

Essay

Bhakti Yoga & Gyan Yoga

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Abstract

On the Eve of International Day of Yoga, I discuss two major methodologies to attain God according to Indian philosophy.

Key Words: Bhakti Yoga, Gyan Yoga, International Day of Yoga, union, addition, God.

June 21 has been declared as the International Day of Yoga by the United Nations General Assembly on December 11, 2014 [1]. The declaration came after the call for the adoption of 21 June as International Day of Yoga by Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi during his address to UN General Assembly on September 27, 2014 [2].

Yoga means *Yog*, *i.e.*, addition/union - addition/union of human being, to God. In Indian philosophy, there are two major methodologies for this, *Bhakti Yoga* (Addition with God) and *Gyan Yoga* (Union with God). Both are capable of attaining God.

I will start with *Gyan Yoga*. *Gyan Yoga* is the route for the intellectually inclined. Synonym to it is the word *Tatav Gyan*. It comprises of a certain protocol to be strictly followed, not going to its details here. The central hypothesis of this concept is self-realization - who am *I*, what am *I*? - the realization of self-being. This is like seed becoming tree, human *being* becoming God, God is generated from within the human being, like whole giant tree is generated from an individual seed. Every human being is an individual seed capable of transforming into the giant tree, the God.

The famous *Gyan Yoga/Tatav Gyan*, sentence/mantra - *Aham Brahmāsmi* (Sanskrit: अहं ब्रह्म अस्मि) - means "I am Brahman", *i.e.*, "I am the Infinite Reality, God". The beauty of it is that, it unites the microcosm to macrocosm. It doesn't mean that human being is God but can attain God. Like in chemistry one form of energy is convertible to another.

Mathematically the mantra *Aham Brahmāsmi* (Sanskrit: अहं ब्रह्म अस्मि) may be written as $1 \rightarrow 10$, *i.e.*, 1 is evolving to attain 10 or 1 is becoming 10.

Gyan Yoga involves the evolution of human being to attain/become God. *Gyan Yoga* consists of strict disciplines of different optimized protocols to accomplish the ultimate reality, achieved by *Yogis*. There are certain rules, specified methods all mentioned in *Four Vedas*, *Bhagwat Geeta* and many more Indian scriptures.

Bhakti Yoga is a route for everybody. It is based on two conditions: (1) Pure Devotion; and (2) Total Surrender to God. Anybody who fulfills these two conditions can attain God. It is like a

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drop of water mixing into ocean as famously said in India: “*Katra mila samandar se samander ho gya*”, i.e., *a drop of water on mixing with ocean become ocean itself.*

But I think, the above two required conditions, the resonance conditions, can only be acquired with pure conscious, pure heart, pure mind, even a trace of impurity of any type can spoil all one’s effort. I would conclude my discussion with 12th *Shaloka* of 12th chapter of Bhagwat Geeta:

*Shreyo Hi Gnaanam Abhyaa-saath Gnaanaad Dhyaanam Vishishyathe Dhyaanaath
Karma-phala-thyaagaha Thyaagaat Shaanti-ranantaram.*

which means that better indeed is knowledge than formal practice; better than knowledge is meditation; better than meditation is the renunciation of the fruit of the action (total surrender in love/devotion) ; peace immediately follows this.

References

1. <http://www.unic.org.in/display.php?E=13712&K=Yoga>
2. Narendra Modi calls for International Yoga Day, Times of India, Sep 28, 2014