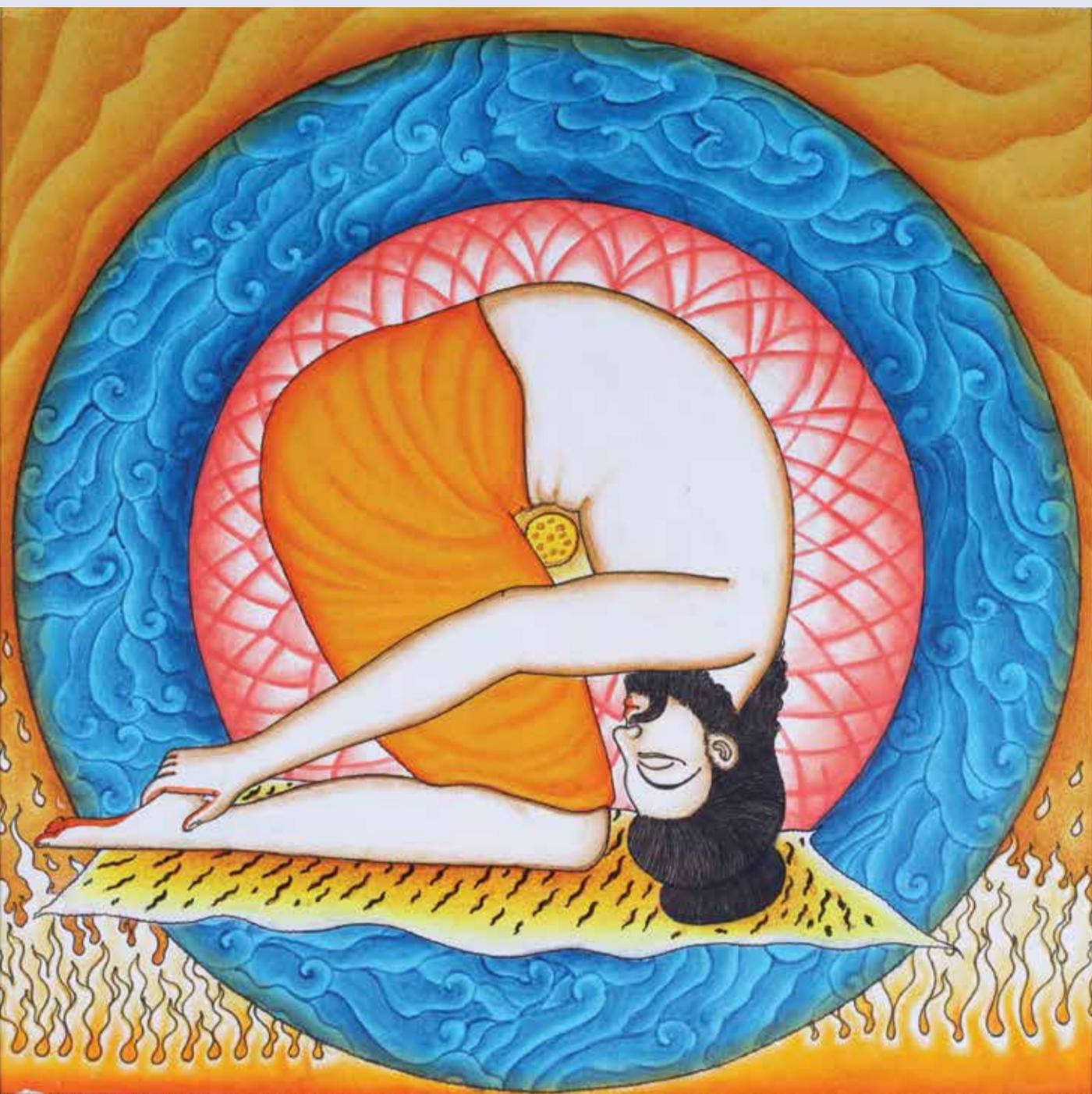


Hatha Vidya

January 2023

An exclusive e-magazine on traditional yoga





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Chief Editor
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Editorial Board
Vijesh Ravindran
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Vibha Sehjpal
Divya Nambiar

Layout
Noufal Dubex

Published By
Thapobhoomi Publications
Web: www.hathavidyame.com
Email: tbp@hathavidya.org

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

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

From **The Editor's Desk**

As the world steps into the new year 2023, Hatha Vidya with full awareness of the mission to be accomplished, welcomes this new year!

Letting go of claims, anxieties and worries based on past gains and losses, let us prepare to accept everything in the coming days whole heartedly by firmly establishing in the practice of yoga.

In order to overcome the challenges to spread the yogic wisdom globally Hatha vidya is striving to safeguard the essence of yogic practices, which were preached by our acharyas.

Fulfilling the inherent duty of spreading the yogic wisdom to its seekers, in its full depth and breadth, without diluting the essence, and at the same creating the opportunities and platforms to practice and experience traditional Yoga, has been taken up as a mission by those yogic seekers who have reaped the benefits of the system propagated at Hatha Vidya.

The inspiration and motivation for such efforts is only based on the utmost conviction that Yoga is not a mere intellectual or an academic study, rather it is something that is realized with practice and experience.

If anyone, from any corner of this world, gets benefited through the messages that are conveyed in this publication, it will without any doubt, provide the encouragement for the many people who are selflessly taking robust efforts.

Acharya *Bala*



"I have come with a mission and for that I want keen students who want to become strong as steel. The ones who would not be purchased by money, name or attachment but who are ready to serve the world through yoga and want to become master of themselves."

Acharya *Bala*

Hatha Yoga & Raja Yoga

The interrelation

हठंवनिराजयोगोराजयोगंवनिहठः ।"

नसधियततितोयुग्मम्आनषिपत्तेःसमभ्यसेत् ॥७६ ॥

"hatham vina rajayogo rajayogam vina hathah
na sidhyatitato yugmamanishpatteh samabhyaset."



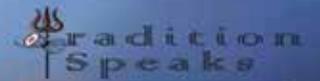
"Neither can hatha be perfected without rajayoga nor rajayoga be attained without practicing Hatha. Therefore, both of them should be practiced till the goal is attained"

- Hatha Pradipika 2.76

This edition of tradition speaks will explore on Verse no 76 from Chapter 2 of Hathayoga Pradipika. This verse explains the interrelation and importance of Hatha Yoga and Raja Yoga. The way the terms Hatha Yoga and Raja Yoga are used in this verse may give an indication that these are two different forms of practice. However, are these two different streams of practices? Answer to this question are significantly relevant in providing clarity on some of the important concepts that should be understood by yoga practitioners.

Hatha Yoga

There are many forms of Yoga practices spread across the world. While some practices are based on ancient yogic texts, there are also modern modified synthetic versions, particularly those promoted as lifestyle, health and well-being activity. However, if we carefully examine, the base of all these practices is Hatha Yoga. Hatha Yoga is the classical and most traditional form of yogic practices. As per the traditional yogic texts such as Hatha Pradipika, Gheranda Samhita and Goraksha Pathadi, the hatha yogic practices are grouped under various limbs. While each of the traditional text uses varying approaches in presenting the hatha yogic practices, generally key limbs of hatha yoga practices include asanas, pranayama, mudras, pratyahara, dharana, dhyana, and samadi. Among these, asanas and breathing techniques derived from



Pīthāni kumbakāśchitrā divyāni karanāni cha
sarvānyapi hathābhyase rāja-yogha-phalāvadhi

**POSTURES, VARIOUS BREATHING
TECHNIQUES, AND OTHER DIVINE
MEANS ALL SHOULD BE
PRACTISED IN THE PRACTICE
OF HATHA YOGA, TILL THE FRUIT
OF RAJA YOGA IS OBTAINED**

pranayama practices are the most prevalent practices. Whenever asanas, pranayama, and breathing techniques are involved it is Hatha Yoga. Therefore, most of the yoga practices widely adopted are indeed Hatha Yogic practices albeit, done without such understanding in many cases.

It is important to understand about Hatha Yoga, Raja Yoga and how they are related.

Raja Yoga

The term Raja Yoga is commonly understood as practices that delves directly into meditation or one pointedness. However, Raja Yoga is a term that is more appropriate when used to refer to the state of higher experience achieved from yogic practices rather than being considered as a separate set of practices. Raja Yoga literally translates as Royal Yoga, as the meaning implies, it refers to reaching the highest state of consciousness. State of Raja Yoga could also be related to Kundalini awakening through Hatha Yogic practices.

Certain group of practices such as pratyahara, dharana and dhyana are in fact found to be practiced as Raja Yoga. However, these practices are also Hatha Yogic practices (limbs) as found in traditional Hatha Yogic texts.

Interrelation of Hatha Yoga and Raja Yoga

While Raja Yoga is the ultimate supreme state achieved through Yoga, it is not practically possible for common man to achieve this state through direct meditation practices or by mere contem-

plation. In order to be able to apply the advanced practices of pratyahara, dharana, and dhyana to achieve Raja Yoga, it is essential for the body and mind to be prepared for such practices. Hatha Yoga provides practical application of the techniques needed to develop and prepare oneself to experience the state of Raja Yoga.

The term 'Hatha' in Sanskrit is composed of two syllables 'ha' and 'tha', wherein 'ha' represents the sun or vital energy and 'tha' means the moon, representing the mental energy. By practicing Hatha Yoga, these two energy flows are synchronized leading to a balanced state of mind. It harmonizes, purifies and prepares the body system to experience higher state of Raja Yoga. There is no other purpose behind the practice of Hatha Yoga. Therefore, Raja Yoga cannot be perfected or attained without approaching it through Hatha Yogic practices.

The verse discussed in this article is used in Hatha Pradipika in the context of explanation of Kevala Kumbaka, a state achieved through perfection in pranayama practice. It is said that the state of Raja Yoga can be achieved in Kevala Kumbaka. However, such state cannot be attained without going through the systematic techniques prescribed for asanas (body postures), shadkriyas (cleansing processes), and pranayama (breathing) techniques.

The benefits of Hatha yogic practices can be realized in its fullest extent only if done with proper under-

standing of purpose of the practice, which is to achieve the state of equipoise. Otherwise, effects of such practices may only be at a superficial level. For instance, if asanas are practiced without the understanding of vinyasa (flow), swasa (breathing), sthithi (stability), drishti (point of focus), and visranti (relaxation) it most likely ends up being a mechanical exercise. While such an approach may still appear to be appealing as a physical exercise, it completely misses the purpose for which these practices were prescribed.

The true spirit of Hatha Yoga is realized only by achieving the state of Raja Yoga. Therefore, Hatha Yogic practices without the aim and understanding of Raja Yoga is meaningless. Similarly achieving the state of Raja Yoga without systematic practice of Hatha Yogic techniques is very rare. Hence the importance of practice of both is essential to achieve success in Yoga.

Achieving Success in Yoga

Perfection in Raja Yoga is the goal of Hatha Yoga and Hatha Yoga is the first stepping stone to reach the ultimate highest state of Raja Yoga as enumerated by Svatmarama, the author of Hatha Pradeepika in its opening verse which says“*Vibhrajate Pronnata rajayogama rodhumicchoradhirohini-va*”.

There seems to be a misunderstanding that Hatha Yoga and Raja Yoga are different forms of practice while in reality both are two sides of the same coin. One denotes the ultimate state achieved in yoga while the other provides the practical application methods to achieve such state.

Hence it is imperative for any seeker to undertake Hatha Yoga with the aim of achieving the ultimate state of Yoga.



Align Body with Mind

WORKSHOP ON DHYANA

24th April. 2023
Monday

TAMAN PELANGI, JOHOR BAHRU
MALAYSIA

Session by: Acharya *Bala*



Pranavam

The Cosmic Sound



Since the days of origin of human race, man has been an ardent seeker of knowing about his own existence and the source of the existence (nature) surrounding human life. The external surrounding factors made him a happy person as well as created fear and also made him anxious.

Our ancient masters in pursuit of this truth understood that there is a strong connection between their existence and the surrounding nature in which they live. The infinite nature of the cosmic system has always been looked upon with astonishment.

They recognized that the changes that takes place in the surroundings also influences changes in the mental and physical conditions of human beings. They comprehended that human life is only a small part of the complex interconnected cosmic system and that resonances within them. The subtle movements in the universal system impacts human existence.

They realized that the functioning of the entire living beings is subject to this universal rhythm which helped them break free from the insecurities and anxieties to have peaceful and joyful life.

They also understood, this eternal force that underpins the cosmic

existence is beyond time, space and form and that it cannot be limited to mere names or words. However, only in order to express it through a language, such an eternal and everlasting system was referred to as ‘Pranavam’, commonly referred as ‘Omkar’.

‘Omkar’ stands as the essence and embodiment of this universal system (Brahman). It is also known as ‘Pranavam’ which implies ‘prakarshe-nanavam’ (always or ever new).

There are two approaches adopted in contemplating the meaning of ‘Omkar’ which are Samastha (comprehensive) and Vystha (component based). Under the Samastha approach ‘Om’ is taken as a phrase and its meaning is explained. In Vystha approach the syllables of the word are dissected and its distinct meaning is analyzed.

In the former approach, ‘Om’ is explained through the phrase ‘Om ithyedaksharam brahma’, ‘Om’ represents brahma. Similarly Bhramam is remembered through phrases such as ‘Om tat sat iti nirteso bhrama thrividam’, ‘Om’, ‘tat’, and ‘sat’. In the second approach ‘Om’ is analysed into separate syllables such as A-U-M, and the meaning of each of the syllables

are interpreted. Mandukya Upanishad, mentions about both these approaches of interpreting 'Omkar'.

If the meaning of 'Om' is interpreted and analysed as ever new as implied by 'prakarshena navam' it can be realized that while it reflects the three states of consciousness jagrat (awake state), swapna (dream state), and susupti (deep sleep state), it also signifies the state of ultimate reality that ever exists beyond these states.

'Omkar' is properly recited by engaging the neck, upper palate and the lips. In Patanjala Yoga Sutras, Sage Patanjali Maharishi, clearly states that 'Pranavam' when practiced with total absorption, and with proper understanding of its meaning, will enable the Sadhak (practitioner) to overcome obstacles in Yoga (Chita vikshepa).

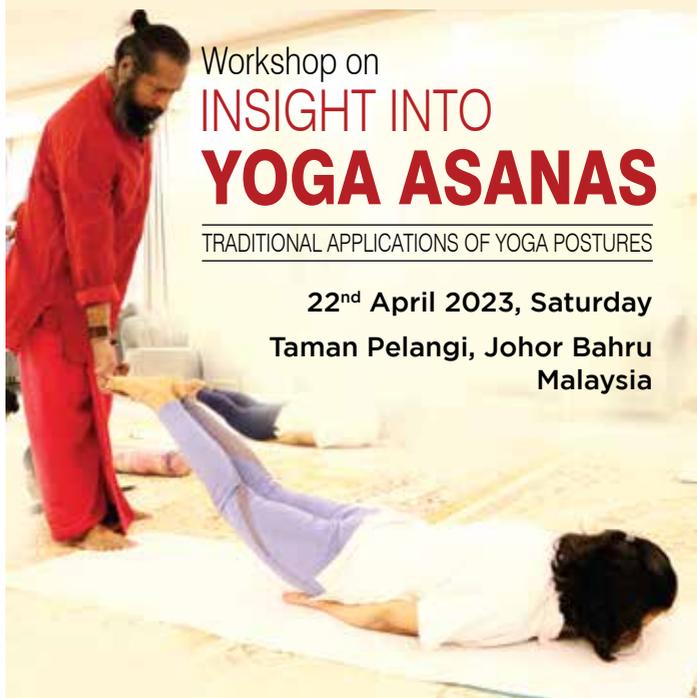


Workshop on **INSIGHT INTO YOGA ASANAS**

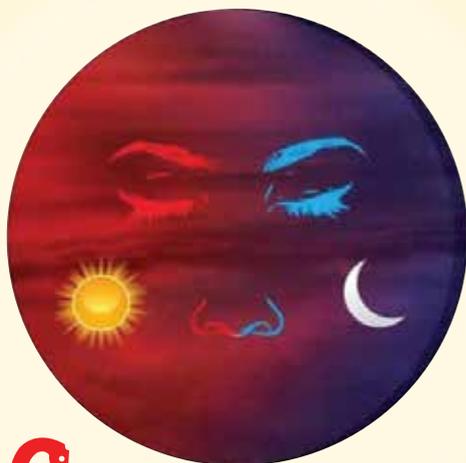
TRADITIONAL APPLICATIONS OF YOGA POSTURES

22nd April 2023, Saturday

Taman Pelangi, Johor Bahru
Malaysia



Session by: Acharya *Bala*



SWARA

Journey into the space within

Session by: Acharya *Bala*

1st April 2023 - Saturday
Dubai Al Nahda Center



Kapalabhati

Inner Mechanism



Traditionally, Kapalabhati is one of the Shatkriyas or Shodhana kriyas (cleansing practice) rather than a form of pranayama. Practicing Kapalabhati regularly helps to remove the toxins that reside within the body. According to the yogic text Gheranda Samhita, Kapalabhati is also known as Bhalabhati and has been presented in the form of 3 different methods of practices. These are Vatakrama, Vyutkrama & Sitkrama. Among these three, Vyutkrama and Sitkrama are practiced with the help of water.

Vatakrama is done by doing strong expulsions from the left and the right nostrils respectively. While Vyutkrama involves drawing water in through both the nostrils and expelling it through the mouth and Sitkrama is other way round, that is drawing water from the mouth and expelling it through both the nostrils.

It is important to understand the impact of doing Kapalabhati in an incorrect manner. In a normal scenario breathing involves active inhalation and relatively passive exhalation. But the traditional technique of Kapalabhati involves forceful exhalation and passive inhalation.

Keep in mind that breathing is the base of life force (prana) normal inhalation and exhalation control different functions of the body in a very peculiar and rhythmic manner. This includes regulating the metabolic rate, heart functions, activities of the brain, emotional state of mind and the thought processes amongst many others. So, if such an important functionality is consciously performed in the opposite direction, we can very well assume how the contraindications of such a performance will impact on our nervous system.

Nevertheless, correct practice and systematic manner of taking up Kapalabhati will definitely result into very pleasant experience without having any adverse effects. This will also enable the practitioner to get the higher benefits as indicated in our Yogic scriptures.

Kapalabhati should be learned from an experienced teacher. As per Hatha Vidya tradition, Kapalabhati is taught in three stages. First stage involves a single stroke of inhalation and exhalation, facilitating the movement of the abdominal muscles in systematic and controlled manner. Second stage is of continuous expulsion,

bringing unanimity between the exhalation and movement of abdominal muscles. Final stage is to combine previous stages the air that is expelled, the movement of the abdominal muscles and the continuous, rapid and rhythmic expulsions.

It is important to observe that movements are minimal on the other parts of the body, especially on the upper chest area. Kapalabhati strokes should be applicable only on the area below the navel. As per the Yogic scriptures, Padmasana is the recommended seating position for Kapalabhati practice. This posture reduces unwanted body movements and increases the strength. Also it helps prana to transcend from the Deh Madhya to the upper proximities of the body.

In order to perform Kapalabhati, there are a few pre-requisites which includes the practice of doing Udiyanabandha and other preparatory practices which are to be learnt under the guidance of a competent teacher.

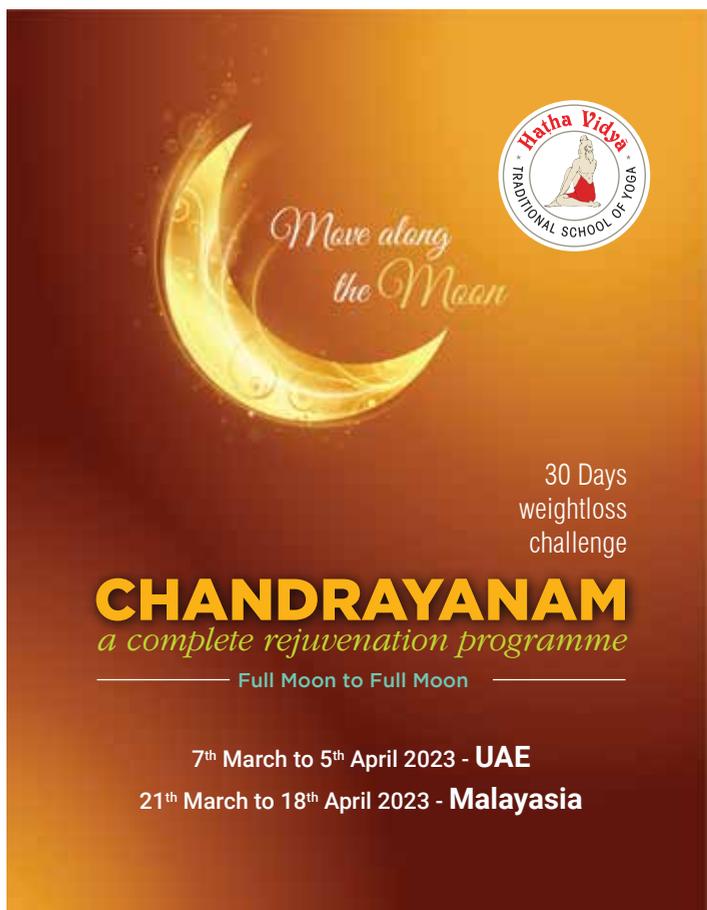
After doing Kapalabhati, many experience certain behavioral changes and discomforts, for eg. restlessness, becoming short tempered etc. In order to avoid these adverse effects at the end of Kapalabhati, the practice of inhaling from the left nostril and exhaling through the right is highly recommended. This is also known as Chadrabhedana Pranayama.

People having high blood pressure and epileptic disorders are advised not to perform Kapalabhati. Those having cardiac problems, should do Kapalabhati under the direct guidance and observance of an Acharya.

To watch the video on ***Kapalabhati***



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Dubai - UAE

Hypertension

Management



Hypertension, or high blood pressure, is the chronic state of elevated pressure in the arteries. Blood pressure (BP) is the force of blood in the arteries. When the heart beats, blood propels in the arteries with force. This is called systolic blood pressure. When the heart relaxes after each beat, the force of the blood flow drops (called diastolic blood pressure). A person with systolic and/or diastolic blood pressures consistently above the normal range (120/80 mm Hg) has hypertension.

Hypertension is called a silent killer as it may not present any symptoms in the individual and may go undetected until a doctor's visit calls for checking the BP. However, having the blood pressure constantly above the normal range stresses out all the systems of the body and can take a toll on the body. Thus its prevention or management is of utmost importance.

Like many other diseases, Hypertension is the result of a faulty lifestyle, which includes a

diet high in processed foods and not enough activity. Other factors like constant stress which is a part and parcel of the modern lifestyle also contributes to hypertension by constantly overworking the cardiac machinery. People who are significantly over their recommended weight, smoke and drink regularly may be at an increased risk of the disease.

Many researches over the years are consistent in their findings that modifying your lifestyle and consuming a diet predominantly rich in natural foods can help to reverse or manage this disease.

Yoga is a system which helps to bring about a state of harmony in the body. One is said to be in a state of harmony when one's thoughts are aligned with one's actions. The modern world is constantly bombarded with a lot of knowledge, we all know what we should and shouldn't eat but yet can't resist the temptations of certain foods, fully aware they are not good for us. The practice of yoga encourages a person to do all actions mindfully and thus addresses the gap of mindless eating. Yogic Diet of Mitahara advocates eating without distractions and savouring each morsel of food so that one enjoys all that is consumed. When the mind is completely engaged in the activity of eating

satisfaction is derived from a small amount of food and there is no urge to overeat or a feeling of deprivation. Gheranda Samhita recommends that a yogic practitioner should eat easily digestible, agreeable, lubricated and food that nourishes the body and also that is liked by mind. It also advocates avoiding difficult to digest, heat producing polluted, putrid, stale, extreme temperatures of food. In modern terms these can be related to eating fresh food and avoiding processed and packaged food which is devoid of essential nutrients.

The dietary recommendations for hypertension are:

- Eat more fresh fruits and vegetables. They provide vitamins, minerals, and important nutrients like fiber and flavonoids. Minerals such as magnesium, calcium, and potassium are known to help lower blood pressure.

- Eat foods lower in sodium and add herbs and spices as flavor enhancements instead. Studies have shown that people in countries that use a great deal of salt in their cooking tend to have higher blood pressures than people in countries that use little salt.
- Reduce dietary intake of deep fried foods especially commercially prepared packaged ones.
- Eliminate trans fats from the diet (found in foods with hydrogenated or partially-hydrogenated oils).
- Drink adequate water daily.

In addition to Mitahara daily yoga practice of asanas, pranayama, meditation and relaxation can help to activate the parasympathetic system of our body thus helping to control the stress and together all these practices can help to manage and even reduce the blood pressure.



Intensive

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AND

RETREAT



3rd March - 26th March 2023
DUBAI



Workshop on

YOGA Nidra

The Ultimate of Relaxation

30th April 2023, Sunday

Taman Pelangi, Johor Bahru
Malaysia

Session by: Acharya *Bala*



THE LIGHT WITHIN

DHĀRANA

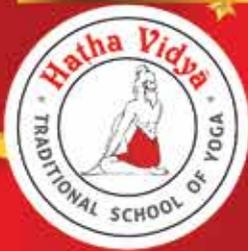
Focusing Techniques Revealed

23rd April. 2023
Sunday

Taman Pelangi, Johor Bahru
Malaysia

Session by: Acharya *Bala*





11th ANNIVERSARY

Hatha Vidya
Yoga Centre
www.hathavidyame.com

15th April 2023
Dubai - Al Nahda Center

Pranayama

Introduction to Pranayama

Pranayama refers to the practice of controlled breathing and is considered a tool for regulating and controlling the life force (prana) in one's body. The main aim of Pranayama is to harness and control the breath to achieve physical and mental health benefits.

चलेवातेचलंचित्तंनश्चलेनश्चलंभवेत् ।

योगीस्थाणुत्त्वम्आप्नोततितोवायुंनरीधयेत् ॥२॥

cale vāte calam cittam niscale niscalam bhavet |

yogi sthanutvam āpnoti tato vāyum nirodhayet ॥2॥

If the respiration is agitated, the mind is unstable and if the same respiration is stabilized, the mind also becomes stable.

Pranayama has been explained in various ancient yogic texts. Lets delve into different definitions of pranayama according to the most prevalent yogic texts.

Patanjala Yoga Sutra

“tasmin sati svasa prasvasayoh gativichedah pranayamah”

Pranayama is the regulation of incoming and out going flow of breath with retention. It is to be practiced only after perfection in asana is attained.

As per the Patanjala Yoga Sutras, Pranayama is the fourth limb, right after the Yama, Niyama and Asana among Asthanga Yoga – the eight limbs of Yoga. Patanjali in the second chapter has dedicated a few sutras explaining the



importance of Pranayama, explaining the process of inhalation and exhalation and the importance of Kumbhaka (retention).

*bahyabhyantarastambhavrittih
deshakalasankhyabhih paridrishto
dirghasookshmah //2.50//*

“Bahya Abhyantara Stambha Vrittih...” Stambha vritti – a point of no inhalation and exhalation - is the result of internal and external Kumbhaka. A stage when there is no complete inhalation or exhalation, and breath is completely absorbed.

“Desha Kala Sankhyabhi..” The structure and the place, time and number are of utmost importance in the practice of Pranayama.

“Paridristha Dirgha Sukshmah..” To identify whether it is prolonged and/or subtle.

As one advances in the practice, a state of Kumbhaka subsists. This state is without inhalation and exhalation unconditioned by place, time and numbers.

Hatha Yoga Pradeepika

Hatha Yoga Pradeepika considers Pranayama as the second limb, amongst the 4 limbs of Yoga. Hatha Pradeepika emphasizes the importance of practice of asanas, the control over the

senses, following a moderate diet and the guidance from an Acharya when one intends to practice pranayama.

According to Yoga there are 72000 nadis emanating from the Kanda region, located below the navel. Out of these nadis, three are very important. Ida, Pingala and Sushumna. In order for prana to flow freely through the middle nadi which is Sushumna, these nadis need to be purified with the help of proper practice of Pranayama. However in Hatha Pradeepika it is referred to as Kumbhaka instead of Pranayama. Kumbhaka is a Sanskrit word, meaning "retention" or "holding of the breath." Kumbhaka, is given extreme importance here, as it provides a technique to retain the life force (prana).

The text clearly mentions the time of the day when Pranayama / Kumbhaka practice should be undertaken by the practitioner. It says that Pranayama should be practiced 4 times a day –
Pratah (morning)
Madhyandina (noon)
Sayam (evening)
Ardha Ratra (mid night)

Eight types of Kumbhakas popularly known as Astha Kumbhaka as per the Hatha Yoga Pradeepika are, Suryabhedana, Ujjayi, Sitkari, Sitali, Bhastrika, Murcha and Plavini.

Gheranda Samhita

Yoga described in Gheranda Samhita is called Ghata Yoga, as Gheranda has preferred to equate the human body with that of an unbaked

earthen pot, which if not tampered properly in the fire of yogic practice cannot be used for higher purposes of yoga. Gheranda has accepted seven limbs of Yoga and Pranayama is the fifth limb, which comes after the Shodana Kriya, Asana, Mudra and Pratyahara.

After elaborating the importance of the place and time of the practice Gheranda Samhita gives relevance of maintaining a balance eating habit with Mitahara, then Gheranda starts the discussion about Nadi Shodana. Purification of Nadis is essential for practicing Pranayama. The text also emphasizes the importance of beginning of Pranayama practice in the right 'Kaala' - season.

Just like Hatha Yoga Pradeepika, Pranayama is considered to be synonymous to Kumbhaka and the eight kumbhakas mentioned include – Sahita, Suryabhedan, Ujjayi, Sitali, Bhastrika, Brahmari, Murcha And Kevali. Sahita is further divided into Sagarbha or Nigarbha, which means with or without the use of the beeja mantra (seed letter). The pranayama practice is clearly stated in this text, to be done with a proper ratio. The ratio of Puraka (inhalation) : Kumbhaka (retention) : Rechaka (exhalation) should be 1: 4: 2.

Gheranda Samhita glorifies Pranayama as giving the ability to move in the sky, destroy the diseases, awaken the Kundalini, and ensue the state of Manomani or Samadhi. Stability is experienced in the mind and the practitioner of Pranayama becomes blissful.

Vasistha Samhita

According to another important text, Vasistha Samhita, one should practice Pranayama, only after purifying the nadis. Vasistha opined, that one who follows all the limbs of Yoga, beginning with Pranayama without purifying the nadis, the efforts of practitioner will be futile. After performing daily duties, the practitioner should sit erect with head, neck and body in straight position. One should sit comfortably facing the east or the north.

In Vasistha Samhita Pranayama and Pratyahara are described together in a single chapter. After attaining success in the practice of Kevala Kumbhaka, other methods of Pranajaya (conquering of prana) should be practiced.

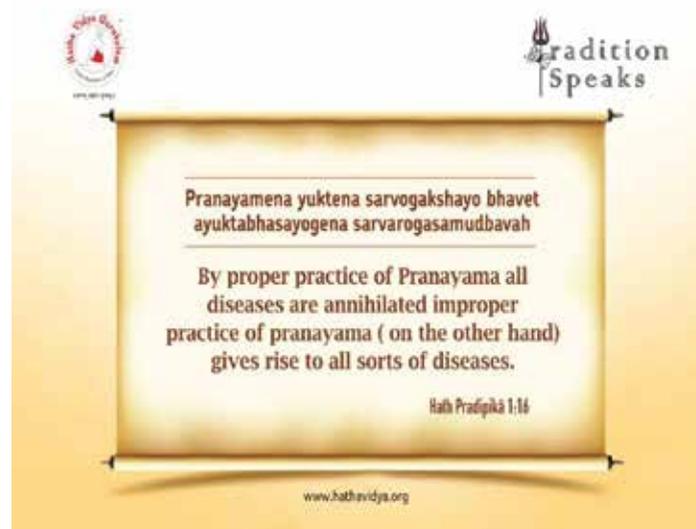
Comparison of the Yogic Texts

Yogic Texts usually describe Pranayama with two traditions. One Tradition describes Pranayama with the use of Beeja Mantra or Pranava. The other tradition does not prescribe the same. Hatha Yoga Pradeepika follows the second tradition and Vasistha Samhita follows the first. Gheranda Samhita has described the technique of Pranayama, with both traditions. It names them as Sagarbha and Nigarbha.

The stages of the progress in Pranayama are also described the four texts. The three stages of progress of Pranayama as described in Vasistha Samhita and Gheranda Samhita are Adhama (Lowest), Madhyama (middle) & Uttama (Best/ Highest). Hatha Yoga Pradeepika, calls the lowest degree of

attainment as Kaniyasi. The Pranayama practice, which brings forth sweat or perspiration, is the Adhama / Kaniyasi (lowest) level of progress. That which brings tremor / throbbing is considered as the Madhyama (middle) level of progress. Once the Uttama (highest) level of progress is attained, Prana gets absorbed in the body and the body become capable of levitating. Astha Kumbhakas are enumerated both by Hatha Yoga Pradeepika and Gheranda Samhita, with a slight difference. Gheranda Samhita has opted out Sitkari and Plavini & included Sahita and Kevali instead, under the eight kumbhakas.

In short, practicing Pranayama as per the prescribed manner slowly brings stability in the mind, which is the first step in attaining liberation or in other words Samadhi. In the coming series, we will continue to elaborate more on the subtler aspects of the Pranayama practice and throw insight on the experiential understanding of Pranayama.





The Wheel of
KARMA
— IN ACTION —

9th April 2023, Sunday

Dubai - Bur Dubai Center



Shodhan
Kriya

yogic cleansing process

01st May 2023, Monday

Taman Pelangi, Johor Bahru
Malaysia



Session by: Acharya *Bala*

Pranāmasana

Traditional Approach



Asanas have become so famous, that there are innumerable books written about asanas, with several variations of each asana.

Through our series – ‘Insight into Asanas’ – we try to study the historical roots of the asana, the physical and meta-physical aspects of the asana, its variations, methodology, benefits, contraindications, and spiritual linkages as per the Yogic traditions.

One of the ancient texts describes asana performance as - Each movement begins with effort, matures into stretching to reach an ultimate position, then recedes from that to attain balance which is thus a form of transcendence or revelation.

The goal of each asana is the establishment of the asana into STITHI (steadiness) to lead to meditation (the relaxed and steady state of mind devoid of any oscillations).

As we describe in each series of asanas, when one performs an asana to attain the final posture, one must first build the foundations to perform asanas through sukshma and sthula vyama (preliminary preparations of the musculo-skeletal system). During the process of attaining the final posture of asana, one

must not force oneself. As one’s daily practice matures, one should cultivate asana practice with ease.

To attain the final asana position, one must follow the moving in to and out of the posture in a systematic flow of VINYASA. One must be aware of the breath (SHWASA) and should sync up the breath with the physical movement. Once the final position is attained, focus one’s attention on body parts (as a beginner – stretch and contraction and as an advanced practitioner – energy centers). This process is termed DRISHTI. Fourthly, maintain the asana with steadiness (STITHI) for some duration to enhance the benefits of the asana (physiological & spiritual benefits). The final steady position of the asana should lead to a relaxed state of mind (VISHRANTI) so that one can experience a stilled mind.

In this series, we will study the asana – PRANAMASANA.

PRANAMASANA

The word Pranama means ‘bowing, paying respect.’ There are various other names associated with Pranamasana. A few common ones are:

- Balasana
- Naman Pranamasana

One of the texts written in the 19th century – Sritattvanidhi, (written in Devanagari) talks about ‘Balasana’. Balasana is a counter asana for various asanas and is usually practiced before and after Sirsasana (headstand).

In Hatha Vidya tradition, we call the asana Pranamasana. It gives similar effects as Shirshasana (headstand) but with less intensity. Let’s study in detail Pranamasana as per our tradition.

Practice Method

- Sit in Vajrasana, with palms on the knees.
- Inhale and drop your head back and arch a little.
- While exhaling lean forward, keeping the chin away from the chest, and place the forehead close to the knees, hold the ankles.
- In the final position, raise the hip and place the crown of the head on the floor, just in front of the knees.
- Remain in the position till comfortable.
- Exhale while lowering the buttocks.
- Sit on the heels and place the palms on the knees. Now inhale raising the trunk and head and return to Vajrasana.

While performing Pranamasana, one can observe the contraction on the lower abdomen, stretch on the spine and feel the blood flow towards the forehead/ frontal lobe of brain and face muscles. Pranamasana enhances the vital capacity of the lungs. It helps manage asthma as it helps open the air passages. It prepares one for meditation by increasing alertness. As mentioned earlier, it is a preparatory practice for shirshaasana (headstand) but provides effects of less intensity. It activates the ajna chakra.

People with high blood pressure should avoid full posture. One can restrict to the preliminary stage, using the palm support to bend down but keeping the head straight. People suffering from vertigo, neck issues, and glaucoma should avoid this asana.

To watch the video on *Pranamasana*



Prenatal Yoga

An Overview



Prenatal yoga is designed to support mothers-to-be on their pregnancy journeys, beginning from conception all the way to the birth of a child. Prenatal yoga is particularly effective as part of an integrated approach that includes breathing exercises, meditation, and deep relaxation. Yoga helps to strengthen the pelvic floor muscles, improve blood flow to pelvic organs, strengthen the reproductive system, give stability to the spine, and make labor pain bearable. Moreover, it gives confidence and inner stamina so that the stress during delivery is alleviated to a certain extent. Yoga helps in good digestion and healthy blood circulation as well.

Recently the evidence in support of pregnancy yoga is accumulating with more women seeking systematic guided yoga training with a favorable outcome for both mother and baby. It has been proven that yoga can be safe during different trimesters of pregnancy and is a safe tool to reduce stress, anxiety, and depression throughout pregnancy.

The latest recommendations by ACOG (AMERICAN COLLEGE OF OBSTETRICIANS AND GYNAECOLOGISTS), designates walking, swimming, stationary cycling, low-impact

aerobics, prenatal yoga or Pilates, running, jogging, racquet sports, and strength training as safe during pregnancy. Most of the warning signs to be aware of, from the ACOG list includes regular, painful contractions of the uterus, bleeding, fluid gushing, or leaking from the vagina. Other warning signs include feeling dizzy or faint, shortness of breath, chest pain, headache, muscle weakness, calf pain, or swelling. From all the recommended activities for an expectant mother, prenatal yoga is well-accepted across the globe as one of the safest practices.

There are many issues that an expectant mother goes through while carrying a child and amongst those the two commonly faced issues during pregnancy are -

Gestational lower back pain

Gestational lower back pain is caused by physiologic changes during pregnancy, including maternal weight gain, spinal lordosis, decreased abdominal muscle strength, changed center of mass, and relaxin-mediated joint laxity. These increase shear forces across the joints of the lower back and pelvis, increasing the risk of LBP and falls during pregnancy. Gestational LBP is

associated with insomnia, impaired daily activity, loss of work, depression, pain medication use, and chronic recurrent back pain. The effects extend through childbirth and into motherhood. Despite the high incidence of gestational LBP and the associated morbidity, treatments are limited.

Pregnancy-related depression

Over half of all women experience anxiety at some point during pregnancy, and about 13% of pregnant women experience clinical depression, even after delivery. Depression and stress in pregnancy are associated with prematurity and low birth rate and postpartum depression. Efforts to improve individual psychosocial factors include exercise and mind-body interventions.

Benefits of Prenatal Yoga:

- Prenatal Yoga improves blood flow to the vital organs of both mother and baby.
- Reduces stress and anxiety.
- Increases the strength, flexibility, and endurance of muscles needed for childbirth.
- Decreases lower back pain, nausea, headaches, and shortness of breath.
- Improves sleep of the pregnant lady.
- Yoga improves gait, postural stability, and flexibility.
- Supine and inverted postures reduce leg edema, open the rib cage, and improve breathing.

Common guidelines for performing prenatal yoga are as follows:

- At least thirty minutes of moderate

yoga is recommended at least five days a week for pregnant females.

- Before beginning a prenatal yoga program, one should take a pre-approval from her health care provider.
- Determine the category of pregnancy whether it's a high-risk or low-risk pregnancy.
- For high-risk pregnancies and those at an increased risk of preterm labor or having certain medical conditions, such as heart disease or back problems, should do tender postures.
- The trimester of the pregnancy running will determine the yoga practices to be done.
- Gentle movement of different areas of the body to maintain agility in the body.
- Gentle postures or pregnancy squats, which open and strengthen the hips.
- Mild asanas to strengthen the pelvic floor muscles.
- Gentle breathwork that instills a sense of calm.
- Relaxation while lying on the left side and not on the back, to ensure maximum blood circulation for the baby.
- Avoid excessive strain on the core and abs, inversions, and other advanced postures.
- Practice prenatal yoga in a well-ventilated room to avoid overheating.
- Intake of plenty of fluids for maintaining good hydration levels.
- All yoga practices are done under the guidance of a competent teacher.
- One needs to be alert for vaginal bleeding, decreased fetal movement,

or contractions during the practice.

Yoga Practices for Prenatal

Pre-Natal Yogic methods are subject to the stages of pregnancy, encouraging the expecting mother's physical, emotional, and mental well-being during each trimester of the pregnancy.

A few safe methods for a low-risk pregnancy that can be performed under the guidance of a competent teacher are as follows:

- Stula Vyama – Energising Techniques as per Hatha Vidya Tradition
- Sukshma Vyama – Subtle Methods as per Hatha Vidya Tradition
- Asanas like Tadasana, Utkatasana, Kati Chakrasana

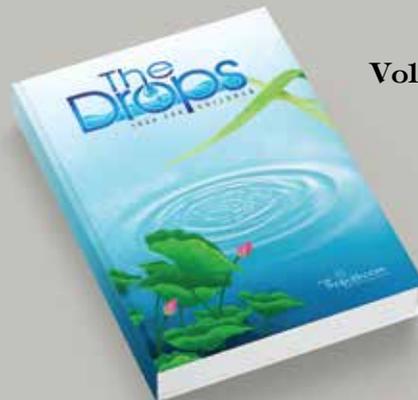
- Squatting
- Recitation of OM
- Nadi Shuddhi
- Anulom Vilom
- Brahamari

Note of caution-

- The expectant mother should be aware of her body limitations in each phase of pregnancy.
- Importance of listening to the body and communicating with the yoga teacher.
- Yoga teachers can support pregnant women in the class, most importantly, not overdoing with strenuous activities and offering modifications throughout the class with each trimester of pregnancy.

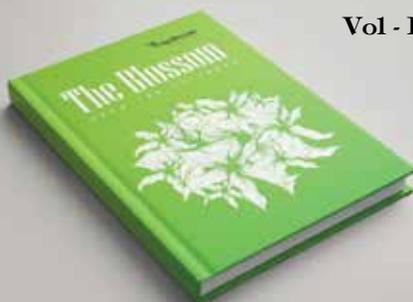


YOGA FOR CHILDREN

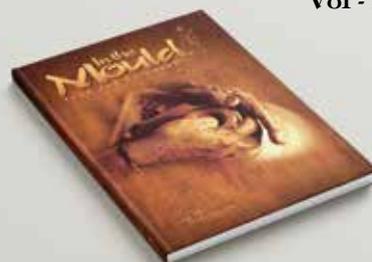


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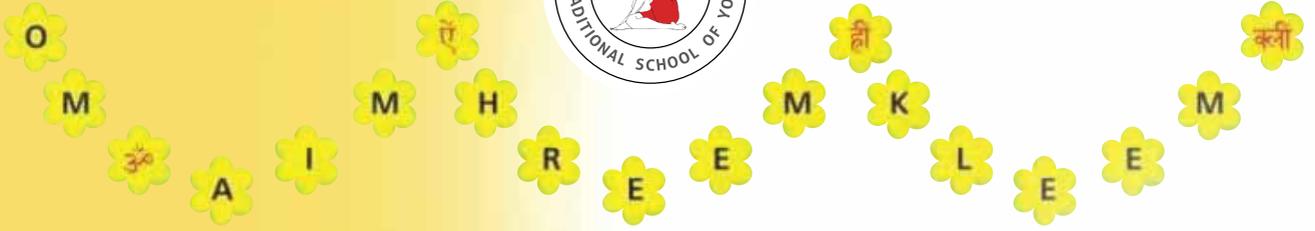
AVAILABLE AT
OUR CENTERS



Vol - II



Vol - III



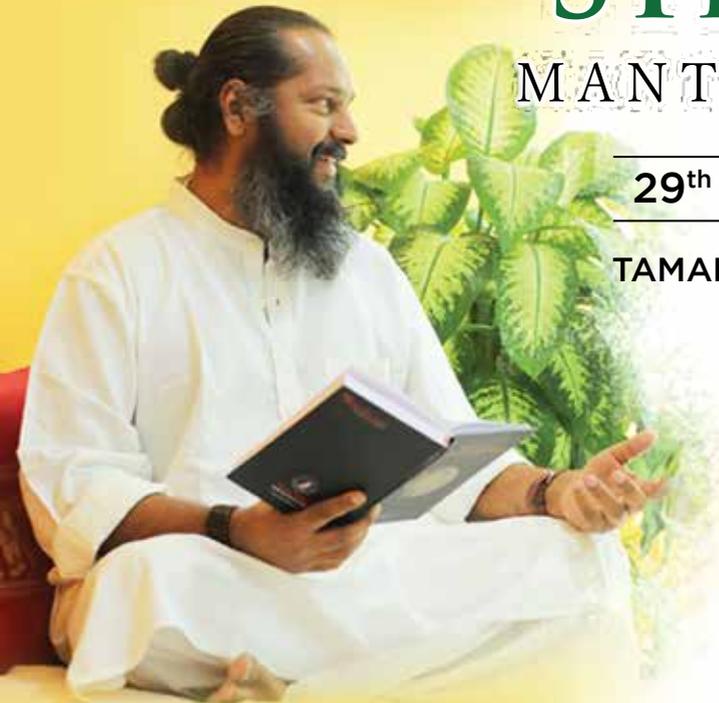
Workshop on

GARLAND OF SYLLABLES

MANTRA EXPLAINED

29th April 2023, Saturday

TAMAN PELANGI, JOHOR BAHRU
MALAYSIA



Session by: Acharya *Bala*



Yoga Asanas

My Experience

Yoga asanas, or postures, are an important part of yoga practice. They help to improve flexibility, strength, balance, and overall physical health. Additionally, asanas can also have a positive impact on mental well-being, helping to reduce stress, increase focus and concentration, and promote a sense of calm and inner peace. Regular practice of yoga asanas can also lead to improved posture and better alignment of the body. Hatha yoga is a branch of yoga that focuses on physical postures, asanas, breathing techniques (pranayama), and meditation.

The word "Hatha" is derived from the Sanskrit words "ha" (sun) and "tha" (moon) and often we have to balance our "sun" and moon" energies by doing the asanas on both sides of the body. For example, if the asana is to be done on the left first you have to hold the asana for the same amount of time as on

the right side.

Some asanas are hard to do and some, are easy. This is because some people are more flexible than others and some people find balancing asanas easier to do. In my experience, strength-based and some balancing asanas are easy and the asanas which require one to be flexible are very hard. Some asanas may be easier or harder for different people depending on their individual physical abilities and limitations, such as flexibility, strength, and balance.

Some asanas may be hard but if one consistently practice yoga then one will be able to perform the asanas effortlessly because one would have built up gradually the strength and flexibility.

EVENTS CONDUCTED

Talk at Sivananda Divine Life Society, Malaysia



Trataka Session, Malaysia



Pranyama Sadhana Workshop, Malaysia



OM Workshop, Malaysia



Graduation of 1st Batch 300hrs YTT, Malaysia



Corporate Event, Malaysia



Mudra Workshop, Dubai



Dharana Workshop, Dubai



Corporate Event at Well Care, Dubai



Corporate Event at Eva Interiors, Dubai



Corporate Event at Kite Beach, Dubai



Al Qayam Boys School, Dubai



Progressive English School, Sharjah



Nishtha Graduation, Dubai



300hrs YTT Graduation, Dubai



