

SAHAJ MARG CATECHISM

“Patrika Magazine”

1. What is Sahaj Marg?

Answer: Sahaj Marg is a simple, easy and natural system of Yogic Sadhana (spiritual practice) aimed at the realization of the Ultimate. It is based on the ancient system of Raja Yoga modified by Samarth Guru Shri Ram Chandraji Maharaj of Fatehgarh, to be capable of being adopted by one and all in the circumstances governing life under modern conditions, without having to make difficult changes in living conditions, sacrifices etc.

2. In what respects is Sahaj Marg different from other systems of Sadhana?

Answer: The Sahaj Marg system of Sadhana, is different from other systems in the following respects:

(i) It is free from all mechanical practices advocated under other systems traditional and modern.

(ii) It does not stipulate any ritualistic or formal practices as being necessary for spiritual uplift.

(iii) Unlike most systems of Yogic Sadhana, this is a system specifically suited to the house-holder or grihasta.

(iv) The Guru's importance in the Abhyasi's progress is paramount and continuous,

(v) Meditation is on the heart.

(vi) The system depends on transmission by the Guru of his own Yogic Power or Life Force into the heart of the Abhyasi, thus making it possible for the Abhyasi to grow by this in-pouring of Divine Energy into him.

(vii) As the name 'Sahaj Marg' implies, it is a simple, easy and natural method of realization and does not involve arduous or austere practices.

(viii) In this system, the Guru establishes at the very outset, a connection between the Abhyasi's soul and the Divine.

3. What is transmission? .

Answer: Transmission is the English word (not entirely effective) adopted in lieu of the Sanskrit Pranahuti. The Guru through his own powers infuses during meditation into the heart of the Abhyasi the Divine Prana or Life Force, more often known as Prana Shakti-Power and Energy- thereby effecting a thorough cleaning of the Abhyasi's entire being and also starting him and maintaining him on the Path to the Divine. This process has been made capable of being used by the Preceptors appointed by the Master in the Mission. In fact, it is the application of the Divine Force for the transformation of man.

4. What is the special importance of the Guru (teacher) in Sahaj Marg System?

Answer: (i) The Guru here offers himself entirely for the service of the Abhyasis for their spiritual welfare and progress. He does not expect any personal physical service, adulation, flattery or traditional worship.

(ii) His role and need do not end with the early stages of introduction of the Abhyasi to the system.

(iii) The need for the Guru increases with the progress made by the Abhyasi because he is the only person who knows the entire Way and knows how to take other persons with him across its barriers and difficulties.

(iv) He establishes immediate contact between the Abhyasi's soul and the Divine even at the first sitting and, maintains it throughout the life-time of the Abhyasi.

(v) He is ever alert, and watchful over the Abhyasi's progress, takes note of every barrier across his path, helps him to cross it. At each centre, where the Abhyasi tends to lag behind and thinks that he has reached the Destination, the Guru stirs him, up and prods him on to further progress.

(vi) The Guru helps in the transformation of the Inner Man by clearance of his samskaras and deficiencies and by installing the Divine in his heart making it possible for him to become purer and purer day by day.

Thus, the Guru here is a Special Personality, entirely distinct from the traditional and recent modern concepts of the word 'Guru'.

5. What are the essentials of Meditation?

Answer: (i) A chosen quiet seat or asana in a clean and airy environment.

(ii) A comfortable pose which can be maintained without the possibility of discomfort or pain, disturbing meditation, arising during the time of meditation.

(iii) Meditation is not concentration, that is, it is not the one-pointing of the Will and utilizing the collected Will-Power on Concentration. It is the process in which the mind is allowed to rest on the fixed goal and remain there and is brought back whenever it tends to stray. All other thoughts just keep rising up without attracting the mind and so drop out automatically.

(iv) Thus a state is achieved in which nothing but the goal remains under contemplation of the mind which is nothing else than the state of concentration. Thus concentration is the result of meditation in Sahaj Marg. In this state the Abhyasi waits subconsciously for the advent of the Divine.

(v) It is done with great devotion and faith in the Master, and not as a routine burdensome duty.

(Note: This answer does not deal with the method of meditation as it is not included in the question.)

6. Who are eligible to take up the system of practice?

Answer: The system is freely available to all human beings without any bar of any kind. But those likely to derive the greatest benefit have:

(i) A craving to reach the Ultimate in the quickest possible time, and in the present life itself, and retain the above as fixed Goal for ever.

(ii) No trammels of traditional religious tenets, observances and practices

(iii) An intense faith in the Master as the Divine representative and his ability to take one on the path of progress to the Ultimate Destiny, and

(iv) The willingness to start on the Path and increase craving and faith as also ability to surrender to the Master.

7. What is the aim (Goal) of sadhana under Sahaj Marg?

Answer: The aim of sadhana under Sahaj Marg is the attainment of the Ultimate in the shortest possible time in this very life.

8. What are the means by which to achieve the Goal?

Answer: (i) The method is meditation which when practiced with sincerity, devotion, faith, and regularity brings about a state of constant remembrance in which the awareness of the presence of the Divine in one's own self is ever present.

(ii) Assiduousness, development of love and devotion to Master with consequent increase of Faith in HIM.

(iii) Making every effort to regularize and lead one's life so as to be in consonance with the Ten Commandments of Sahaj Marg.

(iv) Maintenance of the Fixed Goal for ever in front of one.

9. Are there any 'dos and 'don'ts' to be observed?

Answer: There is no rigid code of 'dos' and 'don'ts' in Sahaj Marg. The former are mostly contained in the Ten Commandments. The best thing to do is to think that every thought or act is that of the Master, so that all unnecessary thoughts and acts drop off in due course. There is therefore no tension, strain or conflict in renouncing unnecessary thoughts which is normally under other conditions.

10. How can spiritual sadhana be integrated into one's own pattern of living?

Answer: In actual practice, most Abhyasis tend to confine sadhana to the stipulated times and forget the need for the constant thought of the Divine during the rest of the waking hours.

In Sahaj Marg, meditation is a discipline practiced at stated hours with the sole purpose of slowly and gradually passing into a state of meditation during the entire duration so that finally the gaps between the prescribed meditative hours get closed. It does not matter in that condition whether the Abhyasi is actually meditating or not in the understood sense of the term. His condition of being will be that achieved during meditation. This would amount to the achievement of the state of constant remembrance during which one passes into the status of being an instrument in the Master's hand and ceases to live for himself or by himself and has thus achieved complete Surrender to the Ultimate

Will. This would also mean in practice the identity of one's self with the Master's Self.

11. What are the stages of progress under Sahaj Marg Sadhana?

Answer: Journey(yatra) of the soul to arrive at the fixed goal viz. the Divine, is continuous and endless so long as life inhabits the body. There are no definite stages in the progress during this journey, but since movement is there, stages have been marked out by the Master. Broadly speaking, the entire scope of the journey has been divided into three stages:

- (i) Heart region,
- (ii) Mind region,
- (iii) Central region.

These are to be taken as practically co-terminal with

- (i) Area of Maya i.e., the Pind Pradesh,
- (ii) a) Brahmand Mandal and
b) Para Brahmand Mandal

Both together practically covering the mind region.

(iii) The Central region – the discovery of Sahaj Marg System, made by its propounder, Shri Ram Chandraji Maharaj, our Master.

In each of the regions there are numerous points(charkas) or knots (granthis). There are major points and minor points. These together will be countless, but spiritual experience is more and more refined and less and less gross.

Master has divided each of the three regions mentioned above into circles, the Heart region consisting of 5 circles of Maya, the Mind region of 11 circles of Ego, and Central region of 7 rings of Splendor.

There are stages of progress associated with each of these major and minor and can be described as:

- (a) Entry;
- (b) Circumlocution over the entire region covered by the point in order to

obtain complete knowledge of the whole region and also master over it, and

(c) Mergence into the condition of the stage which is called Laya Avastha, during which full enjoyment of the benefits of the stage is obtained. Only when all these three subdivisions are completed, does movement to the next point become possible. These three sub-divisions repeat themselves at every minor and major point of every region during the journey. At many places, the abhyasi tends to appreciate his enjoyment so much that he feels he has reached the end of the journey and becomes inclined to take final rest there. At such times, the Master wakes him up, gives him a preview of the greater happiness awaiting him in his onward journey, and pushes him on towards the next stage.

It is essential to understand that while the type of experience repeats itself from point to point and region to region, the degree of grossness becomes less and less so that one is certain that when ultimately one is able to reach the goal, one would have achieved that degree of fineness (refinement) which is necessary before one can hope to merge in the Infinite.

Of course each abhyasi has to pass through a preparation stage before the real journey commences. This preparation time can be divided into four steps, namely,

1. Achieving firm establishment of a craving in the soul for realization of the Ultimate, as the fixed goal.
2. Effective submission to and mergence in the effort to reach the Divine to such a great extent as to see that Divine pervading everything and everywhere.
3. Developing a still subtler and stronger type of craving for further progress in the journey to the Divine.

12. Are there any danger or obstructions in the pursuit of meditation in this system?

Answer: There are no inherent dangers or obstructions but human nature, by the intensity of the grossness it has acquired in its progress from the time of creation to the present day, becomes heir to certain barriers both in the practice of meditation and in the achievement of progress in spiritual journey. First must be mentioned the difficulty in achieving that degree of craving in the soul and in the fixation of the single goal that every abhyasi joining the mission experiences. Faith and devotion are the essential factors to combat this deficiency. Faith begets devotion and in turn devotion strengthens faith. They go hand-in-hand

and as their quantum increases, barriers which are desire-based and hence non-natural, tend to be surmounted. There is a certain danger in abhyasis wishing to measure the degree of progress made by them, forgetting the basic fact that spiritual experiences are non-sensory and cannot be measured by the sense apparatus. Intensity of imagination should be curbed as it is likely to produce unreliable and spurious ideas of success or failure.

13. What is the value, if any, of experiences including dreams, visions, clairvoyance, etc?

Answer: In the early stages, deep-rooted, embedded karmic impressions (samskaras) get stirred up and sent out. They generally lead to dream-like experiences, visions, premonitions, clairvoyant awareness, etc., which of course tend to impress the abhyasi with the power of the Master, and to convince him of the existence of such power. This has a beneficial effect in deepening faith and consequently increasing devotion, both of which are to be welcomed in the personal interest of the abhyasi. But as the journey progresses, and grossness keeps getting reduced from point to point and stage to stage, experiences art diminishing and if abhyasi still continues to need those experiences to convince himself and to create confidence in him thee is definite region, and so one should endeavor to develop in oneself an attitude by which experiences are only expected to the extent necessary in the earlier stages of sadhana and not to look for them in the more advanced stages. Such desire to have continued experiences is likely to divert attention from the Ultimate goal of Reality and also increase the grossness in ourselves.

14. What is the role of the Preceptor?

Answer: The preceptor has a good deal of responsibility in regard to imparting training in spiritual sadhana to the abhyasis who come to him and also interpreting the practices and precepts of the Mission to them. In fact, each preceptor is endowed by the generous Master with a part of the Divine powers and grace which Master has achieved due to his extraordinary sadhana. This, the preceptors utilize during the transmission that they give to the abhyasis during mediation sittings. Preceptors have also to train the abhyasis towards achieving primarily the necessary craving, then developing faith and devotion towards the Master. They have to teach the abhyasis how to meditate, on what to meditate and when and where to meditate. Any mistakes in the directions given thus are likely to not only retard progress, but also to lessen the faith of the abhyasi in the system. The preceptors should be able to explain to the abhaysis the meaning of experiences that the latter may recount to them, and also teach

the abhyasis progressively to attach less and less importance to such experiences of the grosser levels. Preceptors have also to learn for themselves to read the condition and the progress of the abhyasis under their care, to render such help as is necessary to overcome barriers and to move out of stagnant situations during the journey. Preceptors must themselves put into practice in their day-to-day life the commandments of the system and become living examples to the abhyasis.

At the same time, a Preceptor should realize that abhyasis and he are members of the same brotherhood, and there is no inherent eminence attached to the preceptor himself which can justify the assumption of superiority of any kind. His actions should therefore be true to such an inner attitude.

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