

Review



AN OVERVIEW OF THE *GHERANDA SAMHITA*: A CLASSICAL TREATISE ON *HATHA YOGA*

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ABSTRACT :

Background: The *Gheranda Samhita* is a classical Sanskrit text on *Hatha Yoga*, renowned for its systematic and practical approach to *yogic* discipline. Unlike other traditional texts that focus primarily on philosophy, it outlines a unique sevenfold path, emphasizing *Shodhana* (Purification), *Asana* (Postures), *Pranayama* (Breath control), *Mudra* (Energy control), *Pratyahara* (Sense withdrawal), *Dhyana* (Meditation) and *Samadhi* (Ultimate absorption). Rooted in the *Advaita Vedanta* and *Tantra* traditions, it underscores the unity of the individual *Atma* (Soul) with the *Brahma* (Universal consciousness), advocating the purification of the body as a crucial step toward spiritual awakening. One of its significant contributions is its detailed explanation of *Shatkarma* (six purification techniques), which align with *Ayurveda* and contemporary wellness practices. **Objective & Methods:** The *Gheranda Samhita* has profoundly influenced modern yoga, particularly in the areas of postures, breathwork and meditation, which are widely incorporated into therapeutic and holistic health programs. In today's fast-paced world, where stress and mental unrest are prevalent, the text's teachings remain relevant, offering practical solutions for achieving physical vitality, mental clarity, and inner peace. **Result & Conclusion:** This study explores its philosophical foundations, structured methodology, and modern applications, reaffirming its enduring impact on yoga and holistic well-being.

KEYWORDS: *Gheranda Samhita*, *Hatha Yoga*, Sevenfold Path, *Shatkarma*

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1. INTRODUCTION

A famous work on *Hatha Yoga*, the *Gheranda Samhita* provides a framework for personal growth on all levels (mental, physical, and spiritual). It is a practical guide to *yogic* activities and was probably composed in the 17th or 18th century. The *Gheranda Samhita* offers a distinct seven-fold road to enlightenment and self-purification, in contrast to other classic *Hatha Yoga* books like the *Shiva Samhita* and the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*. Sage *Gheranda* teaches his pupil *Chanda Kapali* the ins and outs of *yoga* in this conversational work, which centers on the practice's emphasis on both mental and physical cleansing. There is extensive instruction on various *yoga* postures, breathing exercises, hand gestures, *bandhas* (locks), *kriyas* and meditation in the *Gheranda Samhita*. The ultimate goal of *yoga* is spiritual freedom or *Samadhi*.^[1]

*“Ekadaa chandakaapaalirgatvaa gherandakuttiram;
Pranamyaa vinayaadbhaktyaa gherandam
pariprichchhati.”*

(Once, King *Chandakapali* went to the hermitage of Sage *Gheranda* and, after prostrating before him with due humility and devotion, asked him a question.)

The *Gheranda Samhita* stands out among *Hatha Yoga* literature due to its sevenfold route, as opposed to the more common fourfold or eightfold approach. *Shodhana* pertains to cleansing, *Asana* to postures, *Pranayama* to breath control, *Mudra* to sealing methods, *Pratyahara* to withdraw the senses, *Dhyana* to meditate and *Samadhi* to absorption or enlightenment. These seven phases make up the whole practice. To get one's body ready for more advanced

yogic practices, the literature stresses the significance of *shatkarma* (six cleaning processes). This cleansing focus is in line with *Ayurvedic* principles and the all-encompassing method of old Indian health practices. The esoteric parts of *yoga*, including *Tantra*, *Kundalini* energy and spiritual awakening are also included in the *Gheranda Samhita* in addition to the physical procedures. While *Patanjali's Yoga Sutras* go further into the ethical and philosophical aspects of *yoga*, the *Gheranda Samhita* is more of a how-to guide for the physical and mental practices of *yoga*.^[2]

*“Saucam ca santosatapah
svaadhyaayesarapranidhaanaani niyamah.”*

(This verse highlights *Shaucha* (Purification) as a fundamental principle, emphasizing inner and outer cleanliness as the foundation of *yoga*.)

Yoga Asanas (Postures) and *Shatkarmas* (Cleansing practices) are extensively covered in the *Gheranda Samhita*, which is one of its most notable aspects. All 32 of the *Asanas* (Postures) included in the book have different positive effects on the mind and body. It goes on to explain several *pranayama* (breathing techniques) that are said to improve energy, concentration and calmness. *Mudras* (gestures for energy control) and *bandhas* (locks) are energy-locking procedures that help direct and manage the body's *pranic* energies; the literature also includes thorough instructions on how to do this. These rituals have their origins in *Tantric* teachings, which hold that gaining mastery over one's physical energies is a prerequisite for enlightenment. The importance of *dhyana* (meditation) and *samadhi* or profound concentration, in reaching enlightenment is

also highlighted in the book. Achieving a higher level of awareness and overcoming physical limits are both possible outcomes of regular meditation practice.[3] Additionally, the *Gheranda Samhita* focuses on strengthening the physical body before progressing to meditative and spiritual practices:

“*Sthiram sukhaamasanam proktam na tathaa yatra kastataa*”.

This verse asserts that an *Asana* (posture) should be stable and comfortable, reinforcing the importance of bodily ease before advancing to higher stages of yoga. In modern times, the *Gheranda Samhita* continues to hold great relevance for *yoga* practitioners, scholars and health enthusiasts. The text’s systematic approach to physical and mental well-being aligns with contemporary scientific research on *yoga* and mindfulness. Many of its prescribed techniques such as cleansing practices, breath control, and meditation are now recognized for their therapeutic benefits in stress management, respiratory health and emotional balance. *Yoga* schools and practitioners worldwide continue to study and integrate the teachings of this ancient text into their practices. Additionally, its holistic approach to health and spirituality resonates with the increasing global interest in wellness and self-care.[4]

In popular *yoga* discourse the *Gheranda Samhita* has been given less attention than the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, despite its tremendous significance. This is because the book contains *tantric* and esoteric themes that contemporary practitioners may find difficult to understand. The importance of this text as a comprehensive reference to *Hatha Yoga*, however, has

been acknowledged by researchers and *yogic* lineages that place an emphasis on traditional practices. If you want to learn more about *yoga* than just the physical poses, this book is a great place to start. By demonstrating how practices like meditation, breath work and cleansing may contribute to one's spiritual development, it sheds light on the transforming potential of *yogic* discipline. An outstanding piece of *Hatha Yoga* literature, the *Gheranda Samhita* brings together timeless teachings with modern methods for the betterment of one's physical and spiritual selves. It is a must-read for dedicated *yoga* practitioners due to its systematic seven-limb method focus on cleansing, integration of physical and meditation practices. Those in search of a harmonious and enlightened lifestyle will find the teachings of the *Gheranda Samhita* to be an invaluable resource, especially with the rising popularity of *yoga* and holistic health practices across the world.[5] In Hinduism the *Gheranda Samhita* is a *Sanskrit Yoga* literature that means “*Gheranda's* collection”. Along with the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* and the *Shiva Samhita*, it is considered one of the three seminal books on *hatha yoga* and a veritable encyclopedia on the subject. From Bengal to Rajasthan, researchers have found fourteen copies of the book. Both the Adyar Library (1933) and Digambarji and Ghote (1978) issued critical editions of the work. Unintelligible and grammatically incorrect passages may be found in some *Sanskrit* manuscripts, while others reference earlier *Sanskrit* works. It is most likely a teaching handbook based on a discussion between *Gheranda* and *Chanda*, written in the late 17th century and most likely hailing from northeast India.

With 351 *shlokas* (verses), the book is structured into seven segments. One *yoga* text, the *Gheranda Samhita*, details 32 different *Asanas* (Postures) and 25 different *mudras*. Verse 2.20 of the scripture describes a *mudra* known as *Guptasana* up above.[6]

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Aim: The primary aim of this review is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the *Gheranda Samhita*, highlighting its significance as a classical text on *Hatha Yoga*, its philosophical foundations and its practical applications in both traditional and modern contexts.

Objectives: To analyze the structure and key teachings of the *Gheranda Samhita*, focusing on its seven-limb system and *yogic* practices.

To evaluate the modern relevance of the *Gheranda Samhita* in contemporary *yoga* practice, health and wellness.

2. METHODOLOGY

This review employs a qualitative research approach, focusing on textual analysis and thematic categorization. Primary data includes the *Gheranda Samhita*. Secondary sources was done using electronic database search engine like pubmed, Google Scholar and Cochran Library for the articles published from the date of inception till April 2025 for historical and philosophical insights. The study systematically examines the text's seven-limb system.

The search terms *Gheranda Samhita* AND *Hatha Yoga*, *Gheranda Samhita* OR *Hatha Yoga* & *Gheranda Samhita* NOT *Hatha Yoga* as follows:

Pubmed:

("GHERANDA"[All Fields] AND ("samhita"[All Fields] OR "samhitas"[All Fields])) NOT ("HATHA"[All Fields] AND ("yoga"[mesh Terms] OR "yoga"[All Fields]))

Google Scholar:

" Gheranda Samhita " AND Hatha Yoga

" Gheranda Samhita " OR Hatha Yoga

" Gheranda Samhita " NOT Hatha Yoga

COCHREAN LIBRARY

#1 (*Gheranda Samhita* AND *Hatha Yoga*):ti,ab,kw (Word variations have been searched)

#2 (*Gheranda Samhita* AND *Hatha Yoga*):ti,ab,kw AND ((*Gheranda Samhita* OR *Hatha Yoga*):ti,ab,kw (Word variations have been searched)

#3 (*Gheranda Samhita* NOT *Hatha Yoga*)

The authors screened the title and the abstract to find the articles and then accessed the full text for final inclusion.

Sevenfold path of *yoga* and its impact - The analysis of the *Gheranda Samhita* confirms that it uniquely structures *Hatha Yoga* into seven progressive stages. Similar to other revered works on *Hatha Yoga* theory, method and practice, such as the *Shiva Samhita* and the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, the *Gheranda Samhita* is an all-inclusive guidebook. In keeping with the "eight limbs" of *Patanjali's Yoga Sutras*, it is laid out in the style of seven "limbs" here. Following this seven-fold route to enlightenment and self-realization is like taking a shower: it cleanses the body and mind.[7] The primary limbs described in the *Gheranda Samhita* are: A *yoga* text that is methodically composed is *Gheranda Samhita*. *Gheranda* the preceptor and *Chandkapali* the trainee, engage in a conversational style. *Ghathasta*

Yoga is the name of the kind of *yoga* taught in the *Gheranda Samhita*. "*Gatha*" means physically present. Training one's body is the foundational step in achieving mental enlightenment and *Ghathasta Yoga* refers to a *Yoga*-based approach via the body. Naturally, *Ghathastha Yoga* focuses on *Hatha Yoga* techniques. It details over a hundred different *Yogic* techniques.[8]

These practices can be classified as follows:

Table No.1: Technique Types and its Count

<i>Kriyas</i>	06
<i>Dhautis</i>	13
<i>Bastis</i>	12
<i>Lauli</i>	01
<i>Kapalabhati</i>	03
<i>Trataka</i>	01
<i>Asanas</i>	32
<i>Mudras</i>	25
<i>Pratyahara</i>	5
<i>Pranayama</i>	10
<i>Dhyana</i>	3
<i>Samadhi</i>	6
Total	102

Practicing *yoga* entails a metamorphosis from the material to the immaterial via the mind. In its seven chapters, the *Gheranda Samhita* details all of the aforementioned methods.

Chapter – I on the Training of the Physical Body

Learning to control one's thoughts requires first mastering one's physical self. Only in a sound physical state can a sound mental state coexist. That is why the path to enlightenment or *Raja yoga* begins with *Hatha Yoga* or physical training. The lesson begins with *Chandkapali's* query on the path from *Yoga* to *Tattava*

Jnana (knowledge of truth). According to *Gheranda*, you can't escape the chains of *maya* (illusion) or the power that comes from practicing *yoga*.

Above all else *Jnana* (Wisdom) is a friend, while *Ahankara* (Egoism) is an adversary. Thoroughly exercising initially with physical exercise necessitates understanding of the truth, just as mastering the alphabets enables one to grasp all disciplines via practice. *Yoga* is a powerful tool for liberation from *maya* (illusion). You may train your body in seven different ways. They are especially guiding qualities for lightness, perception, solitude as well as stabilizing and relaxing. There are six processes that make up the *Satkarmas*: *Dhauti*, *Basti*, *Neti*, *Laukiki*, *Trataka* and *kapalabhati*. You will also get a detailed explanation of the approach and its significance.[9]

The *sapta Sadhanas* are,

1. *Kriyas* – For cleansing
2. *Asanas* – Gives *Dridhata* (Strength)
3. *Mudras* – Gives *Sithirata* (Steadiness)
4. *Pratyahara* – Gives *Dhairya* (Calmness)
5. *Pranayama* – Gives *Laghima* (Lightness)
6. *Dhyana* – Gives *Pratyakshatwa* (Perception)
7. *Samadhi* – Gives *Nirrtipta* (Isolation), which is the freedom

Chapter - II. *Asanas* (Postures)

There are as many different types of *yoga* poses (*asanas*) as there are species of life in the cosmos (84,000,000). Of them, 84 are top-notch, and 32 have shown to be beneficial to humanity on our planet.[10]

Here is a selection of important *yoga asanas*, along with their symbolic meanings: Seated and Meditative *Asanas*

1. *Siddhasana* (The Perfect Pose) – A posture of spiritual mastery and energy alignment.
2. *Padmasana* (The Lotus Pose) – A classic meditative position that enhances focus.
3. *Bhadrasana* (The Gentle Pose) – A grounding posture for relaxation.
4. *Muktasana* (The Free Pose) – A symbol of liberation and inner peace.
5. *Vajrasana* (The Adamant Pose) – A strong unwavering seated position.
6. *Swastikasana* (The Auspicious Pose) – Associated with prosperity and well-being.

Animal-Inspired Asanas

1. *Simhasana* (The Lion Pose) – Embodying strength and fearless expression.
2. *Gomukhasana* (The Cow-Face Pose) – Enhancing flexibility and balance.
3. *Mayurasana* (The Peacock Pose) – Symbolizing elegance and inner power.
4. *Kukkutasana* (The Rooster Pose) – A challenging arm-balancing pose.
5. *Kurmasana* (The Tortoise Pose) – Representing introspection and withdrawal.
6. *Uttanakurmasana* (The Upward Tortoise Pose) – Encouraging deep relaxation.
7. *Matsyasana* (The Fish Pose) – Promoting openness and heart expansion.
8. *Makarasana* (The Crocodile Pose) – Inducing deep rest and relaxation.
9. *Bhujangasana* (The Snake Pose) – Awakening dormant energy and spinal flexibility.

10. *Ustrasana* (The Camel Pose) – Opening the heart and enhancing flexibility.
11. *Salabhasana* (The Locust Pose) – Strengthening the back and core muscles.
12. *Vrishasana* (The Bull Pose) – Channeling endurance and stability.

Dynamic and Strength-Building Asanas

1. *Veerasana* (The Hero Pose) – Cultivating confidence and determination.
2. *Dhanurasana* (The Bow Pose) – Enhancing spinal flexibility and energy flow.
3. *Paschimottanasana* (The Seated Forward Bend) – Encouraging introspection and deep stretching.
4. *Utkatasana* (The Fierce Pose) – Engaging lower body strength.
5. *Sankatasana* (The Challenging Pose) – Building resilience and mental fortitude.
6. *Vrikshasana* (The Tree Pose) – Representing balance and growth.
7. *Mandukasana* (The Frog Pose) – Stretching the hips and improving circulation.
8. *Garudasana* (The Eagle Pose) – Enhancing coordination and concentration.

Each of these postures serves a unique purpose aligning the body, mind and spirit. Regular practice of these poses fosters physical health, mental clarity and spiritual growth.

Siddhasana (The Perfect Pose) the first posture is characterized as *mokkna-kavatabhedanka* meaning "which opens the doors of realization." *Padmasana*, *Bhadrasana*, *Simhasana* and *Matsyasana* are all posture that eradicates many diseases. The ideal posture known

as *Muktasana*, *Vajrasana* bestows psychic abilities to the practitioner. When you practice *mritasana* you will alleviate mental and physical exhaustion. With *Gorakasana* the *yogis* achieve achievement and with *Mayurasana* they dispel the power of certain foods. Burns food to ash in the stomach and neutralizes toxic chemicals. For example, a fever may be cured with relative ease. Aside from waking up the *Kundalini* energy, *Makarasana* raises core temperature, *Bhujangasana* (the snake) raises core temperature consistently, eliminates all illnesses and more.[11]

Chapter – III *Mudras*

There are 25 *Mudras* the practice of which gives senses to the *yogis* they are.

Mahamudra, *Nabho*, *Uddiyana*, *Jalandhara*, *Mulabandha*, *Maha Bandha*, *Maha Bheda*, *Khecari*, *Viparita*, *Karani*, *Vajroli*, *Sakticalana*, *Tadagi*, *Mandauki*, *Sambhavi*, *Panca Dharma* (Five *Dharma*), *Asvini*, *Pasini*, *Kaki*, *Matangini*, *Bhujanginini*

These *Mudras* help in regulating *prana* (life force) enhancing meditation and achieving deeper states of consciousness. Each *Mudra* has a distinct technique and effect making them essential tools in advanced *yogic* practices. [12]

Chapter – IV *Pratyahara*

Pratyahara is the fifth limb of *Patanjali's Ashtanga Yoga* and serves as a bridge between the external (*Bahiranga*) and internal (*Antaranga*) practices of *yoga*. It is the practice of withdrawal of the senses allowing the mind to turn inward and detach from external distractions. Through the disciplined practice of *Pratyahara* all worldly passions including lust, greed and

attachment are gradually destroyed. A *yogi* must learn to withdraw the *chitta* (thinking principle) from wherever it wanders whether attracted by objects of sight, sound, praise, criticism, taste, smell or any other sensory influence. By mastering *Pratyahara* one gains control over the mind and senses paving the way for deeper meditation and ultimately leading to self-realization.

Chapter -V *Pranayama*

Four things are necessary for practicing *Pranayama* in Good place, Suitable time, Moderate food, Purification of the *Nadis* The purification of the *Nadis* is of two sorts. *Samanu* and *Nirmanu*. The *Samanu* is done by a mental process with *Bijamantra*. The *Nirmanu* is performed by physical cleanings. After purification of the *Nadis* one has to sit firmly in a posture and be in regular *Pranayama*.

Pranayama is the practice of breath control essential for regulating *prana* (life energy) and preparing the mind for higher states of consciousness. For effective *Pranayama* practice, four key elements are necessary:

1. A Good Place – A clean, quiet and peaceful environment conducive to deep concentration.
2. Suitable Time – Early morning or evening, when the mind is calm and the air is fresh.
3. Moderate Food – A balanced and *sattvic* (pure) diet that nourishes the body without causing heaviness.
4. Purification of *Nadis* – The cleansing of the subtle energy channels to allow the free flow of *prana*.

The purification of *Nadis* is of two types:

1. *Samanu* (Mental Process) – Achieved using *Bijamantras* (sacred syllables) to cleanse the *nadis* internally.
2. *Nirmanu* (Physical Process) – Involves physical purification techniques such as *Neti* (nasal cleansing), *Dhauti* (digestive tract cleansing) and *Basti* (colon cleansing).

Once the *nadis* are purified, the practitioner must sit in a firm posture and engage in regular *Pranayama*, advancing towards breath control techniques like *Nadi Shodhana*, *Bhastrika*, and *Kapalabhati*.

Chapter – VI *Dhyana*

The sixth *sadhana* deals with *Dhyana*, the three kinds of *dhyana Shale*, *Jyoti* and *Suksma* are graded and raise one above the other, the last ending in *Atma Pratyaksham* (Self awareness). The main aim of *dhyana yoga* is the direct perception of the self. By this *dhyanaYoga Atma* is revealed.

Dhyana (Meditation) is the sixth limb of *yoga* and a crucial step towards self-realization. It involves deep concentration, leading to *Atma Pratyaksham* (Self awareness).

There are three stages of *Dhyana* each progressively deeper and more refined:

Shale Dhyana – Meditation on a physical form or deity.

Jyoti Dhyana – Meditation on light or an illuminated vision within.

Suksma Dhyana – Subtle meditation leading to the realization of the self-culminating in *Atma-Pratyaksham* (Self-awareness).

The ultimate goal of *Dhyana Yoga* is to transcend the mind and experience pure consciousness revealing the *Atma* (soul) beyond illusion and duality.

Chapter – VII *Samadhi*

Samadhi is the seventh and most significant *sadhana* (spiritual practice) in the path of *yoga*. It represents the pinnacle of meditation where the mind becomes completely still and the *yogi* attains ultimate union with the *Paramatma* (Supreme Consciousness).

Samadhi is classified into sixfold paths each leading to the same transcendental state through different techniques:

1. *Sambhavi Mudra* - Leads to *Dhyana* (meditation) and culminates in *Samadhi*.
2. *Khecari Mudra* - Leads to *Rasananda* (nectar of bliss) and ends in *Samadhi*.
3. *Bhramari Pranayama* - Leads to *Nada* (divine sound experience) and results in *Samadhi*.
4. *Yoni Mudra* - Leads to *Laya* (dissolution of mind) and merges into *Samadhi*.
5. *Bhakti* (devotion) - Develops *Astika Bhava* (faith and surrender) and reaches *Samadhi*.
6. *Mani Mudra* - Leads to restraint of the mind and ultimately *Samadhi*.

Philosophical foundations

The *Gheranda Samhita* is deeply rooted in the philosophical traditions of *Advaita Vedanta* and *Tantra* emphasizing the unity of the individual *Atma* (soul) with the *Brahma* (universal consciousness). Unlike purely metaphysical texts it presents a structured and practical approach to achieving this union through disciplined physical and mental practices. The underlying

philosophy asserts that the body is not merely an instrument but a sacred temple that must be purified and strengthened to attain spiritual enlightenment.[13] While *Hatha Yoga* is often associated with physical discipline, the *Gheranda Samhita* integrates profound spiritual wisdom. It advocates for a holistic approach where *Shodhana* (purification), *Asana* (posture), *Pranayama* (breath control) and *Dhyana* (meditation) serve as essential steps toward self-realization. This aligns with the *tantric* view that *Moksha* (liberation) is attainable through both material and spiritual refinement. The text does not negate the body but rather elevates it as a vehicle for transcendence.[14] By bridging the physical and metaphysical dimensions of *yoga*, the *Gheranda Samhita* reinforces the idea that self-discipline and inner harmony are prerequisites for attaining higher states of consciousness, making it a significant philosophical and practical guide in the *yogic* tradition.

Contributions to the *yoga* tradition

Additionally, the *Gheranda Samhita* is unique in its classification of *Hatha Yoga* into a sevenfold path differing from the more commonly known eightfold system of *Patanjali's Yoga Sutras*. This structured approach emphasizing *Shodhana* (purification), *Asana* (posture), *Pranayama* (breath control), *Mudra* (energy control), *Pratyahara* (sense withdrawal), *Dhyana* (meditation) and *Samadhi* (ultimate absorption) provides a systematic progression for practitioners making it one of the most comprehensive guides in *yogic* literature. Another significant contribution is the text's emphasis on *Shatkarma* (six purification

techniques) which highlight the importance of detoxifying the body before advancing in *yogic* practice. This focus on physical purification aligns closely with *Ayurvedic* principles and modern wellness approaches, underscoring the text's relevance beyond its historical context. The *Gheranda Samhita* has influenced contemporary *Hatha Yoga* by reinforcing the idea that *yoga* is not just a spiritual pursuit but also a practical science of well-being. In an era where *yoga* is widely practiced for its therapeutic benefits, the teachings of this text continue to inspire modern schools of *yoga*, integrating ancient wisdom with present day health practices.[15]

Modern relevance

Furthermore, the *Gheranda Samhita's* focus on holistic health aligns with modern scientific research on the benefits of *yoga*. Studies have shown that practices such as *Shatkarma* (cleansing techniques) enhance detoxification while *Pranayama* improves respiratory function and stress management. With increasing global awareness of mental health the text's emphasis on *Dhyana* (meditation) as a tool for self-awareness and inner peace has gained significant traction. In contemporary *yoga* therapy elements of the *Gheranda Samhita* are often integrated into programs addressing stress, anxiety and lifestyle disorders. The structured nature of its sevenfold path makes it adaptable for different levels of practitioners from beginners to advanced *yogis*. Moreover, the growing popularity of *Ayurveda* and holistic wellness has reinforced the text's relevance, as it connects *yoga* with overall well-being. As the world increasingly turns to traditional wisdom for

sustainable health practices the *Gheranda Samhita* continues to serve as a vital resource, bridging ancient *yogic* knowledge with modern scientific understanding. Its practical teachings remain a guiding force for those seeking balance, discipline and spiritual fulfillment in the fast paced modern world.[16]

3. DISCUSSION

A unique aspect of the *Gheranda Samhita* is its structured and systematic approach to *Hatha Yoga*, distinguishing it from other classical texts. Its emphasis on purification and preparatory practices reflects the belief that a purified body and mind are essential for higher states of consciousness. The text states:

“*Suddhadehe sada yogi dirghamayuh sukham labhet.*”

(A *yogi* with a purified body always attains long life and happiness.)

This verse underscores the importance of cleansing techniques such as *dhauti* (internal cleansing), *basti* (*yogic* enema), *neti* (nasal cleansing) and *trataka* (gazing meditation) which are still widely practiced today. These methods help eliminate toxins, enhance respiratory function and improve mental clarity.[17]

In contrast to *Patanjali's Yoga Sutras*, which emphasize the philosophical aspects of *yoga*, the *Gheranda Samhita* is a highly practical manual. It provides detailed instructions on various techniques including *pranayama* (breath control) which is essential for regulating the mind and *prana* (vital energy). The text explains:

“*Yatha simho gajo vyaghro bhavedvasyah sanaih sanaih, tathaiva sevito vayuranyatha hanti sadhakam.*”

(Just as a lion, elephant, or tiger is tamed slowly, so

must the breath be controlled gradually, else it will harm the practitioner.)

This highlights the careful and disciplined approach required for mastering *pranayama* as improper techniques can lead to imbalances rather than benefits.

Furthermore, the *Gheranda Samhita* integrates both *Hatha Yoga* and *Tantric* elements emphasizing the balance of physical strength and spiritual enlightenment. It incorporates *mudras* (gestures) and *bandhas* (locks) to awaken and control the flow of *Kundalini* energy.

The text describes:

“*Sarvakamapradam divyam manipurasya madhyagam, mula dhyayedgurum tatra dehajam jnanalaksanam.*”

(One should meditate on the divine energy in the *Manipura chakra* where the *guru* resides as it grants all desires and spiritual wisdom.)

This reference to *chakra* meditation highlights the esoteric aspects of the *Gheranda Samhita* demonstrating its connection to *Kundalini Yoga* and *Tantra*. The final goal of the *yogic* journey in this text is *Samadhi* (spiritual absorption), where the practitioner transcends the limitations of the body and mind. The *Gheranda Samhita* describes this state as follows:

“*Dhyanam nirvisayam nityam nirvikalpam nirasrayam, nityasantosarupam ca dhyanam proktam manisibhih.*”

(Meditation is beyond all objects free from mental fluctuations, independent and eternally blissful as proclaimed by the wise.)

This ultimate absorption into pure consciousness aligns with the spiritual goals of both *Advaita Vedanta* and *Tantric* traditions, reinforcing the *Gheranda Samhita's*

comprehensive approach to *yoga*. [11] In modern practice, the *Gheranda Samhita* continues to hold relevance particularly in the areas of detoxification, breathwork and meditation techniques. The increasing scientific recognition of *yoga's* health benefits such as improved respiratory function, reduced stress and enhanced cognitive clarity validates the wisdom of this ancient text. Many *yoga* schools integrate its teachings into their practice, demonstrating its enduring impact on holistic wellness.

4. CONCLUSION

The *Gheranda Samhita* stands as a comprehensive and practical guide to *Hatha Yoga*, offering a structured sevenfold path that integrates physical purification, postures, breath control and meditation to achieve spiritual enlightenment. Unlike other classical *yogic* texts, it emphasizes the importance of bodily purification as a prerequisite for higher *yogic* practices highlighting the deep connection between physical well-being and spiritual growth. Its philosophical roots in *Advaita Vedanta* and *Tantra* underscore the idea that the body is a sacred vessel for self-realization. By combining rigorous physical discipline with profound spiritual wisdom, the text bridges the gap between the material and the metaphysical aspects of *yoga*. In the modern era the *Gheranda Samhita* remains highly relevant, influencing contemporary *yoga* practices, therapeutic applications and holistic wellness approaches. Its teachings on detoxification, breath control and meditation align with scientific research on health and mindfulness making it an invaluable resource for both traditional practitioners and modern seekers.

The *Gheranda Samhita* continues to serve as a timeless guide, demonstrating that the disciplined practice of *yoga* can lead to physical vitality, mental clarity and ultimately spiritual liberation.

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