

Tyājya Grāhya Vidhāna in Haṭhayoga: A Critical and Textual Study

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Abstract: This study explores the concept of Tyājya–Grāhya-Vidhāna, which refers to the principles of what to reject and what to accept within the Haṭhayoga tradition. It focuses on the Yogakarṇikā and other classical yoga texts.

The paper articulates that yoga encompasses not only the cultivation of positive habits but also the careful selection of practices—embracing some while discarding others. This nuanced approach significantly influences physical training, moral conduct, dietary choices, and mental clarity.

Drawing on key texts such as the Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā, Gheraṇḍa Saṁhitā, and Bhagavad Gītā, the study elucidates how these principles guide practitioners toward achieving yogic accomplishment (siddhi). Additionally, it examines the obstacles that may impede progress, cautions against superficial spirituality, and emphasises the importance of consistent practice and mentorship. In conclusion, the study posits that Tyājya–Grāhya-Vidhāna is paramount to the practice of yoga, fostering harmony among the body, mind, and spirit.

Keywords : Tyājya–Grāhya-Vidhāna, Haṭhayoga, Yogakarṇikā, Mudrā, Yogic Ethics, Siddhi, Discipline

Introduction

The science of yoga, particularly within the Haṭhayoga tradition, emphasizes discipline and mindful selection. A practitioner (sādhaka) must not only engage in beneficial practices but also abstain from those that hinder spiritual growth. This concept is articulated through two key terms: Tyājya (what should be avoided) and Grāhya (what should be embraced).

The Yogakarṇikā, a significant yet less-explored yogic text, presents these guidelines as teachings attributed to Brahmā. It clearly delineates that every aspect of spiritual practice involves both elements to accept and elements to reject. If a practitioner fails to recognize this distinction, they may stray from the true path of yoga.

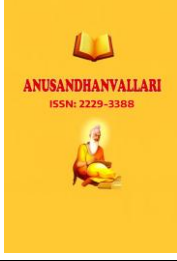
This principle is echoed in classical texts such as the Hatha Yoga Pradipika and the Gheranda Samhita, which underscore the importance of discipline in lifestyle, diet, and conduct. Similarly, the Bhagavad Gita advocates for moderation and self-control as fundamental aspects of yoga practice.

Consequently, this study seeks to explore the concept of Tyājya–Grāhya-Vidhāna within Haṭhayoga, emphasising its philosophical significance, practical application, and relevance in contemporary contexts.

The doctrine of Tyājya–Grāhya-Vidhāna is deeply rooted in the broader Indian philosophical principle of viveka, which refers to discriminative wisdom. In all major Indian traditions, viveka is considered essential for distinguishing between pathways that lead to spiritual elevation and those that result in bondage. Within the framework of Haṭhayoga, this principle becomes particularly practical, guiding practitioners in making informed choices in both daily life and spiritual pursuits.

The yogic practitioner, or sādhaka, is required to cultivate the ability to discriminate between:

what is beneficial and what is harmful,



what is essential and what is non-essential, and

what is permanent (nitya) and what is transient (anitya).

This discrimination is not merely theoretical; it is directly connected to the process of self-discipline. By accepting (grāhya) only those practices that purify the body and stabilize the mind, and rejecting (tyājya) those that create distraction, impurity, or imbalance, the aspirant gradually progresses on the path of yoga.

In Haṭhayoga, this process of selection operates at multiple levels. At the physical level, it governs diet, posture, and bodily practices. At the mental level, it involves control over thoughts, emotions, and sensory engagement. At the ethical level, it encourages the abandonment of negative tendencies such as laziness, excessive social interaction, and hypocrisy. Thus, Tyājya–Grāhya–Vidhāna becomes a comprehensive framework for holistic purification.

This idea is also supported by classical yoga literature. For instance, the Bhagavad Gita emphasizes the importance of understanding the difference between the eternal and the non-eternal, which embodies a form of viveka. Similarly, the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali highlight viveka-khyāti (discriminative knowledge) as key to liberation.

What makes Haṭhayoga distinctive is its translation of this philosophical principle into concrete practices. The aspirant is not only expected to understand what is right but also to embody it through disciplined action. Therefore, Tyājya–Grāhya–Vidhāna is not just a theoretical concept but a lived discipline that integrates knowledge, practice, and experience. While the philosophical foundation of Tyājya–Grāhya–Vidhāna lies in viveka, its true significance in Haṭhayoga is realized through practical application. It serves as a guiding principle that helps the aspirant navigate the complexities of the yogic path and steadily move toward spiritual realization.

Within the framework of Tyājya–Grāhya–Vidhāna, the practice of mudrās and bandhas occupies a central role among the grāhya (adoptable) elements in Haṭhayoga. The Yogakarnikā emphasizes that while numerous yogic techniques exist, certain core practices—specifically Mūlabandha, Mahābandha, and Mahāvedha—are particularly essential for the sādḥaka. These practices are not simply optional; they are foundational disciplines that support both physiological regulation and spiritual advancement.

From a physiological standpoint, bandhas serve as internal locks that manage the flow of prāṇa within the subtle body. By consciously contracting and controlling specific regions of the body, practitioners can direct vital energy, stabilize the nervous system, and enhance internal awareness. This regulation results in improved bodily health, increased vitality, and greater control over involuntary processes.

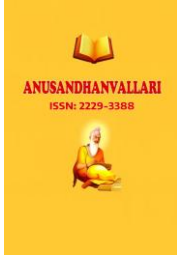
On a spiritual level, these practices are deemed crucial for awakening higher consciousness. The application of bandhas aids in facilitating the upward movement of prāṇa, activating subtle energy centers, and ultimately contributing to the awakening of kuṇḍalinī. Therefore, the practice of mudrās and bandhas acts as a bridge between the physical and spiritual dimensions of yoga.

The significance of these practices is further reinforced in the Gheranda Samhita, which outlines a specific sequence (क्रम) for practicing the three primary bandhas:

मूलबन्धं ततो कुर्यात् उड्डियानं ततोऽभ्यसेत् ।

जालन्धरं ततः पश्चात् बन्धत्रयमिदं स्मृतम् ॥

This verse highlights not only the importance of these bandhas but also the necessity for a systematic approach to practice (क्रमबद्ध अभ्यास). The sequence—Mūlabandha, followed by Uḍḍiyāna Bandha, and finally Jālandhara Bandha—ensures a balanced flow of prāṇa throughout the body. When practiced together, these forms constitute the bandha-traya, which is regarded as highly effective in achieving yogic stability and control.



From the perspective of Tyājya-Grāhya-Vidhāna, mudrās and bandhas are clearly considered grāhya because they directly contribute to the purification (śodhana), stabilization (sthiti), and elevation (unnati) of the practitioner. Unlike superficial or external practices, mudrās and bandhas require internal awareness, discipline, and sustained effort. This makes them closely aligned with the core objectives of Haṭhayoga.

Furthermore, the emphasis on these techniques highlights the practical orientation of Haṭhayoga. It stresses the importance of embodied practice rather than relying solely on philosophical understanding. The sādḥaka (practitioner) must not only comprehend the significance of these bandhas but also integrate them into their daily practice under proper guidance. The practice of mudrās and bandhas represents a vital grāhya element within Haṭhayoga. Through their combined physiological and spiritual effects, they play a crucial role in advancing the aspirant toward higher states of awareness and ultimately the attainment of siddhi.

Continuous practice, known as abhyāsa, is key to yoga and is one of the most important elements to adopt. It means putting in consistent effort, regular practice, and commitment as a yogi. Without ongoing practice, you cannot achieve the goals of yoga; these include mental stability, control over emotions, and self-realization.

As stated in the text, "अभ्यासेन तु कौन्तेय वैराग्येण च गृह्यते," controlling the mind requires continuous practice along with vairāgya, or detachment.

The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali give a clearer explanation of abhyāsa:

1. Yoga (control of mental fluctuations) is achieved through abhyāsa and vairāgya.
2. Abhyāsa is the effort to remain steady in your chosen discipline.
3. Effective practice must happen over a long time (dīrgha-kāla), without interruption (nairantarya), and with dedication (satkāra).

These sutras underline that yoga is not obtained through occasional effort, but rather through long-term, dedicated practice.

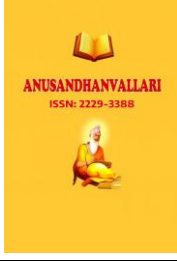
In Haṭhayoga, abhyāsa involves regularly practicing āsana (postures), prāṇāyāma (breath control), mudrā (gestures), and bandha (locks). The Yogakarnikā stresses that anyone—regardless of age or knowledge—can achieve success in yoga only through persistent practice.

From the Tyājya-Grāhya-Vidhāna perspective, abhyāsa is a fundamental element to adopt. Conversely, negligence, inconsistency, and laziness are to be avoided. This focus on practice highlights yoga's practical side, where real experience matters more than only theoretical understanding.

In summary, abhyāsa is the foundation of yoga practice. Combined with vairāgya, it helps gain control over the mind and promotes progress toward higher awareness.

Another important part of Tyājya-Grāhya-Vidhāna in Haṭhayoga is developing specific positive qualities that aid the practitioner's journey. The Hatha Yoga Pradipika lists these six key virtues (ṣaḍguṇa):

1. Utsāha (enthusiasm)
2. Sāhasa (courage)
3. Dhairya (patience)
4. Tattva-jñāna (knowledge of reality)
5. Niścaya (determination)
6. Jana-saṅga-parityāga (renouncing excessive social contact)



These qualities are essential for succeeding in yoga (prasiddhi).

From the perspective of important qualities in yoga, these traits form the core of a disciplined practice. Enthusiasm (utsāha) motivates practitioners to stay energetic and positive, helping to avoid stagnation. Courage (sāhasa) gives practitioners the strength to face discomfort, mental challenges, and uncertainties that come up during practice. Without courage, one might quit too soon.

Patience (dhairya) is also vital, as progress in yoga takes time and consistent effort. This aligns with the long-term practice mentioned in the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali. Knowledge of truth (tattva-jñāna) helps practitioners stay focused on the ultimate goal of yoga instead of getting sidetracked by minor gains or skills.

Firm determination (niścaya) serves as the anchor that keeps practice going, even when obstacles arise, turning intention into regular action. Lastly, avoiding excessive social interaction (jana-saṅga-parityāga) is important for maintaining mental focus. Spending too much time with others can lead to distractions, comparisons, and restless thoughts, which hinder yoga practice.

Together, these six qualities create a balanced approach that combines emotional strength, clear thinking, and disciplined behavior. They ensure that practitioners are physically ready and also mentally and ethically prepared for the challenges of yoga.

From the view of what to keep and what to let go of in practice (Tyājya-Grāhya-Vidhāna), these virtues should be adopted since they help achieve steadiness, purity, and realization. They help counteract negative traits like laziness, doubt, distraction, and instability. The six qualities outlined in Haṭhayoga literature are not just moral values; they are essential for practice. They act as internal guides that support the practitioner, ensuring steady progress toward the ultimate goal of yoga.

Regulating diet (āhāra-niyama) is central to the framework of Tyājya-Grāhya-Vidhāna in Haṭhayoga. Food is not just for physical energy; it also shapes the mental and emotional state of the practitioner. Therefore, keeping a balanced and pure diet is an important discipline to adopt.

This principle is clearly articulated in the Bhagavad Gita:

युक्ताहारविहारस्य युक्तचेष्टस्य कर्मसु ।

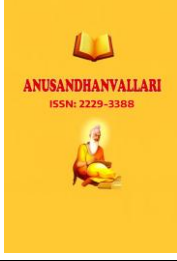
युक्तस्वप्नावबोधस्य योगो भवति दुःखहा ॥ (6.17)

The verse emphasizes that yoga becomes effective for those who practice moderation in:

- Food (āhāra)
- Recreation (vihāra)
- Actions (ceṣṭā)
- Sleep and wakefulness (svapna-avabodha)

Such moderation leads to the alleviation of suffering (duḥkha), indicating both physical well-being and mental peace.

In the context of Haṭhayoga, dietary regulation encompasses not just the quantity of food but also its quality and nature. A balanced, sattvic diet—light, nourishing, and easily digestible—supports clarity of mind (citta-prasāda) and physical stability. Conversely, excessive, overly spicy, or impure foods can disrupt the body's equilibrium, leading to restlessness and mental agitation (मानसिक चंचलता), which are obstacles (बाधक) in yoga.



From the perspective of Tyājya–Grāhya-Vidhāna, both extremes—overeating and complete fasting—are deemed tyājya (to be rejected) because they disturb bodily balance and weaken the practitioner. Moderation (yukta-āhāra), on the other hand, is grāhya, as it sustains energy and facilitates steady practice.

This concept is also highlighted in Haṭhayoga literature, such as the Hatha Yoga Pradipika, which warns against excessive consumption (atyāhāra) as a major obstacle to yoga. Thus, dietary discipline becomes a crucial factor in maintaining both physical health and mental focus.

Moreover, diet also has ethical and psychological dimensions. Controlling food habits reflects self-restraint and awareness, which are essential qualities for a yogic practitioner. A regulated diet reduces sensory cravings and supports the cultivation of detachment (vairāgya). The regulation of diet is a vital grāhya element in Haṭhayoga. It ensures harmony between body and mind, supports sustained practice, and removes obstacles on the path of yoga. Through moderation and mindful consumption, the aspirant lays a stable foundation for higher spiritual development.

Within the framework of Tyājya–Grāhya-Vidhāna, identifying and rejecting obstacles (vighnas) is essential for the progress of the yogic aspirant. Haṭhayoga literature clearly emphasizes that specific behaviors and tendencies must be consciously avoided, as they directly hinder the attainment of stability and higher awareness.

A well-known formulation of these बाधक तत्त्व is found in the Hatha Yoga Pradipika:

अत्याहारः प्रयासश्च प्रजल्पो नियमाग्रहः ।

जनसङ्गश्च लौल्यं च षड्भिर्योगो विनश्यति ॥

This verse identifies six major obstacles that lead to the destruction (vināśa) of yoga. Each obstacle can be understood not only as external behaviors but also as deeper psychological tendencies that disturb the balance necessary for yogic practice.

अत्याहार (Atyāhāra – overeating) signifies a lack of control over sensory desires. Excessive food intake burdens the body, dulls the mind, and leads to lethargy, thereby obstructing concentration and discipline. This directly contradicts the principle of yukta-āhāra (moderation in diet).

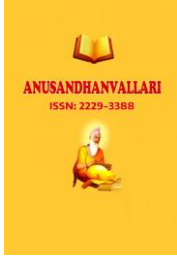
प्रयास (Prayāsa – overexertion) refers to unnecessary physical or mental strain. While effort is vital in yoga, excessive exertion can lead to fatigue and imbalance. Haṭhayoga advocates for a balanced approach, where effort is guided by awareness rather than sheer force.

प्रजल्प (Prajalpa – excessive talking) signifies the dissipating of mental energy through idle or unnecessary conversation. Constant talking distracts the mind, diminishes introspection, and weakens inner awareness, which is essential for meditative practices.

नियमाग्रह (Niyamāgraha – rigid or improper adherence to rules) indicates either a blind attachment to rules without understanding their true purpose or the neglect of essential disciplines. This suggests that yoga requires a thoughtful application of principles rather than a mechanical observance.

जनसङ्ग (Jana-saṅga – excessive social association) highlights the distracting influence of constant interaction with others. Frequent social engagement can lead to comparison, attachment, and mental restlessness (मानसिक चंचलता), which disrupts inner focus.

लौल्य (Laulya – fickleness or instability) represents the restless nature of the mind that continually seeks new experiences. This instability hinders sustained practice (abhyāsa) and weakens determination (niścaya).



From the perspective of the Tyājya–Grāhya-Vidhāna, these six factors should be avoided because they disrupt the balance of body and mind and block inward awareness. They symbolize excess, imbalance, and distraction, which yoga aims to overcome.

These obstacles are not just about actions but also show inner issues like lack of discipline, impatience, and mental instability. To overcome them, one needs to control behavior and undergo a mental change. The six obstacles mentioned in Haṭhayoga texts offer clear guidance on what to avoid in yoga practice. By consciously rejecting these tendencies, a practitioner can create the right conditions for stability, focus, and higher awareness.

A key point in the Tyājya–Grāhya-Vidhāna of the Yogakarṇikā is its clear rejection of false or superficial spiritual practices. The text warns against three main behaviors: showing off (external display), having only book knowledge without practice, and being hypocritical in spiritual life. These behaviors should be avoided because they create a false sense of progress while blocking real inner change.

The criticism of external show (veśabhūṣā) emphasizes the difference between appearance and reality in spiritual life. Simply adopting the outward symbols of a yogi—such as specific clothing, marks, or rituals—does not necessarily reflect genuine spiritual attainment. The Yogakarṇikā stresses that yoga is an internal discipline based on self-control and awareness, not a performance intended for social recognition. When an aspirant becomes attached to their external identity, the focus shifts from inner purification to seeking outward validation, which contradicts the true purpose of yoga.

Similarly, the text dismisses the idea that mere scriptural knowledge is sufficient without practice. While intellectual understanding is valuable, it alone cannot lead to yogic realization. Yoga is fundamentally an experiential discipline; it requires disciplined practice (abhyāsa) and the internalization of teachings. A person who only studies texts or engages in philosophical discussions without embodying the principles remains ३ from actual realization. This distinction reflects a broader emphasis in Indian philosophy on anubhava (direct experience) over mere śāstra-jñāna (theoretical knowledge).

The Yogakarṇikā strongly criticizes hypocrisy (mithyācāra) in spiritual life. This idea is also present in the Bhagavad Gita (3.6), which states:

"A person who controls their actions but still thinks about sense objects is called a hypocrite (mithyācārī)."

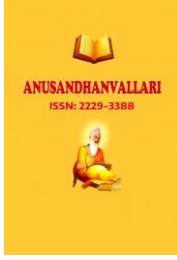
This verse highlights that true discipline requires both external control and internal detachment. In Haṭhayoga, this criticism is very important. A practitioner might seem disciplined by following rituals, living a yogic lifestyle, or discussing yoga. However, if their mind is not controlled, their practice is only on the surface. Hypocrisy leads to a conflict between how someone appears and their true state.

From the perspective of Tyājya–Grāhya-Vidhāna, these tendencies should be avoided (tyājya) because they distract the seeker from true practice and create false confidence. They replace real effort with imitation and prevent genuine progress. Rejecting such practices helps ensure that the seeker stays sincere, disciplined, and self-aware. The Yogakarṇikā's critique of false practices is practical, not just moral. By rejecting superficial actions, false knowledge, and hypocrisy, the seeker moves toward being authentic and achieving inner change, essential for success in yoga.

The Tyājya–Grāhya-Vidhāna framework defines dietary discipline beyond what to eat. The Yogakarṇikā and related Haṭhayoga texts state that certain foods should be avoided (tyājya) because they disrupt physical balance and mental stability, hindering yogic progress.

Some foods should be avoided for proper yoga practice. These include:

Very spicy, sour, or salty foods,



Garlic, onion, and mustard oil,

Extreme eating habits like overeating or complete fasting.

These foods can overstimulate the body, upset digestion, and cause internal imbalance. In yoga, food affects the flow of energy (prāṇa) and the body, which is essential for practice. Eating an unbalanced diet can make you feel tired, restless, or heavy, creating obstacles in your practice.

On a mental level, these dietary rules are linked to the qualities of rajas (activity) and tamas (inertia). Foods that are too strong or stimulating can cloud your mind and cause emotional instability. Since yoga aims for a calm and stable mind (citta-sthairya), these foods are not suitable for dedicated practitioners.

Garlic and onion are often avoided because they can increase distractions and prevent focus. Mustard oil and very heated foods can also disturb your body's balance.

It's important to avoid extreme eating habits. Overeating can make you feel heavy and sluggish, while fasting can weaken you and hinder your practice. The Bhagavad Gita supports moderation in diet as vital for yoga.

These dietary guidelines act as a preventive measure. By avoiding the wrong foods and habits, practitioners keep their body and mind in order. This provides a solid base for advanced practices such as breathing exercises (prāṇāyāma), meditation (dhyāna), and deep absorption (samādhi).

In Haṭhayoga, controlling your thoughts and behaviors is just as important as physical discipline. The practice recognizes that the mind can be a barrier or a help in spiritual growth. Therefore, practitioners should consciously avoid certain harmful thoughts and social behaviors.

One major obstacle is laziness (ālayā). Laziness is a lack of motivation and goes against the idea of continuous effort (abhyāsa). A lazy person may fail to stick to a regular practice, leading to stagnation and reduced progress. Since yoga requires ongoing discipline, overcoming laziness is essential.

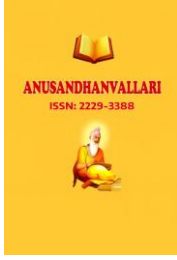
Another important area to watch is idle talk (praṇalpa). Talking too much or about unimportant things drains mental energy and distracts you from self-reflection. This outward focus can interfere with meditation and self-awareness. By reducing unnecessary talking, practitioners keep their minds clear and encourage inner silence (mauna).

Finally, it's crucial to avoid becoming attached to sensory pleasures. This attachment connects the mind to outside objects and strengthens desires (vāsanā), leading to restlessness. Yoga teaches the importance of detachment (vairāgya) to help direct focus inward. Without overcoming this attachment, you cannot reach deeper states of concentration (dhyāna).

It is important to be cautious about the company we keep, especially when it includes dishonest or insincere people (ku-saṅga). Our social environment strongly influences our minds. Associating with deceitful individuals can lead to confusion, distractions, and deviation from our goals. They might encourage false practices or create doubts about our path. Therefore, avoiding ku-saṅga is essential for maintaining clear intentions and focus.

These guidelines emphasize the need for self-discipline and careful association. From the perspective of Tyājya-Grāhya-Vidhāna, these negative influences are considered tyājya because they disrupt concentration, weaken determination, and hinder spiritual growth. Rejecting them is not just about saying no but is a necessary step toward developing positive traits like focus, sincerity, and inner stability.

In summary, psychological and social restraints are crucial in Haṭhayoga practice. By consciously avoiding laziness, idle chatter, sensory attachments, and harmful associations, we create a conducive environment for yoga. This disciplined approach helps us progress toward higher awareness and realizations.



The Yogakarnikā uniquely discusses obstacles (vighnas) encountered during yoga practice. These obstacles are significant challenges that test our commitment. Among them, ālasyā (laziness), bhrama (confusion), and ku-saṅga are especially important as they affect our mental and social states and directly hinder our progress.

Ālasyā (laziness) signifies inactivity and reluctance to put in effort. It disrupts consistent practice (abhyāsa) and undermines the discipline needed for Haṭhayoga. Since achieving yoga requires regular practice, even occasional laziness can slow progress. To overcome laziness, we should cultivate qualities like utsāha (enthusiasm) and niścaya (determination), which support our yoga practice. Therefore, overcoming laziness means actively developing motivation and self-discipline.

Bhrama (confusion) refers to misunderstandings about the yoga path, methods, or goals. This confusion can stem from incorrect information, misreading texts, or being drawn to superficial aspects of yoga. It may lead us to pursue wrong paths, such as focusing too much on supernatural powers or blind rituals. To clear confusion, we need proper knowledge (tattva-jñāna) and guidance from a trustworthy teacher. In this way, correct understanding is key to countering bhrama.

Ku-saṅga (bad company) shows how much our social surroundings impact us as practitioners. Being around undisciplined, deceitful, or spiritually immature people can lead to distractions, doubts, and a decline in our practice. Such company often promotes superficiality or misconceptions about yoga, reinforcing confusion and weakening our resolve. Therefore, avoiding ku-saṅga and seeking good company (sat-saṅga) is vital for maintaining clarity and motivation.

The Yogakarnikā highlights that the yoga journey is not straightforward and requires ongoing awareness. From the Tyājya–Grāhya–Vidhāna perspective, these obstacles are clearly to be discarded, while their opposites—enthusiasm, right knowledge, and good company—should be embraced. This balanced approach ensures that we not only eliminate hindrances but also nurture supportive conditions.

Removing these obstacles (nivṛtti) involves two steps:

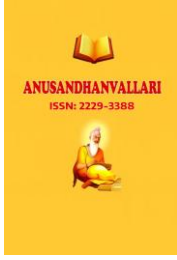
1. Actively avoiding negative influences (tyāga), and
2. Actively nurturing positive habits (grahaṇa).

Understanding the obstacles in the Yogakarnikā emphasizes the need for awareness, discipline, and discernment in yoga practice. By identifying and overcoming challenges like laziness, confusion, and harmful associations, we can maintain steadiness and gradually reach higher levels of realization.

The Yogakarnikā highlights the importance of a Guru and the need for true, ongoing practice in yoga. It makes it clear that spiritual success (siddhi) cannot be achieved through just reading texts. Although studying scriptures is valuable, it is not enough without real experience and consistent practice. Relying only on book knowledge is tyājya (to be rejected), while practicing with proper guidance is grāhya (to be accepted).

Having a Guru is crucial because the yogic path is complex. Haṭhayoga involves not just physical exercises, but also deep work with prāṇa (life energy), the mind, and consciousness. Without the right guidance, a practitioner might misunderstand instructions, practice wrongly, or get distracted by superficial goals like gaining special powers or external recognition. The Guru serves as a teacher, corrector, and motivator, helping the student focus on the true aim of yoga.

The Yogakarnikā stresses that sincere and regular practice (abhyāsa) is the only sure way to succeed. This is consistent with the broader yoga tradition, which values regularity, patience, and dedication. Inconsistent or casual efforts cannot bring about the transformation that yoga requires. It demands long-term commitment and self-discipline.



At the same time, the text criticizes shallow spirituality, which is very relevant today. It dismisses the idea that outward appearances, smooth talk, or social status can replace real practice. People who simply act like yogis or speak eloquently without self-discipline stray from the true path. This not only blocks their own progress but can also mislead others.

In the context of Tyājya–Grāhya-Vidhāna, this distinction is important:

- Tyājya: superficial knowledge, showiness, lack of discipline, and self-deception.
- Grāhya: guidance from a wise teacher, sincere intention, and continuous practice.

This dual framework helps the student stay authentic and avoids confusion and ego-driven practice.

Today, when yoga is often treated as just physical exercise, the Yogakarnikā's focus on the Guru and real practice serves as a vital reminder. It emphasizes that yoga is fundamentally a transformative discipline that requires humility, dedication, and proper guidance. The role of the Guru and the need for genuine practice are central to Haṭhayoga. By rejecting shallow approaches and following disciplined guidance, a student can progress steadily toward true realization and achieve siddhi.

The Tyājya–Grāhya-Vidhāna doctrine in Haṭhayoga offers a clear framework that brings together various aspects of yogic practice: physical discipline, ethical behavior, and mental clarity. This doctrine does not present yoga as a series of separate techniques but as a unified system where the practitioner learns to choose (grāhya) and discard (tyājya) elements at each step of their practice.

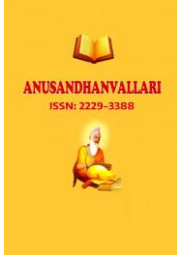
On the physical level, the doctrine gives clear advice about āsana (postures), prāṇāyāma (breath control), mudrā (gestures), and particularly diet. By identifying what is good and what is not for the body, it helps the practitioner stay balanced and healthy. This is especially important in Haṭhayoga, where the body is seen as the main tool for spiritual growth. Without proper guidance, physical practices can turn ineffective or even harmful.

At the level of ethical conduct, Tyājya–Grāhya-Vidhāna emphasizes sincerity, restraint, and the avoidance of hypocrisy. It rejects superficial religiosity and external displays, thereby safeguarding the aspirant from delusion (भ्रम) and egoism (अहंकार). Ethical discipline thus becomes not merely a moral requirement but a practical necessity that supports inner stability and clarity. In this sense, the doctrine closely aligns with the broader ethical foundations of yoga found in texts like the Yoga Sūtras of Patanjali, where self-regulation is central to progress.

At the level of mental purification, the doctrine plays an even more crucial role. By identifying obstacles such as laziness, distraction, illusion, and attachment, it provides a psychological map of the challenges faced by the practitioner. The conscious rejection of these obstructive elements (बाधक तत्व), combined with the cultivation of positive qualities such as enthusiasm, determination, and detachment, leads to citta-śuddhi (purification of the mind). This mental clarity is essential for higher practices like dhyāna (meditation) and samādhi (union with the divine).

A critical strength of this doctrine lies in its dynamic and practical nature. It does not impose rigid rules in isolation but encourages the aspirant to develop viveka (discriminative wisdom). Practitioners are expected to understand the purpose behind each guideline and apply it intelligently according to the context. This flexibility prevents mechanical practice and promotes जागरूकता (awareness), which is central to yoga.

Furthermore, the doctrine acts as a corrective against the modern tendency to reduce yoga to mere physical exercise. In contemporary settings, yoga is often limited to postures and fitness-oriented practices, neglecting its deeper ethical and spiritual dimensions. Tyājya–Grāhya-Vidhāna restores this balance by integrating body, mind, and conduct into a unified discipline. It emphasizes that without mental purification and ethical grounding, physical practices alone cannot lead to true transformation.



However, a critical perspective suggests that the strictness of certain prescriptions—particularly concerning diet and social behavior—may require contextual interpretation in modern life. The challenge lies in preserving the underlying principles while adapting their application to contemporary conditions without diluting their essence. The doctrine of Tyājya–Grāhya-Vidhāna represents a holistic and practical framework that ensures yoga remains a complete spiritual discipline. By integrating physical, ethical, and psychological dimensions, it prevents the fragmentation of practice and guides the aspirant toward balanced and authentic progress on the yogic path.

This study demonstrates that Tyājya–Grāhya-Vidhāna constitutes a foundational principle within the discipline of Haṭhayoga. By clearly distinguishing between what should be accepted (grāhya) and what must be rejected (tyājya), it provides a structured and practical roadmap for the aspirant’s spiritual journey. This dual framework operates at multiple levels—physical, ethical, and psychological—thereby ensuring a holistic approach to yogic practice.

The analysis of Yogakarnikā, supported by classical texts such as the Hatha Yoga Pradipika, Gheranda Samhita, and Bhagavad Gita, reveals that success in yoga is not dependent on external appearances or theoretical knowledge alone. Rather, it is grounded in disciplined practice (abhyāsa), the guidance of a competent Guru, and the conscious renunciation of obstructive elements (बाधक तत्व) such as laziness, distraction, and hypocrisy.

Furthermore, the doctrine emphasizes that yoga is an experiential and transformative journey. The aspirant must actively engage in self-regulation, cultivate positive qualities, and maintain vigilance against obstacles. By doing so, Tyājya–Grāhya-Vidhāna not only facilitates physical and mental purification but also guides the practitioner toward higher states of awareness and realization.

In the contemporary context, where yoga is often reduced to a purely physical or commercial endeavor, the teachings of Yogakarnikā take on renewed significance. They serve as a poignant reminder that authentic yoga transcends mere bodily exercise, encompassing ethical discipline, mental clarity, and spiritual depth.

In conclusion, Tyājya–Grāhya-Vidhāna stands as a timeless and practical framework that upholds the integrity of Haṭhayoga. It bridges theory and practice, guiding both traditional and modern practitioners toward a balanced, disciplined, and meaningful engagement with the yogic path. References : -

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