

18



373en18

HATHA YOG



Note

Lord *Shiva* is considered to be the father of *Hathyog*. The successors of this tradition were *Sh. Matsyendranath*, *Swami Gorakshnath*, *Meennath*, *Bhartrihari* and further it was promoted by *Swatmaram* and other followers of 'Nath-Tradition' till *Sh. Gopichandra*. *Yog* practitioner becomes eligible for *Rajayog* through purified healthy body with the help of *Hathayog*. *Rajayog* is a practice of attaining *Samadhi* keeping pure consciences through *Yama-Niyama*. In this lesson you will learn about the Hatha Yog, its history and its benefits in our life.



OBJECTIVES

After studying this lesson you will be able to:

- explain *Hathayog*;
- describe the Philosophy and History of Hatha Yog;
- identify the importance of Nadis and Chakras and
- explain the effects and benefits of *Hatha Yog*.



18.1 HATHA YOG

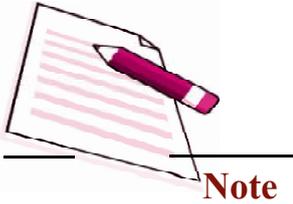
Hatha yog is a very important part of yog. It is a combination of two words Hatha and Yog. The literal meaning of Hatha is 'force' and is more traditionally defined as the 'yog of force or means of attaining a state of yog through force. But, here in Hatha yog 'Hatha' is meant quite differently. It is a combination of two beej mantras 'ha' and 'tha'. 'Ha' symbolically represents for 'sun' and 'Tha' for 'moon'.

In Hatha yogic terms 'Ha' or 'Sun' or pingala nadi represents pran, the vital force and 'Tha' or moon or ida nadi represents mind, the mental energy. So, Hatha means the union of pran and mental forces.

Yog is a Sanskrit word derived from 'Yuj' dhatu, which has thirty two meanings in Sanskrit dictionary. Here, Hatha yog means union, addition or integration etc. It is a state of bliss or the end of all human sorrows. So, the meaning of whole term 'hath yog' is the union of sun or pingla and moon or ida together.

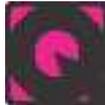


Yogic Practices



In hatha yog sun and moon are two fundamental part of our existence. So these two need more elaboration. Sun (pingla) means pran shakti, the life force and moon (ida) means manas shakti, the mental force. Every object in this universe, right from the smallest atom to the largest star is a combination of these two forces or energies. When they interact with each other, then creation begins to unfold. And when these two shaktis or energies are seperated from each other, creation is dissolved which is called ‘ pralaya’

In Hatha yog, there is the concept of harmonizing the above two fold energies in a human being. Normally, these two energies are in an unbalanced and unharamonized form in all of us. In some persons prana shakti or pingala is while in other ones, mental shakti is predominant and the pran shakti is subservient. Those whose pranic energy is predominant are prone to anger, quarrel, causing murder, committing crimes and violent behavior. Contrary to it, those whose mental energy is predominant are prone to mental imbalance like tension, depression, anxiety and stress etc. Hatha yog devise techniques to harmonize and create balance between these two energies which in turn not only gives, sound physical health, mental peace, emotional balance and above all evolution of human consciousness.



INTEXT QUESTION 18.1

Fill in the Blanks -

- i) Hatha means the union of and forces.
- ii) Hatha yog devise techniques toandbalance between these two energies.
- iii) Yog is a Sanskrit word derived from dhatu, which has thirty two meanings in Sanskrit dictionary.

18.2 PHILOSOPHY OF HATHA YOG

As we have discussed earlier that the word Hatha is made up of two Sanskrit roots, ha and tha. Ha means ‘sun’ and Tha means ‘moon’. This is symbolic of the twin energy forces which exist in everything. Pran energy or vitality is dynamic and active. This is bodily energy or gross energy. The moon is the mental energy of chitta. It is the subtle force which is related with the mental layers. The two create the extremities of introversion and extroversion.

In the body there are specific path ways for channelizing these two forces. Just as in an electrical circuit you have suitable wires for the conduction of positive-negative electrical energy currents, similarly there are energy channels within



the structure of the body. These are known as nadis. Nad means flow. The mental energy travels along ida nadi which governs the left side of the body. pranic energy travels through pingla nadi and this governs the right side of the body. If these two separates flowing energies, prana and chitta are unified, it creates a suitable atmosphere for kundalini or spiritual energy, to awaken and ascend through the middle passage, sushumna nadi. This sushumna nadi represents the neutral force, the flow of spiritual energy.

The awakening of kundalini is the subject matter of Hatha Yog. It is believed in hatha yog that at the base of spine there is a chakra that is called mooladhar chakra. This chakra is a seat of primal energy that is also called kundalini shakti. But, this shakti is in sleeping mode here. This place is also called shakti meaning 'prakriti'. With the practice of Hatha Yog techniques, union is brought about. With this union, the kundalini shakti awakens and it starts ascending to higher realms of consciousness and finally it is established in sahasrara chakra at the crown of the head.

When kundalini ascends and gradually reaches at sahasrar chakra, shakti reaches to the place of Shiva Shakti unites with Shiva, at Sahasrar chakra. This is yog or union of Shakti with Shiva. Sahasrara Chakra is the place of Shiva. So, yog means union of Shiva (consciousness) and Shakti (energy). Shakti is kundalini energy, Shiva is the supreme consciousness seated in sahasrara chakra.

Kundalini ascends though sushumna, not through ida and pingla. Sushumna is the highway for kundalini . It passes through various chakras, sometimes all of a sudden and sometimes very slowly. When it unites with ida and pingala in ajna chakra, it is called hatha yog. Then after this first union it forges ahead to sahasasar chakra there it unites with the supreme consciousness, shiva. That is called yog, which means ultimate union. Therefore, the ultimate object of hatha yog is to experience yog. Swami Swatnaram aptly describes it in his book 'Hatha Yog Pradipika' that Hatha Yog is a ladder and Raj Yog is ultimate-pranamya shrigurumnatham swamiswaatmaramen yogina.

kevalam rajyogya hathvidyopdisyate 11(1/2 HP) means, first prostrating his guru, swamiswaatmaram instructs the knowledge of hatha yog only for raja yog the highest state of yog.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 18.2

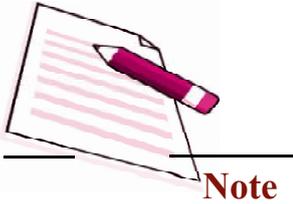
Mark as True or False-

- i) Ha means 'sun' and Tha means 'moon'. ()
- ii) The moon is the physical energy of chitta. ()
- iii) Sushumna nadi represents the neutral force, the flow of spiritual energy. ()



Note





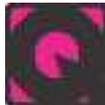
18.2.1 History of Hath Yog

Yog has been the part and parcel of Indian culture. It is so intermixed with the culture that we can not find its real origin in time. However, we have got its references in world's most ancient scripture Rig veda. The statue of a yogi sitting in lotus pose was found in the excavation of Indus valley civilization. Some historians believe that Indus valley civilization came before the Rig vada. But, one thing is certain that it is very ancient and dates back about 2000 BC. According to 'Yogi Yog walk' the founder of the yog is Hiranyagarbh. But there is no mention of sages or seers in this name in any yogic scripture or other Indian scriptures. Adi Sankaracharys says, "Hiranyagarbha is the symbolic name of Maharshi Kapil, the founder of " Sankhya Philosophy ". It is very clear that Mahanshi Patanjali was not the founder of yog as he himself has asked about this in the beginning of his treatisen 'yog sutra' .

Hatha yog is the product of tantra. There are few minor references of Hatha yog in ancient Upanishads and Puranas. But, it has got a lot of importance in Srimadabhagavatam. It has been mentioned several times in this book. Evidence of Hatha Yog has also been found in the pre- Columbian culture of the Americas. Even now , at St. Augustin, a southern province of Columbia in South America there are large stone figures and carvings depicting hatha yog practices.

There are many reliable texts on hatha yog- 'Hatha Yog Pradipika' written by Swami Swatnarma, Goraksha Samhita ' by Yogi Gorakhnath and Gheranda Samhita by great sage Gheranda. All these texts including all other major texts on Hatha Yog traditionally believe that its expounder was Lord Shiva also known as Adinath. It is believed that Lord Shiva gave this knowledge to Parvati. This knowledge came to Matsyendra Nath. Guru Gorakhnath the dutiful disciple of Matsyendra Nath was really the expounder of hatha yog and the founder of the Nath sect. It is also believed that Gorakhnath was probably the guru of Swami Swatmaram.

Guru Gorakhnath is regarded as the real founder of Hatha Yog. His birth time is not very clear but it is believed that this timing was in 9th century AD. All the texts are considered to have been written between 9th and 15th centuries AD. Its systematic form began to emerge in India sometime in the 9th century.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 18.3

Mark as True or False-

- i. Hatha yog is the product of tantra. ()
- ii. Hiranyagarbha is the symbolic name of Maharshi Kapil, the founder of " sankhya philosophy ". ()



- iii. Hatha Yog Pradipika' written by Swami Swatmarmma. ()
- iv. Goraksha Samhita ' by great sage Gheranda. ()

18.3 IMPORTANCE OF NADIS AND CHAKRAS

The word nadi is made of Nad which means flow or current. We generally take nerve and nadis as synonymous but actually nadis are the subtle channels through which the pranic forces flow. While nerves are gross in nature and manifest physical body. According to Hatha Yog Pradipik a there are seventy two thousand nadis in our psychic body. These are visible as currents of light to a person who has developed psychic vision.

But some hatha yog texts differ about the number of the nerves. Shiv Samhita says that there are three and half lakhs nadis in our psychic body. Out of the large number of nadis in our psychic body, ten are major. The most important of them are three nadis- ida, pingla and sushumna. All the nadis in our psychic body are subordinates of shushumna . That is why shushumna nadi is the most important among all.

Sushumna nadi is the spiritual channel. It is located in the centre of spinal cord. Its origin point is mooladhar chakra and end point is sahasrara chakra. Ida nadi symbolizes our mental body. It flows from the left side of mooladhara chakra in spine, passing through each chakra in turn, forming a criss- cross path way which terminates at the left side of ajna chakra.

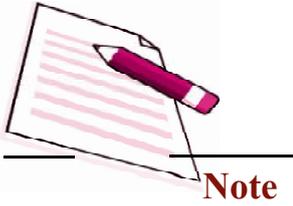
On the other hand pingla nadi flow starts from the right side of mooladhar chakra, passing though each chakra just opposite to ida nadi and ends or terminate at the right side of the ajna chakra. While sushumna is just in the middle of these two opposite forces and terminates at sahasrara chakra. Ida which is passive introvert, feminine and cold in nature, is also known as Chandra or moon nadi. Pingala, on the other hand is active, extrovert, masculine and warm in nature is called surya or sun nadi. Thus, we can say that these two are just opposite forces flowing within us.

We can co-relate pranic flow with our breathing. If at any point of time current flowing is predominant from the left nostril, it shows that ida nadi is more active. When the flow is greater in the right nostril, then pingala is predominant. If the flow is equal then sushumna is predominant. If the right nostril flow is predominant, it means there is more vital energy for physical work, digestion of food, and activeness. It represents extrovert mind and body generates more heat. On the other hand, when the left nostril flow is predominant, mental energy is in excess. At this point of time mind is introvert and mental work is needed. During sleep ida nadi flows and gives deep sleep. But if pingla is predominant at night, sleep will be disturbed and restlessness will prevail. During intake of food, if ida



Note



Yogic Practices

nadi flow is more, then digestive process will be slow which in turn will cause indigestion.

All over activities are linked and influenced by the flow of these nadis. It changes approximately every sixty to ninety minutes. The flow of the nadis can be changed at our will. There are few yogic techniques which practice can change the flow of nadies voluntarily. For example, if ida nadi flow is more and we want to do some hard physical work, we can redirect the flow of the breath to pingla nadi to obtain necessary physical vital force and energy. Contrary to it, if at any point of time pingala flow is more, and one wants rest or sleep, then by the change of flow we can take rest and deep sleep.

The main objective of hatha yog is to bring about a balanced flow of prana in ida and pingala nadis. When both these nadis are purified and balanced and mind is controlled, then prana starts to flow in sushumna nadi, one of the most important nadis. When sushumna flows, kundalini awakens and rises through the chakras.

At the physical or body level, ida and pingala nadis correspond to our autonomic nervous system. Pingala coincides with the sympathetic nervous system and ida with parasympathetic nervous system. The sympathetic nervous system tends to stimulate and accelerate external activities. When this nervous system is more active our heart rate, breathing rate, dilation of the blood vessels, intensify the efficiency of eyes, ears and other sense organs. While parasympathetic nerves coincides with ida nadi and directly oppose above symptoms, which results in introversion. The flow of prana in ida and pingla is completely involuntary and unconscious until controlled by yogic practices

18.3.1 Chakras

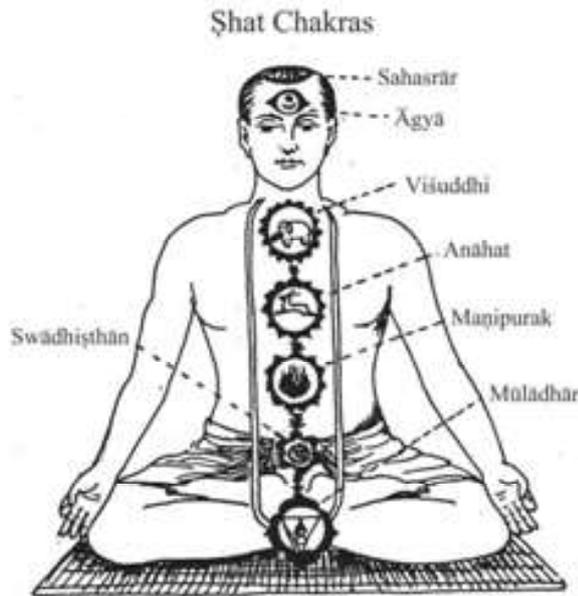
The literal meaning of word chakra is 'wheel' or circle, but in the yogic context a better translation is vortex or whirlpool. Each chakra is a switch which turns or opens up patterns of behavior, Thought or emotional reactions which may have been unconscious in our everyday life. They relate to specific areas of the brain and in most people these psychic centres, lie inactive and dormant. Concentration on the chakras stimulate the flow of energy which in turn activates subtle power.

There are seven chakras in our subtle body. They are located along the pathways of sushumna, which is also called bramharandhra. These chakras are infact located in the centre of the spinal cord. Sushumna orginates at the mooladhara or perineum and terminates at the top of the head- sahasrar chakra. These chakras are connected with nadis. The chakra are symbolically depicted as lotus flowers Each chakra have different number of petals and colours.

Lotus is the symbol of spiritual journey, which has three stages- ignorance, practice and illumination. It represents an aspirants level of spiritual growth



from lowest state of awareness to the highest state of awareness. The brief description of chakras is as follows-



Note

Mooladhar chakra

The word mool means root and adhar means base or place. Therefore, it is known as the root centre. This is the lowest chakra, which is situated at the perineum in the male body and the cervix in the female body. It manifests earth element or prithvi tattva. Its symbol is deep red lotus with four petals. It is believed that a red serpent, representing the dormant kundalini, is coiled three and half times around linga.

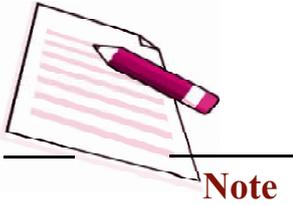
This chakra is the seat of primal energy, kundalini shakti. This kundalini shakti is the serpent coiled in deep slumber around linga. It is the source of all energy in human kind like- sexual, mental, emotional, psychic or spiritual. The aim of hatha yog is to awaken the dormant kundalini through purification and concentration of mind and lead it up to sahasrar chakra, where it unites with pure consciousness, Shiva.

Swadhishthan Chakra

The literal meaning of swadhishthan is 'one's own place or abode'. It is situated just two fingers width above mooladhara chakra in spine. This chakra is symbolized by a crimson lotus with six petals. This is manifested by water element, apas tattva.

This chakra is associated with seeking pleasure and security. It is generally associated with tongue and genital organs. It manifests overwhelming desires or cravings. On a deeper level, it is the storehouse of our all subtle samsakars,



Yogic Practices

past mental impressions. In fact this is the animal consciousness level. By its purification the animal nature is transcended.

Manipur Chakra

The word mani means gem and pur means city. Hence, Manipur means city of jewels. It is located in the spine just behind navel. It is a place of fire element. So it is a fire centre. This chakra is depicted as bright yellow lotus with ten petals. It is a place of vitality and energy. It is the centre of self assertion, dynamism, dominance, ambition and the will and ability to rule.

This chakra is mainly related to the vital process of digestion and food metabolism. It governs the functioning of gastric glands, the pancreas, gall bladder, which secrete enzymes, acids and juices necessary for the digestion and absorption of nutrients. A very important gland in our body adrenal is also associated with this chakra. This gland is responsible for secreting adrenaline into the blood during emergency. It speeds up all physiological processes making the mind sharp and alert.

Anahata Chakra

The literal meaning of the word anahata is unstruck. All sounds in this world is produced by striking together of two objects which set up vibrations or sound waves. But, that sound which is not obtained by striking two objects together and which is beyond this material world, is called anahad nada. This chakra is located in the spine behind heart. This chakra is symbolized by a blue lotus with twelve petals. This is manifested by vayu tattava or air element. It is also linked with the sense of touch, emotions, ranging from the narrow attachment of jealousy to unconditional love. With the purification of this chakra the feeling of universal acceptance is achieved and patience and tolerance increases.

On the physical level, anahata is associated with the heart and lungs, and the circulatory and respiratory system. This is the symbol of jivatma.

Vishuddhi Chakra

The word vishuddhi is a Sanskrit word. There is prefix 'vi' in the word shuddhi means purification. Vi is an adjective which means special. Therefore vishuddhi means specially pure. It is located in the spine behind neck. It is symbolized by a violet lotus with sixteen petals. It is linked with akash tattava, the ether element. Right understanding and discrimination develop at vishuddhi chakra. It is a place of wisdom, where person has the quality to accept the duality of up-down, profit loss and good bad.

At the physical level it is associated with ears, vocal cords, thyroid, larynx and parathyroid gland. This centre is the place where the divine nectar called amrita,



is tasted. Ajna chakra starts from new line- The word ajna means order or command. In deeper states of mediation the disciple receives commands and guidance from the guru, divine or higher self, this is why the name of this chakra is ajna. It is also named as third eye, jnana chakshu, triveni, guru chakra, eye of shiva and eye of wisdom. It is located in the mid brain, behind the eyebrow centre, at the top of the spine. This chakra is depicted as a silver lotus with two petals, which represent the sun and moon. Here two pranic flows which are responsible for the experience of duality, converge at this centre with sushumna, the spiritual force. The element of this chakra is the mind. This is the centre where wisdom and intuition develop. With the awakening of ajna chakra, mind becomes stable, steady and strong.

When ajna chakra is awakened telepathy and thought transmission power comes to the aspirant. It is like a psychic doorway opening into deeper and higher realms of awareness. With this it awakens intelligence, memory and concentration.

Sahasrara

The very meaning of sahasrar is one thousand. Sahasrar is visualized as a shining louts of a thousand petals. It is situated at the crown of the head. it is a place of highest consciousness. At this chakra the mystical union of shiva and shakti take place, the fusion of consciousness with matter and energy, the individual soul with the' supreme soul. When kundalini awakens, it ascends through the chakras and finally reaches to sahasrara and here matter and energy merge into pure consciousness in a state of bliss. This is a place of supreme knowledge and moksha.

The main aim of Hatha hoga is to awaken kundalini and establish it in sahasrara chakra. Shakti is kundalini energy, Shiva is the supreme consciousness seated in sahasrar chakra. The union of shakti to shiva is the prime objective of Hatha Yog. To ascend energy from mooladhara to sahasrar, the supreme consciousness hatha yog has devised shatakarma, asan, pranayama , mudra, bandh and samadhi.

In order to purify mind, it is necessary to purify the body as a whole. Hatha Yog devised shatakarma technique at the very beginning. It is a combination of six purifying techniques. Swami Swatmaram depicts it as follows:

‘Dhautirabastistatha netistratakam naulim tatha, kapalbhatishchaitani shatkarmani prachashhate.’ (Hatha Yog Pradeepika - 2/22)

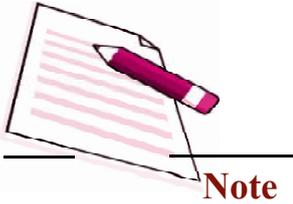
This means that there are six purifying techniques – Dhauti, Basti, Neti, Tratak, Nauli and Kapal Bhati.

Along with this asana, pranayam, bandh and mudra techniques are to be practised to reach the highest level of consciousness.



Note

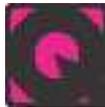




Note

18.4 EFFECTS AND BENEFITS OF HATHA YOG

1. It purifies the body to reach the higher realm of consciousness for this body purification is a must. Shatakarma practice helps to purify the body and which in turn helps to focus the mind. Purification also helps in increasing bodily immunity. The higher the immunity the lower of getting disease chance.
2. It is helpful in curing physical, mental, psychosomatic, emotional, spiritual problems. Even modern western medical science has accepted the need of yog in curing human diseases and other problems. It has given permanent cure to many problems like hypertension, heart problem, diabetes, asthma, anxiety, depression, stress and tension etc.
3. Yog is helpful in relaxing the mind and releases tension in the body. Day to day tension in our life affects our body negatively. Asan practice releases that bodily stress and thus saves the body from diseases.
4. It tones our nerves, muscles and visceral organs, which is very necessary to make our body and mind fit and healthy. It helps to keep spine flexible and supple.



INTEXT QUESTIONS 18.4

Fill in the blanks

- i. The word nadi is made of which means flow or current.
- ii. Shiv samhita says that there are andnadis in our psychic body.
- iii. The literal meaning of word chakra is.....or.....



WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

- ‘Hatha yog is a very important part of yog. It is a combination of two words Hatha and Yog.
- Hatha yog means union, addition or integration etc
- In hatha yog sun and moon are two fundamental parts of our existence



- In Hatha yog, there is the concept of harmonizing the above two fold energies in a human being.
- Hatha is made up of two Sanskrit roots, ha and tha. Ha means ‘sun’ and Tha means ‘moon’.
- The awakening of kundalini is the subject matter of Hatha Yog.
- Yog had been the part and parcel of Indian culture.
- Hatha yog is the product of tantra.
- The word nadi is made of Nad which means flow or current
- Sushumna nadi is the spiritual channel. It is located in the centre of spinal cord.
- Each chakra is a switch which turns or opens up patterns of behavior, Thought or emotional reactions which may have been unconscious in our everyday life.
- Shatakarma practice helps to purify the body and which in turn helps to focus the mind.



Note



TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. Describe the Physiology of Hatha Yog.
2. Explain the importance of Nadis.
3. List the benefits of Hatha Yog.
4. What is Chakra? Explain in brief.



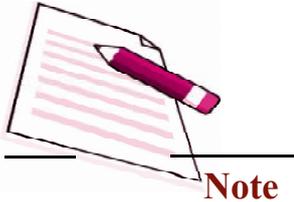
ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

18.1

- i. Pranic and mental
- ii. harmonize and create
- iii. ‘Yuj’



Yogic Practices



18.2

- i. True
- ii. False
- iii. True

18.3

- i. True
- ii. True
- iii. True
- iv. False

18.4

- i. Nad
- ii. three and half lakhs
- iii. 'wheel' or circle

