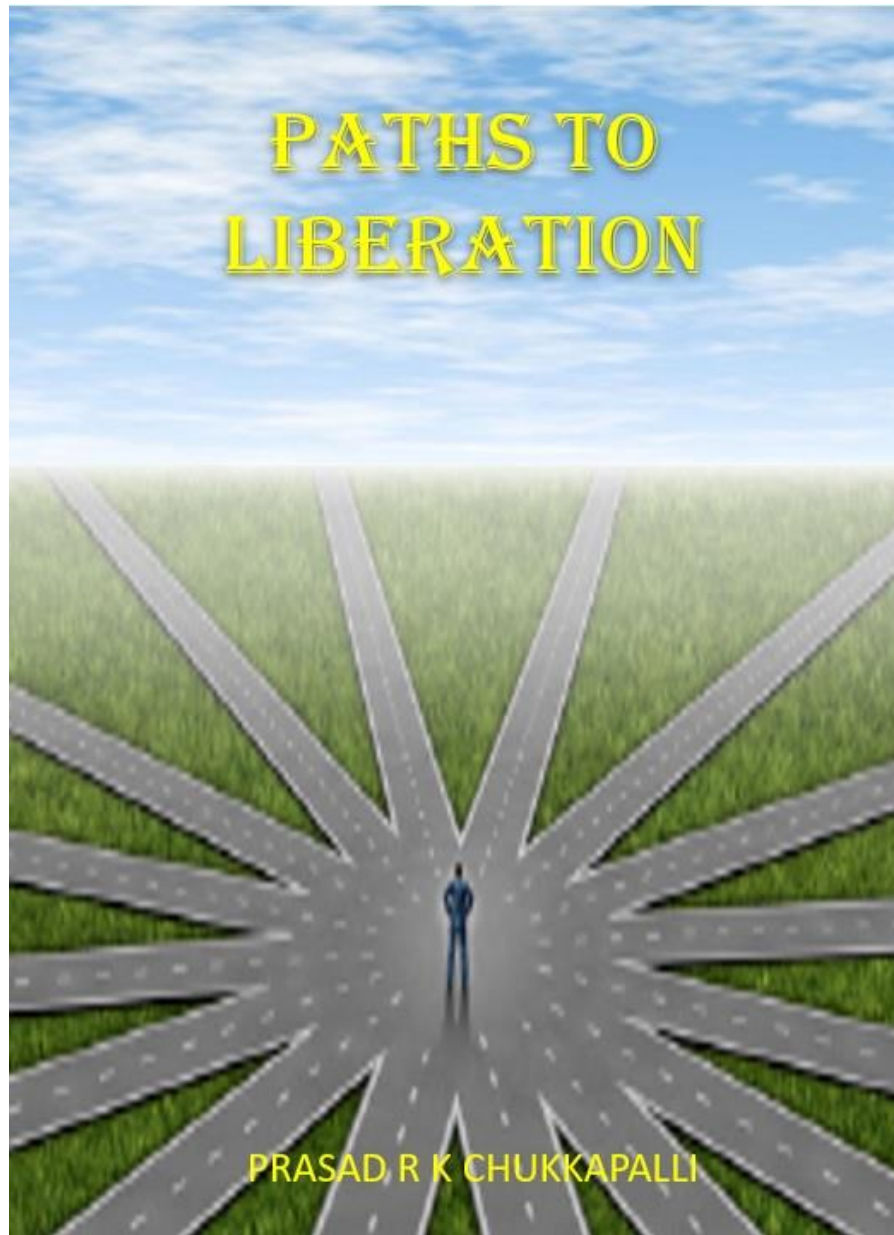


God's Software

PATHS TO LIBERATION



God's Software

Liberation is to get 'Freedom'. Freedom from what?

Freedom from 'Misery, suffering, unhappiness, sorrow, dissatisfaction' etc.

Why humans are suffering?

What is suffering and why human beings are suffering?

There is physical suffering due to the Body; and; inner suffering due to the Mind.

The physical sufferings are from pain, hunger, addictive habits; due to lack of shelter, health, wealth etc.

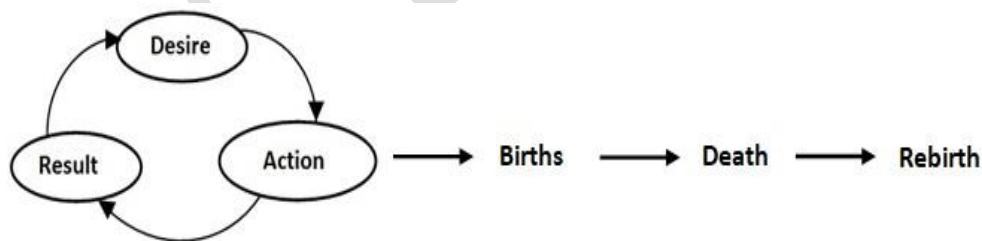
The mental sufferings are due to fear, anxiety, attachment; due to loss of prestige, money; due to lack of education, recognition etc.

In each life, human beings want to experience only 'Happiness' but go through these sufferings quite often.

What is samsara?

Most of the people think the definition of samsara is family life, which it is not.

Saṃsāra is a Sanskrit word meaning going in a circle of "Desire-Action-Result-Desire" in regular family life, that results in the cycle of birth, death and rebirth.



In one's life, a person experiences 'Happiness' and 'Unhappiness'. The sorrow or suffering results in 'Unhappiness'. So 'Moksha' is said to sublating suffering and being 'Happy' always.

The Samsara doctrine is tied to the Karma theory of Indian religion, and liberation from samsara has been at the core of the spiritual quest of Indian traditions. Liberation from samsara is called Moksha, Nirvana, Mukti or Self realisation.

So, 'Liberation' has been defined as, not merely to overcoming suffering from the earthly life, but also emancipation from the bondage of Samsāra (cyclic births).

How we are falling into the trap of 'samsara'?

Let us see short story quoted by Swami Chinmayananda:

“A sadhu (spiritual seeker) having attachment for his loin-cloth could not tolerate the rats which were biting and making holes in his cloth. He brought a cat to keep away the rats. The rats, no doubt, disappeared but the cat had to be fed, and hence, he bought a cow to feed milk to the cat. The cow had to be looked after; hence, he decided to have a wife to look after the needs of the cow. After some time, they had children - their naming ceremony - nourishing and educating them - marriage of each - Endless! - Disastrous!”

All humans once born, undergo the process of growth; evolving from childhood, adolescence, adulthood and old age; ending with the inevitable death. People enjoy life up to adulthood playing games and keeping busy with education. Next, they fall into the marriage trap, forming family bonds with spouse and kids. Later they change their role parents, taking the responsibility of kids well-being and education, till kids make them grandparents. Finally, they have to pass away to be born again and continue this cyclical, cosmic journey of birth and death.

Why we are falling into this trap of samsara?

The cycle of birth and death on earth is applicable to all 8.4 million species of life existing on this planet; out of which, the human form is the last rung on the ladder of evolution. Humans are subject to the laws of birth and death because of Karma.

In this creation, a human has before him, both noble and the ignoble paths, to perform actions to achieve happiness - which create, karmas leading to Merit and Demerit (sin) Karmas. But humans do not always choose the noble path. They succumb to the weakness of temptation and seek pleasures to the body, ignoring the path of righteousness; and thus, experience its consequential suffering and fall into the trap of 'Samsara'

Thus, it is in the hands of human being to choose the right path or not.

How karma leads to rebirth?:

The 'unfulfilled desires' of a person is the main reason for rebirth.

Also, humans not only exhaust pending results of action in their life, through their respective experiences, but also add new ones through different thoughts and action. The balance 'consequences of actions' whether good or bad of this present life which are not exhausted, remain in the sub-consciousness, in a seed form.

They are carried over with the subtle body, which is the store house of all the desires and impressions at death as explained in “Inner engineering of a human body” chapter (*available in website - www.godssoftware.org*)

The seed affects stored in the subtle body, will be the inputs for the design of a person's future life in a new body, to fulfil the pending desires of past life. After rebirth, the new body forgets about its previous birth, and experiences life as per past karma and desires.

This journey of the soul is an inevitable part of creation; due to the illusory power of ‘Maya’, attracting Karma philosophy to operate. A good merit makes a human soul to enjoy, sins makes it suffer on earth; or in the astral world. Soul takes up a new body to exhaust the balance merits and sins.

How to come out of this 'Cyclic births or Samsara'?

A person cannot opt out of the karma cycle, as long as the person has virtues (punyam) and sin (papam). People have to enjoy their virtues and suffer sin totally, as these two cannot be adjusted for one another, which leads to cyclic births...

It is only in human form using mind and intellect, it is possible to exhaust karma (results of past actions), but it is also in the human form that we are most likely to create karma, thus throwing us into birth and rebirth cycle.

One option is 'to stop' the cycle of Karma; by exhausting the old ones and not generating new ones. But it is next to impossible.

When people see the routine life, of getting born, growing from kid to adult and old age and finally dying; they want to understand is there any alternative, for this cycle.

Ex : It is like when a person is studying from kindergarten to 10th grade; again and again, one day he thinks “this is enough- I don't want to repeat this anymore” and wants to proceed for studying higher studies.

Similarly, one day people will question, “Why I am going through all this” and wish to get liberated.

And it is only in human form, using mind and intellect, people are in a position to realise God and come out of cyclic births. That is why human life is considered as extremely important from the liberation point of view.

Then those people look towards spiritual knowledge and its practices.

The very purpose of this spiritual knowledge is to help humans for not giving undue attachment to temporary

objects; as they do not give permanent happiness. When the person believes this in the core of heart, then a strong desire comes out to look for liberation from the cycle of “happiness and sorrow” and walk towards sustainable happiness.

Then people will start using 'physical body' for Self Realisation, which is presently being used to experience fun and pleasure.

Ex: It is like, when you buy a new phone, you keep calling or texting for fun. After some time, you start to use the phone when it is needed for required purpose only.

Hence, physical body, mind and sense organs, which are presently being used to go after all the temporary objects of pleasure should be diverted to realise the 'truth'.

How to get Liberated or Realise Self?

Within us there is 'Lower Self', which is body and our mind; and with the illusion of our ego, assume the role of doer ship. If you identify with 'lower self' -You are a mortal.

Then, there is the 'higher Self'; the Light of our Consciousness, which illumines and is aware of the presence and absence of all thoughts in our mind. If you identify with the 'Higher Self' -You are immortal.

The lower self, the illusory ego or I/Me/Mine, finds itself caged in the prison of its own mind; and finds itself to be a slave of the mind. It is this which seeks liberation from this world.

Once we understand that there is some universal force and we are part of it- then we search the path to reach the 'Higher Self' which is called as Big 'I'

How to reach Self?

To reach any destination- like say Rome -we should know where is it, how to reach it and make preparations to reach it.

Similarly, to reach 'I'- we should do the same.

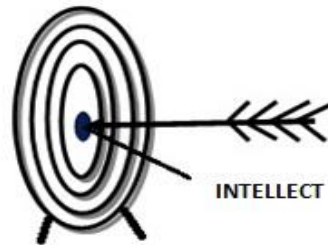
Where is the abode of 'I'?:

In scriptures, they say Brahman or Consciousness is everywhere, which is confusing and we don't understand it.

Like in India, Government of India is every where- but to reach the government, we have to go to the capital-Delhi.

In Vedanta, it has been constantly asserted that the intellect is residing in the “cave-of- the-heart” and in the midst of the intellect is the shining Brahman –So, like in Movies, the treasure is inside the 'Intellect'. Well this answer, at least makes sense, as we know about our intellect.

So, let us fix our destination as - '**Intellect**'



How to reach 'I':

If one wants to go to Rome and see the Pope - it is not possible by just imagining that one has gone to Rome. One has to fly to Rome and reach Vatican City by road. Before that, the person has to plan the trip, book tickets, pack bags and leave from residence by car to airport. These are all preparations;

Similarly a person has to prepare and practice - japam, attend Satsangs, practice contentment, dispassion etc through knowledge and wisdom for realising 'I'.

Now even after one reaches Rome, one has to wait at Pope's official residence, Papal palace, and see Pope when He comes out to greet people.

Similarly, a person cannot realise God by just imagination or think of meeting God after death. But by using Yoga techniques and with intense desire for Self realisation, wait for the moment through the grace of Guru with patience and see the Big 'I' or Consciousness.

It is a common saying “All roads lead to Rome”. Similarly, there are different paths in yoga, which leads to 'I'. Like each road has different distances, different difficulties like hiking, forest, pot holes, scenic road etc and Yoga will take different time lines. One should select based on his interest and proceed.

People think-What is Yoga?

Why I have to follow only these Yoga paths?

It might be taking me away from my religion or Gods which I follow and pray.

Let us understand them before we proceed.

What is Yoga?

What is yoga, exactly?

Is it a Hindu God? Is it a religion? Is it a philosophy? Is it just an exercise?

The word 'Yoga' is derived from the Sanskrit root 'Yuj', meaning 'to join' or 'to yoke' or 'to unite'. As per Yogic scriptures the practice of Yoga leads to the union of individual consciousness with that of the Universal Consciousness.

Actually, the aim of Yoga is not really to unite us with Universal Consciousness, for we are already united. It is to help us to recognise our identity as the Divine Self; to make us know and tune with our intrinsic nature.

“He is Me and I am Him”

One who experiences this oneness of existence -a state of freedom referred to as Mukti, Nirvana or Moksha. Thus, the aim of Yoga is 'Self-recognition' of our true identity.

Yoga is the process of a disciplined activity, an inner science, essentially a spiritual discipline through a variety of methods such as purification of body, mind, and speech; the practice of breathing to control the life force within; and mental exercises through meditation-bringing harmony between mind and body leading to Self realisation.

Patanjali, in his Yoga Sutras defines Yoga as, “Chitta Vritti Nirodha.” Which means; “Cessation of all fluctuations; arising in the mind.”

**'Yoga is not twisting the straight body,
but straightening the twisted mind.'**

- Swami Prathameshananda

Different paths to yoga:

There are many traditional yogic paths that facilitate connection to the highest truth and awaken our own consciousness, including tantra, mantra, laya, kundalini, bhakti, jnana, karma yoga, and so on. Each path specialises in its own techniques and methods to awaken greater awareness and connection to Self.



Why so many paths are required?

The process of evolution of a Soul or Jiva takes its own time. Once the limitations of an Earthly existence are crossed by humans by virtue of wisdom, the seeker looks for a suitable path based on his tendencies.

Yoga works on the level of one's body, mind, emotion and energy. One kind of spiritual path may not be suitable for all.

Ex : People get different diseases and different medications are available. Like correct medicine is to be taken to cure that particular disease-based on Doctor's advice, similarly each individual has to decide his path based on individual temperament, as per Guru Guidance.

This has given rise to four broad classifications of Yoga:

1. Bhakti yoga, where we utilise the emotions- tries to attain liberation through the heart.
2. Karma yoga, where we utilise selfless actions by surrendering body and mind.
3. Raja yoga, where we utilise the physical and mental energy.
4. Jnana yoga, where we utilise knowledge with the mind and intellect.

We have to mix the appropriate combination of the four fundamental paths, as is necessary for each seeker. One yoga cannot be practiced to the entire exclusion of the others, "like smoke in fire".

1. Bhakti yoga

Bhakti yoga is the yoga of devotion. It is practiced by means of ritual worship, prayer and japam.

In the practice of bhakti yoga, some special aspect of God, or some divine incarnation, is chosen, so that the devotee's love may become more easily concentrated.

It is the cultivation of a direct, intense personal relationship between worshiper and worshiped. The result of bhakti yoga is a deep, inner calmness.

Different stages of Bhakti devotees

Level 1: whenever there is problem, then they keep attached to God.

Level 2: Like iron particles get attracted to magnet, whenever they visit temples or meet enlightened people, or visit holy places, they get attached to God.

Level 3: Like a faithful wife likes to be with her husband always, devotee will always be in constant remembrance of God.

Level 4: Like a creeper winds around the tree, the devotee surrenders to God, always.

Level 5: Like a river merges with ocean overcoming all the obstacles and loses its identity, the devotee merges with God surrendering one self. This is the highest level of devotion.

The bhakti yogi feels divinity in all. The great majority of believers, in all the world's major religions, are fundamentally bhakti yogis (God devotees). It is not what we love, but how we love, that is important for our devotion to lead us to enlightenment.

2. Karma yoga:

We have realised that good actions produce good Karma and bad actions produce bad Karma. Karma yoga is the path of selfless, God-dedicated action. "The inaction is present, within all actions,". The selfless actions doesn't generate new karma.

Action is transcended through action without any bonds of attachment, by dedicating the fruits of one's work to God.

They act without desire or reward, but being conscious that it is the Divine who is the Doer, and seeing divinity in each and everyone. Thereby becoming 'One with God'.

3. Raja yoga or Ashthanga yoga:

This Yoga is a non-religious practice, not belonging to any particular religion and fits in with all enquirers of all classes with or without belief in God and religion.

Raja yoga is the royal path of meditation. As a king maintains control over his kingdom, people can maintain control over their own “kingdom”—the vast territory of the mind. In Raja yoga, we use our mental powers to realise God, through the process of psychological control.

Raja yoga is also concerned with using the body as a vehicle of spiritual energy and temple of Lord. The method is explained in detail later.

4. Jnana yoga:

It is the yoga of knowing about Self-through the study of scriptures and taking guidance from an enlightened Guru.

It is the path of finding Brahman through- knowledge and intellectual discrimination. The Jnana yogi rejects all that is transient, temporary and superficial.

It is based on the idea of “non-dualism”, in other words, that we already are the Divine or Higher Self, we just need to recognise it. This recognition comes from being certain that Brahman is real and everything else is unreal.

Meditating on this reality always and reminding the Soul of its real nature is the only purpose of this Yoga.

This is divided into three parts.

- 1) Learning about the truth- that the Brahman is the only reality and that everything else is Maya or Illusion
- 2) Rejecting all unreal points of view by reasoning and logic-saying "not this, not this," and so come to Brahman by the process of elimination.
- 3) Contemplating on the Eternal and realising the truth.

It is the highest, but most difficult, calling for tremendous powers of will and clarity of mind. Many persons get intellectual grasp of it, but very few attain(direct) realisation. Because many people keep searching with the intellect without surrendering it.

From the above four paths, one may wonder which path to choose and which is easiest to practice. The easiest yoga to be practiced is to be determined by the individual's propensities and attitudes.

A person of emotions can cultivate Bhakti yoga.

A person of wisdom and intelligence can follow the path of Jnana yoga.

One who is social worker can follow the path of karma yoga.

Others can follow Raja yoga.

For practising any Yoga, one must have the foundation of Yama, Niyama, Asana and Pranayama.

You may analyse and select any path for liberation, which suits your health and temperament. Each will take its own time to reach destination, but do not give up in between and try to switch to another path. This will only increase confusion and delays your progress. But, if you are now going in the wrong direction, you have to take U turn and start towards your goal.

Ex : Like, instead of taking flight to Rome, if you have taken to Sydney, you have to stop at the next stop and take new flight to Rome.

Whatever may be the path you choose; as long as it results in bringing a person to a state where "All thoughts have disappeared; then that which remains behind, is the True Silence; and in this Silence alone lays the potentiality to meet Consciousness or one's true Self."

Also, whatever path one may choose, without knowledge of Self, one cannot understand, what is Self realisation-so knowledge about our goal is important.

So, with the help of a Guru who has both knowledge of scriptures and Direct experience, we can attain 'Self Realisation'-the everlasting happiness.

Let us look at Raja yoga in detail.

Raja Yoga or Ashtanga Yoga – The Path of Eight Limbs :

This path involves eight parts, which works as a guide to all citizens, provides social guidelines and practical methods. They serve as a prescription for moral, ethical conduct and self-discipline as defined by all religions. However, a spiritual seeker taking the path of Raja yoga, often practices all the above four yogas in tandem, in order to remain balanced.

The eight limbs are given below:

The first five limbs are physical and last three limbs are mental practices.

1. Yama	5. Pratyahara
2. Niyama	6. Dharana
3. Asanas	7. Dhyana
4. Pranayama	8. Samadhi

The first two limbs are called Yamas and Niyamas. These are vows and practices that are actually common and a must for all four spiritual paths. Though these rules are defined elaborately in other books, we shall understand in simple language briefly.

1. Yama - The first limb has five commandments (moralities) which deals with one's ethical standards and sense of integrity, focusing on the rules to be followed, so that, one does good for himself as well as to the society. "Do unto others, as you would have them do unto you."

The five commandments of Yama are

Ahimsa (Non violence) : In its pure sense, ahimsa means refraining from injuring any living being by thoughts, words or deeds. To practice 'Love thy neighbour as thyself'. Not to go against the laws of society and Nature. Or else mind keeps worrying.

A) Satya (Speak truth) : Ideally, to speak truth and have integrity in thought, word and deed under any circumstances. A person who lies, will find no peace and will be in a state of agitation.

However while speaking truth, one should not hurt others. When it is inevitable that truth is going to hurt others, it should be said in a sweet manner.

Ex : Two astrologers came to study astrology of a king.

First one said, "Oh king, it is sad in spite of becoming a great king, you will see the death of your wives and kids in front of you". The king was upset and kept him in jail.

The second astrologer, who was clever twisted the words and said- “Oh King -you will conquer lot of kingdoms and become a great king and have long life, and will live longer than all others.” The king was happy and rewarded him well.

Asteya (non stealing) : To earn money righteously and not to hoard more than needed. Not to steal others property physically or mentally, which invites trouble.

Brahmacharya (continence) : Celibacy implies discipline of the senses and moderation in diet and other sensual activities before marriage. Married people to be loyal and faithful to one's spouse.

Aparigraha (non covetousness) : To abstain from greed-whether it be food, wealth or space. Not to make undue profit from any transaction. Not to be obliged to others; for any gift- a return gift to be given back.

2. Niyamas : The second limb, has another five commandments(rules) to do with self-discipline and spiritual observances. Niyamas are the rules to be followed by an individual to remove one's personal obstacles.

The five commandments of Niyamas are:

A) Saucha (cleanliness) : Keeping internal and external body organs clean. Having a healthy body ensures healthy mind. You can observe mental cleanliness by keeping pure thoughts and dispassionate behaviour. Also, eliminating all distracting thoughts and avoiding useless conversations.

Santosha (contentment) : To have complete contentment, one must earn as much as one needs and be satisfied living with that. What is predestined will come to the person with efforts; not more than that. We may not receive what we want, but we always receive what we deserve.

Tapas (spiritual austerities) : Penance-to control senses and not going to extremes to satisfy them. To develop tolerance and patience.

Svadhya (Self study) : Study of the sacred scriptures and enquiring into the question of 'who am I'? Just as you use maps and reviews before going to your destination; read about the lives of Saints and Mahatmas.

Isvarapranidhana (surrender to God) : Always do your best and surrender the rest to God. Know that this body which one thinks as 'mine', is to be treated as if it has been leased from Nature and has to be returned.

Practising Yama, Niyamas will help to purify the mind and promote tolerance, compassion towards others. These commandments yield self-control and mental peace.

The third and fourth limbs, Asana and Pranayama are important to keep a body healthy, and bring physical calmness and control on life force respectively.

3. The Third Limb is Asana

For a body to be in good health, we should ensure blood circulates to all parts of the body well. In Asanas, we practice different postures which ensures this. It is now scientifically proved that Yoga asanas help to cure lot of diseases as complimentary and alternative to conventional medicine.

In Meditation, one should be able to sit steadily and avoid distraction to the mind. Asanas will create ability to sit comfortably in a steady, erect posture for long without any back pain.

To make the mind calm, we need a healthy body; or else our mind will always be reminding the pain or creates fear about the health.

4. The fourth limb is Pranayama

With Pranayama, Yogis believe that it not only rejuvenates the body, but actually extends life itself. This practice aims at controlling prana through control of the breath.

Prana and mind are intimately related. Gaining control of prana through breathing exercises, leads to control of the mind.

If you notice, we usually do shallow breathing, i.e., we breathe only up to the lungs or above. Which means, all the parts in our body, are not getting adequate oxygen, which are purified by blood cells. So, with Pranayama, we ensure more oxygen is taken inside to purify the blood and also increase the lungs capacity to hold more oxygen.

So, Asanas and Pranayama are complimentary to keep a body healthy and to tame the mind. With Asanas, we ensure blood is circulated to all parts of the body. With Pranayama, we ensure oxygen purifies the blood.

Through the practice of asanas and pranayama-we develop the habit of discipline and the ability to concentrate, both of which are necessary for meditation.

5. The Fifth Limb is Pratyahara (concentration)

Pratyahara is the practice of withdrawal of the mind from the senses. We make conscious effort to draw our attention away from the external stimuli and divert internally.

By focusing on an object or image, develops concentration and with this, we discipline the mind to cultivate a detachment from our senses, and direct our attention internally.

Till now, we have seen the first five limbs of Raja yoga- which are 'physical' practices. The balance three limbs are 'mental' practices.

6. Dharana

The sixth limb is Dharana or deep inner concentration. Having mastered to control outside distractions, one can now deal with the distractions of the mind itself.

What is Dharana?

In pratyahara, one practices to tame the mind by 'concentrating' on an external object. In sixth step 'Dharana', a person focuses mentally intensively and will be able to successfully gain deep concentration.

Since it is tough, to stop thoughts, it is suggested to maintain focus on one subject, so that our mind deals with one subject rather than many. One may notice that Doctors or scientists are very focused, when they are doing an operation or research respectively, then they are said to be in meditative state of mind.

Let us pause and review the six limbs :

The mind gains in purity through the observances of 'Yama' and 'Niyamas'. The body becomes steady through 'Asana' practice; and the breath comes under control through 'Pranayama'.

In 'Pratyahara' we focus our attention on a single point to develop our powers of concentration; and, in Dharana, we become self-observant of the Power.

7. Dhyana or meditation :

A fine line of distinction exists between Dharana and meditation. In Dharana, a person practices one-pointed attention on any object or energetic centre. Dhyana or meditation is a state, where that smooth flow of concentration continues uninterrupted for a long period of time.

At this stage, the mind has been quietened, and in the stillness it produces few or no thoughts at all. Knowing the nature of the mind, this may appear to be difficult; but not an impossible task.

8. Samadhi :

The Eighth Limb is Samadhi; which is the final stage of Ashtanga Yoga.

This is final step of the three stages of meditation.

In first two stages, 'Dharana and Dhyana' there are three things-

1. Subject (experiencer)
2. Object (experienced)
3. Awareness of the act (experience)

Later when the mind reaches the highest point of meditation, there will no more focus on any object. The 'Subject' and the 'Object' become one

At this stage, the meditator(subject) merges his consciousness with his point of focus(object)- which are both being experienced in the mind, by transcending the attachment with his body, senses, mind and intellect. Here the meditator (experiencer) and object (experienced) become one transcending the act of 'experience.'

It is a state of ecstasy and a kind of bliss, which surpasses all understanding - where meditator transcends the individual 'ego' altogether and becomes pure 'Consciousness'; now, he resides in his true Self. At this stage, there is no more awareness of space and time. This state is called 'Samadhi'.

For the theoretical question- "Who am I?"; is now answered by direct experience. One experiences his own Self, the Soul, or the God.

The reflection merges with its source of origin. So, we now know the practical guidance, to reach the true Self or 'I'. If reaching 'I' is so simple, lot of people would have reached it, but that is not happening- why? Because, their identification with their body and mind is so strong; that they feel that they will cease to exist, if the mind is abandoned or transcended.

What should be the qualifications of a spiritual seeker?

Adi Sankara describes the qualifications of an aspirant as follows:

The prerequisite of a spiritual aspirant, is the practice of fourfold injunction:

- a. Gain wisdom to discriminate real from the unreal.
- b. Cultivate dispassion towards sensual enjoyments.
- c. Develop-sense-control (Sama), mind control (Dama), concentration (Uparathi), forbearance (Tetheeksha), faith in the teacher and scriptures (Sraddha); self awareness (Samadhana) and
- d. Strong desire for liberation (Mumukshatavam).

When to start to become spiritual:

Spiritual life is not only for elite few or elders. It is meant for everyone irrespective of caste, creed or gender, and one can start at any stage of life.

People think it is after attaining old age; we have to look towards spirituality. But as per scriptures, as soon as we take care of basic needs and responsibilities of kids, we have to start our spiritual journey. The younger the better.

How people turn towards spirituality?

- Some people after enjoying to the maximum in their life, feel vacuum, when they realise that the objects, friends, family are temporary.
- Some people suffer all their life and get distressed.
- Some people reach a peak in their career/business and suddenly lose their name and fame due to some mistake done by them or family members. They are unable to bear the loss.
- Some people get motivated by reading books or hearing speeches of renowned spiritual masters.
- Some people get contented with their life.

There are many more reasons.

All these people, then look for help and solace from God and religion. They are advised to become pure first and to perform good deeds, avoid bad deeds, control senses and mind, pray and worship God.

We find such people visiting temples or staying in spiritual ashrams.

They do all this for years and gradually their heart desires for something higher and thus they become seeker of liberation.

Reasons of people for not turning towards spirituality:

They are busy from morning to evening-working, travelling to increase the revenue along with name and fame. They increase their stress levels and later go on holidays to relax and destress.

People have to realise that our planet earth is a temporary home. At the instant call of death, all appointments are to be cancelled permanently.

Some people blame family responsibilities. People have to draw a line and limit their responsibilities upto necessity only. Or else, one will never find time for spirituality.

Ex: People after completing their responsibilities towards their children, start all over again, taking up the burden of their grand children, due to attachment.

Guru quotes of a woman standing near the sea shore for taking bath, but not stepping into the water.

When asked why?-she says "I am waiting for the waves to subside." The waves of our responsibilities are never ending and they should not hinder our spiritual progress.

Avoid bad company:

In spiritual journey, one should avoid bad company to avoid bad habits. Just as the pure crystal takes its colour from the object which is nearest to it, so the mind, when it is near bad company, achieves identity with habits and attitudes of the surrounding people.

As a precaution, one should keep away from anything that would stir up passions.

Ex : 1) If one is having the habit of smoking- should keep away from pawn shop and friends who smoke.

2) To reduce the habit of drinking; avoid going to restaurants with bar and keep away from parties.

3) If you are hooked onto internet and phone, switch them off, at home. Also keep the remote away from kids, who are getting hooked to TV.

What you are now is because of what you did in the past; based on what you do now- you will become in future; so we have to make conscious efforts towards good habits.

Once we are on spiritual path, we should never look back at bad habits- like we never think of eating, what we vomited.

Start with selfless service:

According to Sankara, karma yoga or selfless action is the first stage of sadhana. This leads to purification of mind, by doing Good deeds that are done naturally with kindness and without even a tiny bit of selfishness in it. Secondly, karma yoga prepares us to understand the knowledge of Brahman.

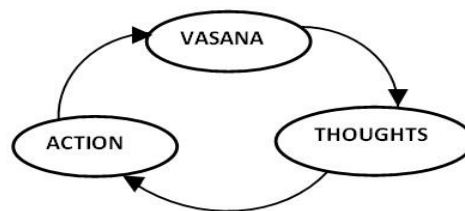
Performing actions to fulfil egoistic desires; or for a particular result, leaves impressions in the mind, whereas performing selfless actions without attachment to their fruits, does not create any new mental patterns of binding karma.

The simple way of starting karma yoga is by serving others in which ever manner your budget or attitude suits. If you do not want to donate money to a beggar on the street- at least 'Bless him.' Go to some orphanage, old age home or Hospital- see in which way you can 'help the helpless' and you will see the Happiness radiating from their eyes.

With your help, they will be pleased and their satisfaction and happiness will shower grace on you, which can be seen in the form of solving your life problems effortlessly. This will also open your heart towards spirituality and you will notice, that when the other person is satisfied – your 'I' or 'ego' is also getting satisfied. This will increase your desire to know your 'Self'.

Reverse the cycle - desire - thoughts - action:

Regular cycle of samsara : Vasana – chintana – Kriya



- **Vasana** (past tendencies) - old desires and habits
- **Chintana** (contemplation)-thoughts that generate based on past tendencies.
- **Kriya** (action) -taking action based on thoughts and form new tendencies.

This creates new cycle again.

How to reduce vasanas/desires:

- Through prayer and surrender
- Through discrimination
- Through Discipline-Vairagya or Dispassion is the best method.

Mind creates a desire and attachment in humans for “objects”. To deny objects, and not allowing the mind thoughts to form into a wave is renunciation. Also, when the impermanence of the objects is realised, the consequent desire to own them reduces, thereby finally there will be no action to attain them.

What to do next?

We have learnt basics of paths to liberation. By selecting a suitable path of liberation explained above, one has to start practicing them sincerely -particularly Yama, Niyamas. Also, one has to control thoughts and agitation in the mind.

Meditation:

To control thoughts one has to practice 'Meditation'. Meditation is the seventh limb of Raja Yoga and similar to Nidhidhyasa in Jnana Yoga. Meditation is basically to reduce the thoughts in our mind and lead us to have a glimpse of Self.

For serious seekers it leads to Samadhi.

There are different practice methods for calming the mind and since it is big subject and necessary to dedicate a chapter alone, I have decided to provide guidance on Meditation in website. Persons interested may visit the website. www.godsssoftware.org.

What are thoughts and thought waves?

We have seen that 'Mind' from the time it gets up until deep sleep, it is always actively thinking of some object or experience. All thoughts and waves arise from Memory or through senses.

Please visit www.godssoftware.org, as more details are given in 'Mind Chapter' on thoughts, thought waves and how to control them.

Let us see again, what mind faculties do and how to control through surrender.

Faculty	Activity	Can be surrendered
1. Mind (manas)	Sankalpa/Vikalpa (Wishing/Contemplation)	Through dispassion and meditation.
2. Memory (chitta)	Data storage and remembering	Through pranayama yoga
3. Intellect (Buddhi)	Taking firm decision	Through knowledge
4. Ego(I) Ahamkara	Takes ownership of above activities	Through devotion and surrender

How to control mind?

Mata Amritanandamayi says:

“The mind is a flow of thoughts. If there are no thoughts, there is no mind. If we wish to control our mind, we should become aware of our thoughts. We should always be alert about which thoughts to accept and which to reject. A prime minister should be able to size up his ministers. He should know their intellectual as well as the extent to which he should accept their opinions and suggestions. If he heeds whatever they say and acts without due deliberation, he might even lose his position. Similar is the case with the thoughts in our mind. It is necessary that we understand them well and handle them accordingly. If not, they will become the cause of our ultimate ruin.”

So, the thought waves, are coming from the objects perceived in the mind. If a person starts satisfying the desires arising out of thoughts, it multiplies and keeps demanding more, bringing various sorts of miseries and sufferings, to its beholder. They can be controlled by 'practice' and 'non attachment'.

Lord Krishna says in Gita sloka 6-35- to Arjuna, when he claims that it is easier to catch 'wind' than Mind.

“Asamshayam mahabaho mano durnigraham chalam
Abhyasena to kaunteya vairagyena cha grihyate.”

“Doubtless O mighty armed, the mind is restless and hard to control; but, by practice and non-attachment, O son of Kunti, it can be controlled.”

Though the mind is, by nature, very restless and uncontrollable, disciplining it assumes primary importance in the practice of spirituality. Lord gives us via Arjuna, two important means to control the mind.

- 1) Practice
- 2) Non-attachment.

What is this practice? :

Continuous struggle to keep thoughts under control is 'practice'. The attempt to restrain the mind and prevent it going out into thought waves. Restraint, does not come in one day, but by long continued practice.

What is Non attachment ?:

Giving up our thirst for attaining and enjoying objects and keeping all desires under control is non attachment. We get attached to objects of joy and enjoyment. And loss of any person or object with which we are attached, brings misery and sorrow.

Practicing to remain undisturbed, irrespective of any outcome, whether positive or negative, from any situation will help us overcome attachment.

Why should we practice ?

Because, each action causes ripples over the surface of the mind lake. When the ripples die out, they form impressions. When a number of similar impressions are left on the mind, they form a habit. Everything that we are, is the result of habit formed earlier. But one happy thing is, if it is only habit, we can change bad habits by practice with good habits.

Simultaneously, eating light Satvic diet, fasting, doing pranayama, attending Satsangs, study of the scriptures, japam, prayer, etc. will help the aspirant to progress in his journey.

Tendencies perish through dispassion, discrimination, control of the senses, enquiry of, "Who am I?" and meditation. If the tendencies perish, the mind ceases thinking of objects and we attain the state of thoughtlessness.

Mind is like a mirror. When the mirror is dusty and dirt laden, you cannot see your face clearly. So, also when the mind is dirty, full of impurities, caught in the network of desires one cannot perceive the Brahman or Truth.

Just as soap cleanses the physical body, even so repetition of any mantra, meditation and prayer, together with the practice of yama and niyama, cleanses the mind of all impurities.

Attachment and Bondage :

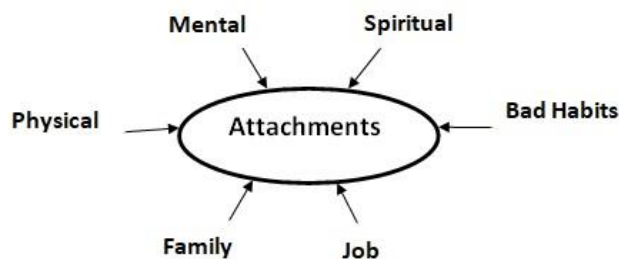
Attachment Bondage... Moha... may mean different to many; but meaning of all three words is same.

What is attachment ?

Attachment is the strong passion and desire to possess an object; family, relatives, house, property etc 'as if' we cannot live without them. Attachment is holding emotional dependence on things we love. Attachment to pleasure and prosperity is the main obstacle to the attainment of God.

People love to have pets and get so attached that when pets die, some people go into depression. We should love our material possessions, but our happiness should not depend upon having them. We can love people by giving, caring and sharing- but never get too attached to someone because they bring in expectations which might lead to disappointments. Do it as your responsibility and leave them.

The most common known attachments to us are :



1. Physical attachments- Attachment to one's body, to material possessions such as money, house, clothes, food, people, pets etc.
2. Mental attachments- Attachment to one's identity, family name, family status, caste, nation, social status, prestige, fame etc.
3. Spiritual attachments- Attachment to one's religion, guru, religious God etc.

Attachments to drugs and alcohol is the reason for ruining people's life. Attachment to life is responsible for the fear of death. Attachment to work that makes a retired man's life miserable.

It is important to remember that from a spiritual perspective there are no good and bad attachments. All attachments are binding and stand in the way of our Liberation.

Mind is the cause for bondage and freedom.

Thus, the mind alone causes bondage and it is the mind again that liberates the individual.

How mind causes bondage?

The impure mind which is after the physical objects, causes attachment and bondage

How mind liberates?

When the mind is purified, it detaches from the outer world and gets attached to the inner world. Thereby it shows Soul way to freedom.

"Mind in itself can make a Heaven of Hell or a Hell of Heaven" John Milton-Poet.

This mind is a strong (fire)wall that stands between the individual soul and the Supreme Soul.

Attached to objects, Mind leads to bondage and freed from objects, it leads to freedom.

How to get freedom from attachment:

As a diamond can be cut only by a diamond, so also, the mind can be conquered only by the mind.

The mind is also said to be two-fold, that is higher pure and lower impure mind.

The higher pure mind, which is endowed with the faculty of right perception, is desire- less and helps people to go into the spiritual path. The higher mind is filled with Satvaguna.

The lower impure mind is dangerous, because it binds people to the busy regular life activity driven by desire and attachment. The lower mind is filled with Rajo and Tamogunas.

The lower impure mind should be conquered by the higher, pure, 'Satvic' mind.

Universe, sun, moon, planet earth all belong to Nature created by God- so how can anyone claim ownership over His land or anything?

We are like tenants, who have to leave after our lease of life is expired.

'I own a house' means it is mine -It is for my 'ego' satisfaction in mind, to make myself special. Even the concept of owning a property is just on paper and mind. Earlier, it belonged to somebody. Now it belongs to me. In future, it will belong to someone else.

One may buy or lease a property, car or any other object for the purpose of using it for convenience. But, people get emotionally attached to those houses and cars, they don't want to sell or leave the objects, even when they are in pathetic condition, saying it has lot of sentimental value, as it brought lot of luck.

If it is seen as an object of use and throw, then one will not feel sorrow, when detached with it. At the time of death, the whole concept of ownership is meaningless.

You can be free of sorrow- if you 'let go'.

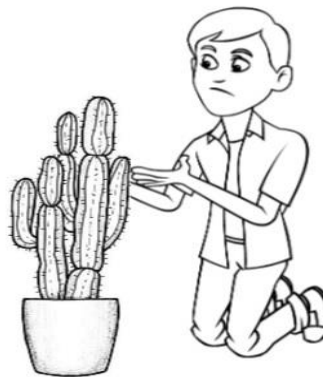
Monkey story: A monkey was damaging a farmer's crop. All his efforts to drive away the monkey failed. He came out with an idea of putting some fresh corn cobs in a pot which had a narrow neck. The monkey tries to remove the corn, but since the neck was narrow, it was not able to remove its hand while clutching the corn cobs. Meanwhile, the farmer comes and starts beating.



The monkey suffers on one side and on the other side, it doesn't want to leave the corn. Finally, when the beating becomes unbearable, it 'lets go' the corn cob and removes its hand and runs.

People catch thorny bush and say it is hurting. If you want pain to stop -what it is to be done? Just leave it.

Similarly, once a person leaves the attachment to an object- the sorrow ends.



There is nothing wrong in owning things or enjoying them. But, let situations not arise that you are unable to live without them. It means, nothing should own you.

One may drink alcohol as long as one's in control of the drink, but one should not let the drink (intoxication) control. Similarly, money should be in your hands. Money should not control you.

From non-attachment comes true freedom.

Bondage with kids : We all love our kids. All species love and protect their kids. However other species leave their kids on their own after they are capable of finding their food.

Scriptures suggest that after all the obligations of a house holder are completed, they have to go to spiritual place to learn about Brahman and later in Sanyasin stage- realise Brahman. But now people are not following it. Presently, parents after completing kids responsibilities, they're taking responsibility of grand kids as well.

So, God has ensured that kids move away from their parents to different places in search of job and better life, forcing the parents to undergo retired life experiences at their home, on their own. But the bondage is still there.

EBL Visa for America :

My cousin Kishore, who lives in Chicago, was mentioning that recently parents are coming to USA on EBL visa. I have heard about EB 5 investment visa, but this was new information. Kishore explained that parents are coming to USA to give moral help to their daughters during delivery and assist them in handling babies; this he calls as 'EBL' -'Emotionally Bonded Labour' visa.

Vairagya or Dispassion ends Bondage

After being bound to the world of objects, dependency can be overcome only when there is a total dispassion for the objects which gives pleasure. Dispassion will develop only, when one is firmly established that the joy is not in the objects.

Let us see a small story narrated by Sadhguru :

"A rich person, who was fed up of the materialistic world, decided to renounce everything. He kept his money and gold ornaments in a bag and approached a Swami sitting under a tree and said, he wanted to renounce everything and requested Swami to show the way to reach God and enjoy mental peace.

Swami immediately took the bag and started running. The rich person was surprised and felt all his life's earnings are given to a fraudster and started running after him. The swami after running around few streets came back to the original spot and kept the bag in front of him. The rich person also came back gasping for air.

Swami then asked him, "If, you have renounced everything then why did you follow me?" He said "your attachment to money is still strong and has not exhausted hence, you are not ready, yet."



There will be times, where we are forced to sacrifice our bad habits like smoking, drinking due to illness, which is not total dispassion as it is temporary setback, for we will start them again as soon as we recover.

There will be temporary dispassion due to following reasons.

1. When someone close dies and we go to his funeral-and think that one day we have to end up like this- it is called 'Graveyard dispassion.'
2. When ladies deliver babies- they decide not to have any more babies, due to unbearable pain-it is called 'Delivery dispassion.'
3. When Love fails, people have temporary dispassion towards marriage and girls, until they find new love -it is called 'Love dispassion.'
4. When people lose money in business, they feel dispassion towards business and life temporarily.

These are temporary and we just forget, once we are out of that situation.

Permanent Vairagya or renunciation is said to have dawned, when there will be no more influence of the mind on that habit or object.

Ex: A person will never think of drinking 'Sulphuric acid' to quench his thirst. Permanent Dispassion can be achieved with knowledge and a strong will, only.

One can help increase dispassion by reminding of the common saying regularly: "You came into this world bringing nothing; and you can't take anything while you go"- So we are here to play with the toys given by God for a short duration of time, called 'life'.

Also remembering, that one will not get single Rupee beyond what people are eligible for, according to their karma. If one tries to cut corners to earn more, they will end up losing more and also add bad karma to suffer later.

So, it is better to avoid attachment, disputes and bondage.

How to become master of your mind:

When you learn to respond differently to the demands of the mind, then the mind follows the new path as water flows in a different path, when diverted.

You break the shackles of your past and set yourself free from the habits of your own mind.

The following suggestions may help you in your efforts to overcome habits or attachments.

Select a few attachments, which you want to get rid of and work on them. It may be a particular food item you like or dislike, a habit that has become part of your daily routine, or a relationship that you have trouble.

1. Suppose, you like coffee - change to drink tea today, coffee without sugar next day and juice third day- keep changing as per your wish – not as mind wants.
2. Let go of your attachment with money. Make a voluntary donation to help a child's education or construction of a temple for the society.
3. Overcome your attachment with the body. If you are accustomed to take a hot shower-take cold bath. Change colour of dress, when mind says white. Exercise, when mind says to relax.
4. Leave your favourite meat and try a vegetarian dish. Fast once in a fortnight to increase your will power...
5. Practice detachment with the usual forms of recreation you are attached to, such as, watching TV or playing cards- by diverting time to some other activity.
6. Practice silence, when you feel urge to argue in a group or conversation. Listen to learn. Consider others view points and arguments before you disagree, and give them benefit of doubt.
7. Let go of your attachment towards too much discipline and perfection. Forgive others for their faults and accept oversights. Or else it keeps bothering you.
8. Let go of your unused possessions. Donate the things that you do not need and do not use.
9. Become aware of the selfish motives behind your actions and words.

By doing good to others, thinking positively and being joyful- one becomes happy.

Yoga sadhana (Yogic practice)

Action is necessary to live in this world. Perform desire-less noble actions, refrain from personal attachment, dedicate all the results to God, say the scriptures.

When a person resolves to attain Self realisation, attachment and attraction for the world will start reducing, which are the main obstacles for 'Self' realisation. Selfless service or Karma Yoga, stops further accumulation of karma, prepares the mind for the reception of knowledge. And then we have to roast the past seeds -habits and impressions, in the fire of knowledge.

Thus, the results of action will be reduced, and our spiritual practices like meditation, prayer, and so forth will further purify the mind. This process should go on till the mind is able to look at itself, investigate the cause of its birth and living experiences. This leads to quest for the discovery of 'Self' and with Guru's help and knowledge, the person will be able to experience true 'Self' and be free of karma and cyclic births.

I shall guide you here below, learnt from my experience, which is not any hard and fast rule:

Start making a habit of getting up early in the morning to practice meditation and eating vegetarian Satvic food. Control your tongue while talking and eating. This brings discipline and control on mind.

Then practice benefit less devotion (Bhakti) - do not ask favours from God when you visit temples. This makes you a favourite devotee of God and he will help you when needed, indirectly.

Ex : Like when our employees do their work responsibly and never ask for any extra increments or favours, we always keep them in mind and help them in need.

Try to reduce regular business/social activities and do the following :

1. Please apply for registration as student to YSS - Yoagada Satsanga Society, Ranchi, (SRF in Los Angeles) who will send lessons by post, which gives basic fundamentals of spirituality and guides you in a simple manner towards God.
2. In Raja yoga or eight limbed (Ashthanga) yoga -start with first two limbs, Yama and Niyamas practice. Simultaneously,

3. Read scriptures Bhagvad Gita, Srimad Bhagawatham, Patanjali Yoga Sutras.
4. Read 108 Upanishads
5. Read 'Viveka Chudamani' book by Adi Sankaracharya, and translated with commentary by Chinmayananda Swami.
6. Read 'Yoga Vasistham' by Venkateswara Anand Swami, in English; or by Sri Poornananda Swami, in Telugu.
7. Practice balance 6 limbs of Raja Yoga-Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Meditation, Samadhi etc. while reading above books.
8. Side by side -practice 6 steps Sama, Dama etc.
9. Watch Sarvapriyanada videos on "Who am I" and other videos in U tube.
10. The above material takes at least 2/3 years to absorb and sink in our mind. Meanwhile, go to spiritual places and also start practising 'selfless' work to gain experience in Bhakti and Karma yoga. After that, all types of Yogas should be practiced simultaneously.

Mediation-practice every day-different techniques are given separately in the website - 'www.lifsourcecode.com'.

Study books like "A New Earth" by Eckhart Tolle and "Buddha-Old Path, white Clouds", by ThichNhat Hahn. Reading, reviewing and contemplation on scriptures should be done continuously. Withdraw yourself and stay in a lonely place for few days. Meet and have satsangs with spiritually evolved persons and Gurus.

Use Mantra and other techniques to help to stop thoughts in meditation. Then using the knowledge (Jnana) of Who Am I -meditate upon the witness.

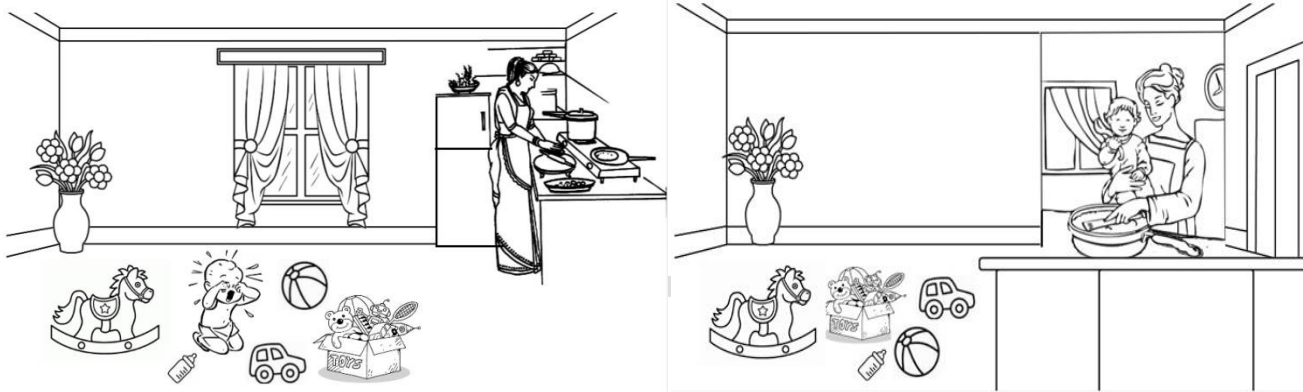
In path of knowledge- we use Sravana (listening and reading), Manana (reviewing) And Nidhidyasa (contemplation)

In Raja yoga- we use Dharana, Dhyana, Samadhi.

Through Sadhana, the mind evolves toward the state of purity. Free from distractions and agitation, it gains calmness. This will lead mind to a meditative level, which is very important for reaching your true Self.

Like in a pond, if we want to see ourselves- we should wait for the ripples to stop. Finally, one should have a strong desire to realise true self.

A mother gives some toys to the baby to play, while she can be alone to cook food. When the baby is done playing with the toys, the baby cries- then mother tries to divert the kid's attention by giving different toys. When finally, the baby is bored with the toys, she cries nonstop. Then mother has no other alternative, but to take the baby into her lap.




Similarly, we also should cry and try desperately to catch God's attention for liberation, by not getting diverted with the materialistic toys given by God.

Till now, we have seen the paths and how to reach destination. Generally, we can take help to reach destination by maps, GPS, taking advice from persons visited earlier etc. But it is your path and your's alone. Others may walk with you, but remember no one can walk it for you. Also, knowing the path is different from walking the path.

AdiSankara in VivekaChudamani says:

“Someone can carry your luggage for you,
but you have to take medicine yourself to cure your illness.”

The ultimate stage of yoga—'Enlightenment'—can neither be bought nor possessed. It can only be experienced, the price of which is, the continual devotion of the aspirant.



To know more about yourself,
Please visit

www.Godssoftware.org

If you need any further guidance, please mail to
admin@godssoftware.org