

‘Traditional Paths’ Vs ‘Surrenderance’

Question::

What are the ‘principal paths/routes’ that are available, to start one’s spiritual journey?

(or)

How to use Jnana, Karma, Bhakti & Yoga Margas/ways in order to ‘internalize Awareness’?

(or)

How to use Jnana Marga or ‘Way of Knowledge’ to transmute the innermost core of one’s being?

(or)

How to use Karma Marga or ‘Way of Action’ to eliminate ego-mind?

(or)

How to use Bhakti Yoga for inner transformation?

(or)

How to use “Yoga Marga” to unfold the path of gnosis ie., for the onward movement of consciousness?

(or)

Why Raja Yoga is considered a negative system?

(or)

Why “the practice of Pranayama or the awakening of Kundalini” is considered a Positive system of Yoga? What is the danger in this path?

(or)

Can one’s “temperament” affect one’s spiritual progress?

(or)

How come “path of love” blends all the traditional paths?

(or)

How can one develop “understanding”? How come “understanding” is a product of one’s spiritual endeavour?

(or)

When and where does these ways/paths converge?

(or)

What is “objective- Illumination” and “subjective-Illumination”?

(or)

How come ‘surrenderance’ help attain ‘complete freedom’?

Answer:

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The various routes by which the individual may start on the journey are many indeed. Several of the principal ones are referred to as

- 1) *Dnyana Marga*, or the way of knowledge,
- 2) *Karma Marga*, or the way of action,
- 3) *Bhakti Marga*, or the way of devotion, and
- 4) *Yoga Marga*, or the way of mental and physical discipline.

Each of these paths may be regarded as– ‘a routine, dutifully followed and unthinkingly executed’ or ‘it may be transmuted into a path of living discovery by having become the focal point of the aspirant’s entire being’.

- 1) ***Dnyana Marga or the way of knowledge***, may consist in the pursuit of speculative philosophy, either through ‘independent thinking’ or ‘in the study of existing systems of philosophic thought’.

Or it may be transformed through “concentrating the mind” and the “entire personality” on the truths hitherto mentally grasped.

Such deep meditation on spiritual realities is aimed at assimilating their inner meaning, and results in lifting them out of the category of ‘intellectual playthings’ into ‘animating principles– which invade and gradually transmute the innermost core of the aspirant.

2) **Karma Marga, or the way of action**, may normally consist of a life of service to humanity, a life in which effort is expended to improve the well-being of people through social, political, or physical projects. ***In such service, the motivating factor is usually a 'sense of duty', but often it is corrupted by the desire to achieve power, fame, or other personal gain.***

Regardless, the 'way of action' creates in its wake many joys and many sorrows, much exultation and much disillusionment. It often creates further bindings for the soul and is frequently fraught with nagging restlessness due to the worker's expectation of specific results. ***As often as not, it results in enlargement of the ego rather than its deflation.***

On the other hand, "internalizing" this same way of action renders it pure, safe and spontaneous. In such case, the aspirant may still be engaged in humanitarian work, but that work is no longer entangled in personal ambition.

Such 'service' is not a mechanical response to a sense of duty, but a spontaneous expression of 'voluntary love'. Through it man gradually becomes purer, is freed from many limitations, and finds peace of being as he becomes wholly detached from the "results" of his actions.

Under the enlightening influence of "inner understanding", the life-of-action helps in the elimination of the ego-mind and quickens the pace to attainment of "truth-consciousness".

3) **The inner spiritual path is irreplaceable because of the welling up of "divine love" which occurs during its course.** *Even in Bhakti Marga as the ordinary religious man of the world practices it, this up-welling of love is absent.*

It is only in the "inner transformation" of the 'way of devotion' that the aspirant is initiated into that spontaneous love, which needs no outer observance for its realization. Such "love" springs up spontaneously in the heart under the quickening touch of the Master's grace.

- 4) **Yoga Marga, or the “way of mental and physical discipline”**, is also capable of producing a complete transformation in the aspirant by unfolding the 'inner path of gnosis' or *Irfan* in him.

In his attempt to gain control over “mind” and “body”, the worldly man often resorts to these “yogic practices” and “austerities” to achieve the discipline he covets.

There are three main systems of yoga:

- I. **Hatha Yoga** which consists of self-mortifying asceticism and physical austerities.
- II. **Raja Yoga** which is the process of mental self-denial through resistance to all desires; and
- III. the positive system of **Pranayama**, which consists in the awakening of the *Kundalini*, and **meditation** through an ascending order of exercises.

It is the characteristic of all the different systems of yoga that they emphasize the ‘purification’ and ‘preparation’ of bodies or “vehicles of consciousness”, rather than concerning themselves directly with the ‘onward movement of consciousness’ itself. The contribution of yoga is comparable to that of the physician who removes the ailments which have developed in the functioning of the internal organs of the body.

- I. **Of the different systems of yoga, Hatha Yoga is the most superficial. The self-imposed austerities represent in a sense— a pressuring of God, or of a God-realized Master, for either power or realization. It is a kind of bargaining in which ‘penance’ is undertaken with an ulterior motive.**

It can hardly be called “self-sacrifice”, for the things apparently denied oneself are denied in order that one might have something else.

Ultimately it reduces to “intelligent selfishness”.

Spirituality, as ‘love’— can never be achieved through any type of coercion. If spiritual attainment should be sought in this manner, the person invites harm upon himself rather than spiritual benefit, and restriction of power rather than expansion. In brief, he gets exactly the opposite of what he had sought.

II. **The yoga of 'mental self-denial' through 'resistance to all desires' (Raja Yoga) is chiefly NEGATIVE in its method.** It consists in a concentrated attempt to be freed from all 'good' and 'bad' wants which plague the mind.

In following this method, the individual attempts to avoid all 'wants' and 'desires'. This in itself is a form of wanting, for it is wanting a state of wanting nothing.

However, this form of yoga, when carried to its extreme limit, can result in the subjective annihilation of the ego-structure of desires.

III. **The POSITIVE SYSTEM of yoga consisting in the practice of Pranayama (breathing exercises), gives increased control over prana or the vital energy.** It also includes the awakening of the '*Kundalini*' or the latent spiritual power in man, and is supplemented by an ascending order of meditation exercises.

But in this yoga there is the danger of the aspirant having a "fall" and retrogressing spiritually if he misuses his awakened "occult powers". This he inevitably does if these "powers" are awakened before he is spiritually ready. ***The aspirant is therefore well advised NOT to take up this positive system of yoga except under the direct supervision of a master.*** When aroused under the proper guidance of a master, however, the awakened "Kundalini" can lead the aspirant to the occult "Riddhi-Siddhi" powers of the fourth plane which is described later.

In any case, the highest attainment possible through "Pranayama"— the breath exercise phase of the positive system of yoga, is that of the objective or semi-illumination of the fifth plane.

Both the fifth and sixth planes of gnosis are states of illumination, but they may be either 'subjective' or 'objective', depending upon the manner in which the illumination has been achieved. ***The positive systems of yoga lead to "objective-illumination" of the fifth plane, but objective-illumination can only be termed "semi-illumination", for in it God is experienced as WITHOUT and therefore sight of Him is eclipsed or obscure.***

In contrast, “subjective” or full-illumination is brought about through the “inner path of love”, which brings about a blending of

- devotion,
- knowledge, and
- action.

Such “subjective-illumination” in the fifth and sixth planes has absolutely no element of obscurity, because God is experienced WITHIN. In a sense, God is nearer the “subjective” realm than the objective, although ultimately He is inclusive of both, as well as beyond both.

Such are the traditional paths by which the aspirant may launch upon his quest for realization. *The particular route by which the worldly man will START his search is determined by his “temperament” and “environment”.* But, when he enters the inner spiritual path, he seeks the truth of consciousness *as it is*.

This ‘quest for the real’ COMPELS him to transcend the obscurities of the mind and the twistings which arise from “temperament” and “environment”.

Even as the ‘inner truths’ unfold, these factors continue to limit his consciousness, but he is now impelled to make a “conscious effort” to free himself from their entanglements.

The first evidence in the aspirant of ‘freedom from limitations’ imposed by the subjective-mind is that he begins to UNDERSTAND without prejudice his own “nature” and “environment”. *To react intelligently to environment is impossible unless its true meaning is understood.*

- For example, a man habitually inclined to REACT CYNICALLY to all that is “good” in other people, inevitably fails to appreciate the latent good in those whom he contacts. Consequently, he not only misses the pleasure of harmonious relationship with them, but is also prevented from utilizing the potential value of such experience for the good of others.
- Similarly, if a man erects his projects on an INCORRECT EVALUATION of “environment”, the energy which he invests in them may be wasted in spite of his enthusiasm. ***Correct judgement of ‘environment’ and ‘people’ is an important requisite of fruitful and right action.*** It requires in the aspirant both the capacity to rise above his ‘personal prejudices’ and, more important,

to understand them. ***Judgement befogged by personal bias renders 'right action' impossible.***

- To illustrate further, if the individual projects the content of his own “subjective-desire” upon another human being, seeing in that person the fulfillment of his “emotional longings”, and if he acts under the impulse of that blind driving force, then “disappointment” is inevitable. He has only seen in the other what is in himself. There can be no adequate response from the object of one's desire, under such emotional compulsion, and therefore no fulfillment.

So, ‘true understanding of environment’ is as necessary for attaining SOUNDNESS and DEPTH of feeling as it is for engendering efficient, creative action. Such “true understanding” is achieved only when the aspirant frees himself from temperamental compulsion.

The “personal factors” which cause the worldly man to look upon the various approaches towards truth as widely divergent or even mutually antagonistic, are gradually transcended on the path. Eventually, the “ways” converge, and their interdependence is revealed to the aspirant. He sees that each way implements the others:

- *Bhakti* or devotion becomes the expression of truth through feeling.
- The ‘*way of knowledge*’ becomes the assimilation of that same truth through ‘understanding’, and
- the ‘*way of action*’ is seen to be the result of the “will” being actuated by that very same truth.

In the worldly stage, man is drawn more to one way than to others because of the particular limitations of his ‘character’ and ‘environment’. *On the path, they blend with each other as the aspirant gradually succeeds in emancipating himself from the specific restrictions of “mind” and “heart”.* Even the dry, self-imposed asceticisms of yoga flower as the individual realizes “divine love” as he follows the “inner path”.

It is possible by following any of the ways, just discussed, to lose the individual mind, the lower self, and yet retain complete consciousness.

However, this is true only when the zenith is reached through the 'inner path'.

The easiest and safest way to lose one's "finite ego" is by surrendering completely to the Perfect Master or to the God-man (Avatar), who is consciously one with the truth.

In them the 'past', 'present' and 'future' of the individual are drowned, and during his "implicit obedience" to the master he is no longer bound by those "actions"— good and bad.

Such complete surrenderance is in itself complete freedom.

– Meher Baba

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