

## Review



### UNIQUE CONTRIBUTIONS OF ANANDAKANDA (A TEXT ON INDIAN ALCHEMY) IN THE CONTEXT OF YOGA - AN EXPLORATORY REVIEW

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#### ABSTRACT :

*Yoga* and Indian alchemy made their evolution to fulfill the quest for longevity. *Anandakanda* is a popular Indian alchemical text by *Sri Manthana Bhairava* written in 13th century. This work aims to highlight the unique contributions of *Anandakanda* in the field of *Yoga*. Three source texts were referred for this work. *Anandakanda*, despite being an alchemical text, a separate chapter 20th *ullasa* named *Divya Vayu Yoga rasayana* has been exclusively dedicated for *Yoga*. The chapter is a conversation between Lord *Shiva* and Goddess *Parvati*. It begins with the inquiry about *Jeevanmukta lakshanas* (one who is free from the cycle of birth and death). Unlike other yogic texts the author describes *Shadanga Yoga* rather than *Ashtanga Yoga*. Other interesting concepts such as *Bandhas*, *Mudras*, *Chakras*, *Nadis* have also been elaborated. The description of ten major *nadis* and the respective ten *vayus* residing in them is a very unique information of this text. The art of awakening *Kundalini shakti*, *Pancha vidyas* and interesting definitions of *Dharana*, *Dhyana* and *Samadhi* are explained. In conclusion, it appears that *Yoga* and Alchemy share a common aim of rejuvenation, health and longevity. *Yoga* bestows a strong body and mind which can inturn pave way for *Jivanmukti* (*Living liberation*). *Anandakanda* despite being an alchemical text has made significant contributions to the field of *Yoga*, comparable to other yogic texts, which could greatly benefit those seeking knowledge in *Yoga* and practitioners of alchemy.

**KEYWORDS:** *Anandakanda*, *Shadanga Yoga*, *Bandhas*, *Mudra*, *Chakra*, *Nadi*, *Rasa Shastra*, *alchemy*, *dharana*, *dhyana*, *samadhi*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The quests for longevity and constant endeavor to conquer death have always been the innate desires of every individual from time immemorial. *Ayurveda* and *Rasashastra* have made its evolution to fulfill this quest for longevity. *Rasashastra* the “Science of mercury” is a specialized branch of *Ayurveda* which deals with the therapeutic use of minerals and metals (*Rasa dravyas*)[1]. The main objective of *Rasashastra* (the science of mercury) is not limited to the transmutation of base metals ultimately into gold i.e *dhatuvada* of Indian alchemy, but also *dehavada* (the preparation of elixir of immortal life) to maintain health and strengthen the body for achieving *mukti* (salvation)[2]. Most of the earlier alchemy texts focused on *dhatuvada* predominantly than *dehavada*. *Anandakanda* is one such text which laid emphasis on *dhatu vada* as well as *deha vada*. It is believed that *Sri Manthana Bhairava*, a Siddha Yogi/Tantrik, a divine person, is the author of the text and it was written in 13th cen. ACE [3][4].

*Anandakanda* is also a source of Tantric literature. *Tantras* cover not only the modes of worship of deities, but also several arts and sciences for producing rare powers of protecting and prolonging life, and acquiring superhuman powers called *Yoga Siddhis*. *Yoga* and alchemy share a common goal of immortality for which a fit body is mandatory. Alchemical text comprises of significant information about *Yoga* which is necessary to achieve strong and fit body. The primary aim of this paper is to emphasize the distinctive contributions of *Anandakanda* to the field of *Yoga* and ultimately aims at achieving salvation through *Yoga*. It is truly remarkable

to see a thorough chapter on *Yoga* featured in a work focused on Alchemy, such as *Anandakanda*. This work marks a novel attempt, emphasizing the importance of the yogic concept derived from an alchemical text. No prior efforts have been made in this regard.

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The text *Anandakanda* was meticulously explored for information pertaining to *Yoga*. Three source texts of *Anandakanda* are: 1. Chaukhambha Orientalia publishers, Varanasi (2018) Siddhiprada Hindi vyakhya of Mishra Siddhinandana.[5] 2. TMSSM (Tanjore Maharaja Serfoji’s Sarasvathi Mahal) Library Tanjore Publication (1952) by Radha Krishna Shastri.[6] 3. Sri *Dhanvantari Patrika* (1969) Muktyala, Andhra Pradesh in Telugu language by Veturi Sankara Sastri.[7]

It was discovered that a chapter titled *Divya-Vayu Yoga rasayana* was specifically devoted to the comprehension of *Yoga*. At the outset the chapter was extensively analysed from the source text, by understanding its context, identifying key concepts and terminology, analysing the authors’ style and tone and recognizing the potential translation challenges. Further appropriate translation strategies were incorporated such as Literal, semantic, adaptive translation methods considering the target audience. Lastly a thorough review of the work was done for accuracy, clarity and fluency.

The text *Anandakanda* is in the form of a conversation between Goddess *Parvati* and Lord *Shiva*. *Anandakanda* is written in two sections called *Amritikarana Vishranti* and *Kriyakarana Vishranti*. Each chapter of the book is known as ‘*Ullasa*’. There are 36 *Ullasas* in total.

*Amritikarana Vishranti* constitutes 26 *ullasas* and *Kriyakarana Vishranti* constitutes 10 *Ullasa*.. Four *ullasas* (17-20) of *Amritikarana vishranti* namely *Ushah pana Rasayana*, *Sadachara rasayana*, *Ritucharya* and *Divya Vayu Yoga rasayana* focuses on the *deha vada*. *Divya-Vayu Yoga Rasayana* deals exclusively about *Yoga*.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### Unique contributions in the context of *Yoga*

In the beginning of 20th *ullasa Divya-Vayu-Yoga Rasayana*, Goddess *Parvati* praises Lord *Shiva* that he is *Panchakritya parayana* that means he takes up the responsibility of five major tasks of this universe. They are *Srishti*-creation, *Sthiti*-position, *Samhara*-annihilation, *Antardhana*-disappearance and *Anugraha*-grace. Goddess *Parvati* requests Lord *Shiva* to reveal the thorough knowledge of *Yoga Rasayana*, She inquiries about *Jivanmukti* and *Yoga swarupa*. Then lord *Shiva* reveals the secret of *Yoga* for the benefit of mankind.

His revelations are

- *Jivanmukta lakshana* (one who is alive and is free from the cycle of birth and death)
- *Upayas* to achieve *sharira sthairya*- *Shadanga Yoga* (*Asana*, *Pranayama*, *Pratyahara*, *Dharana*, *Dhyana*, *Samadhi*)
- *Asana vidhi*- *Siddhasana*, *Padmasana*
- Description of *Shatchakras*
- Description of *Nadis* and respective *Vayu* residing in it
- Types of *mantra*
- Awakening of *Kundalini shakti*

- *Panchamudra* (five postures) in *Pranayama*- *Jalandhara mudra*, *Mulabandha mudra*, *Uddiyana mudra*, *Khechari mudra*, *Mahamudra*
- *Pratyahara*
- *Dharana*- *Pancha vidya*
- *Dhyana* on *Shat chakras* with its *phala shruti*
- *Samadhi*-
- *Yogabhyasa phala*

***Jivanmukta lakshana***- Those who renounce lust, anger, fear, greed, intoxication, delusion, envy (jealousy), honor, shame, family, virtue, profanity (abuse ) pride, deceit, ignorance, inertia, pride, cold, heat, wind, pleasure, pain, sin, virtue, good, harm, ignorance, son, friend, wife, etc. One who is not attached to all these objects and is engaged in *tattvachinta* (contemplation of the Supreme Self) in the way as water does not affect a lotus leaf.

***Upayas to achieve sharira sthairya***- *Parada* -mercury and wind (air) are the two best things which give all types of *siddhis* (to be achieved). If both *Parada* and *Pawana* (*vayu*) become *Murchita*- or *Mrita* or *baddha*, then respectively they always destroy disease, death and provide *Khecharatva* (liberated skyfaring state).

***Shadanga Yoga*** : 1. *Asana*, 2. *Pranayama*, 3. *Pratyahara*, 4. *Dharana*, 5. *Dhyana* and 6. *Samadhi*

1. *Asana*- There are 84 lakh *Asanas*, among them two important *asanas* explained are *Siddhasana* and *Padmasana*. *Siddhasana* is said to be *Moksha marga pradayaka* (which show the path of liberation) and *Padmasana* is said to be *Sarva roga nibarhana* means (destroyer of all the diseases).

### Description of *chakras*

**Table 1: Name, *Sthana*, Resemblance and *bijakshara* of the *Chakra*.**

S.No	Name of the <i>Chakra</i>	<i>Sthana</i>	Resemblance	( <i>Bijakshara</i> ) Alphabets
1	<i>Muladhara</i>	<i>Guda</i> (anal region)	lotus with four petals glow of red colour like the rising sun.	<i>Va-Sa</i>
2	<i>Swadhishtana</i>	Above <i>nabhi</i> (above umbilicus)	lotus with six petals, colour of lightening	<i>Va-la</i>
3	<i>Manipura</i>	<i>Nabhi</i> (umbilicus)	lotus with a hundred petals, similar to a <i>ratna</i> -gem	<i>Da-pha</i>
4	<i>Anahata</i>	<i>Uras</i> (chest)	lotus with twelve petals, is golden in colour,	<i>Ka-tha</i>
5	<i>Vishuddha</i>	<i>Hridaya</i> (heart)	Lotus with 16 petals	<i>Shodhasha swara</i>
6	<i>Ajna chakra</i>	<i>Bhru</i> <i>Madhya</i> (between eye brows)	Lotus with 2 petals, it is of white colour,	<i>Ha-ksha</i>

**Description of *Kanda*:**The region below the navel and above the *medhra* (penis) is called *Kanda*, from where the *nadis* have originated. There are 140,000 *nadis* emerging from it. The ten main *nadis* and the corresponding ten *vayus* associated with it has been explained in Table 2

**Table 2: Name of the Important *Prana vahini Nadis* and the *Vayu* residing in it**

S.No	Name of <i>Prana vahini Nadis</i>	Name of the <i>Vayu</i> residing in it
1	<i>Ida</i>	<i>Prana</i>
2	<i>Pingala</i>	<i>Apana</i>
3	<i>Sushumna</i>	<i>Vyana</i>
4	<i>Gandhari</i>	<i>Udana</i>
5	<i>Hastijihwa</i>	<i>Samana</i>
6	<i>Pusha</i>	<i>Naga</i>
7	<i>Taraswini</i>	<i>Kurma</i>
8	<i>Alambhusha</i>	<i>Krikala</i>
9	<i>Kuhu</i>	<i>Devadatta</i>
10	<i>Shankhini</i>	<i>Dhananjaya</i>

Two kinds of *Mantra*, *Ajapa mantra* and *Japa mantra* are described. *Ajapa mantra* is the *Mantra* the *Jiva* always chants i.e *Soham mantra* or *Hamsa mantra* which means 'I am the one'. The person should always chant *Soham* 21,600 times and this should be completed by chanting it day and night. *Hansakhya Mahamantra* is called *Ajapa Mantra*. *Gayatri Mantra* is *Japakhya (Japa mantra)* which gives salvation (*Kaivalya*). This *mantra* embodies the ultimate form of spiritual practice (penance), knowledge, and virtue.

**Description of *Kundalini shakti* and path for salvation:** Yogis believe that *Kundalini shakti* is *anuccharya* (cannot be pronounced), *avarna* (colourless), *Prana sancarini* (transports life). *Kundalini* is the mother power which is situated above the *Kanda* and is often depicted as a serpent with eight coils. It faces the *Brahmadwara* and should be enlightened (awaken- *prabodhana*) with *Vahni Yoga*. It should be held with the *manas* through *vayu* and through to the *central nadi*. By stubbornly embracing and spreading it, the door to *Brahmadwara*

gets opened. Sitting comfortably on *Padmasana*, one should spread both the hands. Keep the beard in your lap and do a sharp contraction of the anus and also the genitals (urethra). One has to inhale the air repeatedly by facing upwards and release the vital air from the *Kundalini*. With its influence the path to salvation is paved.

**Panchamudra (postures) in Pranayama:** *Jalandhara mudra*, *Mulabandha mudra*, *Uddiyana mudra*, *Khechari mudra* and *Mahamudra* are the *Panchamudras*. *Siddhi* (perfection, dexterity) can be attained by mastering these five *mudras*. Lord *Shiva* describes these as very confidential. *Jalandhara mudra* is beneficial in diseases of ears and it destroys death (*mrutyughna*). *Mula bandha mudra* makes even an old man young. Attainment of *Mūlabandha* also gives freedom from the death. *Uddiyana bandha mudra* gives freedom from ageing. *Khechari Mudra* is done by inserting the tongue into the inner cavity of the mouth, that is cavity of the palate, and with a still gaze place the gaze in the opposite direction between the two eyebrows. This *mudra* is known as *Khechari*, it destroys death, disease, old age, sleep, hunger and thirst. *Mahamudra* is best for *Mala samshodhana* (cleansing the toxins). Even the most dangerous poison gets easily digested like nectar. By this action, diseases like *gulma* (tumors), *udavarta* (bloating), *kushtha* (skin diseases) etc. are undoubtedly destroyed. There is no fear of death and old age when *Mahamudra* is accomplished.

**Pratyahara:** The yogi should free himself from the posture and straighten the neck, head, etc. Look through the tip of the nose and chant the *Pranava*

*Mantra*. Then he should pay obeisance to the sacred entities of the Universe. The author says one who meditates, chants and practices *Omkara* becomes free from the bondage of existence. The person who chants while walking, sitting, awake, in a pure or impure state, becomes free. A person who does this is not attached to his actions, just as a lotus is not affected by water, All the entities in the body function because of *vayu*. Once the *Vayu* is stabilised, the mind also gets stabilised and thus the *Prana* also gets stabilised. *Prana vayu* is to be held for 36 *matrakala* every day. Interestingly the author describes that the measure of *prana* is two *angula* (self) which always resides in us.

**Procedure of Pranayama:** Sitting steadily in *Padmasana*, straighten the body and with a steady mind, close the right nostril with the thumb and draw air from the left nostril in *Puraka vidhi* till the count of sixteen *matrakala*. Hold that air through the *Kumbhaka* method for twelve counts and release the air through the right nostril through the *Rechak* method for ten counts. Same is to be repeated with right nostril. Three types of *Pranayama* namely *Adhama*, *Madhyama* and *Uttama* are explained. The above explained method is done for one time in *Adhama*, in *Madhyama* for two times and in *Uttama* for three times. By meditating on *Brahma* and *Vishnu*, *Purana* (inspiration) should be performed with both nostrils. By this the *Nadi Shuddhi* occurs. If this is done for three months stability of *Vayu* is achieved. By this the Digestive fire is kindled and the *Nada* (It is a way to attain a higher state of consciousness by tuning into the cosmic sounds or it is a mystic practice of deep listening and cultivating

receptivity) gets manifested. He will achieve complete health by regular practice.

Six cycles of *Pranayama* are equal to one cycle of *Pratyahara*. Likewise, six *Pratyaharas* to one *Dharana*, twelve *Dharana* to one *Dhyana* and twelve *Dhyana* equal to one *Samadhi*. When this *Samadhi* happens, the transcendent world becomes visible. In that supreme abode the accumulation of *karmas* gets destroyed. There is no birth and death, old age and disease is destroyed. By judicious use of this *Yoga* happiness is bestowed and the lifespan of the individual increases. Practicing irrationally causes diseases such as *hikka* (hiccups), *karna roga* (ear diseases), *shirovyatha*

(headaches), *shwasa* (dyspnoea), *kasa* (coughing) and other diseases and becomes extremely defective.

**Dharana:** It is said that one has to sit on the *asana*, engage in *pranayama* and practice *dharana* by doing *pratyahara*. The action by which the restlessness of the mind is destroyed is called '*dharana*'.

Perception of the five great elements like earth (earth-water-fire-air-sky) separately in the heart to be done. Description of *panchavidyas* appears in this context. Stabilising the mind on each of the *Pancha mahabhutas* for *Pancha nadika kala- muhurta kala* reaps various benefits. *Pancha vidyas* have been described in Table 3.

**Table 3: Name of the Vidya, Sthana, Devata, Rupa, Tattva and Phala Shruti**

S.No	Name of the Vidya	Sthana	Devata	Rupa	Tattva	Phala shruti
1	<i>Stambhakari Parthivi</i>	<i>Hridaya</i> (heart)	<i>Brahman</i> (God of creation)	<i>Chaturasra, Suvarna, saalankaara</i>	<i>Prithvi</i> (earth)	<i>Prithvijaya</i>
2	<i>Plavini Varuni</i>	<i>Kantha sthana</i> (throat)	<i>Vishnu</i> (god of preservation)	<i>Ardha chandra pratikasha, karpura hima nirmala</i>	<i>Jala</i> (water)	<i>Visha pitta jwarapaha</i>
3	<i>Vaishwanari Dahini</i>	<i>Talu sthana</i> (palate)	<i>Rudra</i> (remover of problems)	<i>Trikonam, tapta hemabham</i>	<i>Vahni</i> (fire)	<i>Visha agni bhaya, Vata kaphaja rogas</i>
4	<i>Vayavi Bhramini</i>	<i>Bhrumadhya</i> (the space between the eyebrows)	<i>Ishwara</i> (God of destruction)	<i>Vartulam, neela meghabham</i>	<i>Vayu</i> (air)	<i>Khagati dayini</i>
5	<i>Shamani Vyomarupini</i>	<i>Bhramha Randhra</i> (A Passage for life)	<i>Sadashivadi deva</i>	<i>Mriga trushnambu sankasha</i>	<i>Vyoma</i> (sky)	<i>Mokshadayini</i>

*Dharana* of the *Panchavidyas* should be done separately and each one has its own special benefit. It is rare to possess the knowledge of these five on this earth.

**Dhyana:** Contemplation on the *tatvas* with a still mind is called *dhyana*-meditation. Two types of *dhyana*, *Saguna*

and *Nirguna* are explained. *Saguna* is with *Varna* and *Nirguna* is without *varna*. The benefit of performing one lakh *Vajapeya Yajnas* and 1000 *Ashvamedha Yajnas* is obtained only by the 16th part of *Dhyana Yoga*. Sitting with the body straight in *Padmasana* with the gaze out

and contemplating inwards is called *Dhyana Yoga*, which is beneficial and auspicious. Contemplation on

individual *chakras* reaps diverse benefits [Table 4].

**Table 4: *Dhyana* on their respective *chakras* and their *Phala shruti***

S.No	Name of the <i>chakra</i>	Site of <i>Chakra</i>	Appearance	<i>Phalashruti</i>
1	<i>Muladhara</i>	Base of the spine	<i>Suvar nabha</i>	<i>Papa nashana</i>
2	<i>Swadishthana</i>	Below nabhi	<i>Rat nabha</i>	<i>Mukti</i> from <i>dukha</i>
3	<i>Manipura</i>	<i>Nabhi</i>	<i>Balarunabha</i>	Protection from sorrow
4	<i>Anahata</i>	<i>Hridaya</i>	<i>Swarna champaka sannibha</i>	Control of <i>manas</i> and <i>brahma samana</i>
5	<i>Vishuddha</i>	<i>Ghantika</i>	<i>Vidyut malanibha</i>	<i>Anandamaya</i>
6	<i>Ajna</i>	<i>Bhru madhya</i>	<i>Anjanakara</i>	<i>Brahmanandamaya,</i> <i>Yoga nandamaya</i>

**Samadhi:** Just as salt dissolves in water, becoming one, Samadhi is the profound state of unity where the mind and soul merge, becoming one with the universal consciousness. When the mind gets absorbed in the soul, and in that state *Pranakshaya* occurs, then there is harmony (feeling of oneness), it is also called *Samadhi*. *Yogis* give up their lives after attaining *samadhi*. When all the thoughts are destroyed, (there are no aspirations left in the mind) and the soul gets absorbed in God and attains the feeling of oneness, then that action is also called *Samadhi*. Just as milk gets mixed with milk, ghee gets mixed with ghee, fire, gets mixed with fire similarly that person gets one with *Brahma*. The above said knowledge about the *yogic kriya* is also termed as *Divya vayu rasayana*.

Lord Shiva explains Goddess Parvati that such a person is perfect and pure, and is like me, my heart loves him, and his mind resides in me. His life becomes successful. He purifies both the families (maternal and paternal). Wherever his feet touch, the earth there becomes pure. Wherever such a person stays even for a moment, the

earth there is called '*Punyakshetra*'. Even a dead person becomes alive just by seeing him.

### 3. DISCUSSION

The book *Anandakanda* seems to be special in a sense that a lot of emphasis is laid on the *dehavada* which means to maintain health and strengthen the body for achieving *mukti*. On the contrary other popular texts like *Rasarjuna Rasahadayatantra* and *Rasaratnakara* emphasise more on *dhatuvada*. Literal meaning of *Anandakanda* is 'Root of Bliss'. It is divided into two parts called '*Vishranti*' or places of restful peace. Peace, as everyone knows, is a preliminary requisite of *Ananda* or Bliss. The first part is called *Amritikarna vishranti* and deals with '*Amritikarana*' or the art of defying old age, disease and death. This is sought to be achieved by for ways;- a. *Rasa vedha* or tapping atomic energy from mercury. By use of medical recipes known as *Rasayanas*. c. by regulated diet and regulated mode of life and d. by *Yoga* or the control of breath and mind. And hence *Divya vayu Yoga rasayana ullasa* has been placed in the *Amritikarana Vishranti* which is a method of defying old

age death and disease. The second part is called "*Kriyakarana vishranti*" and deals with chemical processes involving metals, metallic ores, alloys, and precious stones to make them serve as medical agencies for fighting disease, old age and death. Each part of this book is named as *Vishranti*" which indicates the state of tranquillity and feeling of ease. Each chapter of this book is known as *Ullasa*. It indicates that as one who goes through the book, he gets delighted & attains happiness.

It is generally believed that Ayurvedic tradition has not incorporated yogic practices into the methods for treating illnesses but contrary to that it is quite astonishing to find the thorough description of *Yoga*, the knowledge of *Shat chakras*, *Nadi*, *Kundalini shakti* in an *Ayurveda* and Indian alchemical book of medieval period. The pursuit of longevity, physical revitalization, and transformation constitutes a significant area of interaction among *Ayurveda*, *Alchemy*, and *Yoga*. The principles of alchemical wisdom are reflected in yogic literature, such as the *amrita siddhi*, where the terminology of mercury intertwines with that of *bindu*, and the concept of alchemical transformation more clearly signifies the objective of *Samadhi*. [8] The possible connection between *Yoga* and alchemy could be that the alchemist may enter an elevated states of consciousness through the ritualistic process of preparation. Alchemical traditions commonly aimed to create a condition of immortality in body and soul, which is referred to as the *Vajra Kaya* (diamond like strong body) in *Haṭha Yoga* and Tantric Buddhism that is, an imperishable body of consciousness. Tantric

notions of immortality are thought of in terms of "living-liberation" (*jivanmukta*), which was thought to be achieved through an alchemical ripening of the yogin's body, and a regeneration of the psychophysical complex (*kayakalpa*) [9]. In a purely medical sense, the aim of Hindu alchemy and *Yoga* is rejuvenation, health, and longevity. Living liberation was considered altogether "inaccessible unless we acquire a healthy body"

Unlike other yogic texts the author describes *Shadanga Yoga* (*Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, dhyana & samadhi*) rather than *Ashtanga Yoga* (*Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, dhyana & samadhi*). The possible reason could be that *Yama* which represents the disciplines that guide how one has to interact with others and *Niyama* which represents the disciplines which guide our inner world have been an integral part of the daily routine which has been described in the 18th *ullasa Sadachara rasayana*,

The author *Bhairava* describes that there are 84 lakh *asanas* out of which two are very important. The number 84 lakh is considered sacred and represents a complete and harmonious state. It seems that it is a metaphor for the vastness and completeness of all possible *asanas* linked to the idea that as there are as many postures as there are living beings in the universe. The number is not to be taken literally as it signifies the diversity of life forms. *Padmasana* and *Siddhasana* are considered to be most important among *asanas*. As per the other yogic texts it is believed that *Siddhasana* is most important in purifying *nadis* and perfection is attainable by *Siddhasana*. In this *asana* the *bandhas*

occur spontaneously. No *asana* can rival *siddhasana*. [10]

*Pranayama* is mainly done to achieve control over breath. By restraining breath, it is said that the *nadis* and *chakras* are purified and it awakens *Sushumna*. *Pancha mudras* in *Pranayama* have great significance. *Mudras* are specific body postures or gestures. The spiritual energy which is produced by *Asana* and *Pranayama* is channelised into the various subtle energy centres with the help of these *mudras*. These *mudras* help awaken the *chakras* and arouse *kundalini shakti*. These essential aspects of the practice of *Asana* and *mudra* constitute the psychophysical work of *Hatha-Yoga*, as a way of activating the imaginal intelligence of the body-psyche.

The author describes that *Kundalini shakti* is spiritual energy that is coiled like a snake and located just above the *kanda*, the origin of all *nadis*. It is illustrated as coiled sleeping serpent which has eight coils which differs from other yogic texts wherein, they have described it as three and half coils. Author emphasises the forceful or wilful practice of *Yoga (hatha Yoga)*. [10]

Detailed description of *Chakras* and *Nadis* in an alchemical text seems to be surprising and gives an insight that practice of Indian alchemy requires the understanding of subtle energy channels. *Nadis* are the energy channels that connect to *chakras* which are the energy centres or wheels of energy along the spine. They carry the life force to the *chakras*. The ten different types of life forces residing in specific ten *nadis* is interesting and unique information.

*Kanda* which is said to be the origin of 140,000 *nadis* located between the anus and the root of reproductive organs is a subtle body structure that carries life force throughout the body. In the physical body the *kanda* corresponds to the cauda equina, a bundle of nerves that extends from the spinal cord.

There is a vast description of *Ajapa mudra* and *Japa mudra* in the text which needs to be deciphered further. *Ajapa mudra*- is a technique of meditation that involves repeating a mantra effortlessly and automatically in sync with the breath. *Hansakhya mahamantra- Soham mantra* which means "I am that" represents the oneness of the individual self with the universal consciousness and is a powerful tool for salvation. A *Mantra* acts as a cognitive instrument that triggers a concealed memory or thought structure. This mythical style of communication is designed to activate the devata, or deity, as a form of consciousness. When fully engaged, it breathes life into the *Samskara*, causing the *Artha* (object) to materialize in the mind. Thus, mantras are a representation of the *Samskara* of *Jivas*, with the *Artha* becoming discernible to the consciousness equipped to recognize it. [9]

The author describes specific numerals equating *Pranayama*, *Pratyahara*, *Dharana*, *Dhyana* and *Samadhi*. The exact meaning of these numerals is not very clear, but it seems that this description in the text is very unique and not found in any of the yogic texts. These numerals could be a motivation for a yogic seeker and creates optimism that he also can achieve *samadhi*. This work seems to have the potential to bridge the gap between the alchemical and yogic sciences. It also

reflects that there was an enhanced Knowledge translation and multidisciplinary collaboration. The major part of the chapter was comprehensible. However, in certain contexts there was difficulty in capturing nuances; it was a challenging task to translate the idioms and expressions of author. At various instances such as in the context of the description of *Nadi* and *Chakras*, the process of awakening of *Kundalini shakti* and the steps of performing various *Mudras*, there was a possibility of misinterpretations of the authors intent. This topic requires additional in-depth evaluation. Additional alchemical writings should be explored to elucidate the aspects of *Yoga*, thereby enhancing the understanding of the relationship between alchemy and *Yoga*.

#### 4. CONCLUSION:

*Anandakanda* gives enormous insights on the practice of *Yoga*, despite being a text on Indian alchemy. *Divya Vayu Yoga Rasayana Ullasa of Amritikarana Vishranti* elaborates about various aspects of *Shadanga Yoga*. The *Panchamudras of Pranayama* reap diverse health benefits. The description of *Nadis* (subtle channels) and *chakras* (energy centres) present in the astral body is amazing and it seems the practice of alchemy is closely related to the understanding of the subtle channels of the body. The description of *Jivanmukta lakshanas* and interesting definitions of *Samadhi* have high spiritual significance. Thus, it seems that both *Yoga* and alchemy aims at rejuvenation, health, and longevity. *Jivanmukti* (Living liberation) was considered possible only if we acquire a healthy body. Systematic practice of *Yoga* bestows a healthy psyche and physique. Hence

*Anandakanda* despite being an alchemical text seems to have contributed extensively in the field of *Yoga* on par with other yogic texts which could be of immense help for yogic seekers and alchemy practitioners.

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