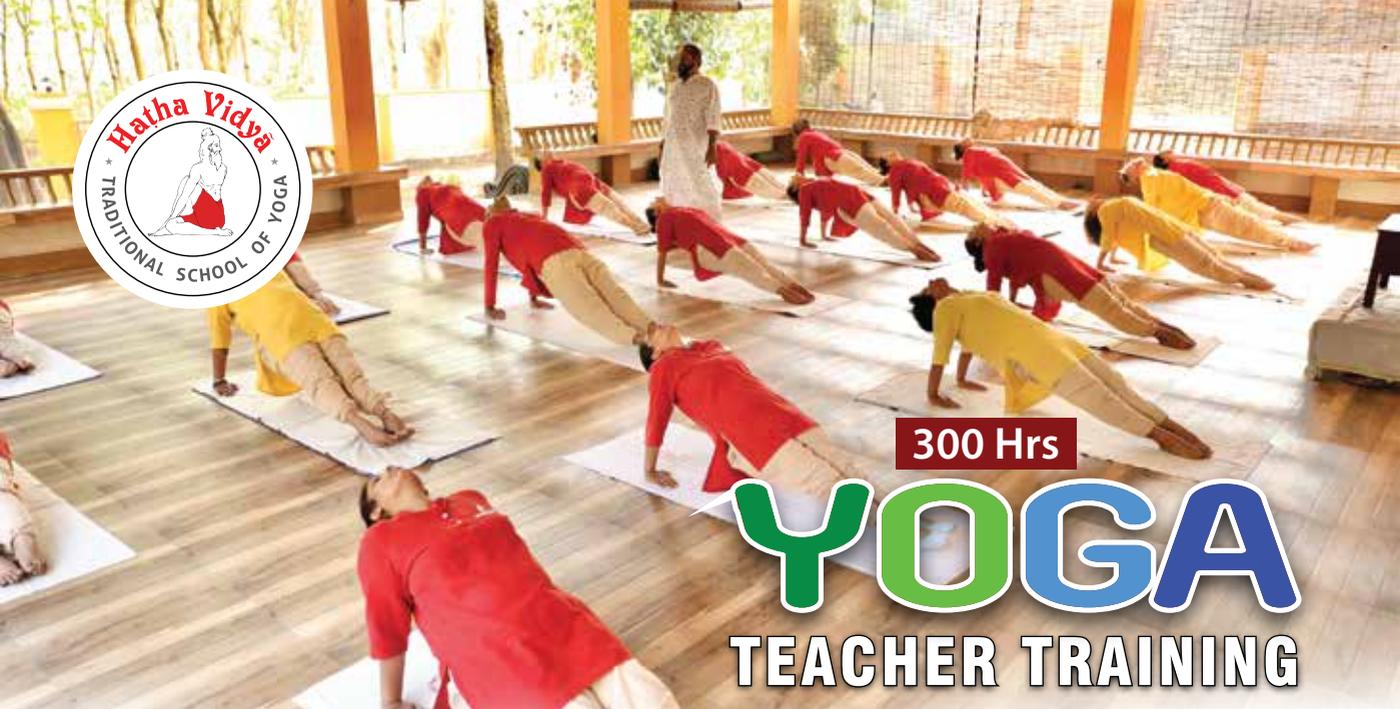


Hatha Vidya

April 2023

An exclusive e-magazine on traditional yoga





300 Hrs

YOGA

TEACHER TRAINING

Eco Botanic & Taman Pelangi - JB, Malaysia

Start Date : 03rd June 2023

End Date : 18th Nov 2023

Dubai - UAE

Start Date : 09th July 2023

End Date : 31st December 2023

Admissions are ongoing for our 300 Hours YTT (Yoga Teacher Training Course). We've provided multiple options to choose from. So one may be able to choose whichever option that suits them best. The options are as follows:

Selective Options :

- 6 months complete In-house course at our Hatha Vidya Yoga Centers in Dubai (1 month Retreat is optional)
- 5 months Online with 1 month Residential Retreat in the serene Kerala, India.
- 5 months In-house course with 1 month Residential Retreat in the serene Kerala, India.

Specially curated & designed by Acharya Bala, it is 6 month course is divided into phases & one month retreat will be directly tutored under the expert guidance of Acharya Bala. This course is open to everyone who would like to deepen their yogic knowledge and also gives an opportunity for teachers who would like to pursue this as a career. It's still very much open for registration, for those who wish to book their slots.

Residential Retreat Dates: From 16th October 2023 to 13th November 2023.

*Terms and Conditions Apply

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***Dhyāna-Moolam Gurur-Murthih
Pujā-Moolam Gurur-Padam |
Mantra-Moolam Gurur-Vākyaam
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**

The thought of what we can contribute rather than what we can gain underpins the activities of Hatha Vidya Traditional School of Yoga which has now completed 11 years since we started operations in UAE.

Looking back, as part of yoga sadhana it was necessary to engage in activities that does not create bondages in order to manage the impurities of mind that arose during the sadhana. This led to the initial efforts of sharing yogic wisdom to others and many interested people came in search of receiving such knowledge. Later it lead to the establishment of Hatha Vidya Gurukulam in 2008 in Kerala, India and subsequently Hatha Vidya Yoga Center was established in UAE in 2012.

While yoga is getting spread across the world in leaps and bounds, they way it is being understood or rather misunderstood is disheartening for those who have taken up yoga as their life. Our ancient masters selflessly spread the yogic knowledge acquired through their undeterred efforts and experiences. However in today's world we get to see this ancient wisdom being modified and manipulated and the number of self proclaimed so called experts are ever increasing. In the midst of this, protecting the traditional values and passing on this yogic wisdom to the next generation without diluting its essence is the responsibility of those who have understood what yoga is through their experience and devoted efforts.

Our intention here is not to establish superiority of our tradition nor to defame other styles of yoga being promoted, rather our humble efforts are to provide an alternative to those sincere yoga seekers who are mislead with multiple options, the availability of this authentic tradition.

Acharya *Bala*

Light on Hatha Yoga

Confusion to Clarity



There are multitude of schools of thought on yoga, Hatha Yoga being the most popular among these paths. It is essential for a yogic practitioner to be aware of different schools of Yoga, the ultimate state to be achieved through Yoga, and the significance of Hatha Yoga. This edition of tradition speaks will dwell upon these aspects with the help of verse no 3 from Hathapradipika, authored by Swatmarama.

भरान्त्या बहुमत-ध्वान्ते राज-योगमजानताम |

हठ-परदीपकिं धत्ते सवात्मारामः कृपाकरः ||

bhrāntyā bahumata-dhvānte rāja-yoghamajānatām |

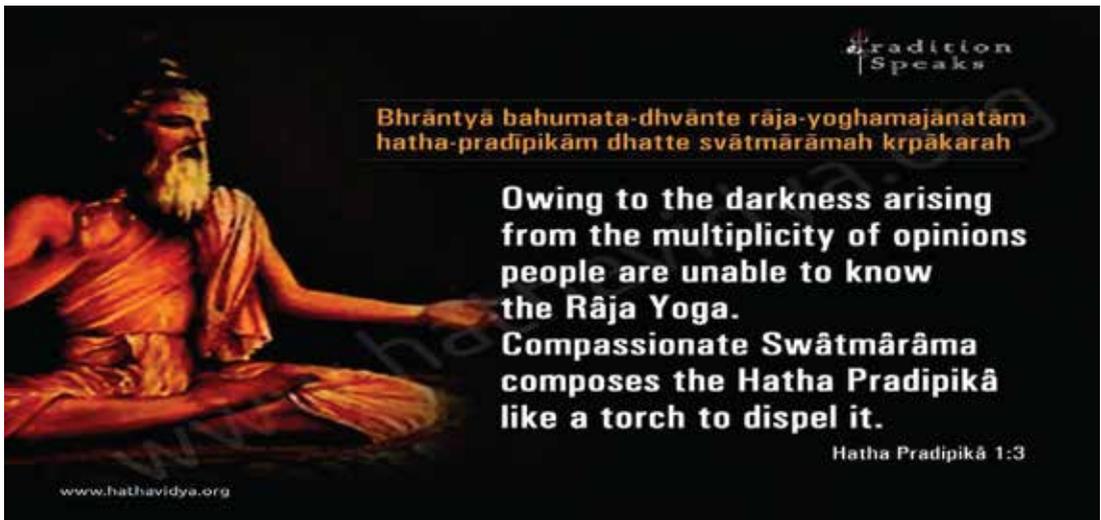
haṭha-pradīpikāṃ dhatte svātmārāmaḥ kṛpākaraḥ || 3 |

“Owing to the darkness arising from the multiplicity of opinions people are unable to know the Rāja Yoga. Compassionate Swātmārāma composes the Haṭhapradīpikā like a torch to dispel it.”

The verse touches upon the multiple opinions (paths) in the yoga, how people are unaware of raja yoga which is the ultimate end state of yoga, and reflects on how well Swatmarama has composed Hatha Pradipika in imparting Hatha Yoga to achieve the state of yoga. These are significantly relevant for a true seeker which we will explore in more detail.

Many paths and opinions

Systematic and methodical way to reach the goal has always been the challenge. There are many paths in yoga, and for the purpose of understanding, can be grouped into the following:



- **Bhavana Yoga:** Yoga of cultivating proper attitude of mind towards the objects of the world and their relationship with oneself.
- **Prana Samyama Yoga:** This approach consists of controlling the breath in order to control the mind.

The yogic paths categorized under Bhavana Yoga includes the following:

- **Jnana yoga:** Jnana means knowledge. As the name implies, Jnana yoga is attaining the knowledge of the reality. Jnana yoga is identified with Vedanta, it is non-dualist and is based on knowing the self/reality i.e. the brahman. This method is direct but yet challenging and requires sharp intellect.
- **Bhakti yoga:** Bhakti yoga is based on considering God (or a deity) as the supreme and surrendering oneself into God without any reservation or doubt. This path enables one to understand reality by being one with God. Bhagavad Gita also includes Bhakti Yoga as one of the paths which is based on love and devotion.
- **Karma yoga:** Yoga through doing one's duty selflessly without getting attached to the outcome, which in Bhagavad Gita, is known as Niskama Karma.

Yogic paths categorized under Prana Samyama Yoga includes the following:

- **Mantra Yoga:** 'Mananāt trāyatē iti mantra' which means "Mental repetition which saves or protects". Mantra yoga works with sound vibrations that

is produced by repetition of sound syllables (mantra) which influences subtle energy centers of the body that leads to deep meditative state and enables one to realize the self.

- **Hatha Yoga:** Hatha Yoga involves control of prana vayu which in turn is achieved through control of respiration. 'Ha' stands for Sun or vital energy (Pingala) and 'Tha' stands for Moon or mental energy (Ida). When union between the pranic and mental energy takes place, it leads to the awakening of the inner dormant potential. Hatha Vidya is the knowledge of the practices that leads to Hatha Yoga.
- **Raja Yoga:** The subtle practices that help one to internalize to achieve the state of samadhi is Raja Yoga. The practices of pratyahara, dharana, dhyana, and samadhi are commonly considered as Raja Yoga practices.

In most of these paths several factors are given importance such as one's conduct, the way one should live, do's and don'ts, practicing techniques, attitudes and various other rules and regulations needed for a Sadhak to achieve the goal. With all these paths and varying views on the requirements to attain the truth, it is natural for any seeker to get into misunderstanding and being misguided on what is the most suitable path. This also arises from lack of understanding of the ultimate purpose of yoga.

Raja Yoga, the ultimate state of all paths

Raja Yoga is nothing but Samadhi i.e. the state of equipoise. Regardless of the multitude of requirements, the ultimate purpose of all the paths of yoga is to enable the practitioner to achieve the state of equanimity i.e. the state of Raja Yoga which is the highest state achieved through yogic practices. Swatmarama also declares that Hatha Yoga and Raja Yoga are incomplete without each other. Due to many paths people may not be aware that the purpose of all these paths is to achieve the state of Raja Yoga which eventually leads to Kaivalya or liberation which is what the true seekers aspire for.

Hatha Yoga, the saving grace

Hatha Yoga works directly on the body, breath and the subtle elements of pranas, nadis, and tatwas (elements) that helps controlling the mind and life perception. Ultimately the practices create balance between body, mind and subtle faculties for functioning of human life.

Hatha Vidya is prescribed without any conditions on conduct, rules as to do's and don'ts. Hatha Vidya is without Yamas and Niyamas which is the starting point in many paths such as Patanjala Yoga Sutra. Even for practicing Yamas and Niyamas certain maturity of mind is required. Hatha Yogic practices enables one to attain the mental maturity wherein the yamas and niyamas naturally and gradually evolve.

Hatha Yoga is relevant regardless of the path pursued by the practitioner and will be supportive in any of the paths as body and mind should be purified to attain higher perception of life.

Hatha Yoga is applicable for everyone regardless of race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, gender, age, or health condition. It is also beyond the ethical or moral background of the person. It is purely based on techniques and practices, very objective and indeed fast-tracks progress compared to all other paths.

Hathapradipika by Swatmarama provides a lucid approach

Among the traditional texts on Hatha Vidya, Hathapradipika occupies the most prominent place. Hatha Yoga is prescribed in a simple and precise manner dividing the practices into four limbs of Asanas, Kumbaka (Pranayama), Mudra and Bhandas, and Nadanusandana with sequential relationship.

In order to prepare one for the yogic practices, one's body and its elements needs to be purified and fully harmonized. Accordingly, the practices of Asanas, Shat Kriyas and Pranayama are prescribed. Through purification of nadis, energy blocks are released to allow proper flow of energy. Then advanced practices of Mudras and Bhandas, and Nadhanusandana are prescribed which eventually leads to awakening of higher consciousness i.e. the state of raja yoga.

Swatmarama has repeatedly reminded in Hathapradipika that Hatha Yoga should be practiced with a goal to attain Raja Yoga thereby clearly specifying that the purpose is for higher state of consciousness and not limited to physical body.

Conclusion

The paths are many, the truth is one. All roads lead to one destination i.e. Raja Yoga. Among the many paths, Hatha Yoga is one universal, objective and result oriented system. Even for the

other paths, Hatha Yoga will serve as strong base to achieve progress to reach the ultimate state of raja yoga or samadhi or universal consciousness. It can be approached by anyone, it is completely unconditional, and is devoid of rules or regulations. Therefore, there is no doubt, Hatha Yoga is a true gift to mankind. Through Hathapradipika, Swatmarama and the lineage of masters have blessed us with the light on Hatha Vidya.

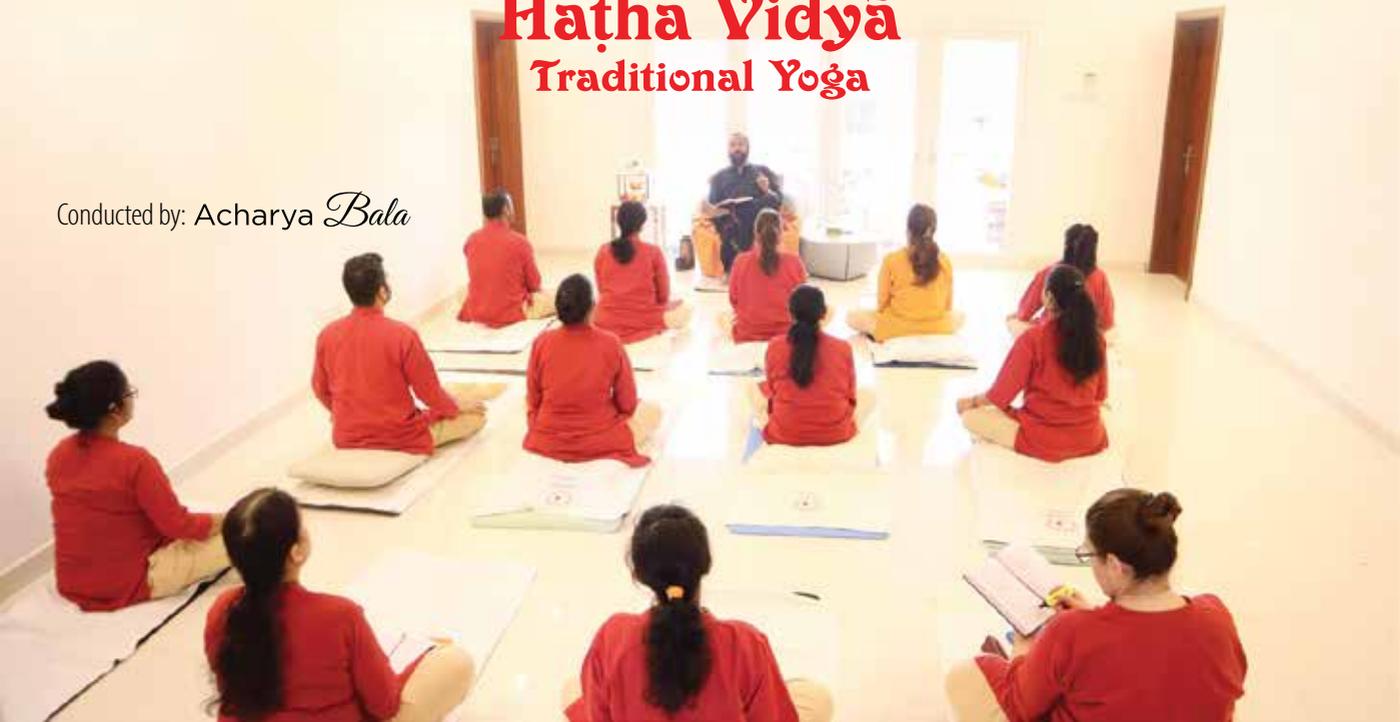
SADHANA RETREAT

11th May to 14th May - 2023

UAE

Hatha Vidya
Traditional Yoga

Conducted by: Acharya *Bala*



Role of Guru

In Spiritual Sadhana



Why is the need for guidance of a Guru in spiritual sadhana? This is a question that has been raised at all times. Before proceeding to answer this question, it would also be useful to understand the state of mind that would have caused this question to arise.

Worldly knowledge is gained through seeing, reading, and hearing. In this current modern era, not only through reading and by hearing from others, but also conventional and social media are becoming an important source to gain information and knowledge. It is worth thinking about the authenticity of the information and knowledge received through such sources.

If we explain in yogic point of view, such knowledge is gained by the mind which works through the senses on the basis of the objects such as sabdha (sound), sparsha (touch), roopa (vision), rasa (taste) and gandha (smell). Applying the same logic, understanding and practicing spiritual sadhana based on knowledge gained through senses may create a false sense of reality. All such knowledge are subject to the efficiency of senses and discriminative power of the intellect. Where as spiritual sadhana starts with pointing out the limitation of the senses and the knowledge gained through the senses. Such knowledge are

incomplete and are very far from reality.

The ultimate knowledge realized through spiritual sadhana is beyond the senses. Which means, the senses which are extrovert in nature are internalized and then later, without relying on the senses, one realizes the eternal knowledge dormant within the self.

This knowledge acquired from one's own individual experience is not something that can be understood from seeing or hearing. Therefore a guide, who has undergone such experience, and who can carefully assess the practitioners aim, poorva samskaras (latent imprints), and monitor the bodily, mental, and social conditions of the practitioner is absolutely essential. Only then the difficulties faced during such sadhana can be appropriately addressed as and when they arise to enable the practitioner to achieve the goal.

While egoistic thinking restricts the expansion of one's inner consciousness, anyone who approaches a guide with humility and reverence will not only give a chance to expand themselves but will also provide chance for others to enjoy the fragrance of such eternal bliss.

Spirituality is about understanding our own self, however all the factors to prevent that understanding is also within us like a veil. In order to remove that veil and to get the capability to understand the self within, support from external interference is needed. This is not necessarily need to be an individual, any external factors from our surrounding could be the source of such external support. However, in order to identify, understand and tap knowledge from such external factors, one should be blessed with a egoless mind. We can pray for that.

अज्ञान-तमिरिन्धस्य ज्ञानाज्ञान-शलाकया ।
चक्षुरुन्मीलति येन तस्मै श्री गुरवे नमः ॥२॥

ajñāna-timirāndhasya jñānāñjana-
na-śalākayā.

cakṣurunmīlitaṃ yena tasmai śrī gurave
namaḥ



KUNDALINI
UNLOCK THE POTENTIAL

10th June 2023
Al Nahda Center, Dubai - UAE

Session by: Acharya *Bala*

Hatha Vidya
Traditional Yoga

I offer my respectful obeisance unto my spiritual master, who has opened my eyes, which were blinded by the darkness of ignorance, with the torchlight of knowledge.



**Meditation
Retreat**

10th July - 15th July

Kerala - INDIA

Conducted by: Acharya *Bala*



Schools of Yoga

An Introduction



We are living in an era where the word ‘Yoga’ is widely popular but it is grossly misunderstood. It is important for practitioners to understand what Yoga is so that the intended benefits can be attained. The term Yoga is derived from the verb root “Yuj” in Sanskrit. It can be understood in four different ways.

- ‘Yuj Samadhau’ which means integration.
- ‘Yuj Samyamane’ which means to control.
- ‘Yujir Yoge’ which means joining.
- ‘Yuj’ as separation.

These four interpretations are closely connected with different methods wherein the term integration is closer to the Patanjala Yoga sutra approach. The meaning of yoga as control is associated with Hatha yogic method while meaning of yoga as joining is more philosophical which considers it as union of individual self with the Supreme Self. Bhagavad Gita has stated the meaning of Yoga as separation which says:

“tam vidyad duhkha samyoga viyogam
yogasajnitam”

*“separation from the union of pain is
called Yoga.”*

The state of Yoga can be attained through different methods. The usage of the word yoga with such approaches

leads to this misunderstanding, and this misperception has always been the case, even in ancient times. Thus, when yoga is known in different names, the aspirant finds it difficult to decide on a suitable path. When appropriate path is not chosen, then, either the aspirant does not achieve the desired results or might attain the results at a slower pace. However, our ancient masters like Swatmarama, through their teachings, have tried to bring forth the real meaning of Yoga and thereby provide clarity about the subject to the yoga aspirants.

In this article, we are intending to introduce the various approaches or schools of yoga. The path of yoga is developed based on Vedas and Tantra shastra. The important schools of yoga can be broadly divided into two divisions which are Bhavana Yoga and Prana Samyama Yoga. All other approaches fall in these two categories.

Bhavana Yoga is yoga of cultivating proper attitude of mind towards the objects of the world and their relationship with oneself. Prana Samyama Yoga is yoga to control the mind through regulating the pranic flow.

Bhavana yoga is further sub divided into:

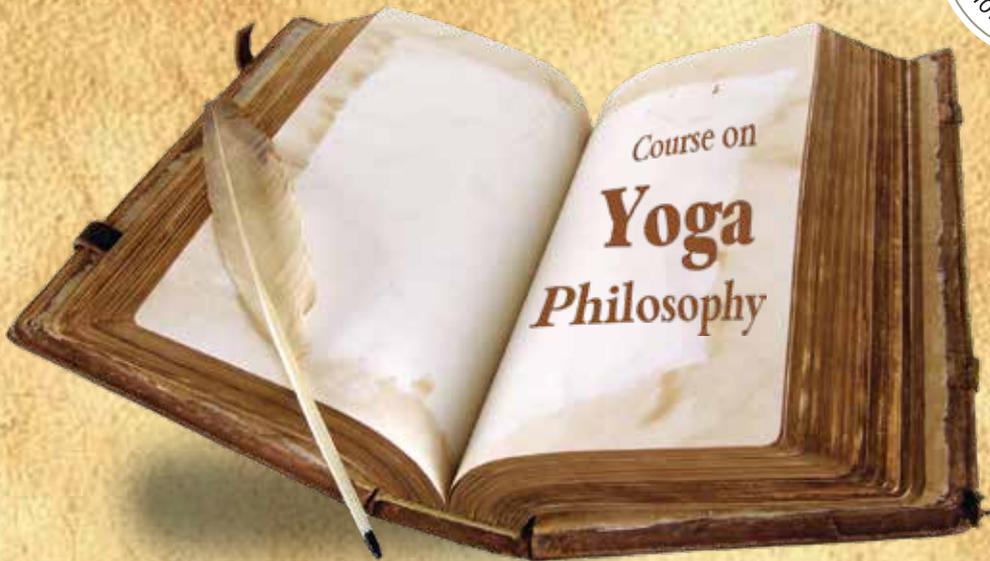
1. Jnana yoga
2. Bhakti yoga
3. Karmayoga

The main schools of Yoga under Prana Samyama Yoga are:

1. Hatha yoga
2. Mantra yoga
3. Laya yoga
4. Raja yoga

The knowledge of Yoga has been assimilated from the Upanishads which is known as the Jnana Kāṇḍa of the

Vedas and it was systematically presented to the world by Sage Patanjali through Yoga Sutras. However, the psychological basis of yoga were elaborated in Patanjala Yoga Sutra and practical approaches were only given as indications. Later, in light of the tantra shastras, Hatha yogic texts such as Goraksha Padhati, Gheranda Samhita and Hatha Pradipika etc were developed by emphasizing more on the practical aspects of Yoga.

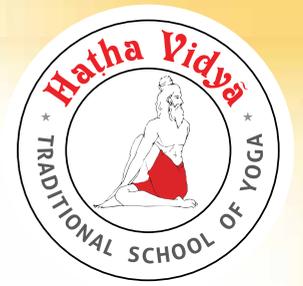


8th July 2023 - 31st Dec 2023

UAE | MALAYSIA

Conducted by: Acharya *Bala*

Hatha Vidya
Traditional Yoga



Celebrating
Guru Purnima

On

3rd July 2023

INDIA | UAE | MALAYSIA

Hatha Vidya
Traditional Yoga

Children's Health

Yoga is the way



Yoga is the philosophy, science, and art of holistic living, and aims at the overall development of the individual's health and personality. Health, as defined by WHO is the state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Thus, even in medical terms, health is thought to be multi-dimensional just as Yoga advocates. Yoga for children is focused on their overall development as development is fundamental to childhood. Teaching yoga to children aids them in becoming well rounded and healthy adults.

The health of the children globally has undergone significant changes in the past few decades which can be attributed to technology, TVs, and more recently the covid. All these have made the lifestyles of children shift to more sedentary. With the result, the childhood obesity is on the rise in the world over, so much so that it is a cause of major concern for everyone especially health workers. This growing epidemic has important consequences, including psychiatric, psychological, and psychosocial disorders in childhood and increased risk of developing non-communicable diseases (NCDs) later in life.

In the current scenario Yoga offers a respite. Regular practice of yoga right from a young age can have lasting impact on the child's health. Yoga requires minimal equipment making it an ideal practice for one and all, no matter where they are. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends yoga as a safe and potentially effective therapy for children and adolescents coping with emotional, mental, physical, and behavioural health conditions. Yoga practices learnt early in life can help children cope with the stress of the modern world and help them become the best versions of themselves by harnessing their latent potential.

However, considering the delicate age of the children, only a competent teacher, well trained in the finer aspects of a child's growth should teach yoga to children. Otherwise, it may be counter productive to the health of the child. Additionally, the teaching methodology of children needs to be different from adults to maximize the learning.

At Hatha Vidya, we take care of these finer points and accordingly have devised yoga programs suitable for children. Children from age of five and

upwards can enrol in these programs. There are two programs which children can enrol in i.e., either regular classes or a specialized program for children called Nishtha. The benefit from these programs would be better physical and mental health, that would transpire into better academic excellence and a disciplined, moral driven attitude.

Regular classes run twice a week where children are taught age-appropriate asanas, breathing and relaxation techniques giving them a foundation of basic yogic practices which not only help them build physical health but also help them to deal with the stresses of their educational life.

Nishtha is a specialized kids training program divided into three modules. The first two modules are of eight months duration; while the final module is further divided into 2 parts each of 8 months duration. Modules are categorized based on ages and each module has carefully selected age-appropriate yogic practices designed in a progressive manner. Children learn and understand Yoga in a fun filled, yet educative background. A properly guided way of teaching is adopted, so that their interest in learning continues. The children learn not just the proper way of performing the different yogic practices but also the rationale behind them.

These modules are based on the book series 'The Path of Harmony' published inhouse by Thapobhoomi publications. During Nishtha program

children learn yoga asanas, pranayama (breathing techniques) and some kriyas (Cleansing processes). In addition to this, they are taught the basic principles of yoga through a story telling method. They also learn techniques to help them build focus and concentration, learning Sanskrit through fun and games is the highlight of the class for many children. During the Nishtha program children are given opportunities to show what they have learnt in different programs organised by Hatha Vidya. It is indeed heartening to see the confidence even the shyest ones exhibit during these events.

Hatha Vidya firmly believes that yogic education imparted in the right way will have a lasting impact on a child's life and endow them with confidence to face all challenges of life and will give them a strong platform on which they will build a stable and successful future.



Workshop on

YOGA Nidra
The Ultimate of Relaxation

21st May 2023, Sunday



Bur Dubai Center, Dubai - U.A.E

Hatha Vidya
Traditional Yoga

Session by: Acharya *Bala*



Intensive

PRANAYAMA SADHANA

AND

RETREAT

29th June - 22nd July 2023

24 days of "Pranayama Sadhana & Retreat"

Inclusive of :

19 days in house /online practice | Shodhana Kriyas

5 days retreat 17th July - 22nd July 2023

Kerala - India



Conducted by: Acharya *Bala*

PĀTANJALA

Yoga Sūtra

Psychological basis of yoga

8th July 2023 - 9th Dec 2023

UAE | MALAYSIA

Hatha Vidya
Traditional Yoga





Align Body with Mind

WORKSHOP ON DHYANA

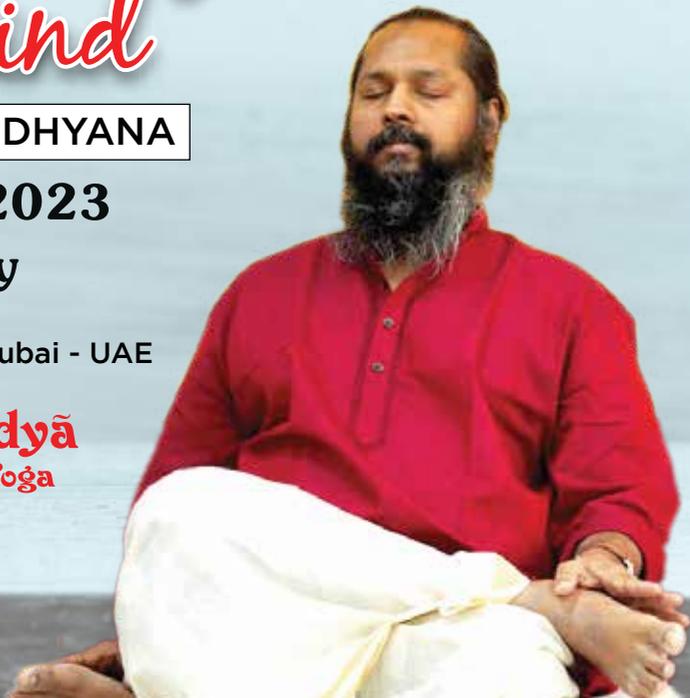
4th June. 2023

Sunday

Bur Dubai Center, Dubai - UAE

Hatha Vidya
Traditional Yoga

Session by: Acharya *Bala*



ADVANCED

YOGA

TEACHER TRAINING

8th Batch

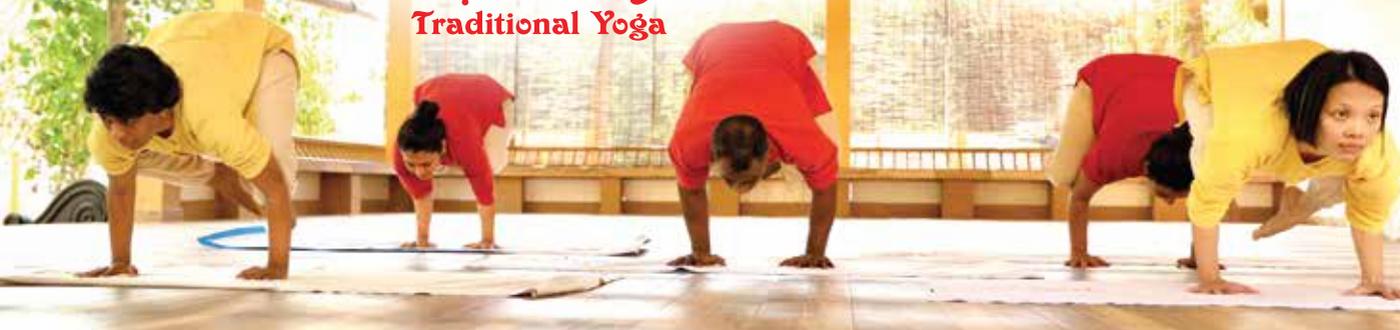
500
HOURS



8th July 2023 - 17th Feb 2024

UAE | MALAYSIA

Hatha Vidya
Traditional Yoga



Pranayama

Path Towards Purification



A healthy body and healthy mind is what we aspire to have and for many of us, the quality of life matters the most, compared to its longevity. Maintaining a yogic lifestyle is one of the best ways to ensure this and it has proven to elevate the energy levels of the practitioners to attain spiritual enlightenment. One important factor, which all Yoga practitioners would commonly agree upon, is the relevance of breathing in yogic practices.

Pranayama is one of the utmost important part in the journey of a yoga practitioner. Commonly misunderstood as breathing practice through mere alternate nostril breathing, there is much more to the methods of practice and its related results. The term Pranayama stands for Prana + Ayama, that is regulation of the Prana. Prana being the subtler aspect of breath requires a continued and focused practice to understand and recognize its movements within the body. Breath is just the manifestation of the subtler Prana. The purpose of the practice is to master and identify the flow of prana inside the nadis or pranic channels with the help of disciplined practice and eventually realize one's true potential.

According to Yoga, there are 72000 nadis or pranic/energy channels emanating from the Kanda – located

below the navel. Out of these pranic channels functioning in our body – Ida, Pingala and Sushumna are of utmost importance. Compared to the other nadis, it is relatively easier to bring awareness to Ida and Pingala as they are directly associated with our left and right nostril respectively. So, every time we breathe, the Ida and Pingala are functioning. But this does not mean that by mere breathing one can understand the functioning of these two nadis or the flow of Prana itself.

In an ideal situation, Prana moves freely through the 72000 nadis when the nadis or the energy channels are clear of any kind of impurities. These impurities that result into a blockage in this free flowing of Prana are caused by various factors such as physical, mental, emotional stress, unhealthy lifestyle habits & negative thoughts and emotions. These impurities are also resultant of one's own samskaras, which are the latent imprints. The importance of cleansing the nadis is clearly emphasized in Hathapradipika:

śuddhametiyadāsarvaṃnāḍī-chakraṃmalākula-
lam|

tadaivajāyateyoghīprāṇa-saṃghra-
haṇekṣhamaḥ||

malākulāsunaḍīṣhumārutonaivamadyaghaḥ |
kathamṣyādunmanībhāvāḥ kārya-siddhiḥ
kathambhavet ||

“When the whole system of nādīs which is full of impurities, is cleaned, then the Yogī becomes able to control the Prāṇa.”

“The breath does not pass through the middle channel (suṣumnā), owing to the impurities of the nādīs. How can then success be attained, and how can there be the unmanīavasthā.”

The method of cleansing the nadis has been approached in various ways in different texts of Hatha Yoga. While Hatha Yoga Pradipika emphasizes the importance of Nadi Shudhi Pranayama, Gheranda Samihita confirms that whatsoever the practice is undertaken one has to undergo the cleansing processes (Shatkriyas) along with other breathing practices. However without understanding the purpose behind these, mere performance of breathing or cleansing processes, will not yield results.

The flow of prana through the Ida and Pingala shifts its course every one hour and fifteen minutes in a day. Yoga practitioners can check the nostril dominance respectively and identify which one is dominant, by closing one nostril and breathing from the other. Most of the time one of the nostrils will be in a partially blocked status than the other.

Hence, when the left nostril is

dominant it is the Ida that is active and when it is the right, it is Pingala. But for a brief moment, both the pranic channels reach a stable state and that is when there is a possibility to get Sushumna nadi activated. This is the stage when both the nostrils are free flowing without any obstruction and is the highest & best stage in which the mind is in a state of equilibrium. A Yoga practitioner is able to prolong this particular period of time and let the consciousness arise. With the help of effective, consistent practice of Pranayama and its associated techniques, the practitioner is able to retain air for a prolonged period of time allowing the pranavayu to enter the Sushumna nadi, leading to a state of harmony and equanimity.

Maintaining focus on these subtler aspects becomes a farfetched reality to a common man who has even forgotten to breathe properly with full lung capacity, being driven away in the tug-of-war of life. Thus it is highly recommended to pursue regular practice of Pranayama and its associated techniques done under the guidance of an eminent master to help the practitioner to come out of the stressful mental condition and lead a fulfilling and contended life. We will continue to elaborate more on the aspects surrounding the practice of Pranayama for better understanding of the concept in our next edition.



Nada

Sound of eternity

WORKSHOP ON LAYA YOGA

27th MAY 2023

@

Al Nahda Center, Dubai - UAE

Hatha Vidya
Traditional Yoga

Session by: Acharya *Bala*



Intensive

PRANAYAMA SADHANA

AND

RETREAT

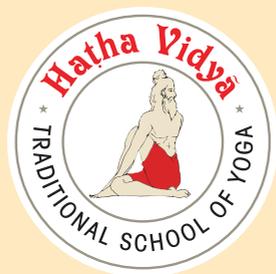
13th April 2023 - 6th May 2023

JOHOR - MALAYSIA



Hatha Vidya
Traditional Yoga

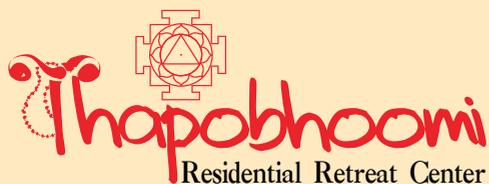
Conducted by: Acharya *Bala*



YOGA RETREAT

3rd July - 8th July 2023

KERALA, INDIA



Conducted by: Acharya *Bala*

Prasarita Padahastasana

Traditional Approach



In this age of mindless rush and receding awareness, Yoga is a great means to establish harmony between one's physical, mental, and emotional state. In yogic practices, asanas is recommended as the first limb before proceeding into other of practices such as pranayama and meditation. It is easier to work upon the body than to work directly on the mind. Thus, body should be conditioned and prepared to be able to undertake other advanced and subtler practices.

Therefore, the role of asanas in yogic practices is significant as a stepping-stone into great possibilities through yoga. Yoga asanas enables one to train and take control of the body which will also help cultivate physical strength, balance, flexibility, and mental focus. In addition to the many physical benefits, practicing yoga asanas can also help to reduce stress, improve concentration, and promote a sense of inner calm.

Asanas should be learned under the guidance of a competent teacher and should be practiced bearing in mind the FIVE essentials of asana practice – VIN-YASA, SWASA, DHRISTI, STITHI & VISHRANTI - Systematic Flow, Breath Coordination & Awareness, Focus outside & inside, Maintaining Steadiness & Having a relaxed state of

mind respectively.

This series – “Insight into Asanas” highlights the relevance of practicing asanas in the right manner to achieve the maximum benefit from them both on the gross as well as at the subtle levels. Our aim is to instill the traditional aspects into the practice of Yoga Asanas for the overall benefit of the practitioner.

Prasaritha Padahastasana

In this article, we will discuss yet another classical asana known as Prasarita Padahastasana. Prasarita means wide legged, Pada means feet and Hasta is hands. So in literal sense this asana deals with widening the legs in order to bring the hands towards the feet.

Let us now understand the process of doing this asana:

1. Stand with your feet wider - maximum width apart, with your toes pointing forward and slightly turned inward.
2. Bring your hands to your hips, thumb pointing towards the front and inhale to lengthen your spine and arch back.
3. Exhale and bend forward at the hips, slowly bringing your hands towards the ankles.
4. Bring the crown of the head in between the legs.
5. Hold the pose for a few breaths, as

comfortably as possible and then release by lifting your torso back up with an inhalation.

Prasarita Padahastasana, offers a variety of benefits for the body, mind, and spirit. Here are some of the key benefits of this yoga pose:

- Stretches the hamstrings, hips, and inner thighs. This Asana targets the muscles in the legs and hips, helping to increase flexibility and range of motion.
- Relieves stress and tension: The forward fold in this Asana allows to release tension in the neck and shoulders, promoting relaxation and calmness.
- Strengthens the legs and glute: As one maintains this Asana posture, the muscles in the legs and glute are engaged, helping to build strength and stability.
- Improves digestion: The compression of the abdomen in this Asana posture can help to stimulate digestion and relieve constipation.
- Improves circulation: As one move into this posture, blood flow to the legs, hips, and abdomen are increased helping to promote overall health and vitality.
- Builds focus and concentration: The mental focus required to hold this Asana can help to improve focus and concentration, leading to greater clarity and productivity in other areas of life.

Overall, Prasarita Padahastasana is a great posture for promoting flexibility,

strength, relaxation, and mental focus. On a subtler level Prasarita Padahastasana helps stimulate the root chakra (Mooladhara Chakra). Doing this Asana, with the required focus, also activates one of the focal points known as Adharas, located at the Left Big Toe.

While Prasarita Padahastasana can be beneficial for many people, there are some contradictions to keep in mind. These include:

- Lower back injuries: If you have an existing lower back injury, this pose may exacerbate the pain or discomfort.
- High blood pressure: This pose involves bending forward, which can cause blood pressure to rise temporarily. If you have high blood pressure, it is best to avoid this pose or practice it with caution, keeping your head above your heart.
- Herniated disc: If you have a herniated disc in your spine, this pose may put too much pressure on the affected area.
- Menstruation: During menstruation, it is best to avoid this pose.
- Pregnancy: In later stages of pregnancy, it is best to avoid this pose or modify it by keeping your hands on a chair or blocks.

It is important to practice this asana under proper guidance. Always listen to your body and practice within your limits. If you experience pain or discomfort during the practice of this Asana, try to come out of it slowly and seek the guidance of a qualified yoga teacher.

Khechari Mudra

Inner Mechanism



Khecharī mudra is a revered mystic yogic practice which is highly regarded amongst advanced yoga practitioners and glorified by the traditional Hathayogic texts. It is considered to be one of the most powerful Hathayogic practice to progress in the spiritual path towards realization of the Supreme Consciousness. It is said to release the elixir of life. The practice aims to gain inner peace and allow the awakening of the Kundalini Shakti energy. When combined with Ujjayi and Shambhavi, Khechari mudra stimulates the master gland pituitary, leading the yogi to higher stages of consciousness through the stimulation of the nervous system.

It is part of Hatha Yogic practice exclusively referred only in Hatha Yogic texts. According to the Hatha Pradipika, Khechari mudra is the bliss of the vast expanse of spiritual consciousness. By touching the tip of the tongue to the nasopharyngeal cavity behind the uvula, the divine life-current draws the prana from the senses into the spine and draws it up through the chakras, uniting the consciousness with higher centers.

The purpose of Khechari mudra is to awaken the Kundalini through kriya. A lot of preparational practices

like talavyakriya, nabhomudra etc. are required prior to performing Khechari mudra. Through chalana and dohanakriya the tongue is stretched in and out repeatedly until it becomes flexible and long enough to perform Khechari mudra.

Hatha Pradipika explains Khechari as follows:

कपालकृहरे जहिवा प्रवष्टिता वपिरीतगा ।
भ्रुवोरन्तर्गता दृष्टस्त्रिमुद्रा भवति खेचरी ॥३२॥

Kapālaharejihvāpravistāvīparītagā|
Bhruvorantargatādstirmudrābhavati-
tikhecarī||32||

Tongue, going reversed, inserted into the nasopharyngeal cavity and gaze fixed in the middle of the eyebrows, it becomes Khechari Mudra.

Hatha Pradipika mentions that the frenulum (a small vertical fold of mucus membrane that link floor of mouth to midline of under surface of tongue) should be cut to increase the extension of the tongue to reach the nasal cavity. It can be done through use of some herbs in a particular way so as to decay the frenulum of tongue to elongate the tongue. The best age to start practice of Khechari mudra is up to 25 years.

It is essential to perform Khechhari mudra in a stepwise manner under the guidance of a competent teacher, who has particular experience personally, as it can be challenging and requires patience and perseverance to achieve. It should be done in a stepwise manner over a long period.

Spiritual Benefits Of Khechhari Mudra

Once tongue has reached beyond the top of the pharynx, an emptiness in the mouth is felt. This is where to focus on at the beginning of this practice. Physiologically, this is the seat of the Pituitary gland, when it is pressed it gets stimulated to release hormones. The Yogi, by the practice get rid of thirst and hunger leading to a sense of inner balance.

In the beginning, the taste would be bitter. This is a sign of detoxification of your bodily system. But, with regular practice, the bitter taste becomes sweet like honey, strawberry, and butter taste. This is called Amrita, the bliss of nectar as mentioned in Hatha Pradipika. It keeps mind steady, even while engaged in day to day activities of material world. Khechhari mudra help to improve overall health and wellbeing. It facilitate extra sensory perception allowing one to develop psychic abilities and intuitive powers.

It can also bring about spiritual powers such as third-eye chakra awakening and extrasensory perception. The mudra also has cleansing properties, as the secretion of nectar detoxifies the

body, clears the tongue gag, and prevents bad breath.

Khechhari mudra can be a helpful technique for meditation, as it makes it easier to draw the mind inward and reduce scattered awareness. It can also make the tongue more sensitive to taste individual elements, allowing for the easy addressing of panchatattva dominance or deficiency.

Physical Benefits

In addition to its spiritual benefits, khechhari mudra has several physical benefits as well. It can help open up blocked salivary glands, prevent painful symptoms of salivary gland disorders, and stimulate the pituitary gland to secrete growth hormone, acting as an anti-aging elixir. It can also activate the vagus nerve through parasympathetic nervous system, leading to a slower heart rate, relaxed breathing, and reduced anxiety. It also alleviates the stammering.

Practicing Khechhari mudra regularly can also have positive effects on the thyroid gland, helping to balance metabolism, body weight, and growth and development.

The mudra also stimulates the release of dopamine, the "happy hormone," which can lead to a calming effect. Indirectly it can activate pineal gland, to produce melatonin and serotonin and beta endorphins. Serotonin is a neurotransmitter that helps regulate mood, sleep, and appetite. Melatonin is a hormone that plays a role in regulating

sleep-wake cycles. Beta-endorphins are natural painkillers produced by the body that can promote feeling of well-being. As per the researches Khechari practice can help to control hyper tension and migraine

Overall, Khechari mudra is considered as one of the best due to its ability to stimulate the master gland of the body and balance energy channels.



YOGA

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Hatha Vidya
Traditional Yoga



Yoga for Children and Adults

My Perspective

This article is about some of the differences I have noticed between the yogic practices for adults and the yogic practices for kids. Since practicing yoga for three years and observing both my parents with their practices, I have noticed the differences in how the yogic practices are approached by adults compared to us kids. For example, while kids' yoga is more focused on asanas, the adults progress faster with pranayama.

Let me explain this point by point.

ASANAS

1. *No. of Asanas*

There are 120+ asanas for kids and 84 asanas for adults.

2. *Preliminaries*

While the adults start out with preliminaries to train their body, kids do it a bit later, right before starting a higher level of practices as preparation.

3. *Repetition*

Although both kids and adults start out with repetitions, adults need to continue with repetitions for longer.

4. *Length of practice*

Generally, when kids practice, they tend to do it faster and finish quicker compared to adults, who take their time with their practice.

5. *Sequences*

Adults and kids have different sequences as both their bodies function differently and might have different impacts on their bodies.

6. *Line drawing*

Different kids learn in different ways and line drawing is where you make simple drawings of each asana to further understand how to do it step-by-step. Adults do not follow or use line drawings.

7. *Surya Namaskar*

For the sun salutation, adults have two

types, a 12-step version for men, and a 14 step version for women, although all the kids practice only the 12 step version of Surya Namaskar.

PRANAYAMA, MEDITATION & MORE

1. *Pranayama's pace*

In pranayama practices, adults advance faster and are to take it more seriously when compared to kids, who progress on it slow and easy.

2. *Approach for meditation*

When learning meditation, kids start out by concentrating upon a certain object while adults start by focusing internally.

3. *Games*

There are many yogic games for kids

that were made to improve concentration, alertness, and other important qualities.

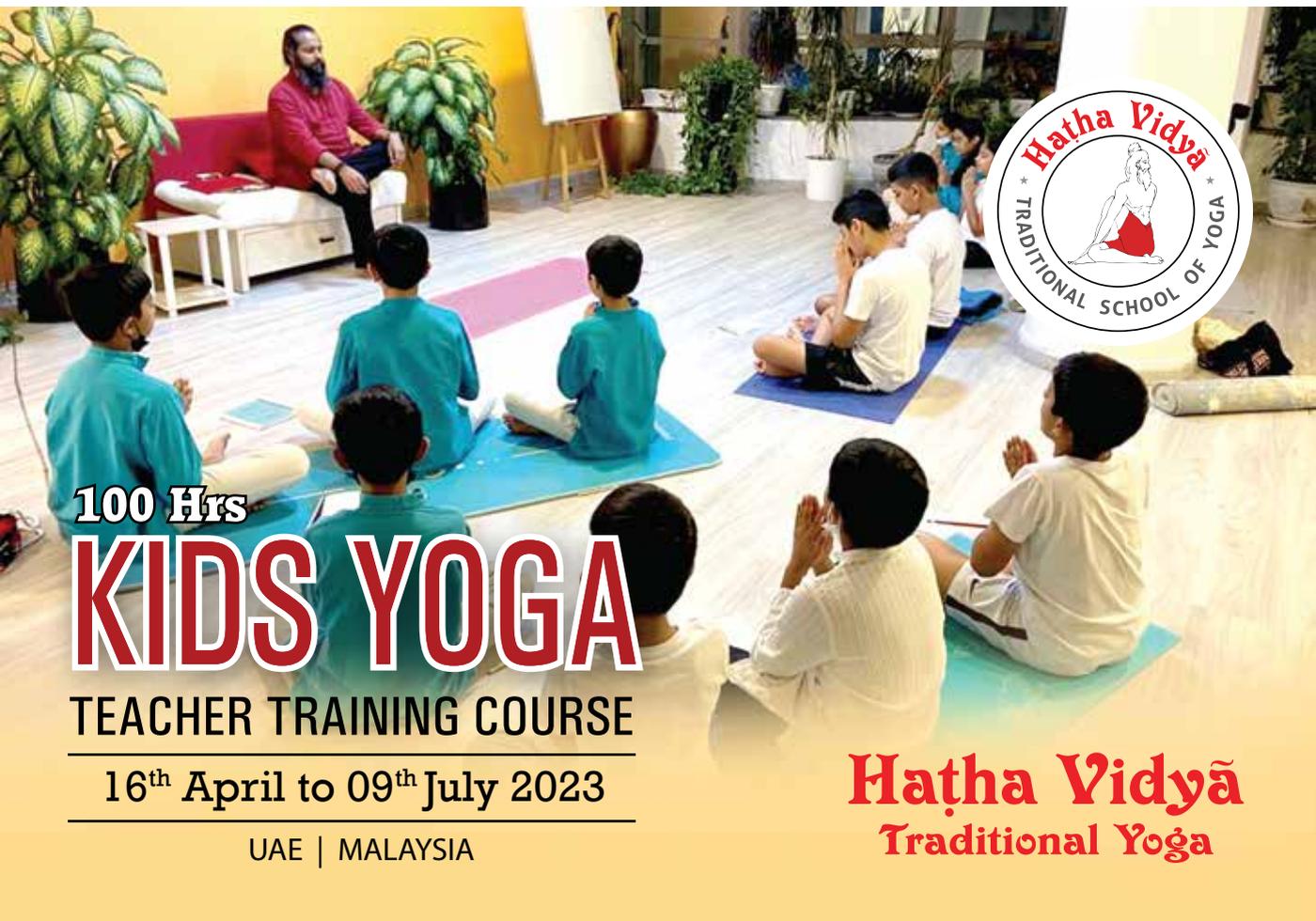
4. *The Philosophy*

The philosophy of yoga is taught to adults directly, while to kids, it's taught slowly and through stories.

5. *Kriyas*

Adults start learning kriyas (cleansing practices) earlier and faster, while kids need time to even start with their kriyas.

It is clear from the above-mentioned points, that the approach to yoga practice by adults and kids are quite different. As they say, yoga is an experiential learning, therefore these are based on my experiences, and this could differ from individual to individual.



100 Hrs

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EVENTS CONDUCTED

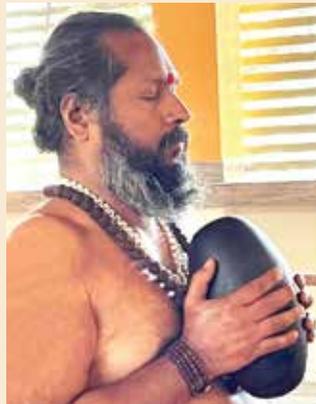
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HQ of Hatha Vidya Traditional School of Yoga - India



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Workshop on Science of Breath, Dubai - UAE



Lecture at Arab Region Yoga Instructors Council, Dubai - UAE

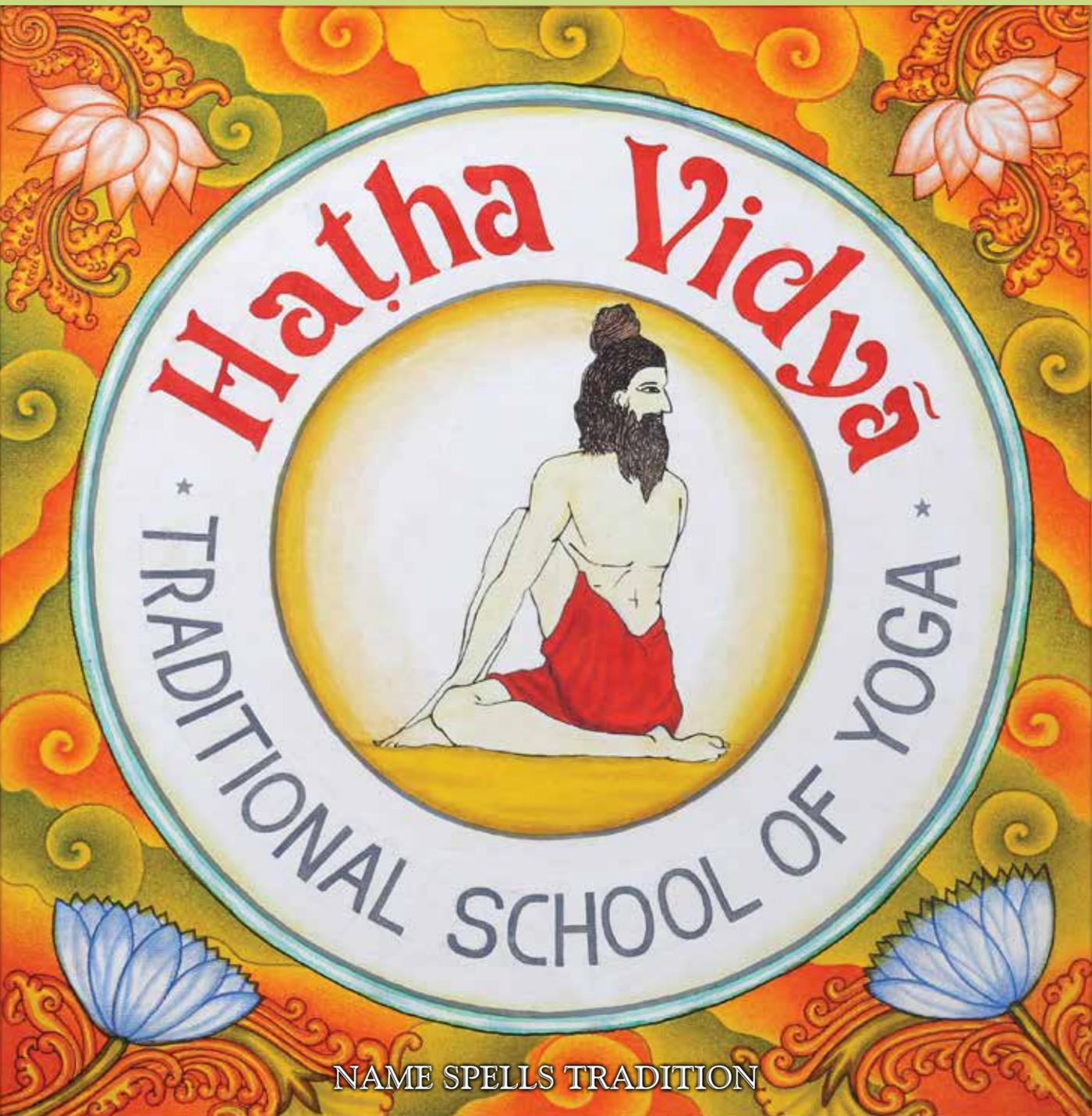


Pranayama Sadhana Retreat - UAE



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