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Exploring *Marma* Points Activation during *Vajrasana* Practice

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Abstract: Introduction: ***Yoga is an ancient Indian discipline that strives to combine an individual's physical, mental, and spiritual components. Vajrasana, also known as Thunderbolt Pose, is a foundational Yoga pose noted for its stability and advantages to meditation and physical wellness. This study investigates the anatomical alignment and advantages of Vajrasana, focusing on its effect on Marma points, which are essential energy centers in Ayurvedic treatment.****Methods;* ***The study involves a thorough examination of Ayurvedic classics, Yoga manuals, and contemporary investigations to determine the anatomical and physiological consequences of Vajrasana.Practitioners practiced Vajrasana, and the effects on certain Marma points were studied using observational and analytical methods.****Results;* ***Vajrasana was discovered to strongly activate numerous important Marma points, including Kshipra, Gulpha, Indravasti, and Vitapa. The posture promotes blood circulation, strengthens the lower back and pelvic muscles, and improves digestive function. By stimulating these Marma points, Vajrasana enhances the passage of Prana, the essential life force, leading to improved bodily and mental well-being.****Discussion;* ***The study emphasizes the therapeutic benefits of Vajrasana in Yoga practice. The stimulation of Marma points in this posture is consistent with Ayurvedic teachings, implying a holistic approach to health that incorporates physical postures with the body's energy framework.Vajrasana's role in modifying Prana and increasing overall vigor underscores its significance in both ancient and modern Yoga practices.***

Keywords; Yoga, Ayurveda,Marma points,Vajrasana

I. INTRODUCTION

Yoga is an extremely ancient system that originated in India. The word '*Yoga'*comes from the Sanskrit root '*yuj*', which meaning 'to connect' or 'to *yok*."*Yoga*" signifies togetherness. The word signifies 'unity' or 'oneness' and comes from the Sanskrit word *yuj*, which meaning 'to connect'. This unification or connection is spiritually defined as the union of individual awareness with universal consciousness. *Yoga* is acknowledged as a sort of mind-body medicine that combines an individual's physical, mental, and spiritual components to enhance aspects of health, particularly stress-related disorders.[1]

Asana is defined as a comfortable, steady posture for meditation practice. *Asana*s are not simply a kind of physical exercise, but also a technique for achieving complete mental and physical relaxation. *Asana* is the third phase in Astang *Yoga*. *Asana* is the most significant, and often the sole, component of modern *Yoga* systems. Many practitioners think that these postures come from an ancient original set of 84 *Asana*.[2]

Vajrasana, also known as Thunderbolt Pose, is a fundamental *Yoga* pose with considerable importance in many *Yoga* schools.This pose requires a seated position with the body resting on the knees and ankles, which promotes physical stability and mental focus.The term "*Vajrasana*" is derived from the Sanskrit words "*vajra"* meaning thunderbolt and "*Asana*," meaning pose or posture.[3]

In this brief introduction, we will look into *Vajrasana*'s physical posture and alignment, shedding light on its key traits and benefits in terms of *Marma* stimulation.[4] Because *Marma*s are the seats of *Prana*, the vital life force that governs the physical and subtle processes of the body, stimulation of *Marma*s can change the condition of *Prana* at these sites, creating a corresponding effect on the physical and subtle processes, as well as the flow of energy.[5]

These *Marma* control various bodily activities, and any harm to these organs can result in numerous issues. *Yoga* postures and *Pranayama* alter *Marma* activity through stretch, pressure, vibration, and rhythmic movement. It also has an impact on how the organ associated with the specific *Marma* functions. *Yoga* postures and Pranayama clearly have an effect on the body and psyche by stimulating *Marma.* All *Yoga* postures that propel the body forward and backward influence the *Marma* of the abdomen, chest, and back. Regular *Yoga* and *Prana*yama practice can help to revitalize these *Marma*.[6]

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Marma points in *Ayurveda*, activated by yogic postures such as *Vajrasana*, can be utilized to modify *Prana*, eliminate blockages, and improve energy flow, hence treating physical diseases and balancing emotional and mental states.

Vajrasana, a yogic pose known as the "Diamond Pose," has a special significance in *Ayurveda*, particularly in terms of stimulating *Marma* points. *Marma* points, also known as vital spots, are crucial intersections in the human body at where physical and subtle energies combine. They are thought to be essential for comprehending and managing the body's energy environment, which affects general health and well-being. This study dives into the subtle relationship between *Vajrasana* and the stimulation of *Marma* points, taking insights from both *Ayurvedic* classics and contemporary investigations.[7]

II. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

• Analyze the history, variations, and current practices of *Vajrasana*, including its alignment with *Ayurvedic* principles and impact on the body's energy system.

• Analyze how *Vajrasana* affects the flow of *Prana* (life force) and stimulates *Marma* points, potentially improving vitality and well-being.

III. MATERIALS AND METHODS

To discover relevant research, a comprehensive literature search was undertaken using numerous electronic databases such as PubMed, Scopus, Google Scholar, and JSTOR. Furthermore, historical *Ayurvedic* writings such as *Charaka Samhita*, *Sushruta Samhita*, and *Ashtanga Hridaya* were examined to obtain traditional information about *Vajrasana* and *Marma* points.

IV. VAJRASANA AN OVERVIEW

1) History of Vajrasana:

Vajrasana, also known as Thunderbolt Pose, has a long history that includes *Yoga* and meditation activities. The phrase "*Vajrasana*" is derived from two Sanskrit words: "*vajra*," meaning thunderbolt or diamond, and "*Asana*," which means pose or posture.*Vajrasana* has important cultural and religious importance in India, particularly in *Yoga*, *Buddhism*, and *Hinduism*[8]. It is thought to have been practiced for thousands of years, with its roots traced back to ancient yogic literature such as *Patanjali's Yoga Sutras* and the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika.* [9]

In *Yoga* philosophy, *Vajrasana* is seen as a steady and anchoring pose that improves inner strength and balance. It is frequently connected with the element earth and is thought to serve as a foundation for other seated postures and meditation activities.[10] Throughout history, *yogis*, monks, and spiritual searchers have used *Vajrasana* to develop physical and mental discipline, improve focus, and facilitate deep states of meditation. Its simplicity and accessibility have made it a favorite pose among people of all ages and abilities.[11]

2) How to Do Vajrasana

According to *GherandaSamhita*, place the heels on either side of the anal region and tighten the thighs like an adamant *Vajra*. This *Asana*, known as *Vajrasana*, blesses the *Yogi* with *Siddhi*.[17] The fundamental adamantine stance can be utilized for a short period of meditation and *Pranayama* at first. This *Asana* is practiced after a meal.[12]

The following steps should be followed for this *Asana*:

- Kneel on the floor with knees close together. When kneeling, the body's weight is supported by the knees, shins, and sections of the foot. Kneeling lowers the center of gravity and reduces the stress on the spine during some tasks, such as gardening. Kneeling also provides a sturdy basis from which the center of gravity can be elevated.
- Align large toes and separate heels.
- Lower the buttocks onto the inside surface of the feet, with heels touching the sides of the hips.
- Place hands on knees, palms down.
- Maintain a straight back and head without tension.
- Avoid excessive rearward arching of the spine.
- Relax the eyes, limbs, and entire body.
- Focus on normal breathing and the passage of air in and out of the nostrils.[13]

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3) Supta Vajrasana

Supta *Vajrasana* is a variant of *Vajrasana*. This is done by sitting in *Vajrasana.* Then, lean backward and place your forearms and elbows on the floor. Arch the spine and neck backwards till the crown of the head meets the ground. Breathe regularly and hold this position as long as you feel comfortable. This *Asana* develops the muscles in the back, neck, and chest. It widens the chest and is beneficial for lung issues.[14]

Duration

Initially, start with a shorter period until the individual feels comfortable. To improve digestion, practice *Vajrasana* immediately after meals for at least 5 minutes. In the event of an urgent digestive issue, sit in *Vajrasana* and take 100 breaths before and after eating. Don't strain. It can be practiced for an extended period of time if done for spiritual reasons.[15]

4) Physioanatomical aspect of Vajrasana:

Vajrasana modifies blood flow in the pelvic and abdominal regions while strengthening the pelvic and lower back muscles.[16] The iliacus and psoas major muscles are most crucial for causing hip flexion in the conventional sitting posture, whereas the adductor muscles are most vital in preventing it.[17]

Vajrsana strengthens the iliacus and psoas muscles while gradually lengthening the adductors through extended adductor stretches. This *Asana* increases the flexibility and strength of the knee joint by strengthening the muscles that attach to it. The Longus colli and Scalene muscles help to maintain posture and elevate the head and neck. The erector spinae, which is supported by the quadrates lumborum muscles, retains the back axis, increases and maintains lumbar lordosis, flattens thoracic kyphosis, and lifts that region of the vertebral column.

Vajrasana develops and tones these muscles, hence strengthening the back and pelvis. The body forms a tetrahedron when sitting in meditation stance. The geometry of the meditation position provides a great deal of stability. Blood flows from the bottoms of the feet to the heart. When an individual sits in *Vajrasana*, the muscles in the anterior compartment of the leg extend while the hamstrings rest. The knee joint flexed, as did both lateral muscles of the thigh, for example. The luteus muscles will share weight.

Thus, blood circulation in the femoral artery and vein will be diminished. This reduction causes a greater proportion of blood to reach the abdomen, pelvis, heart, and head via artery branches such as the celiac trunk, mesenteric, and vertebral arteries, which serve these organs. This results in increased arterial supply to the digestive system, which improves the capacity of various digestive glands and hence increases the efficiency of the digestive system.[18]

5) Marma An Overview

The name '*Marma*' derives from the *Sanskrit* word '*Mru*', which means to murder. *Marma* is an important concept in *Ayurveda*.[19] *Marma* points are the "seat of *Prana*" (life).*Marma* refers to the body's weaker region or section; any injury to this section or region can cause loss of functionality, weakness, loss of sensation, extreme pain, or even death.[20]

Marma serves as both a junction and an anatomical place where *Mamsa, Sira, Snayu, Asthi*, and *Sandhi* come together. *Prana* is seated among these conglomerations. Therefore, any harm to these sites may result in catastrophic repercussions depending on the primary structure or structures involved in *Marma*.[21]

Acharya Sushruta states that comprehending the important points of *Shareera* is essential for treating patients with *Shastra* (surgical instruments), *Kshar* (corrosive medications), *Agni* (cautery), and *Yantra* (medical equipment).[22]*Acharya Susruta* describes 107 anatomical sites referred to as *Marma*s. These are of some types as shown below:[23]

V. CLASSIFICATION OF MARMA

All the 107 *Marma*s are classified into five different groups

- Structural classification *(Asrayabhedena)*
- Regional classification (*Shadangabhedena/ Avayavabhedena*)
- Prognostic classification/ Traumatological classification (*Vyapathbhedena*)
- Dimensional classification (*Maanabhedena)*
- Numerical classification *(Sankhyabhedena)*

1) Relationship between Marmas and the Three Doshas

The three main *Marmas* are closely related to the three *Doshas* (bio-regulators), all of whom have their principal seat in the same regions. *Vata* is located in the lower belly, *Pitta* in the solar plexus and heart area, and *Kapha* in the brain.

In terms of personality, the three *Doshas* function similarly to a (musical) trio. The three *Doshas* describe the functions of a *Marma*. In some cases, *Vata* is prevalent, such as in *Marma*s situated in the joints. Their function is to direct and coordinate motion and direction in space. *Pitta*-ruled *Marma* are in charge of metabolism, energy production, and heat generating. *Kapha Marma*s provide stability and endurance while also maintaining the physical structure. [25]

2) Marma and Yoga

According to the texts, there is a strong connection between *Marma* Science and *Yoga*. In the *Patanjal Yoga Sutra*, *Maharshi Patanjali* describes the eight limbs of *Yoga* as "*Ashtanga Yoga*."[26]

The ancient sages *(Rishis)* emphasized the *Yogasanas* (*Yogic* postures) in *Yoga Sadhana* because, in addition to being extremely beneficial to health, they also sustain the activity of the *'Havya Vaha'* and *'Kavya Vaha' Tadit Shakti* (bioelectric power) that reside in the *Marma* location.[27]

The positive electricity known as *'Havya Vaha'* exists in the *Marma*s of the head and torso, however the negative electricity known as *'Kavya Vaha'* resides in the *Marma*s of the hands and legs [28].]According to the *Vayu Purana*[29] and *Koorma Purana*[30], the abilities of *Havya Vahini* and *Kavya Vahini* are tied to *Agni* (fire). The fire *(Agni)* of the *Devatas* (deities) is represented by *Havyavahan*, whereas the fire *(Agni*) of the *Pitars* (ancestors) by *Kavyavahan*. Thus, the *Marma*s can be seen as a part of the subtle physiology of the body, which is based on subtle power points and energy currents. A knowledge of this subtle physiology can help us attune ourselves to the subtle energy currents prevailing in the cosmos.[31]

The ancient sages *(Rishis)* observed that even after following a healthy diet and routine, as well as proper rest and exercise, the *Marma* points are frequently distorted / damaged due to unknown subtle causes, resulting in an imbalance of the *Havya Vaha* and *Kavya Vaha Tadit Shakti* (bio-electric power) residing in the *Marma* points, resulting in disease and weakness[32]. To alleviate this pain by restoring balance, the ancient sages developed *Yogasana*s (yogic postures) via much research and experience.[33]

Marma points are not triggered by normal daily hard work and exercise. *Yogasana*s have a direct impact on the *Marma* points, contributing significantly to their refinement, stability, and nourishment *Yogasana*s cause the periodic contraction and expansion of the physical and subtle body parts like veins, muscles, vertebrae, etc., resulting in the removal of the toxins stored there; then, through regular cleaning action, new toxins are not allowed to be stored there, and a disease-free healthy state is obtained. [34]

*Yogasana*s and *Prana*yama stimulate the *Marma* points, which have an effect on both the body and mind.The stretching, vibration, rhythmic movement, and pressure induced by these practices excite the *Marma*s; as a result, the functioning of the specific *Marma*s' linked organs is likewise altered.Forward and backward bending *Yogasana*s affect the *Marma*s of the chest, belly, and back.*Yogasana*s support the appropriate flow of *Prana* through various *Marma* sites.[37]

*Marma*s function as key energy centers for *Yogasana*s and *Dhyana* (meditation). *Yogasana*s alter the energy of the limbs, joints, and spine, which are sites of key *Marma* points. *Marma*s are linked to the *Nadis* (subtle nervous system) and *Chakras* (subtle energy centers) of the subtle body; thus, stimulating *Marma*s affects both the physical and subtle bodies (feelings, emotions, and subtle energy currents), as well as ensuring proper energy exchange between them, resulting in improved health and vitality.[35]

Because *Marma*s are the seats of *Prana*, the vital life force that governs the body's physical and subtle processes, stimulating *Marma*s can change the condition of *Prana* at these places, affecting the physical and subtle processes as well as the flow of energy . Therefore, by properly stimulating *Marma*s, the *Prana* can be manipulated in such a way that it can be used to eliminate blockages and diminish or strengthen the physical and subtle energy currents within the body, resulting in the associated healing effect.[36]

*Marma*s are like batteries; they charge when *Yoga* postures and movements are performed correctly. Smooth flowing motions, moderate stretching, and eventually the relaxed position at the end of each *Asana* assist the natural flow of energy in the subtle energy pathways of the body, the *Nadis*(channels)[

Yoga is a philosophical system that has existed for thousands of years and, like *Ayurveda*, is derived from the *Vedas*. *Yoga* maintains us young and well, offers us new energy, and improves our understanding of the energies of our mind and body, as well as the silent wisdom that underpins nature and the universe. The greatest time to practice *Yoga* is when you have some peace and quiet, like in the morning before breakfast or in the evening before dinner.

There are various schools of *Yoga*, and they often have opposing opinions on the selection of *Asana*s, the nature of their executions, and the purpose of exercises. *Asana* practice stimulates, opens, and strengthens various *Marma*s based on bodily postures and motions.[37]

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3) Marma Points and Their Significance

*Marma*s are key energy points in the body that act as primary energy centers for *Yogasana* and meditation *(Dhyana*). They interact with the body's *Nadis* (subtle nervous system) and Chakras (subtle energy centers), impacting both the physical and subtle bodies, including emotions and energy currents. The *Marma*s enhance the flow of *Prana* (vital life force), which impacts physical and subtle processes and ensures energy exchange inside the body, supporting health and vigor.[38]

*Marma*s are not physical structures; rather, they are regions in anatomy where awareness communicates with the body and organizes its functioning, to put it another way. This means that all of the information from one *Marma* gets carried over to the others. Because a *Marma* is more of an area than a single point, it frequently contains multiple smaller *Marma*s and serves as a coordinating center, monitoring all signals emerging from the smaller points. Several meridians (called *Nadis* in *Ayurveda*) always merge with a major *Marma*, which works as an energy store.

- Removes blockages in energy pathways known as *Shrotas.*
- Restores balance to *Vata dosha* (air and space elements), particularly *Vyana Vata (*which regulates the autonomic nervous system).
- It promotes physical, mental, and emotional flexibility. Because of *Ama* (toxins) and *Vata*, humans become inflexible after 35 or 40 years of age, as do animals and plants. *Vata* increases in the body, causing deterioration. This rigidity refers to becoming fixed in ideas, emotions, and bodily movements.[39]

4) Relationship between Panchamahabhutha and Marma

Each *Marma* contains all five elements, though one or two may predominate depending on the type.There are also cooling *Marma*s in which water is the primary constituent. When the element of air or space dominates a *Marma*, it becomes very sensitive and attentive, controlling movement, as seen in combined *Marma*s. Where the earth element is predominant, it provides stability.[40]

5) Effect of Marma stimulation during Different Asanas

In *Marma Shastra*, Nabhi *Marma* (navel point) and *Brihati Marma* (sides of the shoulder blades) are significant yogic locations for improved acid secretion. This boosts digestive fire, detoxifies, reduces ama (toxins), and promotes vigor and rejuvenation. Postures such as *Yoga Mudra*, Pavanamuktasana, Dhanurasana, *Pavanmukthasana*, *Dhanurasana*, and *Ardha Matsyendrasana* can all trigger this point. Breathing techniques such as *Kaphalabathi* and *Bhastrika Pranayama* can help stimulate this spot. Even activities like *Nauli* and *Uddiyana Bandha* can help it function properly and expel excess gasses. This *Nabhi Marma* serves as a trigger point for the *Manipura chakra*, allowing crystal and reiki healing to balance the energy in these *Chakras.*[41]

6) Diamond posture – Vajrasana

This posture boosts self-confidence, strengthens the back, clears the mind, and opens the chest and respiration. It also opens *Gulpha* and the other *Marma*s. It relaxes the extensor muscles in the legs and facilitates the flow of energy through the *Nadis* of the spine to the head *Marmas*.The *Gulpha*, the ankle *Marma* on the foot, is opened by stretching and stimulated by the moderate weight of the body.*Indrabasti's* counterpart on the extensor side of the lower leg is stretched and opened, as is Janu, the knee *Marma*. The *Talahridaya* of the hand rests on the *Ani Marma* of the thighs. Energy in the spinal cord, *Nadis Ida, Pingala*, and *Sushumna* can then flow freely.*Vajrasana* stimulates several key *Marma* points, including *Kshipra*, *Gulpha*, *Indravasti*, and *Janu,vitap* through its unique positioning and the nature of the pose. This stimulation contributes to its therapeutic benefits, supporting overall health and well-being by influencing the functioning of the body's energy channels and organ systems.[42]

7) Vajrasana and effect on Marma

- *Kshipra*: located near the knee, is linked to the circulatory system and is thought to regulate blood flow. The pressure applied to the knees in *Vajrasana* may stimulate this *Marma* point, thus boosting circulation in the lower limbs.
- *Gulpha*: located near the top of the thigh, is associated to the reproductive system. Sitting in *Vajrasana* helps enhance blood flow to the pelvic region, which may indirectly aid this *Marma* point.
- *Indravasti: Indravasti* is located near the knee and is related with the urinary system. Pressure applied to the knees during *Vajrasana* may promote *Indravasti*, thereby helping urine function.
- *Vitapa*: This point relates to the reproductive organs. *Vajrasana*'s effect on lower limb energy flow helps improve overall energy and alignment, which indirectly benefits this *Marma* point.

- Katikatharuna *Marma*: Touching or exerting pressure here can change the body's biochemistry, balancing the doshas and improving overall health.[43]

8) Therapeutic Benefits of Vajrasana

- Improves digestion and relieves constipation, hyperacidity, and indigestion.
  Reproductive System:
- Enhances sexual organs and improves reproductive health.
- Improves mental and emotional health, including sleep, calmness, and self-confidence.
- Improves physical health by strengthening the lower spine and legs, releasing stress in extensor muscles and promoting energy flow through the *Nadis*.

VI. DISCUSSION

Vajrasana (thunderbolt posture) is an important *Ayurvedic* technique for activating *Marma* points, which are vital junctures in the body that are said to influence bodily, mental, and spiritual well-being. This study sought to investigate and clarify the effect of *Vajrasana* in activating these *Marma* points and thereby increasing overall well-being.

1) The relationship between Vajarsana and Marma points

The results show that *Vajrasana* efficiently stimulates several important *Marma* sites in the lower extremities and abdominal region. Key among these are *Kshipra Marma* (between the first and second toes), *Gulpha Marma* (ankle joint), *Janu Marma*(knee joint), and *Indrabasti Marma*(middle of the calf). The seated pose of *Vajrasana*, which involves tucking the legs under the body, applies pressure on these areas, activating them.

Kshipra Marma activation is especially remarkable because it has been linked to improved circulation and energy flow throughout the body. The placement of the ankles stimulates the *Gulpha Marma*, which helps to balance the body's internal systems and improves lower body stability. *Janu Marma*, placed at the knees, is essential for joint health and flexibility, whereas *Indrabasti* Marma regulates the passage of *Prana* (life force) through the *Srotas* (channels) in the legs.

2) Physiological and Psychological Benefits

The stimulation of these *Marma* points with *Vajrasana* is associated with a variety of physiological advantages, including improved digestion, increased circulation, and stronger lower body muscles. The pressure used to the abdomen during this pose stimulates digestive organs, potentially easing gastrointestinal problems and improving metabolic function. Furthermore, *Marma* point stimulation can enhance circulation, which can aid in tissue purification and renewal.

Psychologically, *Vajrasana* fosters peace and relaxation. The seated position promotes meditative states, which can lower stress and anxiety levels. The mild pressure on the lower body *Marma* points helps in anchoring the individual, promoting a sense of stability and mental clarity.

3) Comparison with Other Asanas

When compared to other *Asanas*, *Vajrasana* has distinct advantages due to its specific effect on lower body *Marma* points. While *Asanas* such as *Padmasana* (lotus pose) and *Sukhasana* (easy pose) promote mental peace and physical stability, *Vajrasana*'s unique placement allows for specific stimulation of the aforementioned *Marma* points. This makes it particularly advantageous for persons trying to increase lower body health and digestive functioning.

4) Implications for Ayurvedic Practice

These discoveries have important ramifications for *Ayurvedic* practice. Practitioners can employ *Vajrasana* into their daily practices to maintain and improve health through *Marma* point activation. It provides a non-invasive, comprehensive approach to treating common digestive, circulatory, and mental health issues. Furthermore, recognizing the exact *Marma* points stimulated by *Vajrasana* allows practitioners to adjust their therapeutic approaches to individual needs, maximizing the benefits of *Ayurvedic* treatments.

Vajrasana should be practiced on a regular basis, preferably after meals. Beginners can start with short durations and gradually increase as their comfort level develops. Combining *Vajrasana* with deep breathing (*Pranayama*) can enhance its benefits on *Marma* points and energy flow.

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5) Future Research Directions

Future studies should quantify the physiological changes caused by *Vajrasana*, including hormonal balance, brain activity, and metabolic rate. Furthermore, longitudinal research could shed light on the long-term advantages of frequent *Vajrasana* practice. Investigating *Vajrasana*'s impact on various population groups, particularly those with specific health concerns, could help to solidify its place in *Ayurvedic* medicine and general wellness.

VII. CONCLUSION

Vajrasana stimulates *Marma* points, which leads to a variety of therapeutic advantages. *Vajrasana* promotes general health and wellness by altering energy flow and balancing doshas. The integration of *Yogic* practices with *Marma* therapy underlines the relevance of postures like *Vajrasana* in obtaining holistic health, highlighting the connectivity of physical and subtle energy systems in *Ayurveda* and *Yoga*.

Author declaration

Conflict of interest- Nil

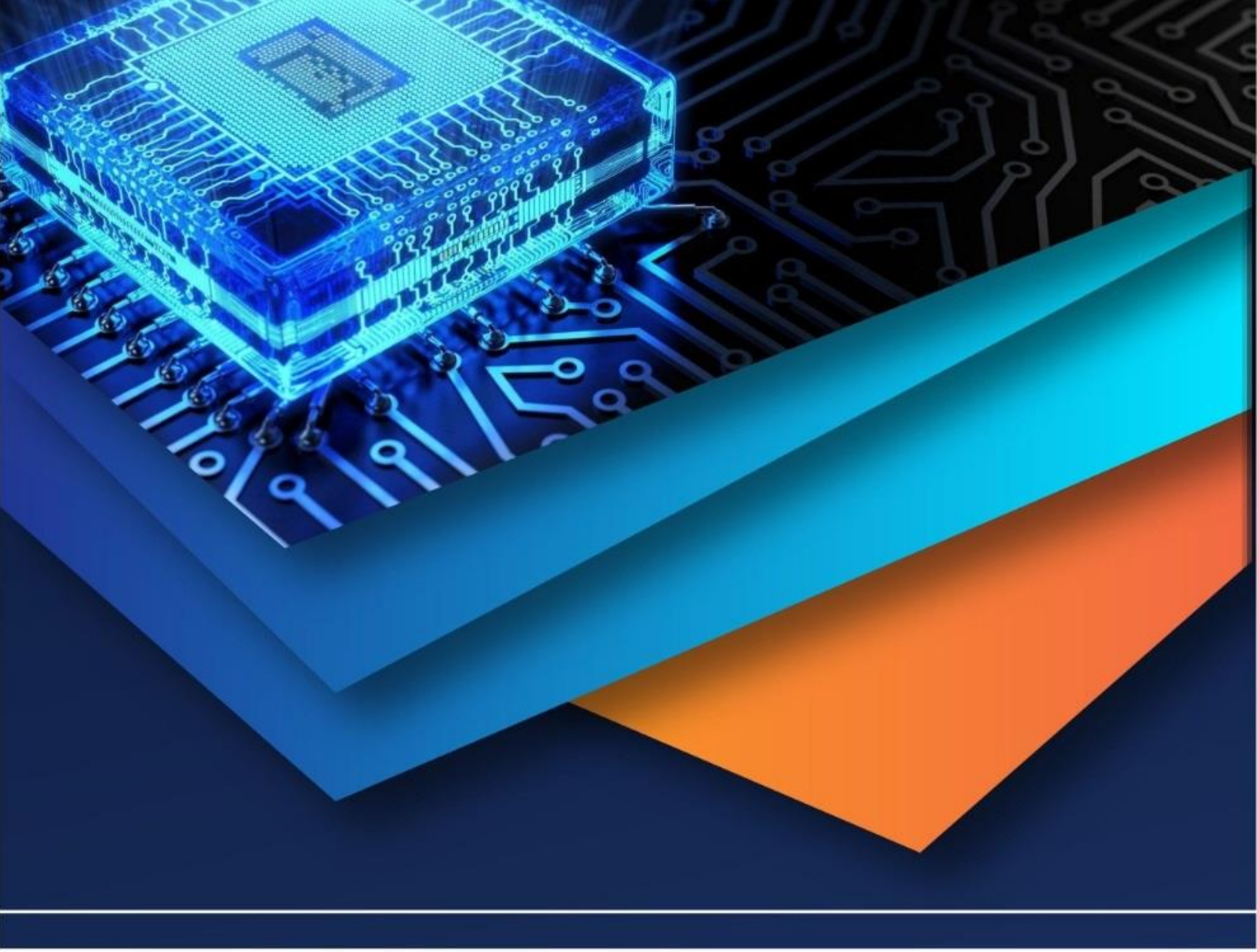
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