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Methods of Spiritual Practices (Saadhana)



“ URDHWAM GACHANTHI SATWASTHAHA, MADHYE TISTTANTHI RAJASAAHA, JAGANYA
GUNAVRUTHASTAHA ADHOO GACHANTHI THAMASAAHA ”

– Lord Krishna in Bhagavadgheetha, in the 18th stanza of 14th chapter, says

“He who is divine in his nature will move upwards i.e. towards divinity (salvation). He who is semi divine in his nature will be stuck in the middle (in the cycle of birth and death). He who is non divine or negative in his nature

will go down to the darker layers of creation”.

People who correspond in their nature to any of the three traits mentioned above tend to follow the spiritual practices accordingly. They are :

1. Pure spiritual practices which are Absolutely divine in nature are called Saathwic saadhana and they are practised by people of saathwic (divine) nature.



2. Semi Divine practices are called Raajasic saadhana and they are practised by people of raajasic (semi-divine) nature.



3. Non divine practices are described as Thamasic saadhana () and they are practised by people of thamasic (negative) nature.



1. SAATHWIC SAADHANA :

The pure divine spiritual practices which are termed Saathwic saadhana are those which are evolutionary in nature, and the practise of these saadhanas ultimately leads the practitioner to the UNIVERSAL BEING and thereby towards eternal rest in the Universal Being. This is salvation or freedom from the cycle of birth & death.

These pure spiritual practices which are also known as vedanthic practices can be practised by one and all, and they are :

1. DHAYANA YOGA (Meditation) : This spiritual practice is the one where the practitioner practises Meditation on the UNIVERSAL BEING and gradually erases his accumulated Karmic forces of innumerable births and ultimately dissolves his individual ego (soul) into the Universal ego (cosmic soul), thus attaining salvation. It is like a river finally reaching its destiny by joining the sea.
2. BHAKTI YOGA (Devotion) : In this form of saadhana, the practitioner focuses all the emotions of his heart on the UNIVERSAL BEING as absolute devotion and works out his karma to finally reach the Universal Being and attain salvation. This saadhana includes, apart from devotion, listening to and singing of devotional songs which awaken devotion to the Universal Being.
3. JNANA YOGA (Intellectual) : In this form of spiritual practice, the practitioner through all available intellectual means, analyzes and understands clearly the very NATURE of the UNIVERSAL BEING and aligns his awareness consciously with that Universal Being so as to live all the time in tune with the Universal Consciousness.
4. KARMA YOGA (Right Action) : In this practice, the practitioner with all his application, dedication, discipline and absolute honesty does his allotted and accepted duties in regard to his work , family and society. This application of oneself to duties as though it is worship will also guide his soul towards the universal soul, shedding his accumulated Karmic forces.

5. **DAANA YOGA (Charity)** : This is a practice of absolute selfless charity to fellow human beings, animals etc. without any expectations what so ever in return. This charity is done within one's limits but it is done as duty and worship. Sacrifice is the essence of this saadhana. This is definitely evolutionary to the practitioner.
6. **SEVA YOGA (Service)** : In this type of saadhana, the practitioner renders service in every possible way to the society, fellow human beings, animals and to nature with real devotion as if he is serving God or the **UNIVERSAL BEING**. This seva yoga is also termed "Manava seva (service to human beings) done as Madhava seva (service to God)". So this yoga is also evolutionary.

All the above spiritual practices are termed vedanthic practices because they do not involve any religious or dogmatic rituals and hence it can be practised by one and all.

These practices lead the practitioner towards his purification at the level of the **Body (Adibouthic)**, **Mind (Adidhivic)** and **Spirit or Soul (Adhyatmic)** and finally transcends all layers of creation (lower and higher) to reach the creator (**UNIVERSAL BEING**).

It goes without saying that nonviolence, both physical and mental, is the very essence of this saadhana. In this saadhana, when the weight of karma is reduced considerably, it is natural for the soul to go up, as lighter things do. A simple physics principle!

ALL THE ABOVE SPIRITUAL PRACTICES ARE COMPLEMENTARY TO EACH OTHER AND HENCE THEY CAN BE PRACTISED SIMULTANEOUSLY.

2. RAJASIC SAADHANA :

This saadhana includes Hatayoga, Upasana, worship of various gods and goddesses of creation through ritualistic vedic practices such as homa, havana, yagna, yaga etc. with the intention of gaining divine grace for the well-being of oneself, family and society.

Here the intention of the practitioner is for gaining divine grace for wellbeing at material levels of life. These practices are dynamic in nature as they include a desire behind it for wellbeing. Therefore the practitioner does not rise above the wheel of birth and death, but being at middle level by his nature, at the most, reaches the levels of Swarga (a heavenly abode), and not beyond.

This is well explained by Lord Krishna in the stanzas 20 and 21 of 9th chapter of Bhagavadgeetha.

3. THAMASIC SAADHANA :

The Raajasic saadhana and the Thamasic saadhana are not the path of Salvation (Mukti) like the Saathwic saadhana.

The practices under this saadhana are totally opposed to higher order and instead take the practitioner to the darker realms of creation. These practices include invoking of dark forces of nature through violent ways of worship including animal sacrifices etc., only to take control of those forces of nature and use them against fellow human beings by way of controlling, exploiting and misleading them as a super human being (so called Godman with siddhis or super natural powers) for personal glory, name, fame and riches. This appeasement of dark forces of nature through these practices and misusing them makes the practitioner to accumulate more and more karma (actions and reactions) and by sheer weight of karma, he will go down to the lower and darker layers of creation (animals and plants etc.), just as heavy things drown in water. This is what Lord Krishna means when he says “Adhoo gachanthi Thamasaha”.

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