

Sahaj Marg Sadhana
**(Its Contribution to Contemporary Renaissance in Indian
Philosophy)**

- Research Thesis for Ph. D. -

PREM SAGAR

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DEDICATION

With all obeisance

dedicated

to

Path Finder

Dr. S. P. Srivastava

to whom

I owe

my whole of existence

my becoming

and

my Being.



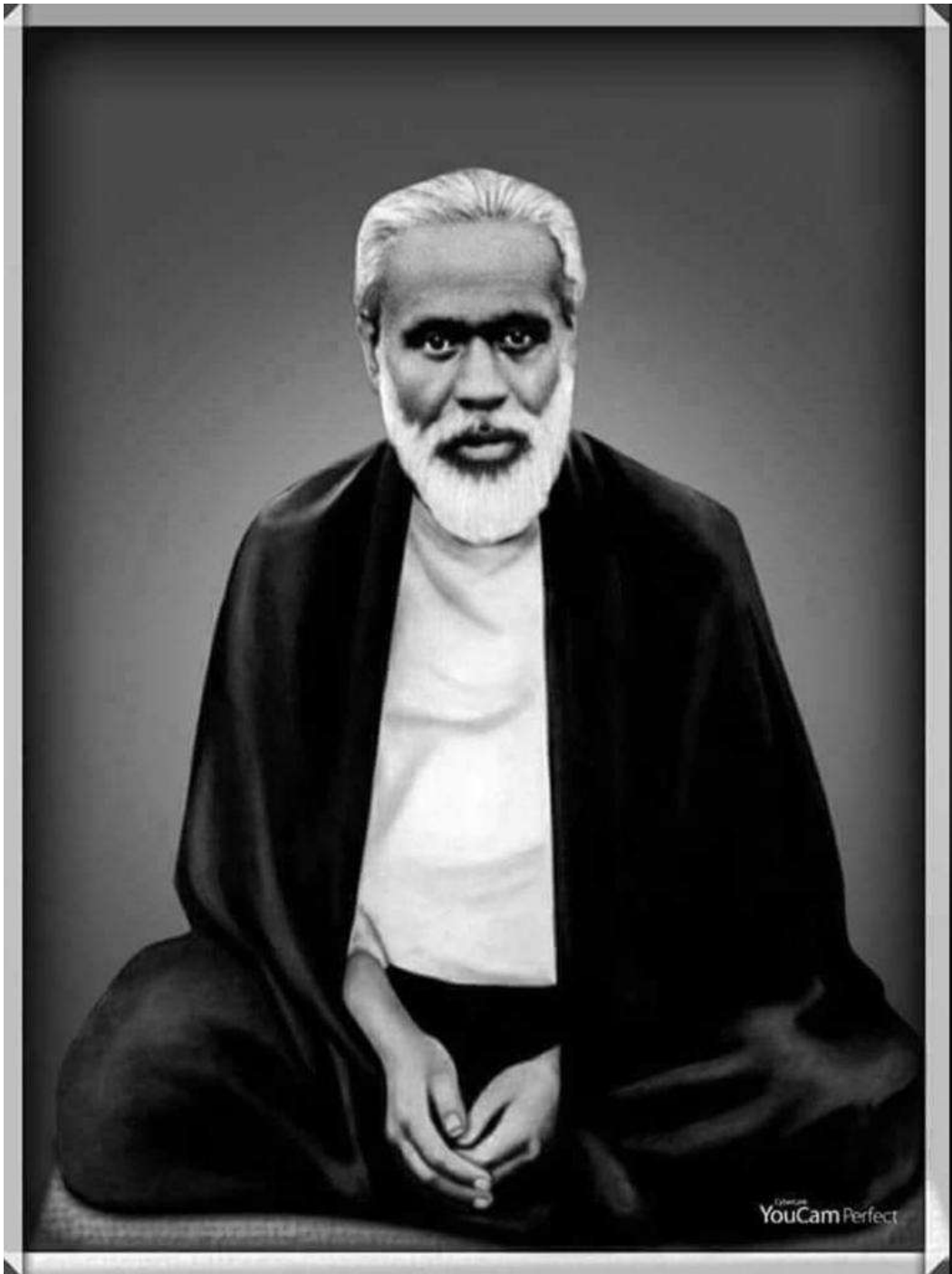








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Scheme of Transliteration

(Hindi to English)

अ	<i>A a</i>	ट	<i>Ṭa ṭa</i>
आ	<i>Ā ā</i>	ठ	<i>Ṭha ṭha</i>
इ	<i>I i</i>	ड	<i>Ḍa ḍa</i>
ई	<i>Ī ī</i>	ढ	<i>Ḍha ḍha</i>
उ	<i>U u</i>	ण	<i>Ṇa ṇa</i>
ऊ	<i>Ū ū</i>	त	<i>Ta ta</i>
ए	<i>E e</i>	थ	<i>Tha tha</i>
ऐ	<i>Ai ai</i>	द	<i>Da da</i>
ओ	<i>O o</i>	ध	<i>Dha dha</i>
औ	<i>Au au</i>	न	<i>Na na</i>
अं	<i>m̐</i>	प	<i>Pa pa</i>
अः	<i>ḥ</i>	फ	<i>Pha pha</i>
ऽ	<i>'</i>	ब	<i>Ba ba</i>
क	<i>Ka ka</i>	भ	<i>Bha bha</i>
ख	<i>Kha kha</i>	म	<i>Ma ma</i>
ग	<i>Ga ga</i>	य	<i>Ya ya</i>
घ	<i>Gha gha</i>	र	<i>Ra ra</i>
ङ	<i>ṅ</i>	ल	<i>La la</i>
		व	<i>Va va</i>
च	<i>Ca ca</i>	श	<i>Śa śa</i>
छ	<i>Cha cha</i>	ष	<i>Ṣa ṣa</i>
ज	<i>Ja ja</i>	स	<i>Sa sa</i>
झ	<i>Jha jha</i>	ह	<i>Ha ha</i>
ञ	<i>ñ</i>	क्ष	<i>Ḷṣa ḷṣa</i>
		त्र	<i>Tra tra</i>
ळ	<i>La la</i>	ज्ञ	<i>Jña jña</i>

PREFACE

When we speak of India or Hindustan, Bhārata or Aryavarta, it signifies the spiritual land of Aryans. Its boundaries may change and its rulers may come and pass away: but it has continued to be the land of spiritual endeavours and originality of experiences since time immemorial. The history of India has covered a long journey and they say that it has reached a state of stagnation during the medieval and modern periods. But really it was an incubation period, which restored India to its original vitality and pristine glory. A current of awakening came to light towards the close of the nineteenth century and brought about a renaissance in Indian Philosophy. This renaissance began as a reform movement, which slowly and steadily overhauled the socio-religio-philosophical structure of Indian culture. The efforts of Raja Ram Mohan Roy towards social reform; of Swami Dayanand Sarasvati for religious regeneration and of Swami Vivekananda in the field of Philosophy and spirituality have contributed a new life and spirit and they resurrected India from its mystic and dogmatic slumber almost causing decline and decay, rather almost annihilation of its pristine purity. They heralded a new Era of Spiritual Awakening, which later gave impetus to creativity and as result, contemporary India envisages a matured period of the renaissance. Noteworthy efforts to systematize contemporary Indian Philosophy have been made by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Dr. VS. Naryane Sh. K. Sachchidananda_Murti and Dr. R. S. Srivastava. Notably, Dr. D. M. Datta has elaborately pointed out and has given a good account of the contributions of modern Indian Philosophy to World Philosophy

The sādhanā aspect, which constitutes the crux of Indian philosophy, came to be regenerated and rejuvenated during the period of renaissance in Indian Philosophy. Swami Vivekananda, Swami Ram Tirth, Sri Aurobindo, Maharshi Ramana, Professor Ranade, Sh. K. Sachchidananda Murti etc., started a chain of significant contributions in this direction.

Sahaj Marg system of yogic practice is the latest link in this chain. The present work incorporates an account of its efforts to introduce a modified Rajayogic method and technique of spiritual practice (sadhana) in the light of its role in contemporary

renaissance. Sahaj Marg system has a brief history, but it possesses a vast treasure of spiritual experiences, which have and may actually be verified by any sincere seeker on the path of spiritual practice. Shri Ram Chandraji institutionalised it as an organisation under the name of 'Shri Ram Chandra Mission' at Shahjahanpur (U. P.) in 1945 after the name of his spiritual guide Samarth Sadguru Mahatma Shri Ram Chandraji of Fatehgarh in district Farrukhabad (U. P.), coincidentally having the identical name. These two masters are known as the 'Founder-President and the 'Adiguru' of Sahaj Marg movement respectively and are affectionately called 'Shri Babuji and Shri Lalaji among their followers and disciples in India and abroad.

Sahaj Marg normally means easy path'; but actually, it is a natural path, a simple way of spiritual elevation. It introduces an efficacious technique of yogic/spiritual practice, which is a modified version of Rajayoga. It simplifies the yogic methodology in order to make it available for practice even to the common man. It provides spiritual training through a most suitable technique in conformity with day to day living in the present society. It has worked out certain innovations in traditional eightfold path of Patañjali with a view to simplify and make it most natural, divesting it of the mysterious and deterrent aspects, almost altogether. In the first place the five preliminary steps (yanma, niyama, asana, pranāyāma, and pratyahara) are left aside, not as unnecessary but as these being the natural results of the real core of yogic practice, which consist in the process of meditation, comprising the last three steps (dhāranā, dhyana and samadhi) of Patanjala yoga, synthesized in a single compact harmonious whole, as second notable contribution of Sahaj Marg towards the simplification of yoga. The third contribution consists in the assertion that Samadhi is not the final level of spiritual attainment rather it is just a beginning and there lies a vast field to be explored after the level of Samādhi. Finally, the most important contribution of this system consists in the emphasis on 'transmission' (pranāhuti), a technical term connoting the all-important function of the capable guide on the course of yogic practice.

The present work gives an outline of the practical and theoretical aspects of Sahaj Marg as a 'new school of thought or New Darśana'. The new, essentially grows out of the whole

tradition of thought and action behind it. As such, in order to have a complete picture of a new school of thought, it is necessary to have an evaluation of the entire background in its historical perspectives of its origin and chief contributions.

Hence, this work deals with the whole history of Indian Philosophy tradition-wise, at the outset, and explains the trends of renaissance in the modern Indian Philosophy. It also examines the various schools of Sahaj Sādhanā and describes the contribution of modern Sahaj Marg movement in that context. Further, the theoretical and practical aspects of Sahaj Marg Sadhanā have been elaborated, referring to comparisons, wheresoever 's possible, with other traditional and modern schools of thought in the history of Indian Philosophy. Finally, it evaluates the role and place of Sahaj Marg movement in the contemporary Indian Philosophy.

I cannot adequately acknowledge my deep indebtedness to Dr. S. P. Srivastava to whom I owe my career as a humble student of philosophy. His capable guidance and supervision of this research work are beyond expression. I am highly obliged to Revered Shri Ram Chandraji of Shahjahanpur (U. P.) for his encouragement, which has inspired me during the trying period of the completion of this uphill task. My visits to Revered Babuji at his residence in Shahjahanpur have increasingly infused vigour and zeal into my inquisitive mind providing assurance of assistance in matters of conceptual comprehension. I am grateful to Dr. B. L. Goswami, Principal of Government College, Bahadurgarh (Haryana), for taking trouble in checking the manuscript of Second Chapter pertaining to the historical perspectives of traditional Sahaj Sadhanā and for his noteworthy suggestions thereon. pay thanks to Shri Ganpat Singh, Principal, Y. D. College, Lakhimpur-Kheri (U. P.) for allowing me to continue my research and to the Library Staff of the College for the free access to the books of the library. I acknowledge my heartiest thanks to the sons of Late Shri Jagannath Prasad Nigam for various kinds of help during the period of preparation of this work. Smt. Sarojini Nigam deserves special thanks for allowing me to consult her valuable collection of almost all the special annual numbers of Kalyāna of Gita Press Gorakhpur. I am thankful to Prof. V. G. Goswami, Law Faculty, Lucknow University, for facilitating the type work and helping in the correction of typed pages of the thesis. Thanks are due to Shri N. L. Sharma for the

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Guru Pūrnimā
PREM SAGAR
18" July 1970

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INTRODUCTION

1. Indian Philosophy and Contemporary Renaissance
2. Sahaj Marg Sādhanā in Indian Philosophy

Indian Philosophy and Contemporary Renaissance

Introduction:

India is known and respected all over the world for its Philosophy and Spirituality. Commenting on the Indians questing, foraging spirit for exploring the unknown rightly does Ghate have it: ". nowhere are made so bold and daring the attempts to solve the riddle of universe as in India." history of Indian Philosophy presents a tale of those seers and sages, conquerors and enlightened ones, who had direct experience of what they have sung in their hymns and preached in their councils. During the course of history, from the hoary Indus Valley Civilization to the present democratic republic of free India, there has been chain of attempts to reveal the secret of human existence and its purpose. Consequently, various sects and systems have appeared on the scene with their numerous methods and techniques. Hence, India presents a multi-coloured spectacle of different schools of thought. There are many ways through which scholars and researchers have studied and evaluated the story of India's past glory. They have divided the history of Indian Philosophy into successive eras (yugas), periods, or ages according to the scope of their research and the purpose of their study. But W. D. Whitney points out that all the dates given in the literary history are pins set up to be bowled down again." Winternitz also opines: "We can often say: this or that book, this or that class of literature is older than a certain other: however, with regard to its real age it is only possible to offer hypotheses. The study of Indian Philosophy in the light of hypothetical successive periods or ages and the relative dates assigned to them would hardly bear categorical conclusions. A period-wise or century-wise study may provide Some idea of a continuously flowing current of thought in India: but fails to offer a unified and synthetic View of Indian Philosophy. While dividing the history of India in periods or ages, it has been a matter of great difficulty to fix a certain date to mark out one form of thought or technique from the successive one. In fact, every new movement has only attempted to refine and reconstruct the parent mode to make it more suitable to the needs and the demands of the changed times.

Thus, there is a need to study and evaluate Indian Philosophy tradition-wise in order to gain its unified and comprehensive view. If Vedic tradition originated in the time immemorial, it did not come to a close when Buddhism came into prominence. Buddhism too, in turn, did not meet its end when Vedāntins raised their heads. Hence, the tradition-wise study will really be more fruitful to highlight the inter-relationship and common characteristics of the various schools of thought in the history of Indian Philosophy and particularly in reference to the advent of contemporary renaissance in Indian Philosophy.

Moreover, "tradition" is a more comprehensive and precise term than "period or age. AS Norman Powell Williams has it: "The word 'tradition' means, etymologically, handing over'. This conception of tradition, therefore implies (a) a 'deposit', which is handed over and (b) 'depositories' i.e., persons, who are in possession of deposit and are commissioned to preserve it and transmit it to the successors." Most, of the religious systems claim to bear within themselves a deposit consisting of ceremonial performances, myth, dogma or ethic or of some of those elements revealed by some ultimate divine or quasi-divine authority meant to be handed down to posterity by a succession of a duly qualified trustees. Max Radin also holds the view that the term 'tradition' implies a judgment about the value of transmitted elements and tradition in its religious aspect is. a delivering of a precious deposit, whose sources are held to be divine to an especially selected person or persons. Udyotkara uses the term 'sampradāya (a Hindi translation of the word 'tradition') and says that It is an uninterrupted succession of pupils and teachers by which scriptural knowledge is conversed or transmitted." Dr. S. Radhakrishnan too falls in Line commenting: a living culture preserves the treasure of the past and creates those of the future."

Now, it is clear that the tradition is not a sudden emergence, but a result of evolution during the course history Sometimes covering many centuries in order to build a new tradition. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan aptly states: "It takes centuries of life to make a little history and it takes centuries of history to produce a little tradition and we cannot lightly set it aside. Therefore, time has to traverse a long journey in order to give birth to a new tradition. Building up of a new tradition and the emergence of a new order signifies a turn in the history from one mode of thinking towards

a regenerating and reformative trend more suitable to the changed environment of that age. H. L. Hariappa also remarks: If a nation is to be united, it is by TRADITION it inherits and cherishes." The appearance of a new tradition is invariably a new creation and "the period of creation have been the periods of great suffering. The world will pass through a phase of growing pains before it reaches new equilibrium." Moreover, "we cannot alter suddenly our subconscious heritage at the bidding of the former. The old ideas cannot be rooted out unless we are educated to a higher intellectual and moral level." In this way, the description of the history of Indian Philosophy as analysed into age, period, system, or era etc., may provide an analytical survey: but it would preferably be revealing, if the course of the transition is assessed and evaluated tradition-wise in the light of renaissance and the regenerating trends as considered earlier. The earlier mentioned contention of the scholars and researchers also stands as support in its favour. There are large varieties of traditions and therefore it would require a selection as per need of present research work in hand. Keeping in View the subject of spiritual practice (sādhanā) and its development the following chief traditions may be undertaken for consideration:

- (i) Non-Aryan Tradition,
- (ii) Vedic Tradition,
- (iii) Buddhist Tradition,
- (iv) Jain Tradition,
- (v) Vedānta Tradition, and
- (vi) Tradition of Saints.

All these traditions had a large impact on the milieu and have contributed vitality to the ever-flowing current of India's glorious culture and civilization. The detailed version with sufficient details may be seen in the voluminous treatise on Indian Philosophy written by renowned scholars like S. N. Dasgupta, J. N. Sinha, and S. Radhakrishnan. It is needless to mention that only a bird's eye view of these traditions would be possible in the limited space of one chapter

(i)Non- Aryan Tradition:

The distinction between the philosophy of India and that of the Western Philosophy is very common. Further a subdivision in the Indian Philosophy may be a recent trend in deciphering the distinction of thought and culture between the North and the South of India has also been drawn by the anthropologists and historians on the grounds of linguistic studies and archaeological remains found in the Indus Valley Civilization and thereby a distinction between Aryan (Vedic) and Non-Aryan (Non-Vedic) traditions have been demarcated. This Non-Aryan tradition has prefixed one more chapter to the historical development of Indian Philosophy, which traditionally is regarded to start from the Vedas. Since this non-Vedic tradition distinctly contains some roots and the' glimpses of spiritual pursuits similar to those as mentioned in the development of Vedic (Aryan) culture. Baudhāyana Dharma Sūtra enumerates five points of differences between the peculiar customs observed in the North and those in the South. Buhler also asserts that some of these customs described therein are still prevalent among them. "Besides, this Sūtra clearly tells that some men are born Aryan and some as Non-Aryan Mahopaniṣad forbids mixing up with the Non-Aryans. Apastamba Dharma Sūtra injuncts: "He who cohabits with a Non-Aryan woman, he who lends money at interest, he who drinks spirituous liquors (other than Sura), he who praises everybody in a manner unworthy of Brāhmana, shall sit on grass, allowing his back to be scorched (by the sun)." Gautama Dharma Sūtra also tells that one "shall not converse with anybody but Aryan." Lord Krishna in Gita (11. 2) also characterizes the despair of Arjun for non-fighting in the battle as worthy of becoming a Non-Aryan (anāryajustam).

Literally "Non-Aryan" means 'one who is not Aryan' i.e., one who has no belief/faith in Vedas and ignores the rules and regulations laid down in Brāhmanas, containing the instructions in respect of rites and rituals to be performed in day-to-day life of Aryans. This Non-Aryan tradition does not refer to some particular tribe or race; rather many tribes and races have been associated with the concept of 'Non-Aryan. They had their own culture and civilization and had developed their own sway and predominance over the regions dominated by Aryans. This tradition belongs to those Vrātyas, who were solemnized as Aryans through the

ceremonial rites at the performance Vṛātyaṣṭoma yajña (sacrifice); to those slaves (dāsas) and robbers (dasyus), who were enemies of Aryans and the more so of those, who were often condemned as 'worshippers of phallus (Sisnadevāh). Dravidians is a general term, which has been used by historians and archaeologists to designate these Non-Aryans. Beside these, many more terms have also been used to designate Non-Aryans e.g., Kikaṣas, Panis, Kirātas, Yavanas, Pulindas, Sakas, Kambojas, Kalingas, Usīnaras etc., (some of these are even later invaders from the north on Indo-Aryans).

There is a controversy regarding the identity of these Non-Aryans. Most of the Western thinkers have identified them with, Dravidians and have ascribed the civilization of Indus Valley to them. Some of them also believe that Dravidians were the original inhabitants of India and they had a wide influence on the social, cultural and religious structure of the Indo-Aryan race, which migrated to India from some distant land in Asia Minor. E. J. Rapson writes that: "Dravidian civilization was predominant in India before the coming of Aryans, and there can be no doubt that they have very greatly influenced Aryan civilization and Aryan religion in the North." E. B. Havell states that: "indigenous Dravidian system was in all probability the foundation upon which the Indo-Aryan economic super-structure was built." Hall also tells the same view when he asserts that: "the culture of India is pre-Aryan and Aryan owed his civilization and degeneration to the Dravidians." Speaking of the influence of Non-Aryans on Aryans Rao Saheb P. R. Ranganatha Punja even claims south India to be the homeland and the place of the origin of the human being, who appeared first in South India and later spread all over the earth. According to A. P. Karamarkar the Mohan-jodarians had an independent religious cult of their own, which was called anyavrata by the Vedic bards. R. C. Majumdar takes pain in outlining the controversy: "Some archaeologists, who are ill-informed about the Vedic literature, have emphasized the importance of Indus Valley culture and belittled the Vedic civilization. Some eminent scholars have gone so far as to describe the Indo-Aryan as barbarians, who destroyed a splendid culture without being able to contribute anything new. They, therefore, describe the Rgveda as the "Epic of Destruction." The view of Majumdar that Dravidians or Non-Aryans influenced Aryan culture and civilization in the north is untenable because the view

is based on wrong information of the Vedic Text with presupposition that Non-Aryans were the pre-Vedic original inhabitants or who came to India in some pre-historic time before Aryan migration. Such scholars and historians have created a wide gulf between the fair-skinned Aryans and the dark-complexioned Dravidians. Really these Dravidians were not Non-Aryan but half civilized Aryans. In Rgveda there is description when Indra says, "It is - who have not given the name of dasyu to Arya" and also "it is I coming, seeing and selecting dasas and Aryas." Dr. Sampurnanand Citing these instances asserts that if these dasyus or dāsas - the so-called Non-Aryans had not resembled dasyus or dāsas the so-called Non-Aryans had not resembled Aryans there would not have been the question of selection and of giving Wrong names by Indra. This clearly shows that both Non-Aryans and Aryans had some features of resemblance. They too were the inhabitants of India and they resembled the Indians.

These Non-Aryans were originally Aryans, who had developed their own religious customs and civilization after migration towards south and almost living in exile far away from Brahmanical fold due to disobedience of some rules or dishonour to the authority of Vedas. Really the Dravidians, the So-called Non-Aryans, were K ṣatriyas and were degraded due to neglect of rule of Brahmanical livelihood. Mahābhārata and Manusmṛti both refer to the fact that śakas, yavanas, kambojas, dravidas, kalingas, pulindas, uśīnaras, kolisarpas, etc., were degraded by not observing the prescribed instructions or by omission of the sacred rites. In this way while considering the Non-Aryan tradition it must be kept in mind that this tradition of Non-Aryan was not a heterodox cult against Aryans, but a link in the development of Indian Philosophy and religion, which definitely deserves due consideration and evaluation under a separate heading. These Non-Aryans are generally regarded "as akarman (riteless), adevyu (indifferent to Aryan gods), avrata (lawless), ayajvan (non-sacrificing), and abrahman (without Brahman)" Pañcavirṇśa Brāhmana categorises these Non-Aryans into four classes (1) Hina, (1) Garagirs, (iii) Samanīca-Medhra and (iv) Nindita.

Philological studies and linguistic considerations ascribe Tamil language to Dravidians. Rawlinson states that "Tamil is the oldest Dravidian tongue; others are Telugu, the Andhra language, and Kanarese, the language of Mysore; Malayalama is later

development of Tamil. Reinhold Rost also tells: "Tamil is the sister of Malayalam, Telugu, Kanarese, and Tulu." The greatest poet in Tamil was Turuvalluvar. His Tirrakkural or Kyril dealing with the three subjects' virtue, wealth, and pleasure is regarded as the Veda of Tamil literature. Their literary development is much later than that of Aryans.

Now coming to the point regarding the spiritual practice (sadhana) as observed by the Non-Aryans it is clear enough that they adhered to a separate mode of worship and devotion. They discarded as to whatsoever was followed by the Aryans and so their method was quite different. They ignored rites, rituals, ordinances, and instructions of Aryans. In this respect Aryans treated them as lawless clan. They did not perform oblations to fire (yajña), which was a characteristic feature of Aryans. The most common object of worship for these people has been Mother Goddess. Besides, the worship Lord Siva, particularly in the form of phallus (Linga) is a peculiar feature of these Non Aryans. The practice of worship of serpent/snakes (Nāga) was also prevalent among them as snakes being associated with Lord Siva. They did not cremate but used to bury the dead. Yet as another characteristic feature of Non-Aryans was a custom among them that on holy and auspicious occasions they used to dance in-group lining up in a circle.

Yogic practice is a fact of pristine glory and it has stimulated Indian thought since primeval times and has stirred up almost every fibre of Indian Philosophy in one or the other way. The relics of Indus Valley, ascribed to Non-Aryans, depict that yogic practice was prevalent among them. The archaeological remains found therein shed light on various poses (mudrās); physical postures (āsanas) and a variety of mode of worship were in vogue during those days. Numerous figures carved/inscribed on potteries, seals and amulets are the clear proof of the existence of yogic practice among the inhabitants of Indus Valley civilization. In this context a three-faced deity wearing horned headdress, seated cross-legged and surrounded by animals, is worth mention. Dr. R. C. Majumdar confirms that this figure represents "at least three concepts viz. (i) Tri-mukha, (ii) Paśupati (Lord of animals) and (iii) Yogeshvara, a mahayog." It is noteworthy herein that Lord Siva is a deity, who is regarded as the incarnation rather the originator of the

yogic practice. His worship as depicted in the relics of Mohen-jodaro is not merely iconic; but also in the form of phallus as it may be derived from the presence of a large number of conical cylindrical pieces of stone and on account of this these Non-Aryans were often regarded as the worshiper of the phallus (sisnadevah).

There is also mention of Vrātyas in Atharvaveda. They too followed yogic practice. Ekavrātyas, as described in Atharvaveda, are designated as mahayogis. here is also description of a hymn known as Vrātyakānda in Atharvaveda. It contains deep and noteworthy spiritual mysteries, which can only be known by a person adept in yogic practices. A. E. Gough also tried to trace the origin of yogic practice to dark-skinned races with whom the Aryans mingled. Tylor has also remarked in his book 'Primitive Culture' that the ecstatic conditions excited by meditation, fasting and narcotic stimulants held in high esteem among the savage people in ancient India.

Whole of this analysis brings to conclusion that there existed some clan or say tribe side by side the Aryans. Whether they were pre-Aryans or post-Aryans is the concern of historians, but it is plausible to assume that this so-called Non-Aryan tradition observed spiritual practice, which consisted of similarities with the yogic practices. They had rustic life and lived in the stone-built houses at hillside in the forests. They primarily depended on domestic animals. They worshipped nature and preferred an innocent life close to nature. The ideal of these primitive inhabitants was the safety of their clan and offspring. It is doubtful whether they had any religious or spiritual text like the Veda of Aryans. At least this much can be conveniently assumed - wherever the human being lived and in whatever condition, the humanity always conceived some kind of deity to which they submitted their offering with respectful feelings for obtaining health, wealth and strength. They prayed in one or the other way for the safeguard of their interests. They were not fire-worshippers and they liked circular things. They did not believe in the immortality of soul as in routine course they bury their dead. They are the primitive inhabitants of Indian soil and may be traced to be the root source of the system of materialistic and atheistic milieu, which later got designated as Carvāka system in Indian Philosophy. Hence, this tradition may be prior to the Vedic

tradition; but its subsistence with the Vedic tradition is clear enough on the ground that this system was criticized and discarded by the Vedic adherents.

(ii) Vedic Tradition:

There are four Vedas viz., Rgveda, Sāmaveda, Yajurveda and Atharvaveda. These are the oldest available literature in the literary history of human civilization in the world. The edifice of Indian spirituality stands on the foundation of four Vedas. They contain oldest language, primitive rituals, philosophical comprehensions and narratives of the primitive culture and civilization. Weber confirms it: "We find in them the oldest rituals. We have the oldest linguistic explanations, oldest traditional narratives and the oldest philosophical speculations.

These Vedas are called the 'śrutis' (revelations) as distinguished from the 'smritis' (remembered). The various 'rsis' to whom the Vedic texts have been ascribed are not the authors (kartārah) or composers (srs/ārāh) of the text rather they are actually the seers (drstārah) to whom these texts were revealed in a super-conscious state of spiritual elevation. Therefore, these Vedic texts are designated as 'apauruseya' i.e., not of human origin. The injunctions and instructions mentioned therein are self-proved (svatahprāmānya); because it has been said about them that these have been revealed to or say conferred on human beings directly from the Supreme Divine, the original Source and hence these are devoid of faults and mistakes. As Dr. S. Radhakrishnan also puts it, "the tradition of the Veda can be traced to the Supreme. It is expressed or formulated by individuals but they are not its authors. The tradition belongs to the supra-individual order and is said to be 'apauruṣeya' or non-personal. It is timeless though its apprehension is possible at any time." Pointing out the authority of Veda, Manu contends sarvam vedāt prasidhyati i.e., everything is proved or justified by Veda. They are regarded as the breathings of Brahman, the Divine Supreme. The wisdom that vibrated in and behind the words of Vedas is the Voice of God, imparted to the souls that had achieved the stage of harmony with Nature.

Each of the four Vedas is further divided into four portions (1) Samhitā, (2) Brāhmana, (3) Aranyaka and (4) Upanisad

(1) Samhitā literally means 'collection. Therefore, this portion IS a collection of hymns, prayers, benedictions, sacrificial formulas and litanies. It contains hymns sung or recited by the priest at the performance of sacrificial rites. It is in primitive Vedic Sanskrit language. Through these hymns they implored or say invoked divine super-natural powers to bless them with health, wealth and security.

(2) Brāhmana contains the rules for the employment of hymns of the Samhitā to the sacrifices (yajnas). They are prose treatises and discuss the significance of sacrificial rites and the method of ceremonial performances of rites and rituals during the life time starting even before birth till death and even thereafter.

(3) Aranyaka portion exhibits/displays the religio-philosophical portions compiled and studied in 'aranyas meaning the forests. Dr. Radhakrishnan explaining the implication of the word Aranyaka' explains that those who continue their studies without marrying are called the aranas or the 'aranyamānasa', the inhabitants of forests. They lived in hermitage or forests. The hermitage, where ar anas lived, is called 'aranya', the forest. The texts containing their speculations are known as Aranyakas. Sometimes these Aranyakas or forest-texts are partly included in Brāhmana, the second portion and sometimes with the Upanisad, the fourth portion. There are also the independent treatises. That is to say that Aranyakas form the transition link between the rituals of the Brāhmanas and the philosophy of Upaniṣads

(4) Upanisad literally means sitting close to as coined from the root sad meaning to sit and prefixed by 'upa' implying close by or near to. This portion contains the Wisdom imparted to the disciples in proximity with their teachers (Gurus). The Upaniṣads are the valuable compilations of the discourses between teachers and disciples, sitting close together. The psychological and spiritual description of human personality contains most scientific manifestation of the Vedic seers (rsis) in its originality of direct imperiences (the inner

experiences).

These four portions of Veda in general propound that the realization of Reality, the summum bonum of human life, can be gained if the method and mode of spiritual practice (sādhana) mentioned therein is duly and properly followed. The message of devotion through prayers in Samhita, of action in the form of sacrifices (yajnas) in Brahmanas, penance (tapas) in Aranyakas and achievement of wisdom through meditation in Upanishads bears a unified and synthetic picture of the devotion (bhakti), action (karma) and knowledge (jñāna), which are enumerated as the three paths leading to spiritual illumination and final emancipation into the Ultimate Reality. If one goes through these four portions of the Vedas, one can comprehend a transition of thought from prayer to sacrifice, from sacrifice to penance/austerities (tapas) and finally from penance (tapas) to speculative meditation culminating into concentration (samādhi). While the student (brahmacharin) reads the hymns, the householders (grahasthas) attend to the Brāhmanas, which speak of the daily duties and sacrificial ceremonies; the discourses of hermit, the vānaprastha, are compiled in the Aranyaka. The monk, who has renounced the worldly attachments (Samnyāsī) studies the Upanishads which specialize in philosophical speculation. Thus, the spiritual practice in Vedas presents an emergence of thought from individual prayer to universal divine-hood, from material welfare to spiritual contentment and from external worship through the prayers to an inner intuition in the spiritual speculation.

Viṣṇumitra advises a fivefold course of method for the study of the Vedas: Adhyāyanam (study of Vedas), Vicāra (thinking over the content of Vedas), Abhyāsanam (practising Vedic injunctions), Japa (muttering prayers etc., in under tone) and Adhyāpanam (teaching the Vedas). These five methods of study of Vedas are self-explanatory and do not need any elaboration. The same course has been mentioned in Dakṣa Smṛti (I. 34) and this text also enjoins: "one should employ the Indian Philosophy and Contemporary Renaissance hurried mode for the sake of study, the moderate in ordinary use and delayed in the instructions of pupils." The Atharvaveda Pratisākhya tells that the study of Veda is duty to be adhered upon.

The Vedic tradition consists of two kinds of texts- Sruti (revealed text) and the Smṛti (remembered text). All the four Vedas along with the four potions in each of them are called the Sruti, which depicts the theory, thought and practice prevalent at that time. Beside these four Vedas there are some other treatises also viz. eighteen Purānas and two epics (the Mahābhārata and the Rāmāyana) also play a major role in depicting the picture of Vedic tradition. Herein it is worth mention that these texts are the smṛtis as against the Vedas, which are śrutis. Moreover, the knowledge of Pratisākhya and six limbs of Veda (Vedāṅga) also help in understanding the tradition of Veda. The six limbs of Veda (Vedāṅga) are (1) the Śikṣā (Learning), (2) the Kalpa (rules and regulations for rites/rituals), (3) the Vyākaraṇa (Grammar), (4) the Nirukta (Etymology), (5) the Jyotiṣa (Astrology) and (6) the Chandasāstra (Lyrics). Beside these six limbs (Vedāṅga) the knowledge of Sūtras (aphorism) regarding sacrificial rites, matrimonial and other ceremonial performances, knowledge of day-to-day ritualistic activities and conduct/behaviour have been described in the texts known as rautasūtra, grhyasūtra, dharmasūtra and śulvasūtra. These are also very significant for having a comprehensive view the Vedic tradition. The spiritual practice (sādhanā) in its most primitive form, as prevalent in Vedic age, lies in reciting the requisite hymns (Mantras) from the Vedas for appealing to the Divinity. The Vedic sages worshipped, prayed, and implored Divinity to seek favour against misfortunes and miseries and to promote welfare of their offspring, society, country and humanity at large. They were worshippers of Nature and their approach towards Nature was that of pantheism, literally meaning "all is God". They found each and every object of Nature infused with the spark of Divinity. They perceived the presence of Gods in water, trees, clouds, air, soil etc. This later developed as polytheism and thereby every object of nature was ascribed to some separate deity.

Slowly with the passage of time this prayer-worship by reciting hymns became more and more ritualistic and took the form of imploring Divinity by performance of yajnas (sacrifices). It became the sacred occasion to offer prayers to and worship of their beloved gods. Naturally and slowly the yajnas dominated the theoretical and practical life of Vedic people and so the fire (agni) became the chief object of their

Spiritual practice and they saw Agni (fire) as the main Deity Rgveda V, 5, 1-2). The performance of sacrificial rites (ouajña) predominated in the routine life of these people. Slowly the polytheism (worship of many gods) turned into monotheism (worship of one God). There are also many references wherein they described to have achieved control over breathing (prāna) and victory over death. Later on, the method of meditation became prominent. Although sādhan in the form of performance of yajna was accorded due place, they condemned the dogmatic attitude towards it. The rituals and ceremonies developed the predominance of priestly class, as they were required to perform them. Consequently, under their influence ritual stricken' and caste ridden' society evolved. The growing impact of the performance of dogmatic rites and rituals was so great that "the true was overwhelmed by: the false and the chaos of Brāhmanical religion with all its theories soon reached its climax in the post-Upaniṣadic or pre-Buddhistic period. The period was of 'spiritual dryness, here truth hardened into tradition and morality stiffened into routine. Life became a series of observance. The mind of man moved within the iron circles of prescribed ceremonies.

With the advent of Jainism and Buddhism the Vedic principles crept into slow oblivion. It almost reached its annihilation, but later the Vedāntins infused life and they gave a clarion call and re-established vedic tradition' on firm grounds. This venture, which will be discussed later, predominated in ascribing more significance to the spiritual and philosophical aspects.

(iii) The Jain Tradition:

Jain tradition as a religious doctrine represents one of the heterodox schools of Indian Philosophy as they did not recognise authority of Vedas and other scriptural texts of Hindus. This tradition is characterised as atheistic (Nāstika) philosophy as they condemned the Vedas (Nāstiko vedanindakah). The origin of Jainism goes to prehistoric period and is believed to be older than the tradition of Buddhism. The adherents of Jainism believed that the Jain religion is eternal, as it has been revealed through the eighteen successive divine teachers known as Tirthankaras. Rṣabhadeva is the first Tirthankara and Vardhamāna Mahāvīra the last one (twenty-fourth). Pārśvanātha was the predecessor of

Vardhamāna and it is believed that he lived for 250 years before Vardhamāna. These Tirthankaras are also designated as 'Jin' (the spiritual conqueror), the Sanskrit root source from which the term Jain' is coined. Hence, they, who followed 'Jin', are called Jains

On the grounds of similarities between Jain and Buddhistic living and also being almost contemporary the thinkers and scholars have regarded Mahāvīra and Buddha to be the one personality. But it has been well established that they were the founder of two different and independent streams of thought in its origin Jain tradition is much older than Buddhism.

The whole of Jain tradition is divided into two sects:
(i) the Svetāmbara (the wearers of white cloth) and
(ii) the Digambaras (the naked ones)

So far as the main teaching is concerned both of them agree with each other, but disagree on certain points of details. The Digambaras were the rigid adherents and believed that Tirthankaras lived without food. One, who own property and wears clothes, cannot attain salvation and the woman cannot achieve liberation (Moksa). Thus, they preserved the original teaching and practice of Jain thought. On account of this rigidity, they are regarded as representing the older creed. The Svetambaras were milder in their approach and adjusted themselves to the normal living in a society. The tenets of Jain tradition consist in the fact that they regard souls (īvas) to be infinite in number and are basically possessed of infinite perception (anantadarsana) infinite knowledge (ananta jñāna), infinite bliss (amanta sukha) and infinite power (ananta viya) These infinite features are suppressed by the actions (karman) performed by the body. Jains regard souls as substance (dravya) and the Soul fills whole of the body as light or air would fill a room. Even the Smallest particle of matter is also infused with soul and they, sometimes for the sake of understanding, call them 'nigodha', which bear close resemblance to the monads of Leibnitz. Thus, Jain tradition advocates animistic pluralism of the universe.

It is action, which obscures the pure and infinite nature of soul and binds to the earthly or mundane life. The right way to

liberation is to be found in the purging away of the actions and their effects. This purging is known as 'nirjara' as opposed to 'asrava' representing the influx of karmic matter into the soul. They believe that the complete destruction of all karmanas leads to liberation (Moksa).

The Divine Jin or lirthankaras is the Guru, who helps in achieving the true knowledge of the tathvas. The Jain tradition has developed a great sway in the Indian society. It consists of vast literature and represents a creed, which on the one hand dissociated itself from the dogmatic, ritualistic and mystic cult of Vedic tradition and on the other hand represents the mature and original comprehension of reality envisaged on thorough understanding of the ontological, epistemological axiological aspects of human life. Currently the vipasyana methodology and preksā-anupreksā technique is novel contribution of Jain tradition. For more details relevant literature in this respect may be consulted.

(iv) The Buddhist Tradition:

The tradition of Buddhism is historically divided in into two major schools viz. (i) Hinayāna and (ü) Mahayūna.

Mahāyāna school gave rise to the systems of Vajrayana, kālacakrayāna and tater also sahaiayana Notably there are four schools of thought in Buddhism: (1) Sautrāntika, (ii) Vaibhāsika, (iii) Mādhyamika and (iv) Yogācāra.

Baldev Upadhyaya enumerates three schools in the Buddhist tradition Sravakyāna, Pratyekabuddhayana and Bodhisattvayana. Yamakamī Sogengives an account of numerous systems of Buddhism from different points of view as 'I-geo-do' and Nan-geo-do' (the easy path and the difficult path)

Actually. there are three turning points in Buddhism known as the three swinging of the Wheel of Law (tricalrapravartana) Due to the variety of nomenclature school of thought it may be presumed that the Buddhist teaching proved most appealing and the people, while accepting it provided their own names to the evolving tradition of Baddhism as per their conception and comprehension under regional and local influences. Later, the scholars and thinkers traced these nomenclatures to describe how the Buddhism was

accepted and vedic ritualism and dogmatic mystification was deprecated.

Sometimes there have been made controversial interpretations on the philosophy of Buddhism. Rahul Sansikrtyayan in a Chapter of his book 'Darshan Digdarshan' under the heading lipā poti (hotchpotch) has harshly criticized the view of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan that Buddhist thought resembled the philosophy of Upaniṣads. Sanskrtyayan sharply writes that Radhalkrishnan" is not worthy of writing the history of Philosophy." In reference to these comments Sanskrtyayan, it would be plausible to assert that Buddhists were non-Vedic and they did not follow the injunctions of Veda in their lives. But it should not mean that Buddhism had no relation to the prevalent mode and technique of spiritual practice (sādhanā) observed during that period. Herein, the words of E.B. Havell may be cited that Buddhism tradition was "a new interpretation rather than entire repudiation of Vedic tradition." Perhaps, being wedded to verbal considerations, scholastic interpretations and pedantic pride Rahul Sanskrtyayan Has made such sharp and scathing comment against S. Radhakrishnan. Really, both Radhakrishnan and Sanskrtyayan suffer from one defect. that is, of over-emphasis. While Dr. Radhakrishnan involuntarily exaggerated the similarity between Buddhist idealism and Upaniṣadic philosophy, Sanikrtyayan voluntarily avoided understanding and comprehending the true sense of the view of Dr. Radhakrisbnan. It is but natural on the basis of verbal analysis to regard Buddhism and Upaniṣadic philosophy as poles apart because the name of Ruddhist view is No-Soul theory (4nātmavada) and that of Upaniṣads is Soul-theory (Atmavāda). These two theories apparcently appear to be the different theories. It may be remembered that Radhakrishnan was not the only person, who indicated and remarked the points of similarity between Buddhism and Upaniṣads. C. D. Sharma Baldev Upadhyaya, Bharat Singh Upadhyaya, J. C. Jenning etc., have also described this similarity between the two systems of Buddhism and Upaniṣads.

There is apparent difference in the nomenclature of the theories i.e., Upaniṣad advocates the 'theory of Self' (Atmavāda) and Buddhists propounded the theory of No-Self' (Anātmavāda). But it may also be pointed out that Buddha and

Patañjali both enunciated the theory of Eight-fold Path and further the eighth step in both the thoughts is Samādhi. Yogiraj Maitreya has collected the views of many scholars on this point. Buddhism "was the reorganization of Aryan society upon wider basis and a re-adaptation of religious thought to the spiritual need of the times. The Dharma of sacrifice and mantram, which had become ineffective as practical politics for the Aryan people was replaced by Dharma of right thought and right living."

Buddha advocated the Path of Four Noble Truth (Arya-Satya). He is also enumerated as the ninth incarnation among the ten incarnations of Vishnu. Buddha definitely advocated the theory of No-Self (Anātma-vāda), but this should not mean that he had no belief in the existence of self (Atman). Thereby he simply and plainly tried to disagree with the Upaniṣadic contention of self or soul as eternal and changeless entity.

Traditionally, Buddhism was a protest against prevailing formalistic and ritualistic society full of superstitious and dogmatic practices and it tried to reform society by rejecting the authority of Vedas and by teaching a fresh mode of living. Buddhism opened a path of new technique of spiritual practice and introduced a fresh approach to the problem of human existence and its final goal on the earth. T. R. V. Murti holds that "Buddha always considered himself as initiating a new tradition, as opening a new path never trod before." The tradition of Buddhism is firmly based on practical experience as it clearly advises its followers: The learned ones test the genuineness of gold through heating, cutting and rubbing on touch-stone similarly O Monk! Follow teachings only through under taking sufficient tests and not due to the magnanimity of the personality of Buddha."

It is also said that after leaving his palace and renouncing domestic life, Buddha undertook the austerities of the practice of yoga under the guidance of Uddak Ram Putta and Alaar Kalaam for about six years. Buddha after enlightenment realized the true worth of yoga and futility of the practice of Haṭhayoga, wherein a practicant has to undergo various practices of physical tortures and mortifications. The final step in the eightfold path of Buddhism is right meditation (samyaksamādhi).

The whole of the philosophy of Buddhism can be summarized. All is non-eternal (sarvam anityam) and Nirvāna is peace (nirvānam śāntam). Originally the whole philosophy of Buddhism is contained in the Four Noble Truths:

- (i) All is suffering (sarvam duhkham);
- (ii) there is cause of the origin of suffering (duhkha samudaya);
- (iii) there is remedy for the cessation of the cause of suffering (duhkha nirodha) and
- (iv) there is way for the cessation of the cause of suffering (dukh nirodha mārga).

The details of the Four Noble Truths may be consulted in relevant chapter of the books on Indian Philosophy

Buddhistic tradition advises complete and total surrender to Buddha (Buddham śaranam gacchāmi); to the tenets (Dhammam saranam gacchami) and to the congregation (sangham śaranam gucchami). Thus, Buddhism in essence. Exhibits the same as the Yoga practice of other Indian systems; But in a simple, natural, conducive and most effective way.

(V) The Tradition of Vedānta:

.Vedānta tradition represents the revival of Vedic thought, particularly Upaniṣadic philosophy against the prevailing anti-Vedic movement under the influence of Buddhism and Jainism. The term Vedānta refers to three meanings

(i) As a school of thought it denotes Jianakānda and is also known as Uttar Mimāmsā against Pūrva Mimāmsā, which deals with ceremonial rites and the result of their performance consisting of the Samhitā and the Brāhmana portions of Vedas;

ii) Etymologically the word Vedānta' is constituted of two words Veda' and 'anta' (end). Thereby it means 'the end of Veda i.e., the Upaniṣads, which are the end/last/final portion of each of the four Vedas. The word 'Vedānta' in this sense has been used in Brahma Sūtra (II, 3, 1), Gita (XV, 15), Manusmṛti (VI, 94), Mundakopaniṣad (I, 2, 6), Kaivalyopaniṣad (4), and in Svetāśvataropaniṣad (VI, 32).

(ii) Some eminent scholars interpret the constituent word anta as purpose, object or conclusion'. Hence, according to them the term Vedanta stands for the final conclusion or the essence of Vedas.

The philosophy of Vedānta denotes all the three meanings mentioned above. The Vedānta appears before us as a general name of the various schools of thought, which emerged out of the different commentaries on Vedānta Sūtra, representing the systematic and consolidated philosophy of the Upaniṣads, the last portion of Veda. It also strives to set forth the essence of Vedic tradition.

The whole of the tradition of Vedānta is fundamentally based on the three holy texts, known as the three foundations (prasthānatrayi) - the Upaniṣads, the Brahma Sūtra and the Srimadbhlgvadgta (Gita) respectively known as the Sruciprvasthlna, the Siiraprasthana and the Snrtiprasthana Brahma Siüa the Rundamental text of Vedanta is also krown as Vedānta Sūtra

Therefore, the three holy texts, mentioned above are the fundamental texis of Vedanta tradition. All the Vedantins have commentel on them and have restored Vedic tradition to its pristine glory. This movement by the Vedantins drew so strong that Buddhism was almost got vanished from Indian soil,

The names of Badari, Kasyapa, Kärypjini, Atreya, Audulomi, Ašmarathya, Kärṣakrypa etc., are enumerated as the ancient rejuvenators of Vedantic tradition before the composition of Brahma Sūtra by IBadarayana. Baudhayāna and Upavarṣa are said to be the fist commentators on IBrahma Sutra, but their works are not available beyond a few references in the commentaries of Ramānuja and Sankara. It is also said that theBhiksu Sūtra, as refered to in the Astādhyāyi (IV, 3, 110) of Panini, is another name of Brahma Sotra of Badariyana.

Brahma/Vedānta Sūta comprises of four chapters (adhyhya), each of which again consists of four sections (pāda).

The First Chapter Vedānta Satra is called 'samanvaya adhyhya' because it presents the consolidated form of Upanisads or broadly speaking of Veda as a whole. Brahman is the cause of the origin, sustenance, and dissolution of the world (Brahma Sūtra L,

i, 2). This Brahman has been conceived and described in different forms AUM , Aksara, Puruya etc

The Second Chapter is known as 'avirodha adhyāya because it presents the critical evaluation of the anti-Vedic contentions.

The Third Chapter is named sadhana adhyaya', It enunciates the means (sadhana) for the realization of Brahman

The Fourth Chapter is designated as 'phala adhyaya' since it presents the results achieved by a practican (vadhaka) on the path of realization. It also explains Mokya-Jivanmukti and Videhamukti

There are numerous commentaries on Vedānta Sūtra differing not only in their interpretations, but also in the number of Sūtras and the adhikaranas of Brahma Sūtra. The maincommentators of Vedānta Sūtra, their theory and the name of the respective commentaries are the following:

Vedanta Sūtra Commentators Theory and Commentary

Commentator	Theory	Commentary
Sankara	Advaita	Sarirakabhasya
Ramanuja	Visistadvaita	Sribhasya
Vallabha	Suddhadvaita	Anubhasya
Madhva	Dvaita	Purnaprajatasaurabham
Nimbarka	Svabhavikabhedabhed	Vedantaparijatasaurabh
Bhaskara	a	am
Chaitanya	Aupadhikabhedabhed	Bhaskarabhasyam
Vijnanabhiksu	Acintyabhedabheda	Govindabhasyam
	Samanvaya	Vijnanamrta

The number of Sūtras and adhikaranas referred to by different commentators also differs:

Vedānta Sūtra Numbers and Adhikaranas

Commentator	Sutras	Adhikaranas
Sankara	555	191
Ramanuja	545	156
Vallabha	555	162
Madhva	562	223
Nimbarka	549	151
Baldeva	556	198

All these commentaries and interpretations brought about a revival of the Vedic thought. The same vedic concepts of Brahman, Atman, Jiva, Mokṣa etc., were brought to limelight and their meanings were explained. Hence, the tradition of Vedānta attempts to achieve an ordered systematisation of Vedic thought. The conceptions, which were being shadowed by mysticism, were given fresh interpretation and explanation. In Vēda Sūtras were the words of Ernest P. Harrwitz: transposed to Buddhist suttas, which once more were reset in Vedanta Sūtras or Brahma Sūtras, God (Brahman) being the end (anta) of the Veda and its wisdom"

However, Vedānta tradition succeeded in re-establishing Veda on its original pedestal, but these commentaries and interpretations made this tradition more and more theoretical and the practical aspect was left to oblivion. They remained primarily engaged in discussion and discourses.

Later, during the modern period the practical aspect again received impetus under Neo-Vedāntism in Indian Philosophy. Various personalities in India made praiseworthy efforts. Swami Vivekananda and Swami Ram Tirth have exemplified this trend by throwing light on practical Vedānta. Besides, Aurobindo, Radhakrishnan. K. C. Bhattacharya etc., have also presented a good account of Vedānta.

(V) The Tradition of Santas (Saints):

The Vedānta tradition, coupled with the advent of Islamic Sufism. gave rise to the tradition of Saints (Santas) during the long period of Muslim rule in India. There have been two main branches of the tradition of saints - First, the Nirguna Saints, who are

predominantly influenced by Islamic Sufism and Advaita Vedānta of Sankara; and second, the Saguna Saints are chiefly inclined towards the artistic lore of Hindu mythology. On one hand, the saint tradition actually contained the influence of Saiva and Sakta systems of Tantric Sect in decadent Buddhism; and on the other hand, it constituted a link between the Nirguna and Saguna mode of spiritual practice (Sādhanā).

The term 'santa' can be traced to the holy hymns of Rgveda, wherein it stands for one Existent Reality or for a virtuous man. According to Taittirīya Upaniṣads: one who knows that Brahman is such that the one is regarded as 'santa by the wise (asti brahmeti cedveda, santamenam tato viduriti- Parashuram Chaturvedi also explains the derivative meaning of the word 'saint', in English language and tells that 'saint' is derived from the word 'sanctus' meaning 'pious or 'pure. Hence, 'saint' in English language means one, who is pious and pure at heart; and the term is ascribed to the father in the Church. R. D. Ranade describes the term 'saint' as technical word for the followers of Vārākārī Sampradāya.

However, the term sard (sant) here stands in particular for those who preserved the light of spirituality and thereby enlightened the masses during the Middle Ages. In general the term santa includes the Vedic seers (Rsis) also Sana Auhka, the annual volume of monthly "Kalyana" in Hindi (pubiished from Gita Press, Gorakhpur, U.P.) gives a brief sketch of he and works of a wide number of saints of the East as well as of the West It also describes worth and place of saints in the cultural history of India

The importance and significance of these saints in the social setup of India has been emphasized in the well-known epic Mabäibbārata and also Srimadbhagvadgiti. These saints serve as a boat for those, who are drowning in the ocean of the world They provide shelter to the afflicted souls of human beings Moreover, they open the inner eyes of the ignorant people and thus enable them to see the Reality Saints, under the pretext of pilgrimage. visit various holy places and thus make them mere sacred through their visits and infusing the places with spiritual vitality. The rejuvenator of Sahaj Marg System Shri Ram Chandraji of Shahjahanpur also rendered the same service by visiting holy places in India and recharging them with divine effulgence. The

association of such saints and these company, according to Nārada Bhakti Sūtra, is difficult to be attained (durtabha). unapproachable (agamyā) and unfailing (amogha). Lord Krishna tells Uddhava that neither yoga, nor Sāmkhya nor sacred law (dharma), nor study of Vedas nor penance, nor renunciation, nor charity, nor donation to Brahmīns, nor fasting, nor sacrifice, nor sacred hymns, nor places of pilgrimage, nor niyama, nor yama holds me so much as Tam controlled by the company of good ones (satsangis).

These saints belonged to various castes and creeds. These were men and women, Hindus and Muslims, Brahmins and Sūdras Kalyāna (Santa Anka), as referred above enumerates Parmeṣṭhi, a tailor, Kūba, a potter; Raghu, a helms man: Radāsa, a cobbler etc. These saints laid emphasis on devotion (bhakti) and surrender to God. They accorded great importance to the Guru and believed in the direct experience. They laid emphasis on practice and discarded the theoretical mystification of spiritual facts. Among the various saints, the name of Saint Kabir is noteworthy. Kabir Pantha, Bavari Pantha, Nanaka Pantha, Dādū Pantha, Malūka Pantha etc., are some of the Panthas and - societies formed after the names of their founders, who tried to bring about a revolution in the field of spirituality in theoretical comprehension as well as in its practical application.

The tradition of Saints has not only attempted to retain the essentials of spiritual practice (sādhanā), but also laid emphasis on devotion and surrender to the Deity as the fundamental technique of spiritual practice. However, this tradition falls under the enveloping mists of the dark age in the history of Indian Philosophy, as the virility, confidence originality of reason and thought seem to have suffered a serious set back during this period; giving rise to dreary scholasticism and mournful submission to authority. The advent of British rule in India, with all its evils and blessings, inaugurated a new era in the history of India's perennial culture. We may call it the modern period or the period of contemporary renaissance

In this tradition of saints, the AJvāras of South India also deserve a special mention; because the term Alvāras was used as equivalent of "santa." "Alvāra is a Tamil word for the one, who is immersed in the ocean of devotion to God. They remained lost in

meditation (dhyāna) and submerged in the recital of devotional psalms. Dr. K. C. Varadachari in his book "Alvāras of South India" enumerates twelve Alvāra saints (1) Poygai Alvāra, (2) Pūtattar, (3) Peyālvāra, (4) Bhaktisāra, (5) Kulasekhara, (6) Vipranārāyana, (7) Tiruppāna Alvāra, (8) Viṣnucitta. (9) Godā, (10) Tirumangai AJvāra, (11) Sanathakopa and (12) Madhura Kavi. The works of these twelve Alvāras are collected in "Prabandham", which contains about four thousand verses. "Prabandham is regarded as the Tamila Veda. Parashu Rams Chaturvedi in his famous book "Uttara Bhārata kī Santa Paramparā", remarks that one, who recites the verses of Prabandham" is known as Adyār. The statues of these Alvāras have been worshipped in the temples along with the statues of God. Dasgupta, pointing to the verse of Bhagavata Purāna (XI, 5, 38-40), remarks that "the great devotees of Viṣṇu will appear in south on the banks of Tamraparyi, Krtamala (Vaiga), Payasvini (Palar), Kāverī and Mahānadi." The time of these Alvāras has been fixed, in any case, before 900 A.D. Dr, K. C. Varadachari remarks that these Alvāras are Shri Vaiṣṇava Mystics of South India. "These seers of God, who are also lovers of God, have opened up a chapter in Indian spiritual renaissance." The remarkable contribution of these Alvāras lies in the fact that they, on the one hand, have influenced Viśiṣṭādvaita of Ramanuja and, on the other hand, from South it tended to move upwards to North, where it flourished through the various devotional sects of Chaitanya, Kabir and others.

The Contemporary Renaissance:

Etymologically, the term 'renaissance' is derived from the Latin 're' (again) and 'nasci' (to be born) and thereby it means 'to be born again'. Historians have used this term to characterize various periods of intellectual revival, and especially which took place in Italy and Europe during the 15 and 16th centuries. The term was coined by Michelet and developed into a historical concept by J. Burckhardt (1860), who considered individualism, the revival of classical antiquity, the "discovery" of the world and of man as the main characteristics of the period as opposed to the Middle Age. Hence, renaissance signified in Europe the period of transition from the medieval theological attitude to the modern scientific interpretation of reality.

It is very difficult to pinpoint the precise source and the time of renaissance in Indian Philosophy, because renaissance in a vast and largely populated country like India, wherein innumerable sects and systems have come into existence, is not a matter of sudden emergence. The seed of renaissance was sown in the soil of India even before India started her struggle for freedom in the shape of social reform movements. In the history of India the period from 11th century to 18th century is regarded as 'the dark period'.

It is not an easy task to define accurately the concept of contemporary India as distinguished from modern India. But it is not difficult to understand and comprehend the sense signified thereby. Neally both modern India and contemporary India are historically the now stages of renaissance, as modern India signifies the incubation period of renaissance and contemporary India refers to the time when renaissance envisaged maturity bearing visible results with India having set up its democratic government. During the former period, Raja Ram Mohan Roy heralded the new age and tried to restore India to its pristine glory and saintly personalities gave expression to their dreams, like Swamm Vivekananda's exhortation: "I am anxiously waiting or the day when mighty minds will arise, gigantic spiritual minds will be ready to go forth from India to the end of the world to teach spirituality and renunciation, those ideas, which come from the forests of India and belong to India's soil alone Thus, the distinction between the modern and contemporary period is that of between the seed and the tree, the cause and the effect.

The cultural renaissance in India really originated in the 19th century with reform movements launched by reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Swami Dayanand Saraswati and Madame Blavatsky. It came to be consolidated by the efforts of dedicated geniuses in the spiritual, social and political fields, to name a few like Paramhansa Ram Krishna, Mrs. Annie Besant, Vinoba Bhave, and Mahatma Gandhi etc. Since the very dawn of renaissance, the people of India were being enlightened with vital power of the soul or spirit to remodel society and to end its prevalent superstitious and dogmatic customs." Various societies and institutions like Brahma Samaj, Arya Samaj, Sanatana

Dharma and Theosophical Society came into existence. The period of renaissance gradually ripened during the 20th century when India achieved political freedom. The philosophers and the professors, the thinkers and the scholars of India as well as of West have whole-heartedly admitted the fact of this tendency of renaissance in modern India. In this context, the works and efforts of Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Swami Vivekananda, Swami Ram Tirth, Swami Dayanand Saraswati, Prof. K. C. Bhattacharya, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Sh. K. Schchidanda Murti and Dr. V. S. Narvane in India and of Zacharias, Andrews, James H. Cousin and Fredrick B. Fisher in the West are remarkable. Moreover, Dr. Max Muller, Frank Moraes, Underwood, Underhill, Farquhar, Griffiths and many others have also thrown light on modern India's awakening from the dogmatic slumber of scholastic interpretations and pedantic prudence. These numerous scholars and thinkers have admitted the unique characteristic of spirituality in Indian Philosophy and they have foretold that the time is not far off when India shall lead the world in spirituality and the world will have to look up to her in matters of spirituality.

Before this period of renaissance, India was groaning under the heels of mental slavery and its people were being "suffocated in the dust of rites and rituals, forms and formalities both in religious and social spheres." The very spirit of India had gone to a dormant and static state, and people were clinging to the "dead forms of the dead past". Moreover, there was "an abject slavery to fantastic superstitions preached in the holy name of religion, in other words, spiritual suicide glazed under the plausible name of obedience to the authority". Dr. S. C. Sarkar points out that these various tendencies became so prominent that "18 century had become from different stand points one of the darkest periods in Indian History". All these features created a feeling of doubt and suspicion in the minds of people about philosophy and ancient glory of India. However, deepening of doubt is the sign of spiritual growth, and this brought about the dawn of renaissance.

This renaissance in India is unique in itself because, unlike the renaissance in Italy and Europe, it did not have to face some particular tradition, custom, attitude or mode of socio-religio-politico-spiritual but various government, conditions and customs, which had become chronic to its physique and fatal to its spirit.

Renaissance in India has brought about comprehensive changes. It is a 'silent revolution', which steadily and slowly overhauled the entire structure of India by laying the foundation of the future of free India on the firm and fertile grounds of spirituality. The materialism had made the people of India "intellectual giants, but spiritual pigmies", but now materialism was fading out and spiritual renaissance was coming to lime light.

As Paul Brunton puts it: "Today the tale of history has become the drama of the unexpected, we wait for the next fresh surprise each morning Everybody is waiting for the fascinating story to be told'. The signs of renaissance are distinctly visible when Swami Ram Tirth dares Such proclamation: "Whether working through many souls or alone, I seriously promise to infuse true life and dispel darkness and weakness from India within ten years; and within the first half of the twentieth century, India will be restored to more that its original glory. Let these words be recorded. Dr. Radhakrishnan also asserts: The prophet souls not the. priest minds, the original man of understanding and not the mechanical imitators of the inherited habits, are needed to help our wandering generation to fashion a goal for itself". Sahaj Marg system of yogic sādhanā, the chief subject of the present exploration, originated in the early half of the twentieth century and was established as an institution about two years before India's independence from British rule. It has the promise to "fulfil the hopes and aspirations of ages" by imparting efficacious spiritual training and laying down a natural path to achieve the goal of self-realization. It has slowly but steadily grown from a tiny group to an all-India organization during the twenty-five years since its inception and has started spreading its branches to foreign lands, without sacrificing principles for the sake of increase in the number of adherents. The following chapters shall elaborate a detailed account of this movement, and examine its promises and potentialities, in the context of the tradition of Sahaj Sadhana in Indian Philosophy and also the contemporary movements for the regeneration of the lost spirit of the sadhanā aspect of Indian Philosophy.

Sahaj Philosophy

Sādhanā

in

Indian

Sahaja sādhanā is not a new process or a fresh technique, rather it is an old mode of spiritual practice (sadhana), followed even by the holy Vedic seers (Rṣis). It has numerous references in the vast literature of Indian Philosophy spread over centuries of its development. In general, sahaja sādhanā is a type of yogic sādhanā for the attainment of the Ultimate End or summum bonum of human life. It aims at this attainment unto the farthest limit in the shortest possible time with due consideration of the capacity and limitations of an individual living in a particular era. Sahaj sādhanā ordinarily signifies an easy or Simple process or practice, but its true sense is not so easy and simple to comprehend, as it has assumed various meanings and different implications during the course of the history of Indian Philosophy. Sahajayāna, Nath Panth and Santas, particularly of Nirguna branch, have laid great emphasis on sahaja sādhanā as a system. Besides, Vaiṣṇava Sahajiyās and Bāulas in Bengal have followed sahaja sādhanā. Sikh religion and philosophy have also been influenced by it. Moreover, the use of the terms like 'sahajā siddhi in Viṣṇu Purāna (I,6,16) and the concept of sahajāvasthā 'sahajānanda, 'sahajoli', sahajabhāva' etc., in Sāmānya Vedānta and Yoga Upaniṣads prove that it has a noteworthy place in Purāṇas and Upaniṣads. Siva Jiānabodha tells that Siva has threefold pāśas viz. (1) Sahaja, (2) Agantuka and (3) Saisargika. Mātanga Parameśvara Tantra enumerates seven 'sahaja malas natural impurities)-(i) moha (infatuation), (ii) mada (pride), (iii) raga (attachment), (iv) visāda (dejection), (v) śosa (grimace), (vi) vicitta (aversion), and (vii) harsa (pleasure). In the philosophy of Madhva, as well, the power (sakti) has four forms: (i) Aciniya sakti (power beyond thought, the intuition), (ii) Sahaja or Karana sakti (natural or causal power, the root force) (iii) Adheya sakti (the basic power, the physical force) and (iv) Pada. sakti (the power of words, the vocal power) In Srimadbhāgavadgītā (XVIII, 48) too Lord Krishna advises: O Son of Kuntī (Arjun) to rise and fight because it is his 'sahaja karma', which should not be forsaken even if it is defiled with pollution (TETI 74 -d VTHfa 7 uq). The use of term sahaja' in Atharvaveda Sanhitā of Pippalāda (VII, 19, 5 and XVI, 131, 2) Taittirīya Kṛsna Yajurveda Sarmhitā (III, 5, 3, 2) and even in Rgveda (1, 104, 8 and

X, 84, 6) proves that the term has a noteworthy place in the Vedic literature.

Prabodha Chandra Bagchi is of the opinion that 'sahaja' is the translation of "Tao in the Chinese philosophy of Taoism. According to him Taoists in China were the followers of Sahajavāda. Yamakami Sogen tells that in Japan -geo-do and Nan-geo-do' i.e., the easy path and the difficult path respectively represent the sanajayana and vajrayana cults of Buddhism.

Further, Riju Yoga or Rju Mārga as described in Srimadbhagavata (11, 25, 26) is nothing but sahaja sādhanā. Brhamachari Prabhu Datta describes sahaja sādhanā as 'Rju' Yoga. Goswami Tulsidas sings in Vinaya Patrika (p. 306): "You have not had the natural affection (sahaja prema) with naturally affectionate (sahaja sanehi) Ram, that is why you have been subjected to worldly existence. Listen, today I teach you this."

Hence, sahaja sādhanā is not a new mode or technique; but it has its roots deeply implanted in the literary tradition of Indian Philosophy and has been used in various implications as it would be clear by going through the description of the meaning of the term 'sahaja' in the following paragraph.

Meaning of the term 'sahaja':

The term sahaja is derived from the Sanskrit root 'jan' that means 'to generate or 'to beget. Prefixed by saha and suffixed by 'da' it refers to the object 'generated with or begotten from, according to this etymological analysis, it means 'what is born or begotten along with, together or at the same time of one's own being' (TE TIT z TET). Thus, sahaja' signifies those, who are equal in age, born from the same mother and twins. In this sense it means one who is born at the same time and it also means a brother of whole blood or uterine brother.

Amarakoṣa tells those words: 'samānodarya, 'sodarya, sagarbhya and 'sahaja' are synonyms. having the same meaning. In Astrology, 'sahaja' stands for the third mansion in horoscope by which the well being of one's brothers is ascertained and the planet (graha) that falls in the third mansion is called 'sahaja', 'sahajendra', or sahajadinātha'. Further, 'sahaja' also means congenial', innate,

hereditary', original', or 'natural state of disposition. In this sense it signifies 'svabhāva' or prakṛti', the nature/natural one. Sukranīti enumerates natural friends (sahajamitra) and natural enemies (sahajāri). Aurobindo tells that the Word 'sahaja in Gita (XVIII, 48) means whatever is natural, inborn, innate; its equivalent in other places is 'svabhāvaja'. Sankara explains the meaning of 'sahaja': 'what is born along with Afman' like the character of going to the sky in birds and 'what is born with the birth'.

Ramanuja comments that the term 'sahajakarma in Gita XVII, 48) refers to the action, which is easy to be done sukaram) and devoid of boastfulness (apramadam).

Venkaṭa in his commentary on Kṛgveda (X, 84, 6) says that 'sahaja means 'originated with'. Sahaja' has also been used as proper name. Sahajamya-is the-name of a Yakṣa, the demi-god and Sahajanyā was an apsarā, a nymph. The Sanskrit-English dictionary of Sir Monier Monier-Williams describes that 'sahaja has been used for the name of a Tantric teacher, of various kings and other men in Mahābhārata and is also used for Buddha. Hathayogapradīpikā (IV, 3-4), a reputed text on yogic practice, enumerates seventeen synonyms of the word 'sahaja "Rājayoga, Samādhi, Unmanī, Manonmani, Amaratva, Laya, Tattva, Sūnya, Asinya, Paramapada, Amanaska, Advatta, Niralamba, Niraijana, Jivaniukta, Sahaja, and Turya". Dharmavir Bharati also explains the six implications of the word 'sahaja' in which Nāthapanthis and

Santas have used it. Thereby, he has concluded that the word is of a very wide import as it includes all these implications-(1) the practican (sādhaka), (2) the means (sādhana), (3) the ideal (Sadhya), (4) the method (vidhi). (5) the process (prakriyā) etc.

Dr. Hajari Prasad Dwivedi, well-known Hindi scholar, points out that the two last letters/alphabets 'ha and 'ja' in the word 'sahaja' are used to symbolize Haṭhayoga and Japayoga respectively. Therefore, the practice that observes Haṭhayoga (ha) and Japayoga (ja) simultaneously is known as 'sahaja sādhanā'. He also tells that one of his friends has associated the word 'sahaja even with the first two letters of his own name Ha and 'Ja' (Hajari).

Dr. B. L. Goswami explains: "Sahaja has both ontological and ethical sense. Ontologically it is that Reality, which is beyond both existence and non-existence. He, who has identified himself with this 'sahaja', passes beyond the spheres of empirical modality. It stands for the destruction of all the views about Reality, for views are but partial and fragmentary. Ethically it is to remain established in equality avoiding all extremes". He further remarks that the Sahaja is not a doctrine of escapism; it emphasizes the naturally pure and stainless character of mind, which though overlaid with foulness of earthward tendencies, can be restored to its essential principle by a right view of things complemented by a, right discipline." Thus, it becomes obvious that the term 'sahaja' has a very long history with its roots in Vedas. "From Yuganaddha of the Siddhas through the ascension in the Sahaja of the Nathas to the simple, unforced emotions of the devotee standing before his Lord is a far cry indeed. But the word sahaja has traversed all this distance".

Dr. S. P. Srivastava's elaboration of meaning of the word sahaja with suitable examples would be worthwhile. He writes: "... the word sahaja' consists of three letters 'sa', 'ha', and ja'. The suffix 'ja' connotes "being born' as in many words e.g., Jalaja, meaning born of water (Jala); Agraja' meaning elder brother i.e., one "born before etc. The letter 'Sa stands for That' or 'He', while the letter ha' signifies the Prāna Sakti' or Jiva', according to dictionary meaning in Sanskrit language. The word 'sahaja', therefore, is to be taken to mean born of the difference between He or Brahman and I or Jiva' He also clarifies that taking the word in the sense of 'easy' is an 'over-simplification' of its meaning and the etymological analysis along with various implications as explained above is an 'over-complication of the true significance and the real sense of the word. Therefore, he suggests that "...we may avoid the over-simplification and 'over-complication' as regards the meaning of the word sahaja'- although both the meanings. are essentially correct and contain very valuable suggestions for the technique and purpose of sādhanā in general".

It is needless to mention that this approach, as explained by Dr. S. P. Srivastava, towards the meaning of the word 'sahaja is more significant particularly for the adherents of the practice of Sahaj Marg.

Leaving aside the etymological analysis, dictionary meanings and scholastic considerations of the word 'sahaja' it may be asserted that the nomenclature of 'Sahaj Marg' for the spiritual practice (sāadhanā), as advocated by Shri Ram Chandraji, Shahjahanpur (U.P.) is very significant, accurate and enough apt to depict the very essence of its methodology. Really, it connotes all the aspects of spiritual practice as advised to its adherents. There is clear assertion by the Founder-President that God is simple and can be attained by a simple means. It has purged out all the complexities and complications. The ideal is simple. The means is simple. One has to become simple. Its methodology is simple and its application is also simple. Rather say simplicity is the be-all and end-all of the Sahaj Marg methodology of spiritual practice.

Sahaja Sādhana in Indian Philosophy:

Now we pass on to various religious philosophical implications, which this term has signified during the course of history, with particular reference to the systems and schools adhering to sahaja sadhana. Broadly speaking, all the schools of thought have advocated sahaja sadhana in one or the other form. Dr. K. C. Varadachari has also hinted at this point, "All the systems claimed that theirs was the natural way of attainment of ultimate Reality or liberation. This much alone is common to all their claim to be natural way" Hence, it would be better to undertake the evaluation of the various schools of sahaja sadhanā and examine the distance the word sahaja has traversed in the history of the sadhanā aspect of Indian philosophy. It would exhibit the large variety of implication and numerous ways of its use in the various systems. Sahaja sāadhanā can be distinctly and appropriately comprehended

- in the following contexts:
1. Sahaja sāadhanā in Vedic literature.
 2. Icchāyoga of Jains.
 3. Sahajayāna Buddhism.
 4. Sahaja sāadhanā in Nātha.
 5. Vaisnava sahajiyā cult.
 6. Baula Sampradaya.

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|----|-------|--------|----|-------------|
| 7. | | Santa | | Sampradāya. |
| 8. | Sahaj | Yoga | in | Sikhism. |
| 9. | | Taoism | in | China. |

Description of these systems would reveal the significance of the Sahaj Marg methodology.

1. Sahaj sādhanā in Vedic Literature:

Sahaja sādhanā does not bear important place in the Samhita portion of Vedas excepting the use of the terms Sahaja' (Rg. X, 84,6) and 'Sahajānusa (Rg. I,104,8) in the text of Rgveda. Likewise, it has also been used in other Sarmhitās. The term has no where been used in Brāhrmana and Ardnyaka portions of Vedas excepting the use of the term Sahajanya' as a proper name of a nymph (apsarā) in Satapatha Brāhmana (VII, 6, 1, 17).

If one goes through the Vedic texts one can easily comprehend that the method and technique of sādhanā followed and observed in the routine way of daily life of Vedic seers (Rsis) was a form of Sahaja sādhanā in disguise. Rgvedic seers have themselves characterized that their process of realization was natural and easy. They offered prayers, performed sacrifices and implored divine agencies working behind the scenes and objects of nature in a simple and natural manner. The idea that the way pantha) of the descent of divinity to the sacrificial rites is easy-going (sugā/T), devoid of complexities and obstacles er thorns (anrksara-3tTeR) resounds in many hymns of Rgveda. They sung that the way to Rta is easy-going (sugartasya panthah). Thus these Vedic seers followed sahaja in a concealed and disguised form and it cannot be denied that the routine way of life and the standard of living of sēers, as known from the hymns of Vedas, were very simple and innocent. They had a direct communication of thought with the Divinity and they invited gods to the various sacrifices (yajña) as the guests and friends and the presence of gods in their rites and rituals has been very enthusiastically and happily glorified in the hymns of Rgveda. Dr. Govinda Singh Tigunayata tells that Nivārtīyas and Vratyas mentioned in Vedas were the followers of Sahaja sādhanā.

The concept of sahaja sādhanā received a vital and energetic fillip in the philosophy of Upaniṣads, wherein the yogis observed various practices for the attainment of natural state (sahajāvasthā). Upanisadbrahmayogi states that the renowned teachers of yoga like Bhuṣuṇḍa expounded six schools (sampradāyas) of yoga viz.. Mantrayoga, Layayoga, Hathayoga, Rajayoga, Bhavayoga, and Sahajayoga He describes the technique of natural breathing sahaja for avoiding the illusion of non-self pranāyāma) (anātmabhrama-nivṛtyartha). He also tells about the method of the attainment of the state of samādhi by the natural control of breath (sahaja kumbhaka). Rbhu, a great yog (Mahāyogī) teaching Nidagha says that "the giving up of addiction to sensual pleasure is very difficult indeed; the actual perception is rarely attainable; the innate or natural state is unattainable without the grace of the Guru. The innate state manifests itself of its own accord in a yogi, who has realization of Kundalini power roused in him or who has abandoned completely his actions. ,25 Really 'sahajāvasthā', as described in Upaniṣads, was a name for the fourth state of consciousness known as Turīyavasthā. Yogatattvopaniṣad enumerates three levels off attaining the super human powers by control of breathing viz., Vajrolī, Amaroli, and Sahajoli. Theos Bernard explains that the purpose of these three levels "is to enable one to control the sex force of body, which the yogis recognize as fundamental urge in human nature" Hathayogapradīpikā gives the following description: "when the mind (citta) becomes even and vital air moves in the middle (i.e. in susumnā), then are produced the state of Amaroliī, Vajroli, and Sahajolr. It also explains that 'sahajoli' is a state of yogic achievement that bestows liberation (mukti) even if one is engaged in enjoyments (bhoga). Viṣṇu Purāṇa (1, 6, 16-17) also tells about a state of yogic attainment as 'sahajāśiddhi', which is probably another name for 'svābhāvika siddhi Lord Krishna instructs Arjun in Gita (XVIII, 48): "The natural action even if defective ought not be abandoned. The natural action (sahaja karma) here stands for 'svadharma' and Dr. P. M. Modi, referring to some previous couplets, comments that svakarma (XIII, 45-46), 'svadharma' (XVII, 47) and svabhavanīyatakarma' refer to the same implication or meaning as signified by 'sahaja karma." In this way sahajal karma stands for svabhāvaja karma as enumerated for all the four castes (Gita XVIII, 42-44) and one performing one's duties determined by his nature incurs no sin (Gita XVII, 46).

In many descriptions of yogic practices, it is found that the natural state (sahajāvasthā), whereupon an aspirant enjoys inborn or natural bliss (sahajānanda), has been regarded as the highest type of spiritual happiness. Mandalabraman- opaniṣad (1,1, 8) has it: "When mind seeks repose in inborn bliss (sahajānanda) in this manner then there occurs the Sambhavi. That alone they call Khecarī". Hathayogapradīpikā (IV, 75)

explains this state more elaborately saying that a yogi enjoys sahaajānanda after 'ciltananda and this state of sahaajānanda avoids defects (dosa), miseries (duhkha), old age (jara), ailments (yādhi), hunger (kyudha) and sleep (nidra).

Thus, Sahaja sādhanā in Vedic hymns and allied literature on yogic sādhanā refers to 'sahaja', without giving a clear manifestation of the term, until the emergence of the Yoga Upaniṣads. In sahaaja sādhanā the place of Guru (teacher) has been accorded supreme importance and his help for the attainment of natural state (sahajāvasthā) is indisputable. Moreover, it is regarded easier to realize God through complete surrender. Such a man gets release from the cycle of birth and death. The practice and technique of sahaaja sādhanā be traced in the word of Lord Krishna: "Whatever you do, whatever you eat whatever sacrifice you perform, whatever you give as alms. Whatever austerities you indulge in, O Son of Kuntī, you should do that with a feeling of absolute surrender to me". (Gita IX, 27) This phenomenon of surrender prolongs and persists in the forthcoming spiritual practices as sahaaja sādhanā also depicts this feature.

2. Icchāyoga of Jains:

It is notable that at a certain time in the history of Indian

Philosophy, particularly in its sādhanā aspect, the concept of sahaja became so popular that people were driven to associate and implicate, often designate their sādhanā by adding the word sahaja'. Similar attempt may be perceived in Jain thought in the following words: The sādhanā of Icchāyoga is the sādhanā of sahajayoga". It brings to light that the Icchāyoga sādhanā of Jains is a form of sahaja sādhanā. It is also said that sādhanā observed under the pressure of the fear of hell or temptation for heaven is of no avail for practical purposes. Really, true sādhanā is that towards which one is voluntarily driven to follow it in a natural way without having any pressure from the outside. That is to say that sādhanā is an affair of personal volition. It cannot be imposed. One may carry a horse to the water but cannot make it drink. It requires that one should desire or will something naturally without any fear or temptation. Vardhamāna Mahābira, one of the eighteen Tirthankara, who is regarded as the founder of Jain system, had also delivered the message: 'whenever one feels pleasure, one should follow that without delay'. This Icchāyoga advises that one should listen to the voice of Will and follow it with earnest effort and faith. If one cannot will to become a Sramana, one may at least will to become a Srāvaka and follow that path. Thus, one can easily catch a glimpse of sahaja sadhanā among Jains. Amara Chandra also concludes that if one wants peace and happiness, one should observe sahaja dharma of Icchāyoga. Here it is remarkable to point out that this method lays emphasis on easiness and advises to earnestly adhere to the inner voice. One should be firm and resolute in one's practice. If one has firm faith, the practice is destined to reach its goal.

3.

Sahajayāna

Buddhism:

Sahajayāna is an offshoot of Mahāyāna Buddhism. Mahāyāna can widely be divided into two parts-Pāramitānaya and Mantranaya. From Mantranaya evolved Vajrayāna, Kālacakrayāna and Sahajayāna. Pt. Har Prasad Shastri regards the text known as 'Bauddha Gāna Au Dohā' as the ancient Bangalā hymn of Bauddha Sahajiyā view. This book also contains the commentary of Advayavajra, and this Dohākoṣa has also been called Sahajāmnāyapañjikā'. This is an important work of Sahajayāna in Buddhism. It is a matter of controversy as to when and where does the Sahajayāna cult evolve? The use of the term Vajrayāna', 'Tantrayāna', Mantrayāna' etc., is found many

times in Tantric Buddhist literature, but the term 'Sahajayāna' as a system or school of spiritual practice (sādhana) has not been used. It may be that the name Sahajayāna was given to the system of practice followed by Siddhas, because of the free and prolific use of the word sahaja' in their literature and also because it simplified the mode and technique of practice as against that of Vajrayāna. It is also said that Nagārjuna was the first man, who used the simile of Sahajayāna in his commentary on Daśabhūmivibhāṣā Sāstra'. The use of the term Sahajayāna (the easy path) as a system in Chinese Buddhism is merely to indicate the simplicity and easiness of Mahayāna as compared to Hinayāna, which has been termed as Kathinayāna (the difficult path). Thus, there is much controversy over the question as to when and how did the Sahajayana School develop in Buddhism. Pt. Har Prasad Shastri is of the opinion that Luipāda in 9th century propounded Sahajayāna. Dasgupta regards Sahajayana to be a sub-yāna of Vajrayāna. Baldeva Upadhyaya says that Sahajayāna is really another name of Vajrayāna. Rahul Sanskrtyayana regards Saraha to be the first Acharya of Sahajayana. Dr. Nagendra tells that it was Lakṣmīnkarā, who propounded the new advaita theory of Sahajayāna in her work Advayasiddhi'. Lakṣmīnkarā was the sister of Indrabhūti, who was a King of Orissa. She developed and elaborated the mahasukha (Super Happiness) concept of his brother in her Sahajayāna point of view. Indrabhūti and Lakṣmīnkarā both are enumerated among the 84 Siddhas. Sahajayāna is still prevalent among Nathas and Baulas according to Vinoyatoṣa Bhattacharya.

Leaving all these controversies aside, this much perhaps is certain that Sahajayāna is the final culmination of Mahāyāna Buddhism. This system also definitely belonged to Siddhas, who are regarded as the followers of Tantric Buddhism.

The thought and theory of Sahajayāna has vigorously criticised the various dogmatic and superstitious practices prevalent during that time among Brahmins. Sahajayānis emphasised that external practice (bāhya sādhana) eg., Mantra, Tantra, Yajña etc., are of no avail on the path of salvation. They advised internal mode of practice (antassādhana). Our body is the greatest place of pilgrimage. The Supreme resides in us. The

ostentatious practices do not bear significant fruits. People vainly spoil their eyes in sacrificial smoke. They uselessly burn candles, wear coloured clothes, carry the weight of hair on their heads and practise various postures. Had these been the means even animal, birds and all creatures would have achieved salvation.

Sahajayāna has positively contributed a lot to Buddhism and has given more significant interpretations to the thoughts and ideas of Mahāyāna Buddhism. 'Sahaja' has been used by Siddhas in the sense of Sunya oi vajrayana. According to them

there is one Ultimate substance and they called it 'sahaja tattva (the Natural Substance) and its knowledge cannot be obtained from the study of Sāstras and Vedas. Guru is dumb and disciple is deaf in explaining or understanding it. It is a matter of personal experience. Thus 'sahaja' became an object of great significance in Sahajayāna. The concept of 'sahaja' as described and accepted by Sahajayānis has been compared with Brahman in Upaniṣads and 'Siva in Saiva School.

Moreover, the term sahaja received so much Significance and importance in this school that the various objects and states in the mode of their practice have been named after it eg., sahaja-svarūpa, sahaja-sukha, sahajānanda, sahajavasthā, sahaja-jñāna, sahaja-samādhi, sahaja-kāya, sahaja-tattva, sahaja-prema, sahajāmṛta, and sahaja-patha. Even Buddha has been designated as 'Sahaja Samvara and Nairatmā or Sünya as 'sahaja sundart.

Sahajayānis accepted the triple body (trikāya) theory of Mahāyāna Buddhism but they added one more body viz, sajakāya, which is the final and supreme so far as the celestial and divine form (aivya rūpa) of Buddha is concerned. Hence, Buddha has been ascribed with four bodies Nirmānakāya, Sambhogakāya, Dharmakāya, and Sahajakāya.

The object of Sahajayāna practice (sādhanā) is the enjoyment of 'sahajasukha'. There have been enumerated four types of Happiness (ānanda) viz. Prathamānanda, Paramānanda, Viramānanda, and Sahajānanda. These four

kinds of happiness are enjoyed in association with the four Mudrās described in Dohākoṣa' Karmamudrā, Dharmamudrā, Jñānamudrā and Mahānmudrā.

Sahajayana has also been described by Siddhas as 'Uja batu' (the straight path) as against "Banka bātu' (the crooked path) of Vajrayānis. Nagendra Nath Upadhyaya holds that both Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna are difficult paths but Nāmagāyana is the easy path. Sahajayāna, as described in Buddhism, has accorded great honour and significance to Guru and it is said that the assistance of Guru makes the journey of an Abhyasi smooth and simple.

Sahaja sādhanā of Sahajayāna was a yogic technique. But, like yoga sādhanā, it did not advise renunciation (vairagya) and severe penance (tapas). They told that one could achieve salvation even while leading a worldly life. Family life is not a hindrance on the path of salvation.

Siddhas also tell about the dualism of prajñā and upaya like the kamala and kuliśa idea of Vajrayāna. But to them the final state lies in the union of both the powers. Thus, Sahajayānis were non-dualists (advaitavādins). The union of prajñā and upaya has been simplified in the concept of Yuganaddha. The concepts of prajñā and upaya have also been represented in the form of man and woman, the more so even in the form of genital organs viz., Linga and Yoni. In the union of the two lies the experience of Mahāsukha'. Hence, gradually the sexual practice also crept in, which reached its climax among Vaisnava Sahajiyas. Dharmavir Bharati writes that in Nepal the idea of Yuganaddha has been represented as flames rising out of moon, in Tibet as a branch of Aśoka tree implanted in a pot and in China by the statues of couple indulged in intercourse. He also maintains that really the three fundamentals - Dharma, Buddha, and Saigha - were contained in the concept of Yuganaddha. Prajna is Dharma, upāya is Buddha and Yuganaddha is Sangha. Among Siddhas this union of prajñā and Upāya has also been described as the bola-kakkola-yoga', by which one aims to achieve karpūra' (the camphor state). They say that when one casts Bola (the Kuliśa or Upāya) in kakkola (kamala and prajna), one achieves sahaja, which is of the form of Karpūra (camphor).

Pt. Har Prasad Shastri points out that there are three sects or states of Sahaja Sampradāya -Avadhūti, Candālī, and Dombi or Bengālī. Baldev Upadhayaya" describes that these are the three names of the one energy. In avadhūti state there is dualism and Ida and piigalā both works separately. In Candālī state there is dualism as well as non-dualism and in Dombi state this duality is surpassed and non-duality survives.

Thus, Sahajayāna sādhanā has accorded a significant place to the notion of Sahaja. They clearly explained that one, who dreams of Nirvana after forsaking 'sahaja, cannot gain any progress in spiritual elevation. After knowing this (sahaja), there remains nothing more to be known. All the knowledge lies in it (sahaja). They have also ascribed the name of Sahajacitta' to "Bodhicitta.

Now in this reference it is clear enough that sahaja sadhanā has a significant position in the sādhanā aspect of later development of Buddhistic thought in Indian philosophy.

Sahaja Sādhanā in Nātha:

Gorakhanath is the chief exponent of Nātha Sampradāya. The name of his teacher was Matsyendranātha or The Macchendranātha. The name of Kanphaṭās, Darśanīs and Kapālika are also associated with the followers of Gorakhanath. They rigorously and strictly followed the rules and regulations of their discipline. They laid great emphasis on the preservation of celibacy. There was no place for a woman in their system of sādhanā. To them a female is heinous tigress, which tempts the heart and sucks the nectar of man. Thus, they regarded domestic life a hindrance on the path the attainment of realization. Householder is one who knows his house and keeps in what goes out. Further, householder is one who holds the house (body), forsakes inner lust (māyā) and embodies oneself as sahajaśila. Such a holder of the house of body is as pious as the holy water of the river Ganga. One who does not restrain his sense and tongue is a low caste. This is why Gorakhanath himself says that their path is a very difficult one. Therefore, the Nātha sādhanā

followed Haṭhayoga in practice, but only to the extent of purifying the body through the observance of strict modes of discipline.

These Nāthas appear to be Hathayogis, but essentially, they too were the followers of sahaja sādhanā. Like Sahajayāna concepts of prajñā and upāya, Nāthas also introduced the notions of Sakti and Siva and likewise the union between the two has been the object of their sādhanā. Nāthas definitely-described this union as yogini meeting yogī, her husband. But this was only a symbolic expression of the inner state. To them Sakti was Kundalinī power, which resides at the bottom of Susumna and Siva has his abode in the highlands of Sahasrāra at the top of head. In eighth patala of Kaulajñānirṇaya there is reference to four types of Sakti - Sahajā, Kulajā, Antyajā, and Mahādevi. Sahaja has been described in the form of housewife; but it should be realized inside the body. One who realizes it enjoys sahaṅānanda.

Gorakahnath has himself been described as one, who keeps the trade of sahaja having five bulls (of senses) and nine cows (of randhra) to sell. Moreover, it is also stated that one should cook his meals upon the hearth of sahaja in such a way that neither vapour comes out nor water drops down. Thus, Nathas were the followers of sahaja sādhanā. Dharmvir Bharati describes the use of sahaja in literature of Nātha sect in following six senses:

Sahaja	(1)	as	an	Ultimate	Substance;
(2)	as	the	supreme	knowledge	
(3)	as	union	with	Sakti	inside body;
(4)		as		Sahaja	Samādhi,
(5)	as	a	final	state;	and
(6)	as	a	mode	of	living.

According to Nātha sampradāya, Sahaja is the Ultimate Substance. From the sahaja the day comes out and when the day comes out, the night too assimilates in sahaja." Sahaja is sūnya, the Void and there from the world cometh/originates and into the same it returneth/merges. In sūnya the mind dissolves. Mind and body both remain calm in sahajaśūnya. Such is the view of Macchendra. This is the message of Gorakha that one should try to be natural in one's dealing with others, in one's

speech and gait and moreover in one's livelihood.

However, the method of sādhanā of Nātha was rigorous, but not Hathayogic as they advised to Be natural in practice. They asked to practise natural posture (sahaja āsana) and one should observe his postures following natural principles.

Further, enumerating the characteristics of a person Gofakha points out that wisdom (sumatī), friendliness (suhrdi), coolness (Sītala), and pleasantness (sukhadān) are the four tests of Sahaja. In this way it is clear enough that Nathas, even if they appeared to be Haṭhayogis, were the followers of sahaja sādhanā.

5. Vaisnava Sahajiyā Cult:

Vaisnava Sahajiyā cult is older than the period of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Dr. Majumdar is of the opinion that a branch of Vaiṣṇava School was famous by the name of Sahajiyā before Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Among the chief followers of this cult were great poets like Chandidas, Vidyapati, and famous saints like Swaroop, Damodar, and Jiva Goswami. Lokanath, Raghunath, Gopal Bhatta, and Krishnadas may also be enumerated as the followers of this cult. Some regard Mahaprabhu Chaitanya also a jewel of this school, but there is a great controversy about it. Whatever the fact may be, the melody of Mahaprabhu Chaitanya was definitely influenced by the exalted love of Sahajiyās. Baldev Upadhyaya maintains that Auliyā, Baula, Sai, Darbeśa, Kartabajā are the traditions, which are known by the name of Sahajiyā. Its literature has mostly been kept a secret by its followers. However, some works have been published - 'Vivarta Vilasa' by Akinchandas, 'Nigudārtha Prakasāvali' by Gauridas, 'Govinda Mañjarī' by Ghanshyam Das, 'Prem Bhakti Candrikā, 'Rasa Sāra and 'Rasaratnasāra by Narottamdas, 'Amrtaratnāvalī and 'Adya Sārasvata Karikā by Mukundadass, and 'Rativilāsa Paddhati', and 'Rasa Tattva Sara' by Rasik Das. Sahajiyā Cult in Bengal is a Vaiṣṇava modification of

Sahajayāna Buddhism. According to Sahajayāna the ultimate goal of human endeavour on earth lies in the achievement of sahajāvasthā, a union of prajīā and upāya represented by the concept of Yuganaddha, where an Abhyasi enjoys sahaja sukha or sahanānda. Saiva Tantrika likewise gave the notion of Siva

and Sakti, and they believed that the union of Siva and Sakti was possible by raising Kundalinī power. But Sahajayānis observed the union of prajñā and upāya by keeping the sexual association with women known as 'Mudrās'. Vaisnava Sahajiyā took this idea of Mudrā sādhanā from Siddhas and gave a celestial twist to it by representing the concept of prajñā and upāya in Rādhā and Krishna respectively.

Thus, with Sahajiyās the enjoyment of sahasasukha or sahasānanda of Siddhas lies in the exalted love-play (keli) of Rādhā and Krishna, which has been whole-heartedly described in the glowing verses. It is said that most of the Sahajiyās had a maiden associate with whom, as partner, they performed their worship. To them the natural way of salvation was to worship in the company of a woman, and they claim it to be the natural religion (Sahaja Dharma) of human passions and emotions. The process of worship is to think of oneself as Krishna and to cultivate within oneself the passions of Krishna for Rādhā, who is represented by the female companion. In this way Vaisnava Sahajiyās taught the attainment of salvation through worship in the form of sexual partnership with a beautiful maiden. Like that of the Siddhas, the 'sahaja' of Sahajiyās was also indescribable. But they represented it in the form of pure love (suddha prema). Sahajiyā sādhanā made earthly love (pārthiva prema) an affair of spiritual exaltation. They mentioned that since our organism is the abode of the divine, we could have direct experience of celestial happiness in our own self (body). They also explained that the divine love between Rādhā and Krishna can be realized through earthly love, because according to them Krishna exists in every man and in every woman in herself enshrines Rādhā. To these practicers the love-sport (keli) of Rādhā and Krishna is played in Vrndāvana. There are three forms of Vrndāvana –(Vana Vrndāvana (Vndāvana, the forest), (ii) Mana Vrndāvana (Vmdāvana, the heart), and (i) Niha Vrndāvana (Vrndāvana, where the play of Rādhā and Krishna continues ceaselessly). In this way Parkiyā Prema acquired an important position among Vaiṣṇava Sahajiyās. The love of a woman other than one's wife was regarded necessary on the path of salvation.

The main feature of Sahajiyā sādhanā in Vaiṣṇavism is that of imposition (āropa) of svariūpa (the divine inner form) on ripa

(earthly form). Svarūpa cannot be realized without ripa. In this way they don't draw any line of demarcation between earthly love (pārthiva prema or Ishq Mazāz) and transcendental love (apārthiva prema or Ishq Haqiqi). They maintain that one can enjoy the transcendental love in earthly love by imposition (āropa). Hence, this school emphasized that every man in himself has the presence of Divinity and thus they gave a divine touch to human passions and emotions and have tried to divinise human existence by the feeling of celestial love imposed on the ordinary earthly passion.

This divinisation of human existence gave rise to the concept of 'sahaja mānuṣa' to be the ideal of a society. Sahaja Manuṣa or sahaja mānava has neither the predominance of Rajoguna nor that of Tamoguna, but the pure Sattva pervades in him. He does not distinguish between himself and other creatures of the world. He is devoid of attachment towards worldly objects. Sahaja Mānusa is the ideal form of man.

Vaisnava Sahajiyās also introduced the notion of seven lakes (saptasarovara) viz.

(1)	Ghora	Sarovara,
(2)	Nābhi	Sarovara,
(3)	Prthu	Sarovara,
(4)	Mana	Sarovara,
(5)	Ksīra	Sarovara,
(6)	Kantha	Sarovara, and
(7)	Aksaya	Sarovara.

This novel presentation in the form of lakes (Sarovara) can be compared with the traditional lotuses (cakras) in yogic far as veins (nādis) are concerned Vaiṣṇava sādhanā. So Sahajiyās enumerate thirty-two veins. Among them four are regarded as significant for the purpose of sādhanā viz.,) Arunavarna Nadi, (i) Garbhodakaśayvi. (Gii) Kṣīrodakaśayī, and (iv) Candraśayī.

Sadhana of Vaiṣṇava Sahajiyās has been termed by Baldev Upadhyaya as following pleasant sentiments mādhyura bhāva) in their practice of devotion, wherein a devotee regards himself to be the beloved and God to be the lover. This also led to the mode of sādhanā in association with parakīyā (other than one's own wife). According to Baldeva

Upadhyaya there are two aspects of parakīyā - soāial and spiritual. In social aspect the association with parakīyā is morally deplored and condemned, but in spiritual aspect parakiyas provide great assistance in spiritual advancement. Vaiṣṇava Sahajiyās introduced this parakīyā sādhanā in the form of eight-told path of (i) rati, (0) prema, (i) sneha, (iv) mana, () pranaya, (vi) rāga, (vii) anuraga, and (vii) mahābhava.

Further parakiyā is of two types external and internal. The external parakiyā (the physical association with parakiya) is advised through the observance of the practice of eightfold devotion, as mentioned above. This external parakiya is known secondary one (gauja parakiya). The internal parakiya is the marma parakīyā, residing in the heart as real one.

As evident from above analysis the Sahajiyā cult did have some carnal inclination, which may not be approved by the social structure. But keeping in view the period and the environment of that time such practice were prevalent in the society. At least this much is certain that this system made an effort to do away with the orthodox, dogmatic and mystical performance and gave vent to the human emotions and passions by exemplifying the Upaniṣadic slogan: yatha pindande tatha brhamande.

6.

Baula

Sampradāya:

The term Baula' has been traced to various origins. It is a deformation of the Sanskrit word vātula meaning 'affected by wind and it can also be taken as a modification of the Hindi word 'vyākula meaning bewildered or perplexed. Some maintain that it is a changed form of the word Baura', or say Bavala' (the mad). However, what may be taken to be common to all these views, the term Baula' expresses a restless anxiety resulting in madness for Supreme Reality.

Baulas were the reformative saints they had no belief in ostentations and traditional rites. They had no faith in temple and mosque. According to them human body itself is a temple and the person energizing it is the true God to be worshipped and realized. There was no distinction of caste among them. It is to be noted that generally the Hindu Baulas were the protagonists

of Vaiṣṇava doctrines, and Muslim Bāulas' bear the influence of Sufism. Nevertheless, their conception of Ultimate Reality and the mode of practice for realization do not bear any mark of communal difference. They got themselves intoxicated with the love of God to the extent of forgetting their own being. This emotional forgetfulness was their chief characteristic and in that state, they enjoyed indescribable happiness. This happiness was all in all to them.

Baulas adhered to the basics of yoga. Their object of spiritual practice was to realize the union of soul with the person residing in the heart. They put forth the concept of "manera manusa" i.e., the person residing in the heart'. Rabindra Nath Tagore has also accepted this concept of Bāulas. Bāulas emphasize inner spiritual practice (sādhanā) known among them as 'ulti-cāla' (reverse movement). Dasgupta has interpreted it as a process of progress towards Sahajāvasthā. Anyway, these Baulas were also Sahajavādins. They regard the intoxication of love to be the means for the attainment and realization of the God, residing in the heart. Like Sahajiyās, they too regarded worldly love as a source of divine love. Therefore, they paid great respect and reverence to women. It was their belief that woman on the one hand makes domestic life pleasant and on the other she helps in divine and spiritual pursuits. The former role of woman is called 'vighraha and the latter agraha'. Hence, they stretch and extend the worldly love to the extent of divine love and establish a strong attachment to divinity. Thus, they gave due regard to domestic life. If the domestic life proves to be a hindrance in the path of spiritual progress, they advocated that it should be given up.

In both the spheres- worldly as well as spiritual Baulas prefer simplicity and naturalness. The purity of soul is something simple, and should not be spoilt by religious ostentations.

The Baulas doctrine is the confluence of the three streams of sahaja sādhanā viz., Sahajayāna Buddhism, Sahajiyā Vaiṣṇava, and Islamic Sufism. The Bāula methodology of spiritual practice was developed out of these three currents and it assimilated in itself the essence of these schools.

The contribution of saints to the practice of sahaja sādhanā is remarkable. In Upaniṣads and Purāna sahaja sādhanā refers to a state of yogic attainment. With Siddhas the term sahaja became a symbol of the state of union between prajna and upāya in the form of Yuganaddha. Later the concept of the association between the two vital forces Siva and Sakti kamala and kulisa, Vindu and Nāda etc., signified the samesense in Saiva, Natha and Sākta school. This copulative representation of the term sahaja inspired Vaiṣṇava Sahajiyās to realize love of Rādhā and Krishna in their association with parakiyās. But the tradition of saints discarded this sexual and carnal association in their sahaja sādhanā.

Dr. Hajari Prasad Dwivedi points out that Satya Purusa, the Ultimate Reality, for the sake of creation produced six sons viz., (i) Sahaja, (ii) Aikura (iii) Icchā, (iv) Suhaiga, (v) Acintya, and (vi) Aksara. The personality of Kabir has been divinised by his followers to the extent regarding him as the incarnation of God. They say that God incarnated Himself as Sukrti, Munīndra, Karunā Svāmi and Kabira in Satyayuga, Tretāyuga, Dvāparayuga, and Kaliyuga. It is also stated that the four Vedas are the gross form of the real Veda, which consists of the words (Vānī) of Kabir. The followers of Kabir regard the knowledge of Vedas as the skin knowledge (vacāinana). They hold that actually the Kabir's vāni known as: (i) Kūtavāni is Sūkṣma Rgveda; (ii) Takasāra Vāni is Sūksma Yajurveda; (iii) Mūka-jñāna-vāni is Sūksma Sāmaveda; and (iv) Bijaka Vānī is Sūksma Atharvaveda. Thus, Kabir bears an important and significant position so far as the technique of sahaja sādhanā is concerned. Besides him, Dadū, Paṭṭu Sundaradāsa, Raidāsa, Caranadāsa, Bhikhā and Sahajobāi have also advocated sahaja sādhanā in the tradition of saints. Saints have used the word sahaja in various implications. Dharmavir Bharati explains that the word sahaja, like Nath Sampradāya, has also been used in six senses viz., (1) Parama Tattva (Supreme Substance, (11) Parama Jñāna or svabhāva (Supreme Knowledge or Nature). (ii) Sahaja Sādhanā (a natural mode of practice). (iv) Sahaja Samādhi (Natural Concentration). (v) Parama Pada (state of the final attainment), and (vi) Sahaja Rahani (a natural mode of

living)

The detailed description of Bharatt emphasizes that the term sahaja in the tradition of saints is noteworthy because the Ultimate Reality is Sahaja, the final level of attainment is known as Sahaja Samadhi, which is aspired to be achieved by the practicant through the mode of simple and natural livelihood (sahaja rahani) by surrendering oneself at the holy feet of a worthy Guru. Dr. Govind Singh Triguanayata also deals elaborately with sahaja sādhanā of saints, and he points out that the approach of saints was reformative as well as formative, that is to say, a purification of the dogmatic and false trends of sādhanā as well as a contribution of new notions through significant similes. Trigunayata remarks that the sādhanā of saints has given a simplificatory touch (sahajikarana) to the mode of sahaja sādhanā, and their simple conduct (sahajācarana) involved (i) Sahaja Vairagya (natural renunciation), (ii) Sahaja Karma(natural action), (iii) Sahaja Tyaga (natural denouncement), (iv) Sahaja Vicāranā (natural thinking), (V) Sahaja Jiāna (natural knowledge), (vi) Sahaja Prema (natural love), and (vii) Sahaja Sādhanā (natural spiritual practice)

The sahaja sādhanā of saints eradicates the dogmatic and ritualistic practices from the sādhanā aspect of Indian Philosophy and propounds the necessity of the inner purity and a simple and natural life with total surrender of one's own being to Guru or God. In this respect the famous verse of Kabir on Sahaja Samādhi is noteworthy:

Sādho sahaja samādhi bhalī to put the same in English version would render and reveal the significance it achieved in the practice of saints as under:

"O Saint, Sahaja Samādhi is Superior,
Since the day it emerged by the grace of Guru
It went on increasing day by day.
Wherever I walk is circumambulation,
Whatever I do is the service.
Wherever I sleep, it is prostration,
And I do not adore any other God.

Whatever I speak is His Name,
Whatever I listen to is His remembrance.

My eating and drinking itself is His worship.
I behold equality between the home and the desolation,
Having given up the thought of difference.
Neither do I shut the eyes, nor do I smell with nose,
Nor do I undertake the least trouble.
With open eyes I smilingly gaze at
And recognize the charming beauty (of Lord).
Kabir tells, this unmani living I have revealed in song.
There is a supreme state beyond pleasure and pain,
In that state I have got merged."
Further, Kabir speaks of sahaja:
The indescribable tale of sahaja is unique,
Neither it increase nor it decreases,
It appears neither light nor heavy.
The thought of above and below is not there;
Nor is there day and night.
Nor water nor air, nor again fire is there,
Only true Guru helps there.
That state ever remains beyond access, beyond experience,
Is attainable through the grace of Guru.
Kabir tells that I turned mad and my mind succumbed
And got merged in Sahaja."

Whatever happens is said to be yours and what is realized is
also merged in the Sahaja.

Kabir also remarks that everybody speaks of sahaja but nobody knows it correctly because only they realize Sahaja, who have forsaken their longing and who have controlled their five senses. Kabir also compares sahaja samādhi with a tree, which has neither branches nor flowers nor fruits. He further clearly tells that householder is one who holds the body and renounces the internal māyā.

The state of samādhi in Nath yoga was expressed by the term unmuni. This unmuni state has been described as the state of dmanaska beyond sunya and asunya, wherein one's total existence is merged as salt is dissolved into the water. And this unmuni state is Known by the náame or sahaja samādhi. In this

state of sahaja samādhi, according to Kabir unmuni is awakened and one easily attains the Ultimate. This is the supreme state (Parama pada) to be achieved by an aspirant. This state of sahaja is what is meant by sunya or nirvana in Buddhistic thought. Saints have constituted the words sahaja sunya and sahaja nirvāna. Thus, saints have assimilated the thought of śūnya and nirvāna in their sahaja sādhanā.

8. Sahaja Yoga in the Sikh Religion:

Gura Nanak, the spiritual giant of Punjab, is the Adi Guru of the mighty and martial religion known by the name of Sikh religion. Guru Nanak was succeeded in sequence one after another by nine Gurus. The last of them was Guru Gobind Singh, who started the practice of baptism for Sikhs. Macauliffe tells that there are two main divisions of Sikh religion Singhs and Sahajadhāris. The former are they who follow baptism as enunciated by Guru Govind Singh. The remaining Sikhs are known as Sahajadhāris those who lived at ease, as the word denotes, and practised trade or agriculture. Among the Singhs are included the Nimalās and the Nihangas. The Sahajadhāris included the Udāsis founded by Shri Chand, son of Guru Nanak, the sevāpanthi founded by a water carrier of Guru. Parashu Ram Chaturvedi opines that all the schools except Nirmalās are Sahajadhāris.

The term sahaja in Sikh religion too has denoted several meanings viz., habit, born with, natural, spontaneity, state of equipoise or poise easiness. divine knowledge, divine tranquillity etc. Sahajāvasthā in Sikh religion is that state of soul (Atman), which is above the three gunas and contains in itself the true knowledge. Moreover, it is a state wherein the soul, becoming peaceful (sānta) and motion less (adola) is concentrated in one's own Real Form and lives a natural life. Benevolence and love overflow from such a heart. Thus, sahaja sādhanā in Sikh religion appears in the form of sahaja yoga, which means the spontaneous concentration of mind as opposed to Hathayoga. Macauliffe uses Sahajayoga and Rajayoga as synonymous terms and according to him, sahajayoga means "the repetition of God's name with fixed attention and association with the holy, as contra-distinguished from the

Hathayoga..

The role of Guru has been accorded supreme importance just as in other schools of sahaja sādhanā. "Without Guru the Poise (sahaja) cometh not to the mind: Ask the wise one if you may. In this context the following words of Guru Nanak Dev Ji are most remarkable: "The whole creation craves for the state of Equipoise (Sahaja), but without the Guru one finds it not. The Pandits are tired of reading, also the Diviners of future; many are deluded by their garbs. Yea, if we meet the Guru, we attain to the state of Poise (Sahaja), if the Lord in His Will is Merciful. O brother, there is no Poise (Sahaja) without the Guru. It issues out of the Word, and one finds one's Lord, the True God. If the Lord's Praise cometh out spontaneously (Sahaja) it is accepted; otherwise, it is all vain prattle. Thus is all Worship, thus is all Love, Detachment. In the state of Poise (Sahaja) is utter Bliss and Peace, without it life is all in vain. Spontaneously (Sahaja) then praise thou the Lord and into Silence of the Great Peace. Thus, utter thou, His Virtue; and enter into communion with thy Lord. Through the word, (sabda) cometh the Lord in the mind and the tongue lips the Reality of the Real. In that state of Poise (Sahaja), thou killest Death and takes to the Refuge of the True One. Thus, doth the Lord's Name come into our minds and we do only what is Good and True. Fortunate are they who found this (Sahaja) and are merged in it. Where is Equipoise (Sahaja) in Māyā? Māyā abideth in Duality. The self-willed go the way of works, and are burnt down by ego. Their comings and goings cease not, and they are cast to the round time and again. Living within the Three Modes, there is no Equipoise (Sahaja), they make one wander in Doubt. What shall we read, dwell upon, utter, when one is led astray by God? (Yea enter thou) the Fourth state (of Bliss) and like the Gods-wards gather it in thy skirt. The Name of God, the Unmanifest, is like the (nine) Treasures; one is Wise in God only through Equipoise (Sahaja). The Virtuous are in His Praise and their True Repute is abroad. Through Equipoise is the strayer United (with Lord); through the Word comes Union. Without Equipoise is all Darkness of Māyā and lust. Through equipoise is one Wise-in-the-Time, Infinite Word. And the Guru-God in His Mercy, Unites one with Himself. Through Equipoise (Sahaja), the unseen Lord is seen and the Light of the Formless, Fearless, Lord (burn in our hearts). He is the blesser of all souls and the One to unite thy Light with His Praise thou then

through the Perfect Word thy Lord, who is beyond end, beyond limit. The Wise-in-God have the Name as their Wealth and through Equipoise do, they Trade (with Him). Night and day, they reap the Profit of the Lord's Name, whose treasures are inexhaustible. Nanak, when the Giver gives, He never falls short (of the Gifts).

There have been enumerated five types of raptures (mastīs) viz., (i) Hala kī mastī (the rapture in one's own being), (ii) Hukama kī mastī (the rapture of command), (iii) Javanī kī mastī (the rapture of youth), (iv) Māla kī mastī (the rapture of wealth and property) and (v) Lata Kī mastī (the rapture of addiction to intoxicants e.g., opium, wine, etc.). The fourth rapture of wealth and property is most powerful and among all the above mention five raptures, the first one i.e., the rapture of one's own being (Hala kī mastī) is the best and this is called Sahajayoga. This is also termed Hukama and is known as Eka Nama. In such a condition, one does not experience doubt or fear. He is always carefree. It is obtainable by prostration before the feet of Guru or deity. They say that this state of Sahajayoga is obtainable rarely by few. The visible sign of such a person is that whatever comes his way or happens to him during day and night, he views it as the command of Purusa, the Almighty God. And he thinks that in whatever manner he behaves, whether rightly or wrongly is His Wish. He should neither criticise nor listen to criticism of others through his every thought, word and action. Whatever he gets, he should eat. If somebody gives him a cup of poison, he' swallows it taking it to be nectar. Even if one is an emperor of the whole of earth or of whole of the Universe and if per chance, he happens to be blessed by God to attain the state of Sahaja, he will be happiest even if he holds an earthen begging bowl in his hand and begs from door to door. No matter, whether he gets the alms or not. He should neither worry about begging nor feel happy for this kingship. Whatever he does he should view it as obeying the command (or will) of God and should be detached from his lot, whether good or bad. He should be indifferent to poison and nectar, honour and dishonour, gold and clay, heaven and hell. Failure to attain to the path of Sahajayoga will render one liable to undergoing the cycle of birth and death. This Sahajayoga is the simplest of all the forms of practice. Thus, Sahajayoga is best of all. Sahaja is the antidote to all ills. It should colour all actions. They say that one should sleep naturally (sahaja) awake naturally, eat naturally, drink

naturally, lead family life naturally, sing God's praise naturally, and keep silence naturally. And really one should remain absorbed in the rapture of one's own being (Hala kī mast).

Thus, Sahaja Sādhanā in Sikh religion is the form of sadhana, which condemns austerities of Haṭhayoga and advises us to seek shelter in the Guru, live according to Command (Hukama) and be pleased with one's own being (Hāla).

9. Taoism in China:

Taoism is an ancient religion of China and Lao Tzu (604 B.C.) was its propounders. Among the chief followers who developed Taoist thought after Lao Tzu are Lieh Tzu (400 B.C.) and Chuang Tzu, a contemporary of Mencius (300 B.C.). "Tao Te Ching, the holy text of Taoism, is ascribed to Lao Tzu. Apart from it "Tai-shang Kan-ying P'ien" by Li Ch'angling and the anonymous "Yin-chih Wen" are the noteworthy works of Taoism.

Dr. Prabodh Chandraji Bagchi is of the opinion that sahaja is the translation of Tao' and the Taoists were the followers of Sahaja Sādhanā in China. The fundamental teaching of Taoism bears close similarity with the philosophy of Upaniṣads. Dr. Radhakrishnan clearly hints to this proximity of thought and maintains that the central ideas of Taoism are akin to those of the Upaniṣads. Taoist metaphysics is close to the thought of Upaniṣads and its discipline to the Yoga technique.

Tao' is the concept that connotes Ultimate Reality in Taoism. The Tao, that can be expressed, is not the eternal Tao; the name that can be defined is not the unchanging name." He who knows does not speak, He who speaks does not know" Tao is a thing that is both invisible and intangible. Intangible and invisible, yet there is form in it, Invisible and intangible yet there is substance in it, Subtle and obscure yet there is essence in 96 Where Tao is, equilibrium is. When Tao is lost, the outcome is all the difference of things.

The mode of practice as advised in Taoism is easy, simple and natural. Lao Tzu himself asserts: "My words are very easy to follow and very easy to practice." Lao Tzu advises us to follow the great way of Tao because" the great way is very

plain and easy, but the people prefer by-paths." He condemns wearing embroidered clothes. "There is no greater crime than seeking what men desire; there is no greater misery than knowing no contentment; there is no greater calamity than indulging in greed.

Taoists suggest the return to the simple state of nature. They hold: "Appear in plainness and hold to simplicity. Restrain selfishness and curtail desires. The secret of success on the path of liberation lies in the Maxim: "Be humble and you will remain entire." Let all knowledge be forsaken and desires be dried. One must search out the Great Centre, which is eternal and unchanging. Each goes back to its origin. Going back to the origin is called peace. Free from desires, they would be at rest and the world would itself be rectified. Let all things develop in their natural way, and do not venture to act. According to Taoism a sage should avoid excess, extravagance and indulgence. "Excess in food and over doing in action, even in other things, most, they are rejected." He who pursues Tao will decrease every day; he will decrease and continue to decrease, till he comes to non-action. By non-action everything can be done. In this way, the sage lives in the world in concord, and rules over the world in simplicity. This is why Taoism, tells to "act non-action; to undertake no undertaking and to taste the tasteless." They advise a very simple method: "Manage the difficult, while they are easy; manage the great while they are small. All difficult things in the world start from easy; all great things in the world start from the small. The tree that fills a man's arm arises from a tender shoot. The nine storeys towers are raised from a heap of earth. A thousand miles journey begins from the spot under one's foot. Thus, Taoists try to fulfil huge tasks steadily and slowly. They are sure of their success, which may be late but will not be never. They avoided learning and preferred simplicity, because according to Taoism the best practiser of Tao did not aim at the achievement of knowledge. Instead, they try to restore themselves to simplicity. Lao Tzu declares: "I have three treasures, which I hold and keep safe: the first is called love; the second is called moderation; the third is called not venturing to go ahead of the world."

Therefore, Taoism in China is a mode of sādhanā that laid emphasis on the original and natural capacity of an individual and

has contributed a lot to the literature of China. The little classic "Tao Te Ching" is a book of deep contemplation full of accurate suggestions. Its sādhanā is sahaja sādhanā because it avoids all sorts of ostentations and tells that knowledge is of no avail. It insists on the originality and simplicity. "Dry the desires and empty the heart, the success lies ahead. Use what is naturally useful; do what you spontaneously can do, act according to your will within the limit of your nature, but having nothing to do with what is beyond it. This is the easiest matter of non-action. And thus, the proverb goes: "It is the emptiness of the heart that makes it spiritually receptive. It is the emptiness of a valley that makes it yield an echo."

Sum

up:

All the above-mentioned systems of sahaja sādhanā are clear exhibition of the fact that they in one way or other adhere to the simplification process, which on earlier occasion had become prejudiced to the orthodox, dogmatic and mystic indulgence leading to recantation of simpler and natural course of spiritual practice. It is amazing to find that the basic conceptual frameworks of all the systems of sahaja sadhanā recoil to a comfortable fillip in the Sahaj Marg system of yogic practice. It should be remembered in this reference that even if there is similarity with all the above-mentioned techniques but it would be wrong to adjudicate that Sahaj Marg thought and theory in any way is influenced by them. All the contentions whether in theory or in practice are nothing but coincidence because whole of the philosophy is the original apprehension and comprehension derived from the direct experience (imperience) of the Founder-President of this new mode of spiritual practice. It would be needless to mention that the coming chapters will reveal itself the authenticity and its claim to be a new philosophy for whole of the humanity. The world will have to look forward to this nimble but forceful system to resolve its problems and tensions in day today happenings in human life.

Sahaj Marg – A Movement

There is, however, no connection at all of the modern Sahaj Marg system of yogic sādhanā to any of the traditions elaborated so far in the previous chapter, except the identity of the word sahaja used

to denote the system of spirituality under the present system as also in the traditional one. The founder and exponents of this system explicitly treat the Modern Sahaj Marg as a 'New Darshana', based on the spiritual intuition of the two Masters of the system known as the Adi-Guru and the Founder-President of the system. This is surely not to assert an impossible magical emergence of the system like a bolt from the blue totally unconnected to the history. It is only with a practical purpose of divesting the new movement of scholastic mystification and traditionalistic degeneration and to make it more directly serviceable to the aspirants of yogic sādhanā in the context of the present-day world. All revolutionary movements and new systems in any field advocate and claim a break from the past only in this, sense and only with such purpose in view.

The modern Sahaj Marg system represents the developed and matured form of spiritual practice (sādhanā) adapted to the needs and circumstances of the human beings in the present day society. To quote Shri Ishwar Sahai, "It is in fact a complete overhauling of Patanjali's yoga, purging out from it all physical occult and esoteric appliances, and runs from beginning to end along purely spiritual lines without slightest amalgamation. As such, it is a valuable contribution to the world-thought and in presenting a new school of philosophy. It reconciles all systems of philosophy and yet has a separate entity of its own." Sahaj Marg introduces a new interpretation of Reality and fresh approach to the problem of human existence and its purpose on earth. It brings to light a natural and simple way of God- realization within shortest possible time. The spiritual practice (sādhanā) as advised in this system is based on pragmatic application and is most suitable to resolve the numerous riddles in the field of spiritual endeavours. It opens new vistas and explores afresh the prospects and possibilities for human beings through reconciling the various complex issues and the knotty conceptions.

The Masters of Modern Sahaj Marg Sādhanā:

To begin with, for the sake of clear comprehension of this system, it would be opportune to review short sketch and a brief survey of the life and works of the two Masters, the Adi Guru (Sh.

Lalaji) and the Founder-President (Sh. Babuji) of Sahaj Marg system of yogic practice. Both the Masters of Sahaj Marg have brought about a revolution in the field of spiritual practice. They have contributed a simple and natural method and have opened new vistas in spirituality rather discovered new fields of spiritual progress.

The Adi Guru of Sahaj Marg:

Samartha Sadguru Mahatma Shri Ram Chandraji Maharaj of Fatehgarh (U.P.) is the Adi Guru of Sahaj Marg system. He is known as Lalaji among the followers. A brief history of his life was published in the annual volume Kalyāṇa' of Vikrami Samvat 1994 under title 'Santa Anka' on pages 757- 58 along with his photography on page 753. His disciples, viz., Dr. Chaturbhuj Sahai, Dr. Shrikrishna Lal and Dr. Harnarayan Saxena have brought about books on his life. A short sketch of his life is also given in the Book 'Efficacy of Rajyogà' (p. ix-x). It is a remarkable feature that one finds while going through the details of his life that his thought are treated by his followers as more valuable than the presentation of his chronological details of his life.

He was born on February 2, 1873, the Basant Panchami day, in a Kayastha family at Fatehgarh in district Farrukhabad, (U,P.). The name of his father was Ch. Harbaksh Sahai. He was educated through Urdu medium. He also learnt English, Hindi and Persian languages. He got married when he was a student. After his education, he got an appointment in the Collectorate, at Fatehgarh and was retired from there

It is also said that he attained perfection in a brief span of only seven months. Ater enlightenment, he devoted his life to the spiritual uplift of mankind groaning in the mire of materialism and darkness of ignorance. Ater having served humanity up to the age of fitty-eight, he breathed his last on August 1931. At Fatehgarh, there stands a Samādhi on the site of the cremation.

His standard of living was simple and his dealings with people were very friendly. He had a melodious voice with a very sweet tone. "He was an embodiment of moderation, toleration and devotion, devoid of egoism altogether. With him dawned the new era of yogic training through transmission, of which he was the

master. He could bring a man to perfection simply at a glance. It was he, who made it possible that a man can attain perfection in one life only and even while leading a domestic life. He used to say that troubles and miseries of domestic life are the penances and sacrifices for spiritual attainments. He had simplified the method of spiritual training to a great extent and adjusted them to suit the requirements of the time"

The discovery of Central Region' is the unique and remarkable research contributed by him to the process of yogic practice. His works in manuscript form amply demonstrate his command over Arabic and Persian languages on the one hand, and over Sanskrit, including Vedic Sanskrit on the other. His hold on both the Sufi and Hindu traditions of yogic practice appear to be convincingly thorough. It is really a pity that a major part of his work, in manuscript, got destroyed through sheer negligence of his kith and kin. A collection of his correspondence with some of his disciples was published in 1943 under the title Shri Ram Sandesh in Hindi. It contains 105 letters. A series of ten articles from his pen was published under titles:

- (1) Akhalāq.
- (2) Tarje-gufigi,
- (3) Etaqāda,
- (4) Veda,
- (5) Karma,
- (6) Adhyātma,
- (7) Brahma Jaāna,
- (8) Sadhanā,
- (9) Parama Pada, and
- (10) Bandhana aur Mukti.

(These inspiring and motivating articles were published serially in the SAHAJ MARG (Quarterly) of Shri Ram Chandra Mission, Shahjahanpur (U.P.) from Volume I, No.1 to Volume IX, No.1).

A large number of his letters, articles and daily diary still lie in manuscript form with his grand son Sh. Dinesh Kumar at Fatehgarh. He intends to publish the literature with him in near future and his wife Dr. (Mrs) Suman Saxena is helping him in this auspicious venture. Some of his articles were also published serially in "Brijmohan Vachnamrita" (magazine). Further, the book (Hindi) under title Kamāl-e-Insānī' contains valuable analysis of

explanation of the terse and tedious conceptual framework of spiritual thought. It is a useful book for the aspirants on the path of spiritual practice.

The Founder-President of Shri Ram Chandra Mission:

Samartha Sadguru Mahatma Ram Chandraji Maharaj of Fatehgarh, the Adi Guru of the Sahaj Marg system is succeeded by his disciple with identical name Shri Ram Chandraji of Shahjahanpur (U.P.), affectionately known as 'Shri Babuji' among his followers. He is carrying on the task of his Master and belongs to a family, which has glorious history with illustrious personalities. Shri J.R.K. Raizada has given worthwhile information of his ancestors: "His family has a hoary history; its rise dated from the time of Akbar, the great Mughal emperor, and its misfortune followed upon the downfall of the Mughals and subjugation of India under British rule. One of the members of his family was the Mir-Munshi at Akbar's court. He was granted the title of 'Bugarā'. He held a jagir at Talgram in Avadh. For several generations the estate remained in the family. One of the later descendants of his family, Bakshi was the chief army officer under Nawab Kundan Lal, Shujauddaulah. In 1762 Bakshi Sahcb commanded the armies of Shujauddaula in the third battle, of Panipat. After this battle, Hafiz Rahamatakhān, who was impressed by the bravery of Bakshi Saheb, borrowed the services of Bakshi Saheb from s Shujauddaula and appointed him his army officer. In the battle of Fatehganj (near Shahjahanpur) 1774 between

Rahamatakhān and Shujauddaula, Bakshi Saheb was killed with his new Nawab. Shujauddaula ordered the confiscation of the family's property and Jagir. The surviving members left the place to save their lives and got scattered in various districts.

"In the year 1824, Diwan Shadilal, grandson of Bakshi Saheb and great grand father of Shri Ram Chandraji was appointed Diwan to the Nawab of Shahjahanpur. His son, Shri Janki Prasad, grand father of Shri Ram Chandraji joined Civil Courts as Munsarim, under British rule. Shri Janki Prasad's son, Shri Badri Prasad, was born on July 12, 1867 at Badaun. He was taught Urdu and Persian at home and was sent to the English School at the age of nine. He was a brilliant student. He studied law, became a pleader and started legal practice in the year 1892

at Shahjahanpur. In a short time, he became leading lawyer with a roaring practice. He was appointed First Class Special Magistrate and in 1929, he was awarded the title of Rai Bahadur.

"He was a great scholar of history. His work on ancient period of Indian History is of rare value. His research about Lord Krishna's lineage is very valuable contribution. This work is in Urdu, named Musharaf-ul-Tārikh-Hind'. He was a lawyer, scholar, historian and above all a gentleman. His wife was a pious lady. Through this couple was born Shri Ram Chandraji, the successor and representative of Adi Guru on Sunday (7.26 a.m.), April 30, 1899 at Shahjahanpur (U.P.) i.e., the morning of Baishakha badī Pañchamī, the time of birth was 4 gharis 55 pal Vikrami1956. Being the son of a scholar, he received best education and finished three books at the age of seven. During this time, he had an attack of acute typhoid, which lasted for one year and when he recovered from illness, he forgot even the alphabets. Hence, he had to start his education afresh. He had interest in Urdu, Persian and English Literature. The study of Geography was his hobby. He was weak in Mathematics Moreover; he was also a good player of Hockey and Football and had much liking for riding. After some time, his interest in sports declined. He started the practice of pranāyāma at the age of sixteen. After having passed the Matriculation and [S.S.LC](#) he joined the judges' court in 1924 and was retired in 1954. He was married in 1920 at Mathura."

Autobiographical note by Shri Ram Chandraji himself would reflect his personality in a better way: "At the age of nine I felt a kind of thirst for Reality, and I remained extremely frustrated, just like a man who is drowning in water. I continued for some time, but finding no solution, I fixed my mind upon making myself deserving. I went on, with this idea till the age of fourteen, praying at the same time for getting a good and capable Master. I had also made up my mind that I should not seek for a Master. If I went at all with this idea to some one, I should definitely accept him as my Master. My fortune favoured me and I arrived at the holy feet of my Master Samarth Guru Mahatma Ram Chandraji of Fatehgarh (U.P.), on 3 June 1922. I was so spell bound by the effect of Master's force entering into me that I found myself compelled to gain it rather than to study philosophy in which I was deeply interested. The meeting was, to

me one of the most important events, which contributed to solve my problem of life. I commenced abhyāsa under his guidance and gave up prānāyāma, which I had been practising for seven years or so. A feeling of perfect satisfaction prevailed upon me, when I was graced by his (Master's) first glance.

After the passing away of the Adi Guru Shri Ram Chandraji of Fatehgarh in 1931, a number of his disciples set up their independent organizations imparting spiritual training more or less after the method of the great master, but gradually drifting away from the original source, due to the touch of self- in the performance of their work and lack of the spirit of selfless dedication. To Shri Ram Chandraji, the death of his great Master came as an intense shock, instantly causing even physical symptoms of severe gastro-enteritis, with after- effect of acidity. persisting over decades. He spent long years of deep anguish in constant remembrance of and communion with the Master, experiencing constant guidance in every small detail in the form of the dictates from him. He knew no duty or God except his Master, to whom he surrendered his total being, and worked in utter obedience to him alone, ardently burning like a petty moth on the dead flame of an extinguished candle. He presented a living example of the Gita's ideal of self-surrender: Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer as sacrifice, whatever you give as alms, whatever austerities you perform all that you surrender to me, O Son of Kuntī!"(Gita 9, 27).

In such a state of mind, and with such a spirit of sheer subservience and dedication to his Master, he got the Sahaj Marg system of sādhanā institutionalised under a registered body as 'Shri Ram Chandra Mission' in commemoration of His Master's holy memory, some fifteen years after his passing away. The institution started in most humble way with hardly about a dozen members, with a vow never to sacrifice principles for the sake of increase in number of adherents and followers. Some of even these few primary members of the Mission did not come up to the mark, and virtually dropped out, but slowly and steadily, the organization prospered and is growing constantly beyond the bounds of the country of its birth. The credit for all this goes solely to the Founder-President of the organization.

He toured the chief parts of the whole country, particularly South India from December 1944 to February 1945. He realised the need of organised efforts and established Shri Ram Chandra Mission after the name of his Master at Shahjahanpur on 21 June 1945. The organization, with its headquarters at Shahjahanpur (U.P.), and branches and training centres working under trained Preceptors all over India and in some European countries, was governed by an' executive body under the Chairmanship of. the Founder-President of the Mission, who in the words of Dr. K. C. Varadachari has come to be, "One of foremost, if not the foremost of living teachers of mankind, who has rather unobtrusively been training and teaching the path of recondite Yoga of the most ancient times to worthy seeking souls."

Literature of Sahaj Marg

The basic works of Sahaj Marg system written by Shri Ram Chandraji, Founder-President of the Mission are the following

1. Sahaj Marg Ke Das Usoolon Ki Sharah (Hindi)
2. Efficacy of Raja Yoga (English).
3. Anant Ki Ore (Hindi)
- 4, Reality at Dawn (English)
5. Sahaj Marg: Philosophy (English)
6. Voice Real (English)

All these books put forth records of direct research and experience in the state of superfine levels of consciousness and may be regarded unique in so far as these are not borrowed from any treatise on Yoga-ancient or modern; but are claimed to be verifiable by anybody equipped and prepared to examine and explore. A brief comment on presentation of the subject matter in these books would be worthwhile.

1. Sahaj Marg Ke Das Usoolon Ki Sharah (Hindi): This book explains the scientific background of the basic tenets of Ten Commandments of Sahaj Marg and reveals the fundamentals of the technique of Sahaj Marg system as followed in the Mission. These Ten Maxims are the rules to regulate the practice of the adherents on the path of spiritual pursuits. In the author's own words: "In this book I have endeavoured to put in those spiritual secrets, which have up till now come down from heart to heart. But since they relate to direct perception, which

depends upon the study of Nature and can be revealed by means of vibrations, it is not only difficult, but almost impossible to express them adequately in words." Further, "this book has been written not for the novices but for those who are highly advanced in spirituality.

2. Efficacy of Raja Yoga (English):

This treatise is of great significance as it describes the fundamental basics of Sahaj Marg system. Moreover, it also deals with the various levels of spiritual elevation in terms of three regions- Heart Region, Mind Region and Central Region. This region-wise analysis of the stages of evolution on the path of spiritual elevation is a novel and exemplary approach. In this way it has made a very simple methodology in assessing the level of progress in the field of spirituality and it claims to unravel some of the unexplored levels of spiritual growth.

3. Anant Ki Ore (Hindi):

This book brings to light the essential nature of Divine Knowledge and describes the thirteen broad knots formed during the process of evolution, which have to be loosened and crossed over on the path of individual's spiritual progress to the original Being.

4. Reality at Dawn (English):

This book is the presentation of the fundamentals of Sahaj Marg in the most lucid and easily comprehensible terms. It represents the course of spiritual journey through 23 concentric circles, divisible in three regions Maya, egoism and splendour. It also contains a small appendix 'My Vision', consisting of many prophecies, some of which have curiously, come to be true. Dr. Varadachari commented on this book: "I found in that book a deep and profound spirituality and a willingness to experiment. Unlike the other books and Philosophies, here was one that was not burdened and labouring under dogma and other things. It was full of spirituality of the highest order.

5. Sahaj Marg: Philosophy (English):

This book sums the theory and techniques of Sahaj Marg system and brings to light the practical application of philosophy in life. It attempts to explicate some of the confusing riddles for the serious aspirants in the field of spirituality.

6. Voice Real (English):

Vedic literature and works like the Quran and Sermon on the Mount are claimed to be the result of revelation rather than of deliberation. This fact of direct grasp of the voice of the Real Eternal has been attempted to get it rid of mystification and also regarded as verifiable at a certain level of mental sublimity and purification by the Founder of this system of yoga. The present book is put forth as a result of such revelations concerning the technique of mental purification and spiritual progress akin to the Aarma Kanda part of the Veda.

This literature is also available in other Indian languages and in foreign languages. Besides the above-mentioned books some senior Preceptors and Abhyasis of the Mission have also contributed a lot to the literature of Sahaj Marg. These works are as following:

1. A Peep into Sahaj Marg -Sh. Ishwar Sahai
2. Sahaj Marg-New Darshan - Dr. K. C.Varadachari
3. Lectures on Sahaj Marg - Dr. K. C.Varadachari
4. Talks on Efticacy of Rajyoga - Dr. K. C.Varadachari
5. Talks on Commentary on Ten Maxims of Sahaj Marg - Dr. K. C.Varadachari
6. Sahaj Marg and Personality Problems - Dr. K.C.Varadachari
7. Souvenir on 71st Birthday of Shri Ram Chandraji Maharaj

Moreover there are a few small pamphlets and booklets:

1. Guru Sandesh (Hindi) - Sh. Ram Chandraji
2. Sahaj Samādhī (Hindi) -Km. Kasturi Chaturvedi
3. Misunderstanding about Yoga (Eng.) - Sh. Ishwar Sahai
4. Outlines of Sahaj Marg (Hindi & English)
5. Saptati (English) - G. Vijaya Ranga Chary
6. Sahaj Marg - a way of life - Dr. K. C. Varadachari

SAHAJ MARG' (Quarterly)

Shri Ram Chandra Mission has been publishing a bi-lingual (English & Hindi) journal "SAHAJ MARG" October 1956.

The literature of the Mission has won wide applause and has been so popular that its literature has been translated into regional language like Telugu, Gujarati, Kannada, and Tamil languages. The translations of Mission's literature into French and German language are also available.

Important Forums of the Mission:

Sahaj Marg sādhanā as introduced by Shri Ram Chandra Mission is a boon for whole of humanity. In order to have a wider knowledge of the functioning of this system it would be useful to analyse the important forums, which highlight the efficacious technique supported by sound back up.

(i) Sahaj Marg Research Institute, Tirupathi:

Under the Directorship Dr. K. C. Varadachari and having Dr. S. P. Srivastava as Associate Director, the Institute systematically plans to carry out researches in the field of Yoga Sadhanā and it also tries to prove the claims of Sahaj Marg. The Institute has testified and verified the various facts and features of Sahaj Marg system. Thus, the Institute brings to light the efficacy of the method of meditation as advised and followed in the Mission. In brief, the main problems, which it tackles for the uplift of Abhyasis, are given as the following: -

- a) To see whether every Abhyasi (including Preceptor) gets spiritual experience in the Sahaj Marg system. If so, what they are?
- b) Do their experiences (individually) agree with the description made in the basic texts of the Mission? What is the extent of co-relations?
- c) The role of the Preceptor's, aid in the progress of the Abhyasis by cleaning their system.
- d) To establish the nature of the levels of attainments objectively.
- e) To see whether Sahaj Marg system is really better than other systems.

(ii) The aim and objectives of Sahaj Marg system: These may briefly

be described as following:-

- i) To educate and make available to all, the art and science of the yoga modified and simplified to suit present day conditions and environmental needs this is being done by the Sahaj Marg (the natural path) method of training by Prānāhuti'
- ii) To promote feeling of mutual love and universal brotherhood without any distinction of race, nationality, sex etc.
- iii) To conduct research in the field of yoga under the system of Sahaj Marg and to establish research institute for this purpose. (The Sahaj Marg research institute at Tirupati is providing great help and assistance for this purpose to the Mission).
- iv) To encourage research in yoga by granting of assistance to person interested in such research work.
- v) To establish institutions for the public service like Dispensaries, Libraries, Reading Room etc

(ii) Annual Celebrations:

The Mission celebrates the Birth Anniversary of the Adi Guru, Mahatma Ram Chandraji Ji of Fatehgarh on Basanta Pañichami. This is the most auspicious day for all the abhyasis and followers of Sahaj Marg Sadhana. On this day they assemble at Shahjahanpur (UP) and participate in the special meditation sittings. The followers who are unable to come to Shahjahanpur assemble at their respective branches or centres. This annual function at Shahjahanpur lasts for three days, and during these days' speeches are also delivered on the various aspects of Sahaj Marg Sādhanā. This is the main function celebrated in the mission annually. They also observe Janmāstami day and under take due subservience commemorate Lord Krishna's birth, who is also known as the Lord of Yoga (Yogeśvara).

Basic Tenets of Sahaj Marg Sādhanā:-

(i) Ten Maxims of Sahaj Marg:

The following are the Ten Maxims, referred to earlier, on which there is a commentary by the Founder-President of the Mission and Dr. K. C. Varadachari has delivered a series of talks on Ten Maxims

1. Rise before dawn. Offer your Prayer and Puja at the fixed hour,

preferably before sunrise sitting in one and the same pose. Have a separate place and āsana (seat) for worship. Purity of mind and body should be specially adhered to.

2. Begin your puḷā with a Prayer for the spiritual elevation, with a heart full of love and devotion.

3. Fix your goal, which should be complete Oneness with God. Rest not till the ideal is achieved.

4. Be plain and simple to be identical with Nature.

5. Be truthful. Take miseries as Divine Blessings for your own good and be thankful.

6. Know all thy people as brethren and treat them such.

7. Be not revengeful for the wrong done by others. Take them with gratitude as heavenly gift.

8. Be happy to eat in constant divine thought whatever you get with due regard to honest and pious earning.

9. Mould your living so as to rouse a feeling of love and piety in others.

10. At bed time feeling the presence of God repent for the wrong committed. Beg forgiveness in a suppliant mood, resolving not to allow repetition of the same. All the practicers of this system are advised to strictly adhere to above-mentioned ten maxims. There is a commentary on these maxims, which elaborately describes the basics and fundamentals of this mode of spiritual practice. These are really the guidelines for the aspirants and help in reaching the real goal of human life in shortest possible time.

(ii) General Rules and Teaching of the Mission:

Besides the ten Maxims there have also been enumerated some general rules for moral discipline.

- Lead a simple life, uninfluenced by surrounding.
- Be gentle, polite and sweet.
- Maintain cordial dealing with neighbours and relations keeping oneself free from narrow bonds of relationship.
- Husband and wife should act like the two wheels of a vehicle for the due discharge of household duties.
- Give up the mania of friendship.
- Develop uniform taste for all articles of food, with due regard to the pious and impiousness.
- Behave with your officers with proper submission, abiding by the rules of subordination.
- Avoid imposing uncalled for opinion

- Avoid prescribing medicines to patients (physicians exempted) except in the most exceptional cases, where you are convinced, the case otherwise is going out of control.
- Avoid telling your secrets to others and do not let one feel that it is being held up from him.
- Avoid accepting personal services from others, except when it is unavoidable and that too only to the extent to which you yourself can be prepared for it in return.
- Avoid indulging in loose talks or reading of novels etc.
- Have firm faith in god - 1The One Absolute and live in Him.
- The two phases of life, the worldly and the Divine must go side by side, in conjunction with each other and must be attended to without least neglect of either.
- Take everything in the sense of duty and attend to it faithfully without any feeling of attraction or repulsion.
- Love all beings with a spirit of service and sacrifice.
- Give everyone his fair dues, treating him as your own.
- Treat elder with respect and younger with affection abiding by the general rules of etiquette.
- Meet adversity with recognition, banishing from the hearts, feeling of anger and vengeance.
- Follow tolerance and moderation in all activities of life.
- Aim at the highest, putting in honest and sincere effort in its achievement.

Special Features of Sahaj Marg Sādhanā: -

To borrow the words of Shri Ishwar Sahai "System aims at the spiritual regeneration of mankind in general without any distinction of religion, race, or nationality in accordance with the need of the time and demand of nature." A brief account of the special features of Sahaj Marg sādhanā may present forth a glimpse of its endeavour to introduce an efficacious technique of Rajayogic Sadhanā.

1. A Renaissance in Yogic Sādhanā:

Sahaj Marg does not introduce those cruder methods and techniques, which are hard to practise. It is an organismic spiritual advancement culminating in Divine elevation. It is not a traditional process of the mystic awakening of Kundalinī from the lowlands in sacral plexus and raising it to the highland of

sahasrāra in the crown of the head; but it begins its journey from heart, which is scientifically the source of life. All the development of Kundalinī and crossing of various lotuses (Cakras) have automatic and natural manifestation. "Sahaj Marg is, in one sense, the ideal towards which all yoga's have striven but have missed." It is Sahaj Marg because it is simple. It is Sahaj because it is natural, divinely natural in human existence.

2. Modified and Remodeled form of Rajayoga:

There are two aspects of human personality the body and the mind. In yogic practice for spiritual elevation both have been given due consideration and consequently there are technique of spiritual practice Hathayoga and Rajayoga respectively adhering to physical and mental function of human personality. Rajayoga represent the final and ultimate form of yogic Hathayogapradīpikā explains that Hathayoga is Sadhanā. practised to achieve the Rājayoga. It should be remembered that these are not two opposite disciplines but as a matter of fact mutually cohesive to each other. Sahaj Marg enunciates a novel and efficacious approach in its practice by introducing modified version of Rājayoga. Pantañjali in Yoga Sūtra (1, 29) propounds the eightfold path, but Sahaj Marg practice begins from the seventh step (i.e. dhyāna) and claims that all the essentials and characteristic features of the previous steps from Yama to Pratyāhāra naturally and automatically develop in an abhyasi during the course of one's practice. The last three steps (Dhāranā, Dhyāna and Samādhi) are treated as a single step of meditation, starting with Dhāranā and culminating in Samādhi. Through this modification Sahaj Marg has vitalised and infused the very methodology in order to achieve the real goal in shortest possible time. Besides, it has also done away with the physical mortification from the path of spiritual regeneration in human life assuring sure success.

3. Transmission (Prānāhuti):

The technique of transmission is a unique and important feature in Sahaj Marg Sādhanā; and this technique is not found in any other form of spiritual practice (Sadhanā). Transmission is a technique in which "the Master by the application of his inner powers awakens and accelerates to action and directs the flow of

Divine currents towards his heart." It helps in the spiritual transformation of man. The function of the capable guide essentially supplements the effortful abhyāsa of the aspirant to make the Sādhanā really efficacious.

4. The Ultimate Reality:

The Ultimate Reality has been conceived in a simple and easily comprehensible way as Tam, Centre, Nothing or Zero. The conception of Nothing is not the nothing which nothings, but it is a positive concept meaning the 'reservoir of all energy' as it has been discussed earlier also. It is the Base conceived as Tam. Actually it is said that the Reality is neither light nor dark, but it is somewhat of 'grey' colour. This 'Nothing' is also not the ever-changing current in Buddhist idealism, known as Sūnya. Sahaj Marg propounds that Reality is definitely indescribable in words, but not beyond experience. This system asserts that Nothing is not a negative but a positive force which posits the being and becoming of the world.

5. Domestic Life:

Sahaj Marg Sādhanā has given a way and a meaning to our domestic lives. They say that domestic life is no more a hindrance in the path of Yogic Sādhanā, rather true form of spiritual elevation is possible only in domestic life. To Shri Ram Chandraji the domestic or family life "is not a bar in gaining the real aim of life. I think that it is the best Ashram in which higher approach is easily possible.

6. The Region wise description of Spiritual Evolution on the path of Sādhanā:

Sahaj Marg Sādhanā divides the path of spiritual advancement into three regions - the Central Region, the Mind Region and the Heart Region, These regions are respectively described in the form of seven, eleven and five concentric circles, which are crossed by an abhyasi on the path of spiritual elevation. The description of Central Region is the unique discovery and a revolutionary contribution of Sahaj Marg practice

to the Sādhanā aspects of Indian Philosophy.

7. The State of Ignorance (ajñāna):

This system enunciates that the state of ignorance (ajñāna) as conceived in Indian Philosophy is a 'wrongly interpreted and falsely assumed conception. Really, ignorance is a higher state of development as compared to knowledge (jnana), which is regarded by Sañkara as a matter of supreme importance. This system also advocates and furnishes reason that ignorance (ajñāna) is the characteristic feature of Atman. Thus, this system unravels the true significance and meaning of ignorance (ajñāna) and knowledge (jnana)

8. Prayer:

Great emphasis is laid on Japa or prayer in various forms of Sadhanā in Indian Philosophy. Prayer is a necessary preliminary for a beginner on the path of Sadhanā. "It is an opening of the mind and the heart for the entry of God into you. The prayer introduced in Sahaj Marg practice for an abhyasi is very simple and presents the real essence of a prayer. It sums up the feeling of an abhyasi in order to achieve communion with God.

9. Fresh approach to traditional terms:

This system explains the significance and meaning of the various important concepts of Indian Philosophy viz. Brahman, Atman, Jiva, Moksha, Ísvara etc. Thus, it contributes a fresh approach towards the numerous concepts.

(Note: Only short analysis has been given above of the features and virtually there are so many more features to be enumerated e.g., the description of thirteen knots, theory of parallelism, principle of invertendo, the role of Preceptors in training aspirants, diary writing, meditation on heart, constant surrender, the state of forgetfulness, the remembrance, methodology of cleaning, utilization of sleep and so on are a few to mention. These features make this system unparalleled and unique rather revolutionary in the sādhanā aspect of Indian Philosophy.)

These features of Sahaj Marg system would come to light in the following chapters. It discards scholastic interpretation and

mystic glorification and models its technique of Sādhanā on the principle of "do and feel i.e., On the basis of direct experience. To quote Dr. K. C. Varadachari; "Sahaj Marg is simple and sweet in the beginning, simple and sweet in the middle and simple and sweet at the end.

4. BEING-the Ultimate Reality

The notion of the 'Being' is the basic concept of philosophy referring to the Ultimate Reality, It involves the root cause of origin, Sustenance and dissolution of the world, i.e., thoughts and theories regarding God, the fundamental element Substance) of the mundane World as the root cause of the process of origin and evolution of whole of the cosmic universe The view of Sahaj Marg in the light of philosophical traditions brings to light the theoretical background of the 'Being' and its significance and usefulness in day-to-day human life.

(1) God, the Ultimate Reality

Those who discourse on 'Being', the Ultimate, ask such questions as given in the Upanishad: "What is the cause? (Is it) Brahman? \Whence are we born? O, knower of Brahman (tell us) presided over by whom do we live our different conditions in pleasure and other than pleasures (pains)." Thus, the question of Being' (Ultimate Reality) is the pivotal point round which the philosophy of any school of thought revolves. All the schools of Indian philosophy, except the materialistic Carvāka system, admit the existence of some Supreme Reality, which governs the being and becoming of all the animate and inanimate objects in the world, The problem about Ultimate Reality "is not that of proving or disproving the existence of an Eternal Absolute but that of describing it in an adequate and satisfactory way." All the traditional heterodox and orthodox school, as well as various recently developed Neo-Vedānta and Yoga school in India have painted Absolute Reality in different shades and hues, according to the intellectual capacities of their founders and in the light of the later development of their approaches towards the origin (jannma), sustenance (stlhiti) and destruction (pralaya) of world. The numerous attempts to define and to describe Reality have given rise to many controversies and

confusions during the course of history. Really any controversy or confusion is the result of theoretical philosophy and to describe Reality have given rise to many controversies and confusions during the course of history. Really any controversy or confusion is the result of theoretical philosophy devoid of practice. There is no confusion in Reality as such. The difficulty arises only because the different interpretations do not tell us what God is in Himself but only what He is to us. Turning over the pages of history one finds that there has been a heated exchange of views over the conception of Being (the Ultimate Reality). That is why, not only laymen but even learned ones are misled, when they come across the numerous interpretations and theories about the existence and the nature of God. They helplessly fall prey into the cobwebs of one or the other standpoint, which they happen to regard as best and satisfactory. In the words of Shri Ram Chandraji (Shri Babuji): The Reality has sunk deep leaving its outer cover for the artist to paint with colours according to their mental taste and skill. The result is that people began to focus their attention on those very paintings and get into them to the extent, which is neither spirituality nor real.

Any way, at least this much is certain that God or Reality is the universal principle and commonly admitted belief of all the sects and systems in the pursuit of some solution to the problem of human existence and its purpose. "But such godhead has been made complicated, and we are today witnessing the clash of philosophies and cults devoted to god in his manifold form or appearance." God is simple and extremely subtle devoid of all grossness. In the matters of Realty, one should always keep in mind the words of Swami Vivekananda that "a man has no right to say that there is God unless he realises It. Similarly, Shri Babuji also tells, "I believe that one must have no right to touch the subject of realization unless he has attained it in true sense, whereby the Divine wisdom has awakened in him.

The numbers of gods and deities enumerated in India is so large and the human existence is of such a short duration that it would require persistent efforts through many lives to have knowledge of them. Each of the gods has been vested with some power to work the plans of nature and to keep the order in the Universe "God in English language consists of only three letters G-O-D and " (A-U-M) also consists of 3 letters. They are very simple

to utter, simple to remember." There is description of three gods Brahma Vismu and Mahesa, symbolized in sacred syllable of (AUM) as respectively governing the origin, Sustenance and dissolution of the world. These three divinities are really the three personified powers of the Supreme Divinity It is a very interesting coincidence that the God and the AUM as respectively used in western and in Indian thought represent the same alphabetical sequence denoting the three functions of governance, Therefore the concept God in English language is very much like the syllable 'ss (AUM) in Hindu mythology as following

(AUM) and GOD

Deities	Governing	Sound	Alphabets	Function
Brahma	Origin	A	G for	Generation
Visnu	Sustenance	U	O for	Operation
Mahesa	Dissolution	M	D	Destroyer

The gods are "the different functionaries of Nature set to work out Her will like different parts of the machine." This trinity of three divine powers is manifested in every existing object of the world even in the minutest particle. Every nucleus has all these three attributes in it, which resemble the factions of Brahma, Visnu and Mahesa. That is to say that one has the power of creation in it, the other of growth and development and the third power of destruction.

Sahaj Marg Sādhanā contends that if anybody takes these triple divinities as his ideal, he will never be able to get release from the cycle of birth and death simply for the reason that the field of action of these three divinities is limited and they are mutually assisted by one another to complete the rotation and to keep the wheel of universe moving on and on. According to the founder of Sahaj Marg System the various incarnations of Ultimate Reality as Rāma, Krsna etc., to descend to earth in human form to save human race from vice and sin or save from demoniac powers. which become Overpowering during that period. The same thought is clearly expressed in Gita (IV, 7): "When Virtue subsides and vice prevails, I create myself for the establishment of Dharma (righteousness)." Hence, these incarnations were the special personalities infused with super-human capacities to complete the

work, which Nature demanded and for which they had come down to earth.

In Shri Ram Chandraji's own words: "The Avatars come down for a definite purpose endowed with all the necessary powers required for the accomplishment of the work allotted to them. That may, in other words, serve to be their samskāras, which brought them down into the world. The power withdraws them when their work is finished." They are generally described as Almighty, because they had full command over various powers of nature and could utilize them in the way they thought to be proper. The scope of their work and the field of their action were limited in accordance with the purpose of the work they had to accomplish. They went back when the task assigned to them was fulfilled. Thus, the coming down to earth and returning back to their Original Source of the numerous incarnations means that "they are also not away from the sphere of birth and death. In this respect worship of them can never lead one beyond the circle or region of rebirth. Moreover, they descended to earth to save humanity from the evil forces and when their mission was over, they went back to the Original Source. This also means that the incarnations were the partial manifestations of Supreme power. "We die and become gods, while devas die and they take our form." Further, Shri Ram Chandraji boldly asserts, "If I put it in high sounding words on the basis of my own experience, I would be bold enough to say that gods are in tact at our service and not we at theirs. With due regard to this fact, you can yourself decide how far can gods be helpful to us in realization. They themselves are always craving for it. Therefore, these gods are helpful only to the extent of their power and their worship and adoration will lead only to the extent of their level in the order of Nature.

Shri Ram Chandraji suggests, "God is one and only one, so we must take only the one to realise the one alone. The idea of Trinity will definitely lead you to births and rebirths. "God is Subtlest. In order to go up to Him one must become equally subtle. He also explains some conceptions about Reality.

Some conceive Reality as a power or Energy, which is also a limited concept because it also sets a material cloak round it. Existence also does not signify the real sense because "if we fix our

thought on it even then the faint idea of something persists and then some consciousness of materiality is revived to some extent." Moreover, every existence requires a base. "There must be a backing for the existence. Existence is meaningless if it has nothing to stand upon." In this way there are numerous conceptions and forms in which Reality is adorned and worshiped. Gita also tells us that in whatever forms a man worships God; he gets Him in that very form. But the common difficulty is that people do not worship Him in any form, but instead they worship only the forms, whereby the Reality at the root disappears altogether. This is really the greatest blunder and should be avoided in order to have progress on the path of spiritual elevation.

(2) The Concept of Brahman:

The term Brahman has been used for the Ultimate Reality in Indian Philosophy. In Vedic texts this term stands for various meanings in different contexts. Dr. Fateh Singh says that European scholars have connected the Brahman and its root with 'Bricht' (magic), 'Brager' (poetry) and Braggi (the god of poetry). He also tells that according to the etymological meaning 'Brahman' would also mean a magical formula or spell. In Rgveda too the word 'Brahman' sometimes means a 'prayer or a magical formula'. In Atharvaveda also the word 'Brahman' has been used for 'magic and spell'. Brahman is such a term, which has signified numerous objects in Vedic texts. Hansara has cited various references wherein the Brahman has been identified with different objects e.g. Vak (speech), Vyoman (sky), Satyam (real), Manas (mind), Hridaya (heart), Caksu (eye), Srotra (ear), Gayatrī (a Vedic metre), Pranava (the sacred syllable Aum), Vasanta (spring season), Mitra (sun), Palāśa (a tree, Butea Frondosa), Amrtama (nectar), Brhaspati, Brahmanaspati (a god), Candramā (moon), Aditya (the original god), Agni (fire), Yajña (fire-sacrifice) etc. The more so priest and king have addressed each other as Brahman. There have also been enumerated fourteen standpoints of various schools of thought about the concept of Brahman. Thus, the picture of Brahman has been painted in different shades and colours. However, at least this much is certain about Brahman as an Ultimate Reality that he is the cause of origin, sustenance and dissolution of all the animate and inanimate objects of the Universe.

Etymological implication of 'Brahman':

The word 'Brahman' has been derived in Sanskrit language from the root 'Brh' meaning 'to grow' or 'to expand', therefore 'Brahman' means that "which has expanded or manifested the whole creation; inorganic or material. Viṣṇu Purana also tells that it is called 'Brahman' since it is great and expanded. Shankar traces the origin of the word 'Brahman' to the root 'Brhati', (to exceed), meaning thereby eternity, purity etc. Madhva is of opinion that 'Brahman' is the person in whom the qualities dwell in fullness (brhanāti hyasmin gunāh). All this discussion brings to light the thought of Rgveda (I. 146, 46) that "learned ones speak variously of the one Truth" (ekam sadviprabahudha vadanti). In all this controversy over the different and numerous conceptions and notions of 'Brahman', it is better to keep in mind that 'Brahman' is the be all and end all of the whole of universe.

Now we turn to the approach of Sahaj Marg Sādhanā to the concept of 'Brahman'. Adi Guru Shri Ram Chandraji of Fatehgarh explain that the term 'Brahman' is derived from the two roots 'Brh', to grow and 'Man', to think. Therefore, 'Brahman' is that which grows and thinks. Some may say that since growing is only a progressive (agragāmi) process, 'Brahman' would not be explained thereupon. But it is not so, because both the processes -progressive as well as regressive-signify the same sense of 'growing'. The difference is such as one pushes up and down, rise and fall or expansion and contraction, the same principal of growing involves both the motions and there is no thought of diminishing in it. The Adi Guru has very aptly explained this idea by the example of the running wheels of a locomotive, whose spokes on one side rise up and on the other side go down, making the wheel move forward. Even so in the case of 'Brahman' growing involves both the progressive and regressive processes.

The Adi Guru also points out some characteristic features of the 'Brahman', the Great Existence. He remarks that (i) 'Brahman' is a knot of animate and inanimate: (ii) it is a mixed state of sattva, rajas and Tamas. (iii) like ourselves it wakes, sleeps and is merged and becomes Mahat: (iv) like ourselves it behaves and (v) truly it is great and we are little ones. 'Brahman' is limitless,

all knowing, all pervading and inherent in all the object but we are limited ones. Since he is great, his name is Brahman and ours Jiva. The root brhati' also means 'big' or great and mam, the heart, therefore, Brah-man is one who has Great Heart. The thinking process will always be possible by manas' Brahman is the transcendental heart and Jīva is earthly heart. He is one and this is many. He is whole and this is a part. Further, the Adi Guru, astoundingly attributes a few more characteristics to Jīva and Brahman alike; "Jīva is stupid (midha), Jiva is ignorant (ajñānī), Jiva is wise (jñānī), Jva also remains unsteady (cañcala). Brahman is Ignorant (ajñānī) Brahman is wise (jñānī) and unsteady (cañcala). Had these qualities not been in Brahman, these qualities would not have been in Jiva.

The thought mentioned above i.e. to call Brahman stupid, ignorant and unsteady is nothing more than repeating the sense of the Vedic idea 'yathā pindānde tathā brahmāṇḍe' (as in the microcosm so in the macrocosm). This is why Brahman must possess the characteristics that are found in Jiva. Moreover, like Jiva Brahman also has three bodies (i) Gross body (Sthūla Sarīra) i.e., Virāta, the Great, (ii) Subtle body (Sūksma Sarīra) i.e., antaryāmin or avyākṛta, the inheritant or unmanifest, and (iii) causal body (Kāraṇa Sarīra) i.e., Hiranyagarbha, the root cause.

In religious texts much has been said about twofold description of Brahman (i) saguna (determinate or qualified) and (ii) Nirguṇa (indeterminate or unqualified). There has been a lot of discussion and exchange of views over these two conceptions of Brahman in the sādhanā aspect of Indian Philosophy. This two-fold division of Brahman in Upaniṣadic philosophy has been described as Aparā (lower) and parā (higher) Brahman. Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad (1, 3, 1) points out verily, there are two forms of Brahman, the formed (mūrtam) and the formless (amūrtam), the mortal and the immortal, and the moving and the unmoving, the actual (existent) and the true (being)." These two forms of Brahman are further described as Satya and Satyasatya (Brh. II, 3,6). Maitrī Upaniṣad (VI, 3) also gives the description of two forms of Brahman formed and formless. Shankar accounts for this division of saguna and nirguna Brahman as the practical (vyāvahārika) and the transcendental (pārmārthika) levels of Reality. He also advocates that those who are not much advanced in spirituality

should follow and worship Saguna Brahman and Nirguna Brahman is the ideal and final in the field of spirituality. These two conceptions of Reality have given rise to two branches of sādhanā saguna sādhanā and nirguna sādhanā.

Sahaj Marg Sādhanā treats both the above-mentioned conceptions of Reality as misleading. "These are no doubt two ways; but the goal is one - the realization of God." Both the conceptions are inaccurate and inadequate because "God is neither Sākāra nor Nirākāra but beyond both. It is we who conceive him to be Nirguna; it is we who make him Saguna. What we should do in order to avoid these quarrels is that we must fix our view on the Original Elements (Adi Tattva)." If one meditates upon the Saguna form of Reality and thinks it enough, the Infinite will disappear and the Reality limited to form only would survive; and those who worship Nirguna form of Reality commit the mistake of limiting the Reality in a negative way. An attempt to set aside the age-old controversy in Indian Philosophy, over the concept of Ultimate Reality or God, has been made by the Founder- President of Shri Ram Chandra Mission, in the following words: "I believe that the controversy over the question of God is a fake one, It really arises due to misconceptions with which God has become loaded in the course of the history of various cultural groups of humanity, The need, therefore, is to give up the impulsive approach to the problem, because it blurs the vision and thus, impedes the progress of man towards his goal "

(3) Being, the Ultimate Reality in Sahaj Marg:

Sahaj Marg sādhanā conceives Ultimate Reality as the most simple and extremely subtle existence devoid of grossness and materiality. Shri Ram Chandraji maintains that Ultimate Reality or God "is neither confined within the certain forms or rituals, nor He is to be traced out within the scripture, Him we have to seek in the innermost core of our heart. Really God is very simple and plain. He is not a solid form, there is no solidity whatsoever of any kind in Him, God is simple and extremely subtle, In fact the very simplicity has become a veil to it. Dr. S. P. Srivastava also remarks that the true "experience of the Ultimate Reality in its naked form comes with the casting aside of the covering of egoism." The Ultimate Reality is

indescribable (anirvacaniya) and they say that neither speech nor mind nor sense can apprehend him. The indescribability of Ultimate Reality in Sahaj Marg has neither been explained by logical arguments, nor by making language incapable of expression. nor by taking agnostic or sceptic stand, nor by admitting intellect as blind or senses as lame to approach up to It. Sahaj Marg system describes Reality from different angles of view; and thereby advocates the implication of the thought of the Upaniṣadic philosophy: "How knower can be known (vijñātāramare kena vijaniyal)? Shri Ram Chandraji, the Founder-President of Shri Ram Chandra Mission also explains that in order to know zero, the Ultimate Reality, one should become zero. When one becomes zero the duality of knower and known is lost and then "the zero cannot know the condition of zero, por the dead of (his own) corpse. "Moreover, Ultimate Reality is indescribable because Reality never says, "I am so and so or I have such and such nature." It is we who assign it the description as Not-this' Not-this (neti-neti). Since the description of any object in language is always through one or more words, but the object is even more than the description made in words. The word 'table' signifies the object table but the word 'table itself is not table. Hence, the description of Ultimate Reality is possible, but one should not treat it to be the complete and total expression of the Ultimate Reality as a whole. That is to say that the conception of unlimited and formless Being is impossible through limited and formal words Therefore, Ultimate Reality is indescribable. Senses and intellect may not reach up to Him but Its realization is not an impossibility.

For the sake of understanding Sahaj Marg system attempts to describe Ultimate Reality by various words viz. zero or Naught, Nothing. Centre, Base and Tam. These expressions are not fresh invention or discovery, but a new interpretation of the various notions and concepts used in the history of Indian Philosophy. Synonyms of these words can be traced in Eastern as well as in Western Philosophy e.g., noumena of Kant, pure Being of Hegel. Nothing of Existentialists, Tao of Lao Tzu in China, Mu of Kitaro Nishida in Japan, conceptions of Sūnya, Aksara, Kham, Abhāva, Vyomna, Akāśa etc. in Indian Philosophy. Now, the implication of these terms may be under taken into consideration in the light of the philosophy of Sahaj Marg practice. It would help to have a clear and comprehensible notion of the Ultimate Reality.

Ultimate Reality as Zero: -

Shri Ram Chandraji uses the concept of zero to characterize Ultimate Reality; and thereby he exemplifies mathematically the Upaniṣadic thought of Reality as being bigger than the biggest (mahato mahiyān) and 'smaller than the smallest (anoranīyān). He argues: "In order to understand the conception of God or Ultimate Reality, let us start with the stand taken by an atheist, that there is no God. This is to say in mathematical terminology, that no positive or negative value can be assigned to it. The mathematical sign for that which has no positive or negative value is Zero' or 'Naught'. Now let the atheist be faced with the question as to what exists. A consistent agnostic can doubt and deny the existence of everything, but not of one's own self, viz., that doubt or denies. Speaking again in mathematical terminology it may be expressed as 'one.

"Look at the magical function of zero AN you p0 on adding more and more of these to the right side of that which exists, viz. 'one', it goes on swelling and multiplying itself There is handily a comprehensible limit to this expansion, and the Upanishads have rightly characterized this expanded Infinite bigger than the biggest (mahato mahtyan)" Further, Shri Ram Chandraji asserts that "start assigning 'zero to the left side or negative side of 'one' or yourself with the function of negativating will ie., the decimal point, the addition of more and more 'Naught's will gradually bring 'one closer and closer to the zero. Again there can be hardly any limit to this shrinkage of the 'self, and the Upaniṣads have rightly characterized it as smaller than the smallest (anorantyan)

The concept of Ultimate as zero reveals the attribute of immanence as well as transcendence, and it also explain that the origin of creation of the manifold objects in the world does not affect in any manner the integrity of Ultimate Reality, Shri Ram Chandraji points out that zero is the most potent numerical symbol, which represents the power of the greatest degree of addition or subtraction. All the numerical digits stand for accurate and definite amount of some limited quantity. But the capacity of zero encircles in itself greater value than the other numerical digits

have.

Zero as taken independently and compared with other numerical digits, symbolizes perfection and changelessness. One minus one is zero ($1-1=0$), two minus two is zero ($2-2=0$) and three minus three is zero ($3-3=0$) and so on. And one plus one is equal to two ($1+1=2$), two plus two is equal to four ($2+2=4$), and three plus three is equal to six ($3+3=6$). Thus, they are changed to higher number of multiplications. But the zero plus zero and the zero minus zero both lead to the same field of zero. That is to say that the addition or the subtraction does not bring any quantitative change in it. It remains in the same zone of naught (zero). This attribute of perfection and changelessness in zero can aptly be compared with the concept of perfect (pūrṇa) in the invocation hymn of Yajurveda Upaniṣads. "That (God) is perfect. This (universe) is perfect. The perfect (universe) evolves out of perfect (God). By subtracting the perfect (universe) from the perfect (God) the remainder is perfect." To equalize this concept of perfection (pūrṇa) with zero, it can be described as following: That is zero. This is zero. The zero evolves out of zero. Subtracting the zero from the zero, the zero remains. In this way, by the help of the concept of zero as Ultimate Reality, Shri Ram Chandrajī has very accurately pin-pointed that the Ultimate Reality is a perfect and changeless existence and whatever that exists in this moving world is Ultimate Reality.

Ultimate Reality as Nothing:

The notion of Ultimate Reality as Nothing is very common in Philosophy. In Indian Philosophy as well as in Western Philosophy this concept of Nothing has been conceived and expressed through different conceptions e.g., Nothing of Existentialists, 'Mu' of Kitaro Nishida, "Tao of Lao Tzu, Pure Being of Hegel, Concepts of Aksara, Kham, Sūnya, Akāsa etc. in Indian Philosophy also express the same idea. Dr. S. P. Srivastava uses the term 'vacant nothing', and thereby he clarifies that "the expression of 'vacant nothing' is a crude one and has been used to connote a total negation of all that is possible to be communicated to one, who has not experienced it himself. Yet this 'vacant nothing' is not something negative. It, is experienced as a reservoir of all imaginable energy. "Thus, the nothing in Sahaj Marg is not a nothing, which nothings (nichet) itself. Nothing has

a positive aspect, which makes it the 'reservoir of all imaginable energy' and infuses vitality to it and it becomes what Kitaro Nishida calls to be 'Mu', the absolute nothingness and he tells, "Death is an entering into absolute nothingness and life is an appearing out of absolute nothingness." Shri Ram Chandraji has himself pointed out that the conception of Ultimate Reality as Nothing is simply for the sake of expression and understanding or so to say. for comprehending a glimpse of Ultimate Reality. He explains that the term Nothing also does not convey the actual and real sense of Absolute Eternal, because even in this negation a faint idea of something remains in view. It is that one may not ascribe this-ness or that-ness to the idea of 'Nothing', but the Nothing is after all a thing. Hence, the word 'Nothing' too bears a faint reflection of something in it. Some may charge that if Nothing is taken for granted to be the Ultimate Reality, It is useless because in the absence of something in it, the so-called Nothing neither would serve any pragmatic purpose nor the creation of the world could legitimately be explained. They say: Ex nihilo nihil fit' (nothing can come out of nothing). But it is not so. As a matter of fact, nothing is of immense pragmatic worth. In our day-to-day life also we use so many things simply because there exists nothing. Lao tzu has very aptly pointed out the pragmatic worth of Nothing:

“Thirty spokes unite in one nave,
And because of the part, where nothing exists,
We have the use of carriage wheels.
Clay is moulded into vessels,
And because of the space where nothing exists
We are able to use them as vessels.
Doors and window are cut out in the walls of a house.
And because they are empty spaces,
We are able to use them. Therefore,
On the one hand we have the benefit of existence, and
On the other hand we make use of non-existence

Thus, it would be erroneous to say that since Nothing is nothing it is useless. Lao Tzu calls Ultimate Reality 'Tao' and remarks: "If I am forced to give it a name I call it 'Tao' and I name it as Supreme. And "the Tao that can be expressed is not eternal Tao,,.

Nothing can be compared with the Sūnya in Buddhistic idealism. According to Dasgupta Sūnyata may be viewed in seven aspects, and Nothing in Sahaj Marg sādhanā may also be presented as parallel notations.

Sunyata (Buddhism) and Nothing (Sahaj Marg)

Sūnyata (Buddhism)	Nothing (Sahaj Marg)
(1) They are always interdependent and hence have no special characteristics by be themselves and as they cannot determined in terms of others; for their own natures being only an indeterminate in themselves and hence they are all indefinable	(1) Nothing is always independent and it does not need any help to determine itself Dependence and interdependence are the characteristics of limited particulars objects but It is a Perfect and self-proved existence.
(2) They have no positive essence since they spring up from the nature of non-existence.	(2) Nothing has a positive essence. as it posits pragmatic purposes and is the reservoir of all imaginable energy.
(3) They are of an unknown type of non- existence since all skandhas or psychological groups vanish in nirvāṇa.	(3) Nothing is knowable by following proper practice under the guidance of a capable Master..
(4) They appear phenomenally connected though non-existent for the skandhas have no reality in themselves, nor they are related to be somewhat causally connected.	(4) Not only phenomenally but also noumenally Nothing is connected with the things, and therefore, things are true not Sunya as Buddhist idealists proclaim.
(5) None of the things can be described as	(5) Nothing cannot be described in language but is not of indefinite

having any definite nature, they are all un-demonstrable by language.

(6) There cannot be any knowledge about them except that which is brought about by the long standing defects of desires, which pollute all our visions.

(7) Things are also non-existence, in the sense that we affirm them to be in a particular place and time in which they are not.

existence. He is the Base of all things.

6) Nothing can be known by the ardent and devoted seeker. unpolluted by the defects of desires. through spiritual practice under capable guidance pollute all our visions.

(7) the existence of Nothing in a particular place and time is self-evident because it is an all-embracing and all-pervading existence

Dasgupta states "things which are neither existent, nor non-existent are only imagined to be existent by fools. But in Sahaj Marg it is wise to regard Nothing as existent and actually it is 'existent non-existence'. Hence, it can be held that world is neither a dream, nor a mirage, neither a flux, nor an appearance but Nothing and it has been expressed as non-existence (asat) in Upaniṣads. "Non-existent, verily was this world in the beginning. There from, verily was existence produced. Lao tzu in "Tao-Te-Ching (XL) also tells that existence is born of non-existence. One may object as to how existence could be produced from non-existence. The same question was also asked by Svetaketu in Chandogya Upaniṣad (VI 2, 2). there have been enumerated four types of non-existence in Vaiśeṣika Philosophy: (1) Absolute non-existence atyantabhāva): e.g. barren woman's Son (vandhyaputra); (2)Posterior non-existence (pradhvansābhāva): e.g. the non-existence of jar after it is broken or destroyed; (3) Mutual non-existence (anyonyābhāva): e.g. the existence of cloth in jar and vice versa; (4) Antecedent non-existence (prāgabhāva): e.g. non-existence of jar in clay before its production. Nothing or non-

existence does not always mean absolute non-existence, but antecedent non-existence. Hence creation of the existent (sat) world from non-existence does not mean creation from absolute non-existence (alyantābhāva), but from antecedent non-existence (prāgabhāva). Dr. Radhakrishnan explains: the manifested universe is called 'sat and its unmanifested condition is said to be 'asat. From the unmanifest (asat) the world of sat with names and form is said to rise." Thus., there is no contradiction in maintaining that existence is the production of non-existence 1. Nothing Chandogya Upaniṣad (III, 19, 1) clarifies: "In the beginning this (world) was non-existence. It became existent. It grew..." Therefore, non-existence (asat) is a state in which name (nāma) and form (rūpa) were in an unmanifested state. Shankar calls it as unmanifested name and form (avyakta nāmarūpam).

Ultimate Reality as Centre or Base:

Ultimate Reality is the foundational Base to stand upon. In Samkhya philosophy Prakrti has been regarded as the base of the evolution of the cosmic world. Shri Ram Chandraji remarks: no Prakrti and no universe can stand without the base. There must be backing for the existence and the backing is God or Brahman, the Ultimate Reality. It is Bhima" Sāmkhya philosophy advocates that Praktyi is the harmony of the three attributes (gunas) -sattva, rajas, and tamas If this is regarded as true, then the existence of Prakrti is only possible before the beginning of evolution or after the end of involution i.e., pralaya, because creation is the result of disharmony in the gunas. And after the commencement of the process of evolution Prakrti is described as a dancer (nartak) playing before her witness, the Purusa. But the existence of Prakrti is also not possible even before creation and after dissolution, because when harmony among three guṇas gets established, then the Prakrti is nothing but another name of three attributes taken collectively. Really three attributes themselves are the result of the process of evolution or creation, because they have qualitative as well as quantitative difference. Moreover, Prakrti is itself the result of stir (ksobha) and Prakrti also has some Base to stand upon. "The permeating nature of Reality is such that it is the meaning and soul of all things. All things live and move and have their being in it without knowing it." The original ground is the Original Peace the Quiet or quintessence, which souls seek in

the world.

This conception of Ultimate Reality as Centre' is a unique contribution and pragmatic discovery highlighting the contemporary renaissance in Indian Philosophy. Shri Ram Chandraji clarifies the real sense of Centre', so that its true significance may not be misunderstood. He asserts: "the centre of a circle, if observed minutely, is in itself another smaller and finer circle. As such it must have another still finer centre. The same process continues up to infinity. In other words, each of the finer or smaller circles serves as a centre of the next bigger circle. Reason and imagination fails to trace out an origin or end." This conception of Reality as Centre is original contribution of Sahaj Marg and this Centre is the root cause of the multiple existences in cosmic universe.

Ultimate Reality as Tam:

The notion of 'Tam' as used in Sahaj Marg should not be confused or identified with the Tamas, one of the three attributes (guna) of Prakrti in Sārmkhya philosophy. In this respect of gunas Shri Ram Chandraji tries to remove the misunderstanding: "People generally consider sat to be Reality and treat it as a yardstick for measuring the knowledge of God. In fact, it is all the sphere of Tama and Tama alone. This is the only thing worth achieving for a true Yogi. People also regard this state of Tama as their deadliest enemy. The conception of Ultimate Reality as Tama is also found in Nasadiya sukta of Rgveda (X, 129, 3) "Tama (darkness) there was, at first, concealed in Tama (darkness). All this was an indiscriminate chaos. All that existed then was void and formless. By the great power of warmth was born that Unity." Manu Smṛti (I, 5-6) also affirms this notion of Tama: "This (Universe) existed in the sphere of Tama (darkness) unperceived, destitute of distinction marks, unattainable by reasoning, unknowable, wholly immersed in deep sleep. Then, the divine self-existed (himself) indiscernible; (but) making (all) this, the great elements and the rest discernible appeared with irresistible (creative) power, dispelling the darkness". Thus, Ultimate Reality in its primal form was Tama (darkness). But Shri Ram Chandraji remarks that people have lost true sight of Ultimate Reality, which is beyond both light and darkness. It is grey in its colour. He writes: "true Reality is neither

Light nor Darkness. It can be called 'dhundhlāpana'

Dr. K. C. Varadachari gives another interpretation of the concept of Tama as conceived in Sahaj Marg. "The conception of Tama as the Reality is unique. It is like the 'unground' of Jacob Boehme. It is the Reality." It is "the actual state we were in when the world was created or born." He also asserts that Tama is THAT and "Here again my Master has given the meaning of the Ultimate as Tam. The name of it is Tam - THAT. You cannot express it in any other language. You cannot call it 'aham'; you cannot call it 'tvam'. It is THAT". Thus, Tam is not the abbreviation of Tamas. It is Tam -That or the object the second accusative case of Sah'. If you know the object, then get identified with it. One will begin to draw the vital from the Source. Dr. K. C. Varadachari also asserts that That thou art (Tattvamasī) is more important than That I am (So hamasmi). Tam is Reality where absolute peace (Sānti) pervades. This contention of Ultimate Reality in Sahaj_ Marg unravels mists of the wrong conception and provides a reasonable explanation.

The Ultimate Reality

Now we come to the concept of Being and becoming. These are not the terms to signify the two levels or states to be attained at or crossed over; but the two processes in the spiritual life of an individual on the path of spiritual practice (sadhanaā) Dr. K. C. Varadachi explains that Being and becoming are inversely related and "in yoga we seek to increase Being and reduce becoming. We inverse dharmī or self-consciousness or awareness and reduce the object-consciousness (dharma)." He also clarifies, "The movement of ourselves has this twofold nature; one which is inward and central increasing awareness or Being, and the other outward and losing awareness of Being but gaining consciousness of becoming."

In this way Being' means God-ward ascent and becoming Signifies 'descent towards world'. Former is the process of realization, and latter of creation. Sahaj Marg trains man to increase Being and reduce becoming. Thus, this account of Ultimate Reality as Being and becoming explains how Ultimate Reality is the efficient (nimitta) as well as the material (upādāna)

cause. Briefly, it is Being, which becomes.

However, for the realization of the Ultimate Reality and for true comprehension of the origin of universe one should forsake "the impulsive approach to the problem, because it blurs the vision and thus impedes the progress of man towards his goal. In this way, Sahaj Marg sādhanā presents numerous descriptions of the so-called indescribable Ultimate Reality for the sake of understanding and for having a glimpse of it. The variety of conceptions of Ultimate Reality as Nothing, Zero, Centre, Base, Tam, Bhūmā, Being and becoming may create confusion in mind for comprehending the real meaning and the essential nature of the Ultimate Reality. Moreover, it may also make it difficult for an aspirant to select one conception to begin with one's practice on the path of spiritual elevation. Actually, it is not so because the large variety of concepts used for Ultimate Reality in Sahaj Marg philosophy as explained above has been described and evaluated from various viewpoints in order to make way for reaching a plausible comprehension of true implication. Ultimate Reality is ontologically 'Base or Bhūmā', epistemologically 'Nothing', cosmologically Being and becoming, mathematically 'Zero', geometrically 'Centre', transcendently extremely subtle, practically simple and pure, negatively 'devoid of all grossness and solidity and positively reservoir of all imaginable energy.

But the description of Ultimate Reality is still not complete. Sahaj Marg attempts to define Ultimate Reality to a conceivable limit, In the history of philosophy there are numerous modes in which Ultimate Reality has been described. Spinoza describes it as the Substance of the substances. The Upaniṣads mention it as the Divine Entity "higher than the highest (parātparam puruṣam), 'subtler than the subtlest smaller than the smallest (anubhyoPyanu ca suksmam), (anoranīyān), greater than the greatest (mahatomahiyan). vitality of the vitals' (prānasya pranam), 'truth of the truths (satyasya satyam). It is noteworthy that the description of Shri Ram Chandraji matches with the notations of Upaniṣad but it would not be an exaggeration if mentioned that the clarity and practicability in the conceptual rendering surpasses the analysis of Upaniṣads, when he mentions that Ultimate Reality is a

substance less Substance', 'godless God', forceless Force', and metaphorically saltless Salt'. Further, more plausibly he maintains that the best possible expression of Ultimate Reality can be that It is, as It is' or say He is, what He is'.

Thus, Ultimate Reality is the "Central Substance". Which has been described by various names and forms. To sum up, in the words of Dr. K. C. Varadachari: "The metaphysics of Sahaj Marg thus implies the acceptance of the transcendent, which is beyond all descriptions, and yet is the fountainhead of all descriptions. It is Infinite and indescribable, but it is capable of being realized. It is that which grants Ultimate peace, perfection and liberation to all. It is that which is to be known, seen and entered into. From it, all our senses recede and our mind also recedes, but it can be realized and entered into.

Becoming: The Cosmic Evolution

Our existence, in present grossest form is neither sudden nor accidental, is the result of the slow process of evolution. The questions as to why and how do the whole of universe along with its manifold objects come into existence. Thinkers have provided numerous solutions to this riddle in a large variety of ways and the result is the origin of various systems of philosophy in India as well as in the West. All the systems have conceived. their notions and notations to develop respective system as per their belief and convictions.

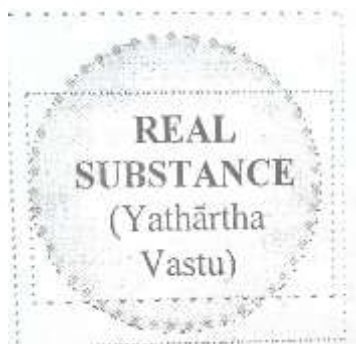
The Real Substance and Evolution

Sahaj Marg sādhanā holds that before the origin of the process of creation (evolution) there was Real Substance (Yathārtha Vastu), which is the unconditional and primal cause and source of all the animate and inanimate existences. This is the original Base (Bhūmā). Dr. K. C. Varadachari tells: "The Real is the Ultimate source of realities and sustains all. It can be said to be the Substance of all that is real." This is known and described as such only for the sake of understanding. Actually that Real Substance has neither name nor form, because all the names and the forms originate from It. It is the Original Ground', the "Base' existing in itself. It is causeless cause. All the existents for their subsistence depend upon It. It is an independent existence,

because there is nothing else to depend on. One prefers to designate the name, which one considers being the best as per one's own liking, inclination and interest. All the ascribed names and forms are the product of one's approach and comprehension. It is we who give one or the other name. It is we who impose subtle and fine attributes. In itself It is Nothing. It is the pivotal Centre to make the process of origin (Jamma), sustenance (thit), and dissolution (pralaya) run. It is Real, it is Perfect. All the conceptions are merely reflections for the sake of understanding and making it comprehensible unto the possible limit of human intellect.

Shri Lalaji Maharaj, the Adi Guru of Sahaj Marg gives a plausible and comprehensible description of this Real Substance. He asserts that towards the bottom of the Real Substance there is something what may be said to be smoke-like playing around in a superfine and most subtle form. In Sahaj Marg philosophy this smoke-like thing is called 'maya', which revolves and plays around the Real Substance. It is in the form of very subtle particles. Taking the shadow from the Real Substance, also called That (Tam), it forges different shapes and features. Really mayā does not have any separate independent existence. It appears as existent (sat) or non-existent (asat) only in and by the presence of the Real Substance. The power is dependent on the powerful and in itself power does not have any independent existence. Likewise maya too has its being based on Real Substance. This comprehension is unique as it provides us apprehension in the best and the simplest possible way. The Adi Guru illustrates (Figure-1) the Real Substance along with the 'energy particle' of māyā playing around it.

Figure



The Real Substance, which has been called 'Nothing, Centre', 'Zero' Base' etc., is the primeval form of Ultimate Reality i.e., the beginning and end of the whole of the cosmic universe. Around it the Māya or Being (Satta) may be said to be in the shape of energy particles, in its original form.

It is Nothing. It is Centre. It is Ultimate. It is something motionless or say mute. It is infinite in itself. The Centre Original is "absolutely motionless, and there is no energy, no power nor anything of the sort."

Clarifying the traditional belief regarding the concept of Mayā Sahaj Marg philosophy contends that Maya is neither an illusion, nor ephemeral appearance. It is not something to be feared as binding to the cycle of birth and death. Sahaj Marg philosophy argues: had there not been the Maya, there would not have been the possibility of creation of the cosmic universe and consequently we, the human beings, too would not have come into existence. There is no remedy for one who conceives Mayā to be something tempting the soul and subjecting it to the imprisonment in the cage of gross body. If one thinks that Māyā is something, which can harm, one will definitely get harmed and there is no way out from this riddled notion. It is rightly said that there is cure for madness but no remedy for foolishness especially in the field of spirituality. Thus, Sahaj Marg system does not conceive Mayā as an entity, which infatuates soul and subjects it to attachment and bondage. Shri Babuji Maharaj clearly remarks: "those who talk so highly about it are, in fact, far away from the sphere of spirituality even."

The whole of creation is regarded to be Trigunātmaka i.e., characterized by the three attributes (gunas) of sattva, rajas and tamas. Sāmkhya system in Indian Philosophy propounds that creation shoots forth from the stir (kyobha) in the "balanced state of the gunas" called Prakrti. Shri Babuji asserts: "the Prakrti itself came into existence through the effect of the revolving motion round the Centre. The motion generated power, which subsequently led to the same cause of creation." He further clarifies that "at the time of creation everything was not available quite measured and sized up; therefore, everything was manifested in the real reflected state."

Sahaj Marg contends that before the time of creation there was not Prakṛti, the balanced state of three guṇas, but the stir (ksobha), a revolving motion around the Real Substance. This stir, the revolving motion, is the cause of creation. "Before creation came into effect, there was only the latent motion round the Centre; and adjacent to it and in it was present the idea of creation (ksobha). You may call it motion, vibration, force or anything for your understanding. It was the Ultimate cause of creation and everything necessary for it. When the time of creation came, the idea which lay hidden or sleeping in the latent motion matured and churned up the whole motion created a force or power which rushed out." He further clarifies: This latent thought came into action and the subtlest particles got heated up. Thus the preliminary coverings set in from the very first day. By the effect of continuous heating. The particles began to come into action. Its intensity went on increasing adding veils after veils to it. Grossness began to develop by the effect of growing intensity of the vibration."

There was only one Entity in the beginning without second and that has been called 'Real Substance (Yathārtha Vastu) in Sahaj Marg system. The similar reflection is also available in Chandogyaopaniṣad (VI, 2, 1): "In the beginning, my dear, this Being was alone, one only without a second. Some people say in the beginning this was non-Being (asat) alone, one only: without a second. From the non-Being (asat) the Being (sat) was produced."

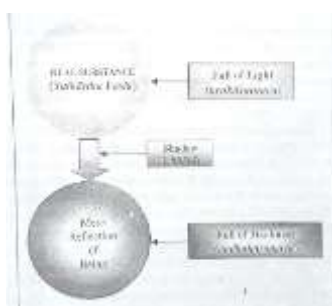
This non-Being (asat) has been called 'Nothing' in Sahaj Marg. The idea of the thought of creation was latent in a sleeping state and the idea of the manifest form has been described as the desire (kāma). "He (the Supreme Soul) desired: Let me become many. Let me be born. There from the heat originated." (Chand. VI, 2, 3).

Thus, it is desire that brings forth the creation of the objects from the primal substance. As mentioned above that there was Real Substance, which had latent desire for creation, which slowly at first stage produced heat, which later caused vibration resulting in a stir (ksobha) in the second stage and in the third stage of manifestation relates to the release of the material

exposition of the objects of nature.

Shri Lalaji again illustrates the description of the creation. As already described that there was one Real Substance and adjacent to it were 'energy particles' called the Being (sattā) or Majyā. Absorbing and saturating Mayā slowly and steadily made its appearance. Consequently, a second field or circle was formed, which is a reflection (partibimba) of the Real Substance pervaded with darkness. Thereafter, two entities came into existence. A glimpse of this description can be traced in the Chandogyopaniṣad (1,19,1): "In the beginning this world was non-existent (asat). It became existent (sat). It grew. It turned into an egg. It lay for the period of a year. It burst upon. Then came out of the egg-shell two parts one of silver and the other of gold." Shri Lalaji gave more clear picture of this assertion that the perfect Real Substance at the beginning was full of light and its shadow came to encircle another field, which is a mere reflection (pratibimba) and is full of darkness. Chandogyopaniṣad (III, 13, 7) also describes primal substance as full of light: "Now the light which shines above this heaven, above all. above everything in the highest world beyond which there are no higher, verily, this is the same as this light, which is here in the person. Shri Lalaji explains this through illustration as follows:

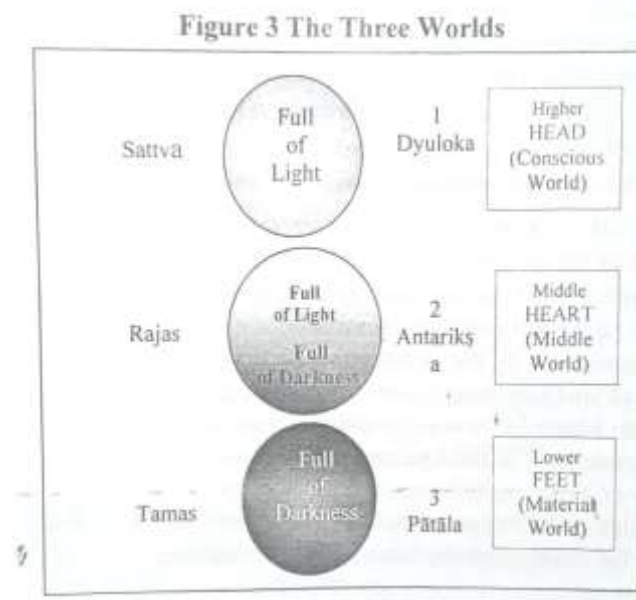
Figure 2 Shadow of Real Substance



One may contend and protests that it is a contradiction in description as how can the dark being evolved out of Real Substance, which is full of light. Shri Lalaji clarifies and justifies

through the example of burning lamp that in the first place, it existed below or down the Real Substance; secondly it was the shadow, which was reflected in it. For example, when a lamp burns, the smoke comes out and the smoke is dark. Hence, there is no contradiction as two circles or fields are formed one full of light and the other full of darkness. The latter is connected with the former. A current from the field of light constantly continued to transmigrate to the field of darkness. Later transmigration of this current encircled one more field and a third circle of manifestation in between was formed. The new manifestation in the middle has both light and darkness. The light circle is sattva. the dark circle is tamas and middle circle, which is the admixture of both, is rajas. And these are the Dyuloka, the Pātāla, and the Antariksa as illustrated in the Figure-3. These three worlds as a whole is called Brahmānda. The Dyuloka is the head, the Pātāla is the feet, and the Antariksa is the heart. The reflected current of the Real Substance come to these three fields; and three fields take the form of three regions of worlds (lokas). This tripartite origin explains the notion of three attributes (gunas).

Figure 3 The Three Worlds



Further, the creation proceeds onwards from the Middle world. Heart is the book to understand this creation. Heart is the admixture of consciousness (spirit) and materiality. Therefore,

heart has the potency and capacity to understand both the worlds. "The energy particles coming into contact with thought got heated up and moved out; and in this moving out they irradiated the entire universe, forming rings after rings and individuating themselves." In this way the process of creation proceeds on and on. Herein it is noteworthy that farther the process of creation moves away from the Real Substance it goes on becoming grosser and grosser and cultivates more and more solidity. In due course it envelops the Real Substance like the silkworm in the cocoon.

Shri Babuji pointing out the cause of the Original Stir (ksobha) remarks that perfect calmness prevailed before the process of creation came into existence. "Even power or force lay frozen in its origin. The time for the change, however, came. Motion got awakened and set things into action, resulting in the formation of forms and shapes in accordance with the will of Nature. At the root of it there was something, which we might call an active force. But that too must have a base for itself, without which it cannot have its actions, and it was the Ultimate. Thus we come to the conclusion that creation was the result of motion, and motion of the Base, which is and shall be."

In this way the theory of the origin of universe as propounded and explained in Sahaj Marg system states that the creation is the result of stir (ksobha), which is called the 'Super Mind' a sacred existence next only to God. This stir too was brought about by the dormant will of God. After this first stir "the Divine Currents began to flow, their actions and counter- actions created a grossness, which led to the formation of atoms (anus) and sub-atoms (paramānus) in their particular forms and shapes. The continuance of flow created heat, which was the very, basis of life, and which gave further stimulus to existence. But the heat remained in existence: its force got diverted downwards."

According to Dr. K. C. Varadachari the stir or vibration, which is the cause of creation, "... is the Nada of Tantrika, it is also called Sudaršana by Pāñcarātra. It is Sakti. It is Godhead or Centre of creative movement the asudeva, the Viṣṇu, Omni pervasive Being, who is known as Jagatkāranavastu or pervasive Jagadyoni. It is also Nature, Prakṛtyi. This is the para-form."

It has also been said in Sahaj Marg system that prior to the beginning of creation there was darkness (Tam). This idea of darkness is similar to the description of creation in Nasadiya Sūkta of Rgveda (X, 129, 3) and also in Manusmṛti (1, 5-6). This darkness descended down in the form of five currents and these currents differed in colour. First was black, second yellow, third red, fourth white (with a tinge of red) and fifth white. These colours envisaged three forms (i) Hiranyagarbha, (ii) Antaryāmin or Avyākṛta and (iii) Virāta, which are respectively the causal (kāraṇa), the subtle (sūkṣma) and the gross (sthūla) manifestations. At first stage of Hiranyagarbha there are five latent currents differing in colours as enumerated above, at the second stage of Antaryāmin or Avyākṛta the five currents took the form of five subtle elements viz., (i) Sound (śabda), (ii) touch (sparśa), (iii) form (rūpa), (iv) taste (rasa) and (v) smell (gandha); and at the third stage it manifested five gross elements viz., (i) ether (īkāśa), (ii) air (vāyu), (iii) fire (agni), (iv) water (jala) and (v) earth (pṛthvi). These manifestations or say the evolutes in the process of creation may be summarised in the table as follows: -

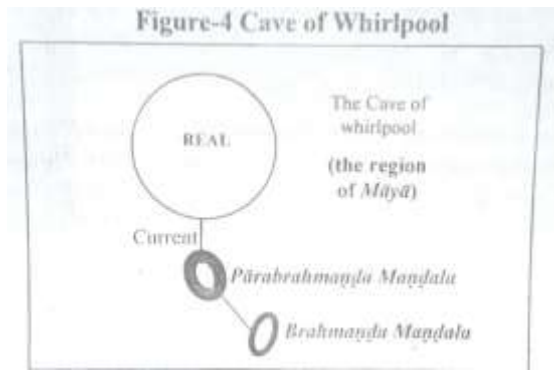
The Causal, Subtle and Gross

DIVINITIES	STAGES	REGIONS	MANIFESTATIONS
Hiranyagarbha	Causal	Mahakala	Five currents
Antaryamin/Avyākṛta	Subtle	Trikuti	Five subtle elements
Virata	Gross	Sahasrara	Five gross elements

The Cosmic Evolution:

The real substance had the 'energy particles (Māyā) revolving round it. This Māyā saturated the shadow of the Real Substance in itself. Later a current, which rushed out from it encircled a field and is called Pārabrahmānda Mandala, which having the reflection developed three levels of the causal, the subtle and the gross.

Figure-4 Cave of Whirlpool



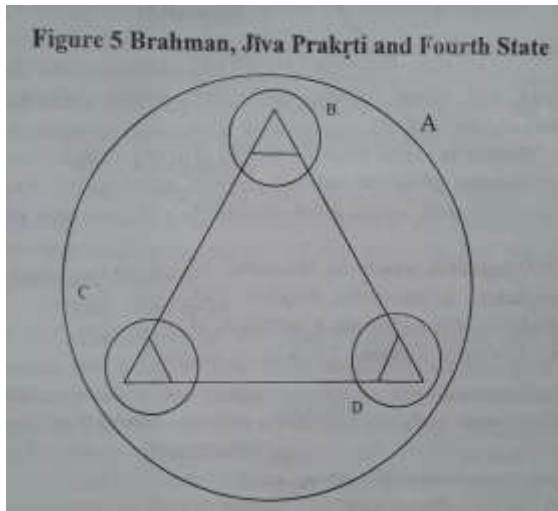
These parts are called Hiranyagarbha, Antaryāmin/Avyākṛta and Virāta. In the cave of whirlpool, it is known as Hiranyagarbha, in Pārabrahmaṇḍala Mandala it is called Antaryāmin/Avyākṛta and in Brahmaṇḍala Mandala it is designated as Virāta.

Hiranyagarbha, Antaryāmin and Virāta are respectively the soul, the heart and the body of Brahman. This triplicate form is known as trigunātmaka. When the other animate objects evolved out they also had three bodies causal, subtle and gross. In the gross body of human being ether (ākāśa) took place in the throat, air (vāyu) in the heart, fire (agni) in the navel, water (jala) in the organ of generation (jananendriya) and earth (pṛthvi) in the organ of secretion (gudā). Five subtle elements took their respective places in subtle body and the causal elements in the causal body.

The Base - Fourth Level:

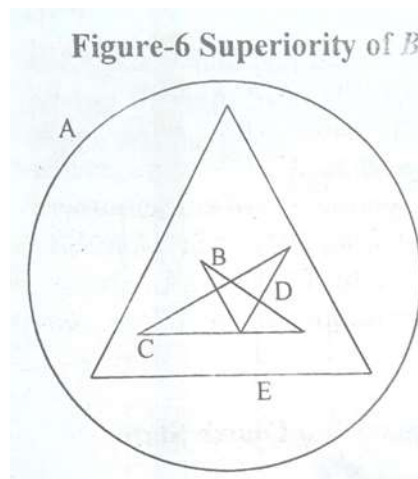
The Adi Gurū explains by the help of diagrams. Whatever is beyond (para) Brahman is called Parabrahman. As is the condition of Brahman having three attributes (trigunātmaka) so is (parabrahman). And it has been revealed or manifested by the saturation of the shadow of Real Substance, the ultimate base of the process of creation in the cave of whirlpool. The Parabrahman is pure because it is not soiled by the defects of physicality (Sāirikata). That which has physicality is Brahman, and this is the state of Hiranyagarbha and it is also known as the state of fourth level of consciousness i.e., turiyāṅgita. Saints have called it Kāla Puruṣa or Mahākāla Puruṣa and He is the base of the cave of whirlpool. And higher to it is the level of so-called Satpuruṣa of the region of Sat (Sat-Loka) in the thought of saints.

Figure 5 Brahman, Jiva Prakrti and Fourth State



In Figure-5 there is a big circle 'A', and inside it a triangle BCD, which too has three smaller triangles having their own circles. The big circle "A" is the foundational Base and is the fourth state and the remaining smaller circles are the fourth state of their respective triangles. The "B", 'C' and 'D' circles are respectively the region of Brahman, Jiva and Prakrti. In this regard Shri Lalaji also hints that this diagrammatic representation is simply for the sake of understanding. Actually, Brahman bears supreme position and encircles all that which exists. Brahman is higher than Prakrti and this too has been illustrated through the following diagram.

Figure-6 Superiority of Brahman over Jiva and Prakrti



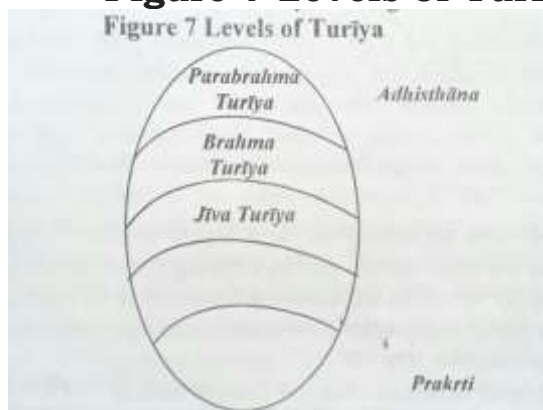
In the Figure-6 B is Brahman, 'C' is Jiva and D' is three Prakrti. These are the triangles falling inside a big and that is triangle Parabrahman and actually the circle A is the Base or Ground, which envelops of all of them.

The tripartite nature of Brahman has causal, subtle and gross forms, which are respectively the soul, the heart and the body.

Prakrti is material (Padārthaka). The tripartite nature of Prakrti consists of causal, subtle and gross materialities. Really the tripartite nature contains causal soul, subtle heart and gross body.

What is beyond this tripartite nature is the level of Turīya, which is above Brahman, is important. Further, Shri Lalaji also analyses the level of Turiya through illustration as

Figure 7 Levels of Turīya



This is the illustrative description of the consciousness beyond the fourth level (Turīya), which is known as Turīyātīta as also mentioned in Yoga Upaniṣads. So far as the tripartite feature and its knowledge of trinity persist it is not the perfect stage. Really when one gets merged in the Turīyātīta level, then none reaches real perfection.

Four Kinds of Manifestation:

All the created objects have three levels - causal, subtle and gross. Here it should be remembered that in accordance with the predominance of the one or the other of the three levels of

consciousness the condition and nature of the object is determined during the course of evolution. Broadly there are four kinds of manifestations:

i) Minerals:

In these the causal level is the gross body and the other two levels are submerged in it. Minerals externally appear to be insensible but they attract, assimilate and saturate the particles of energy in themselves. It is the state of deep sleep.

(ii) Vegetable:

These have gross body along with the causal body and the subtle body is assimilated. It attracts and saturates both the moving and static energies of the world. It has the stage of dream and deep sleep.

(iii) Animals:

These have all the three causal, subtle, and gross bodies and living at these three levels they eat and drink, sleep, wake up and enjoy pleasure and pain. They have the stages of waking (āgrata), dreaming (svapna) and deep sleep (suṣupti).

(iv) Human Beings:

All the three levels of causal, subtle and gross are totally manifested in human beings. The greatness lies in the fact that they can achieve the fourth state of consciousness called Turiya', which is not possible in the previously mentioned three levels of manifestation. Now how does the thought of high and low or up and down commenced during the course of evolution, which brought to motion the notion of ascent and descent of divinity. In other words: what makes one object higher and the other lower? Shri Ram Chandraji accounts for that: *When we have sprung up from that which is greatest and best, the level next to it will naturally be called lower or lesser in comparison. This brings in our mind the idea of high and low." Hence the divine energy descended down into gross forms and it is a scientific principle that the lighter things are subtler and they tend to rise upwards, and grosser

objects being heavier remain lower in the course of evolution. When the downward tendency begins to get diminished, the very same thing, which had been continuously pouring heat into the particles help to direct them upwards wherefrom their existence had started. Thus everything that came into activity by the effect of Divine flow, tends to fly towards the origin." This is known as ascent. Such is the thought behind the notions of evolution and involution, descent and ascent, becoming and Being. When downward tendency diminishes, one naturally feels inclined towards the worship of God.

The Space and the Time

The categories of 'space' and 'time' are admitted as the eternal and all pervasive existences, because it is said that all the phenomenal objects have their being and becoming in space and time. Everything, whatsoever it is, exists within the limits of these two categories of space and time.

The Space

Chandogya Upaniṣad (1, 9, 1) propounds the supremacy of Space. *All the objects are produced from space. They return back into space. For space is greater than these. Space is the final goal.

This Upaniṣad (VII. 12, 1) further mentions that: "Space verily is greater than fire. In the space existed both Sun and Moon, stars and fire. Through space one calls, through space one hears, through space one answers. In space one enjoys oneself, and in space one does not enjoy oneself. In space one is born and unto space one is born."

In this regard Aitareya Brāhmaṇa (III, 4, 2, 1) also mentions the same view. Kauṣītakī Upaniṣad (, 6) also declares: "From space as the source, I am produced as the seed for a life." Similarly, Shri Babuji also gives a better explanation that before creation of the numerous objects, there was only space all over. Even God (Isvara) himself was later development during the course of creation. He says: space served as a mother for the creation of God." Now the question legitimately arises that if space is the cause of God, what is the cause of space? Sahaj Marg system explains that the need

for the creation of God and the universe are the cause for the creation of space. Space is and will be. Therefore, it is an eternal existence. "The Akāśa or the space is the Absolute. It is not composed of particles, nor is there any action in it. It is perfectly pure and unalloyed." If so, why should one not worship space? Shri Babuji provides a worthwhile explanation that if one develops within oneself the state or space (akāśa), one reaches a high point of spiritual advancement; but it is, of course, very difficult to bring it about to the mind of everybody. The meditation on heart as advised in Sahaj Marg system is process to create space in heart. The same is affirmed in Chândogya Upaniṣad (III, 12, 9): "That is the same, what the space here within the heart is. That is the full, the non-active prosperity. Meditation on heart is also advised in Chandogya Upaniṣad: "Now with reference to Divinities one should meditate on space as Brahman." Balāki also asserts in Kauṣītakī Upaniṣad (IV, 8): "The person who is in space, on him, indeed, do I meditate." In this way according to Sahaj Marg system space is a vacant or empty container and has the attribute of sound (śabda), which represents an important state of spiritual elevation.

The Time

It is also an important and significant category in the process of evolution. Atharva Veda (xix, 53) asserts: "Time is a horse, with seven reins... him, the knowWing pòet mounts." In this view it is also said: "all the worlds are his wheels." Dr.Radhakrishnan also points out the creative and destructive functions of Time (Kāla) as described in Mahābhārata. Sahaj Marg' system tells that when the creation commenced the brief pause between the original thought and the subsequent Being, or in other words between cause and effect is called Time. Comparing time with space Shri Ram Chandraji tells: "Akash I the Space while Avalkasha is the Time, both are widely different from each other. Time. the creation of space. may be taken as the grosser state of Alasha. As a matter of fact, universe is the manifestation of time or avakasha, while God is that of Akasha or space.

Pralaya (Dissolution):

According to Sahaj Marg pralaya occurs when things change and start to return back to the original source, they have come from.

The state of pralaya comes in when contraction begins to take place. Similar contraction in man leads to the individual pralaya. At the time of death of an individual being the elements constituting the gross body begin to contract. The earth element in the organ of secretion (guda) contracts into water element in the organ of generation (jananendriya) and the earth element is dissolved and is transformed into water. This is called water dissolution (jala pralaya) and the hands and feet get cold. Afterwards the water element in the body contracts into fire in the navel and becomes fire. This is known as fire dissolution (agni pralaya). Then there remains heat only above the navel. Later fire element passes into heart and is turned into the form of air. This is named air dissolution (vāyu pralaya). At this stage body feels shivering and slowly is transformed into ether in the throat and it is known as ether dissolution (Gkāṣa pralaya).

The dissolution (death) is not still complete. The gross and physical body dies; but the portion above the eyes still survives. Now the contraction of Brahman element occurs and the eyes are over turned and the Brahman in the Brahmrandhra becomes Virāta, Virāta dissolves in Antaryamin and that too into Hirayagarbha. In this way the Brahman dissolution takes place in our body. Thus contraction brings pralaya and "the contraction always starts from below and proceeds upwards. Onwards at the time of Mahapralaya the three bodies of Brahman assimilate into time and time into the whirlpool of original Māyā and finally into the Real Substance.

Sattva, Rajas and Tamas

These are the three primal attributes: In Sāmkhya Philosophy sattva, rajas and tamas are enumerated as the three attributes having quantitative as well as qualitative differences. Harmony in three attributes is called prakṛti (sāmyāvasthā prakṛai). It has also been mentioned there in Samkhya Sūtras that the mutual co-operation of these three attributes is necessary for the evolution and manifestation of prakṛati for creation. These three attributes are collectively called gunatraya'. All the objects during the course of creation are the manifestations of these three attributes.

Sahaj Marg system explains that tamas is gross, rajas is subtle and sattva is causal; sattva is high or above, tamas is low or below and in between lies rajas. There is no motion or activity either in sattva or in tamas. The motion lies in the middle of both and that is in rajas. The head is above, the feet are below and in the middle is heart, which embarks motion to both. Similarly, sattva is above and tamas is below and in the middle is rajas, which infuses motion to both sattva and tamas. As described previously (Figure-3) that there are three regions: firstly, above or at the top lies the region of sattva, which is full of light or brightness; secondly below or at the bottom hangs the region of tamas, which is full of darkness and thirdly in the middle of both exists the region of rajas, which contains both light and darkness. The region in the middle of rajas is the combined form of sattva and tamas. All the animate and inanimate objects are created out of these three attributes, and are called 'trigunātmaka'; and the specific nature of the objects of creation is determined by the predominance and subordination of one or the other attribute.

Shri Lalaji Maharaj provides an explanatory description of the three attributes: tamas is manifesting and unfolding. There is becoming and is-ness in tamas. Sattva has contraction and is unmanifesting. It is thin (adanm) and dissolving (mahaviat). Herein the thinness and dissolving should not be treated as non-existence. Rajas is admixture of both. Tamas is body, satva is soul and rajas is heart.

Important Features of the Process of Evolution:

The process of creation as envisaged in Sahaj Marg system its characteristic feature and a brief sketch as a hint may be mentioned in order to highlight the significance of the description of Being and becoming as pointed out by the AdiGuru and the Founder-President of Sahaj Marg system.

These features are as under

(1) Principle of Parallelism:

According to this principle, there is a parallelism in the various objects of nature created during the course of evolution. The

Upaniṣadic thought as in the microcosm so in the macrocosm (yatha pindande tatha brahmande) is well known. Had there not been the parallelism it would have been meaningless to say that Atman is Brahman; Jiva is Brahman; and self-realization is God-realization. Dr. K. C. Varadachari tells that... there is apparently a parallelism between Divine and the human, the spiritual and the material or the subtle and the gross, in creation the material is manifested and in involution the spiritual is manifested." Shri Ram Chandraji also maintains that both the lines are now in action; the Divinity and the Humanity are running side-by-side parallel to each other. That is to say, it is the principle of parallelism. which is keeping order and symmetry in the manifold and numerous objects of nature. What is true of the atoms or amsa is equally true of the vast and the whole. As is the minutest, so is the largest. The finite repeats the Infinite. The microcosm is the repetition of the macrocosm. If one knows the atom, he can know the Atman or Brahman. Dr. K. C. Varadachari points out that the description of the process of parallelism as mentioned by Shri Ram Chandraji is more luminous way than by Spinoza, Leibnitz or the Jain did.

(2) Principle of Invertendo:

This principle consists in the peculiar process of inverting the arrangement during the passage from one place of experience or existence to another. That is to say that, the left side of the object becomes the right and the right takes the left at a different level in due course. The method of inversion in deductive logic involves the mutual replacement of the subject and the predicate and finally coming to the conclusion have contradictory subject as well as predicate of the given original proposition. (For details one can read the process of immediate inference dealing with inversion in the books of deductive Logic). In Physiology too it is found that the nervous path in the physical body is in such a way that the nerve of the right side moves to the left side and vice versa in the brain. Dr. K. C. Varadachari also mentions that even the three attributes of Sattva, rajas and tamas too are the result of the process of inversion. Actually, this principle of Invertendo is an expression of the thought, which was propounded by Hegel in his dialectical process of thesis and anti-thesis culminating into synthesis. But herein Shri Ram Chandraji gives an account as how the two opposite agencies or existences synthesize with each other. The inter-action., between the two sides of an existence, has an

intermediary point, where the inversion takes place and at this point of inversion a twist or knot is formed. As the process of inversion moves on the grossness goes on increasing. Now, how is the parallelism to be maintained, when there is the principle of invertendo in the process of evolution? Dr. K. C. Varadachari aptly explains the harmonious adjustment of both the above-mentioned principles: "The dynamic organic explanation of the Sahaj Marg reconciles the basic concepts of creation with the development of parallelity between the inner and the outer. The inner, seen through inner vision, is spirit, animated with that basic and central life, whereas the outer is seen to be the matter, the body of that inner, and there is the transcendental interaction between them. At any moment one could pass from the one vision to the other and realise that both are real, and that a central force alone makes for the transformation or translation of one into the other." Thus, it is clear as to how the two principles of parallelism and invertendo work in the process of evolution and what is the place of Ultimate Reality, therein. Moreover, this principle also reconciles the controversy of non-dualism (advaitavāda) and the dualism (dvaitavāda). Sahaj Marg contends that there is inversion of the upper and lower regions.

(3) The Formation of Coverings:

The process of evolution during the course of becoming forms coverings one after another and curtails the Real Substance. These coverings in Sahaj Marg are described as having the form of circles or rings and it envelopes the Real Substance as the 'silkworm in the cocoon'. When a stone is thrown into the water reservoir, one finds that the water wave-rings running towards the bank are formed. Similarly, the first stir (ksobha) in the bosom of Ultimate Reality goes on forming rings one after other. As the process moves on, the grossness and solidity goes on increasing.

(4) The significance of Being over becoming:

Sahaj Marg system clearly hints that one should not unnecessarily worry over by thinking on the lines as how the universe came into existence, because such considerations are opposed to the development of peace in the spiritual advancement.

One should have the mania to find out one's own self and this alone may be termed as the spirituality. It suggests that instead of pondering over as to how the universe came into existence, one should admire the Being, who created the universe. Dr. Varadachari also emphasizes the same when he asserts: “. the attempt at knowing the Being is more important than the knowledge of becoming. Thus, for the sake of having speedy progress on the path of spirituality one should culminate rather cultivate deep love, firm faith and iron will for the achievement of the real goal of human life.

Theory of Knowledge (Epistemology)

Introduction:

The term 'epistemology' is constituted of two words 'episteme' (knowledge) and 'logos' (discourse). Therefore, it literally means 'discourse about knowledge'. What is the nature of true knowledge and what are the valid sources of its achievement are the main problems of epistemology. In this way epistemology is a science, which deals about the true nature of knowledge and the valid means of its achievement.

The theory of knowledge (Epistemology) is the central problem of Indian Philosophy because ignorance (ajnāna or avidya) is regarded as the root cause of bondage to the cycle of birth and death. The concept of the knowledge (Gñana) has a wide field of application. The so-called realization is also a cognitive process of superfine spiritual consciousness resulting in the 'complete union' with the Ultimate. Knowledge has been treated as the antidote for all the miseries and afflictions of worldly life. True knowledge is primarily concerned with the complete realization of Ultimate Reality. Hence, epistemology, the theory of knowledge, is closely related to ontology. Unintelligible ontology is a blind mysticism. It is true that Ultimate Reality is beyond sense experience. It is inaccessible to mind and is beyond the grasp of speech. But its knowledge is

possible, if one follows sincerely the prescribed spiritual practice (sādhanā) under the capable guidance of competent Master. There is no liberation (mukti) in the absence of knowledge. Gita also remarks that there is nothing pure like Knowledge in this world.

Knowledge in its real sense has a spiritual significance for an aspirant on the path of yogic practice (sādhanā) Knowledge should not be limited to the knowledge acquired through perception (pratyaksa), inference (amumāna), and/or word (sabda), which are the three main source of knowledge (pramana) mentioned in literature of Indian Philosophy. Essentially knowledge is an awakening or illumination of soul G. R. Malkani gives an account of the achievement of freedom through knowledge and he warns: "knowledge at the common- sense level or at the level of science, which is merely its extension, is only an appearance of knowledge. It is through and through mediated. it can be erroneous. It is always doubtful. Thus, we must have clarity about the difference between appearance of knowledge' and 'true knowledge i.e., the appearance and the Reality/Truth The worth and value of true knowledge leading to Ultimate Truth cannot be ignored, because "truth alone conquers, not untruth. By truth is laid out the path leading to the gods by which the sages, who have their desires fulfilled, travel to where be that supreme abode of truth."

Upaniṣads divide knowledge between lower knowledge (Apara Viha) and higher or transcendental knowledge (Parā Vicha). The lower one (Apara Vidyā) pertains to the knowledge of Vedas and the higher one (Parā Vidya) consists in the knowledge of imperishable soul (Atman) The former is definitely inferior as compared to the latter; but the lower knowledge (Apara Vidya) is not false or wrong knowledge (mithyā jñāna) or illusion (bhrama). It too has validity in our day-to-day life. That is to say that Apara Vidyā concerns our worldly life and Para Vidya refers to the spiritual life. Chāndogya Upaniṣad (VII, i, 3) points out the difference between the knower of the text (mantravetta) and the knower of the Self (Atmavetta). Thus, knowledge in the true sense does not mean the knowledge derived from books, But the true seeker of knowledge like Svetaketu aims at the knowledge of that "by which unheard becomes heard, unperceivable becomes

perceivable and unknowable becomes know." Revered Ram Chandraji explains that the word nāna in ordinary sense means knowledge, which may be of different kinds physical, mental, material or spiritual. In the spiritual sense the term is applied so vaguely that often it becomes very difficult to understand its true significance and asserts: Jaana in real sense refers to the inner condition of mind, which an abhyasi develops" through spiritual practice. Therefore, it is clear that theory of knowledge has been accorded an important and significant place in the history of Indian Philosophy. Vedas imbibe in them the words of divine revelation. The very word Veda' derived from the root 'vid to know, in Sanskrit language means wisdom i.e., true knowledge. The word Philosophy, too, in its literal sense means love of wisdom' and Darśana' also stands for the vision of the true nature of Ultimate Reality. Upaniṣads, as well, present before us the knowledge acquired by an aspirant sitting close to his Guru. The text of Veda has been divided into two major sections Karma Kānda and Jnana Kanda. Karma Kanda lies in the performance of rites and rituals as per description of injunctions mentioned in the Brāhmaṇas and Jhana Kānda refers to the spiritual knowledge i.e., the realization of the Ultimate Reality. The Mimāmsā and the Vedānta schools in Indian Philosophy respectively are regarded as the Karma Kānda and the Jhana Kānda. That is to say that knowledge is a significant aspect of spiritual practice (sadhana), because some time it has been used to designate the celestial entities. For example, the well-known Nārada', name of a celebrated sage, in Hindu mythology literally signifies one who gives (da/ dadāti) the knowledge (naram) of the Supreme Reality. Rgveda also emphasizes that 'what hymns can do for one who does not know Him (yastanna ved kimricā karisyasi). Even Sakyamuni Gautama was designated as Buddha', the enlightened one, because he got himself illumined with light of true knowledge. The dualistic philosophy of Sāmkhya system recognizes two entities of Purusa and Prakṛti as the two primal sources of the process of creation. The Puruṣa, as distinguished from Prakṛti, has been designated by the term 'Jha', the knower. The three paths of 'Jiāna' (knowledge), Bhakti (devotion) and karma (action) are well-known. In Yoga sādhanā we hear of Jianayoga, that treats knowledge as

the capacity of discrimination between the soul (Atman) and the non-soul (anātman). Shankar also lays great emphasis on knowledge (jnana) by regarding it superior to action (karma) and devotion (bhakti). Besides the ideal of Sthitaprañā Brahmajña, Brhamavetta etc., provide clear proof of the importance of knowledge in the sadhanā aspect of Indian Philosophy.

Shri Lalaji Maharaj, the Adi Guru of Sahaj Marg sādhanā, describes that the concept of thinking is involved in the coinage of the terms of Brahman' and Atman'. He remarks that thinking (manana) is inherent in both of them. Brahman etymologically is constituted of Brh', (to grow) and man' (to think); and Atman' is also derived from 'ät' (to move) and man (to think). On this literal analysis the Brhaman is one who grows and thinks and the Ätman is that which 'moves and thinks. Therefore, the thinking (manana) process is inherently implied in both the words Brahman' and Atman'. This is to hint that thought is an important feature of human personality in reference to the spiritual practice, specifically in the Rajayogic methodology. If thought is purified the dawn of enlightenment gets manifested in the life of an aspirant on the path of progress towards the ultimate destiny of human existence.

Features of Sahaj Marg theory of Knowledge:

For the sake of having a clear comprehension of the significance of knowledge as conceived in the Sahaj Marg system of yogic practice it would be plausible to take into account the characteristic features of the knowledge. These features would bring to light the efficacious approach of the system as well as it would help remove some misconceptions regarding the notion of knowledge.

Jñānayoga, Bhaktiyoga and Karmayoga:

These are the three paths for the achievement of the state of 'complete union' with the Ultimate Reality as enunciated in the history of Indian Philosophy. Sahaj Marg system of yogic practice treats them in a unique and novel way. It gives a systematic account of all the three types and thereby tries to explicate the true significance of the knowledge in the being of an aspirant on the

path of spiritual elevation. Adi Guru Shri Lalaji Maharaj points out that there are three attributes of sattva, rajas and tamas, which are actually the three levels. He remarks that Sattva is above and Tamas is below and in between i.e., in the middle lays the Rajas, which is combination of both Rajas and Tamas. If there is one, there is no motion, no change. The change or motion is possible when there are two existences. The combination of the two would cause origin to a third entity. Thus, on the one side is the higher level of spirit (Atman) and on the other side is the lower level of matter (body): and taking the shadow of both there is heart which lies in the middle. Head is above, the feet are below and in the middle is the heart, which gives motion to both of them. In this way these are the three aspects of the constitution of man. The above, the Atman, is the level of happiness, below, the body, is the instrument of bringing motion or change into action, and the middle is the heart which imbibes the experience of both is the source of knowledge. Happiness is peace, action is motion, and knowledge is the understanding. In this way Sahaj Marg contends that knowledge is the condition, which is associated with the functioning of heart lying in the middle. Essentially, happiness, action and knowledge are the attributes of heart and are related to the subtle body (sūksnma śarira). The difference consists only in the fact that happiness is higher and action is lower and knowledge owes its being in the middle of both. Happiness is the peace and changelessness; action is the manifested motion and knowledge is the thinking and understanding. Bhaktiyoga strives for happiness, Karmayoga renders social service for action and Jñānayoga aspires the achievement of knowledge.

Herein the words of Dr. K. C. Varadachari are worth mention: Karmayoga is social work, Jhānayoga is modern Philosophy and Bhaktiyoga is mere bhajana. Sahaj Marg system presents forth such a technique of yoga that it involves Bhaktiyoga, Karmayoga and Jñānayoga in a systematized and unified form leading to the true and complete knowledge (realization) of Ultimate Reality." The words of Dr. K. C. Varadachari are noteworthy-as they provide a comprehensive approach of Sahaj Marg: ... there is no effort to speak the truth, there is no effort to practice brahmacharya, or an effort to love God,

or effort for devotion. Knowledge comes naturally. Action comes naturally. We are established in the yoga of jnana and karma and bhakti in a natural way."

Knowledge is a means, not an end:

In the traditional thought of Indian Philosophy knowledge has been treated as an end to be achieved by the practicant, if he wants release from the cycle of birth and death. They regard ignorance (ajnāna) to be the root cause of bondage and they propound that liberation from the bondage is possible by the achievement of knowledge. There have been enumerated means for the acquisition of knowledge e.g., perception (pratyaksa), inference (anumāna), testimony (igama) etc. These means of valid knowledge (pramāna) as mentioned in the six orthodox schools of Indian Philosophy give us only lower knowledge (aparā vidya); but the transcendental or higher knowledge (parā vidya) is a matter of spiritual elevation, and aims at the knowledge of self. The real aim is to achieve the higher knowledge.

Sahaj Marg boldly asserts and advocates that knowledge (jñana) should not be treated as an end in itself. Really knowledge is a means tor the realization of God or Ultimate Reality. Adi Guru Shri Lalaji says that knowledge is light, but it is not an end in itself. We do not light up lamp for (the light of) lamp itself but for the work, which we do in the light and that is the ideal. Therefore, our knowledge also has some end; it is not an end in itself. The rue and real knowledge lie in the awakening of the soul and the perception, inference etc. give only a glimpse of it. They are really the means of valid knowledge that has been described as aparā vidyā Dr. S. Radhakrishnan remarks: "The Supreme is not dependent on mind, life and senses for its being." Mundaka Upaniṣad (III, 1, 8) clearly asserts the same: "He is not grasped by the eyes, nor even by speech, nor by other sense-organs, nor by authority, nor by work, but when one's nature is purified by the knowledge then alone, he, by meditation sees hm who is without parts." The above-mentioned description points out that real knowledge cannot be acquired by mind or from the books. Books are of no avail in the matters of spirituality. They give us second hand knowledge and enable man to deliver eloquent discourses

and to win arguments. Shri Babuji Maharaj also hints at it, "Shastras go into contradiction of each other, but they are of value to us since they offer a chance to think upon and arrive at the solution. They have another merit besides. It is that they offer means and methods for spiritual advancement for man of every taste, mentality and standard of mind." In the sphere of spirituality books are of very little avail. There is hell for the sinful, paradise for the ignorant and Brahmaloaka for the innocent. But for the wise and learned there is artificial paradise of one's own making.

Shri Aurobindo distinguishes four-fold order of knowledge: (i) knowledge of identity, (ii) knowledge by intimate direct contact, (iii) knowledge by separative direct contact, and (iv) a wholly separated knowledge by indirect contact. This also clarifies that the aim of the philosophy of Aurobindo was the achievement of integral knowledge, which is knowledge by identity. Such integral knowledge means an integral transformation of the personality." Therefore, knowledge is a means to establish identity and complete union with God and it is not an end in itself.

Knowledge is an activity:

According to Sahaj Marg knowledge is an activity. It is a process of knowing. Swami Shivananda remarks that knowledge is a process and not being. All processes are movements, brought about by an interaction of external stimuli and internal conditions. The rise of knowledge in an individual is a mysterious process affected through such an interaction. But by the rise of knowledge what is meant is not the existence of this transcendent awareness but the process of the manifestation of it in the relative individual." Adi Guru of Sahaj Marg tells that the word 'Jnāna' is derived from the root 'Jna' meaning to know'. Therefore, 'Jiāna' etymologically means knowing'. In this way knowledge (Jnana) and action (karma) both are activities. Both have some end to achieve. Like action (karma) knowledge also has good or bad results. The difference between

them lies in the fact that action is a physical or bodily activity, while knowledge is a mental manipulation. Thus, Sahaj Marg system presents forth a pragmatic and efficacious synthesis between knowledge and action. Action means doing and knowledge means knowing: both are activities, both are processes.

Further, knowledge is a theoretical understanding and action is practice. For securing true progress on the path of sādhanā both are necessary. Knowledge without its practical application in action is useless and action without true knowledge is misleading. Knowledge and action, theory and practice both are complementary. Sahaj Marg treats knowledge to be an unfolding of the coverings. It is the manifestation of that which is hidden behind the coverings

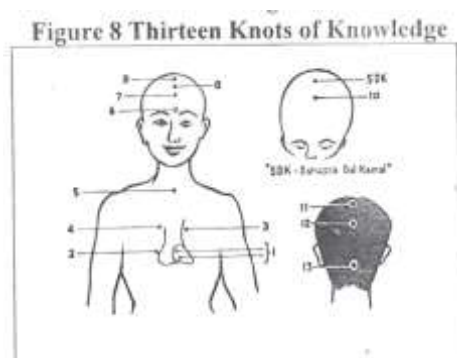
Knots of Knowledge:

In the history of Indian Philosophy sages have thrown light on the knots of knowledge. Mahopaniṣad asserts that knowledge is opening of the knots of heart and liberation is achieved by acquiring knowledge. The seven-levelled description of the stages of progress on the path of Yoga sadhanā starting with Subhecchā and leading to Turyagā has been presented as consisting of the levels of knowledge (Jnāna- bhūmikās). In the same text, Rbhu teaches Nidāgha the seven levels of ignorance (ajñāna) But the Sahaj Marg attempts a fresh approach to these levels in the form of thirteen knots. Dr. K. C. Varadachari remarks, the originality of these descriptions and the method of transcendence of these knots or circles or being, and the experience of the different kinds of happiness (Ananda) that had made for descent and now making for the ascent reveals a new technique unknown to the earlier extant yoga literature. These knots determine and pin point the levels in the process of knowledge. The knots during the course of spiritual advancement are not "to be cut but loosened and transcended

Shri Ram Chandraji gives the following account of these knots: "When we ponder over God, our imagination creates a circle round it. This is knot, which bars our approach to the answer of every question. If possibly we can get over this knot and remove the limitation of thought, then the subtlest thing can be revealed to us. But there is also another circle within, of which this one is but a reflection. When we force our entry into that one, the mystery of the centre can be revealed. "These knots are the points or levels to be attained and transcended in order to have true knowledge. Shri Ram Chandraji broadly enumerates thirteen knots and thereby he tries to reveal the true nature of knowledge. These knots have been given a psychophysical account, which unravels the worth and place of knowledge in spiritual practice (sādhanā). "A person can rightly be taken as the possessor of the Divine knowledge in true sense, when he has mastered the various conditions." He who transcends them is capable of being a Guru or teacher; and when he transcends beyond where one might rarely be able to reach deserves to be called Sadguru."

Shri Ram Chandraji, in order to locate these thirteen knots of knowledge in human organism, illustrates them through a figure. This figure shows that these knots of knowledge have a definite location in human organism and thereby explains that the journey begins from the heart and ends in the occipital region. This is the field of knowledge.

Figure 8 Thirteen Knots of Knowledge



Shri Ram Chandraji also gives an account of the experiences enjoyed by an Abhyasi at various knots in his book "Towards Infinity". Let us now have a general estimate of these knots, The following remarkable and notable characteristics of these knots are worth mention in order to know their significance on the path of spiritual elevation:

Characteristic Features of Knots:

1. These knots are not to be cut or pierced through but to be loosened and transcended. It is an unfolding, which brings about revelation or illumination resulting in the awakening of the soul
2. One should not try to acquire these conditions of various knots by the force of concentration. Shri Ram Chandraji remarks, "The Extra-ordinary mental visions will no doubt come to view, but since they have resulted from the exercise of thought power they will only serve as a bondage to keep us ensnared as tightly that it shall almost be impossible to extricate ourselves from it." That is to say "if we try to acquire these conditions by applying the force of thought it will be artificial and not true and genuine. "The transcendence of these knots should be observed naturally. If the very thought is forced to action, the desired result is hard to be achieved.
3. At each knot condition change. The condition become lighter and finer at higher levels of ascent.
4. The Process of merging is followed by the identity, which is repeated at each knot for having true knowledge of the knot at that level. When identity is established, an Abhyasi secures knowledge up to that level. This identity also is not the final phase of the condition. The identity also merges into finer state, which may be called as sāyujyatā (i.e. close conformity). Shri Ram Chandraji says, "When that has been attained then alone can the knowledge gained be deemed as complete,
5. A particular kind of voice or sound is also heard at each knot. "The higher the knot the sweeter is the sound. It is louder in the pinda- Material sphere - but it grows softer as we ascend higher.
6. There is also a common feature at each knot that knowledge acquired at these levels infuses a craving for Reality in the practicers. It intensifies the desire for the search of Reality. If there is no craving i.e., if an Abhyasi does not crave for Reality, one

becomes interested in the performance of miracles, which really blocks the progress on the path of spiritual awakening.

7. These thirteen knots are the major ones and the minor knots are innumerable; and their differential analysis in words is extremely difficult.

8. Even after having secured mergence n and identity with the thirteenth knot, the final state of progress on the path of sādhanā is still not achieved. These thirteen knots depict the levels of knowledge; and onward lays the region, which may be described as the stage of knowledgelessness

9. Shri Ram Chandraji explains that Jnana, in the real sense, refers to the inner condition of mind, which an Abhyasi develops during the course of his pursuit, while passing through different spiritual states at different knots or Granthis. Knowledge, in fact, is the realization of the condition prevailing at each knot, now since the knots are innumerable; the knowledge gained is also different, according to the level of approach of an Abhyasi. Thus, it is meaningless to call one a Jnani without defining his level of approach or limit of knowledge realized by him. The real state of enlightenment comes, when we get into full consciousness of the condition of enlightenment, and after imbibing its effect, secure our merging in it. When we develop this state and merge into its consciousness, we come to know all about it, and thus become Jnani, i.e. enlightened, up to that extent.

Thus, in the light of the descriptions of these knots we may determine the level and approach of a man in the field of knowledge. Now, we may turn to the treatment of the region beyond knowledge, as described in Sahaj Marg System.

Complete Ignorance and knowledge:

Sahaj Marg system introduces a daring and amazing conception of complete/perfect ignorance and thereby sets aside the misconception and wrong interpretation of ignorance (ajnana) and brings to light its true significance. Shri Ram Chandraji remarks, Ignorance is the highest pitch of knowledge. That comes to mean that we start from the level of ignorance and finally end in a state of higher ignorance (or complete Ignorance', as I call it). The sphere of knowledge is only an intermediary state. Really so far as it is the

sphere of knowledge, it is all ignorance in true sense."

Upaniṣads speak of the march from darkness to light (Tamaso mā jyotirgamaya). But Sahaj Marg contends that light is not the real goal. "It is but an intermediary stage, which we pass through during our march to the Ultimate, which is neither light nor darkness but beyond both. Thus, we start from Avidya (Ignorance) and pass through Vidyā (knowledge) on to that which is neither Avidyā nor Vidyā but beyond both. What word can donate the exact sense of that which is neither Avidya nor Vidya Is there any word for that in any vocabulary in the world? There is none for sure. Let it, therefore, be as I say complete ignorance', different from its crudest state of preliminary Ignorance."

Adi Guru Shri Lalaji of Sahaj Marg also attributes the characteristic of ajñāna (ignorance) to soul (Aman) and also furnishes reasons in favour of his view, i.e., the final phase of achievement in Sahaj Marg has been describes as Complete Ignorance' and this is a higher level of attainment than knowledge. Ignorance (ajñāna) herein does not mean absence of knowledge but a state. wherein the subject-object relation is totally merged and complete identity survives.

Shri Ram Chandraji also gives the following account to make the idea signified by the term, "Complete Ignorance more comprehensible. He remarks: "Ignorance and knowledge are the two extremities of the same thing. Up to a certain extent it is termed as ignorance; after that it turns into knowledge. They are like the two poles of a magnet. Thus., Avidyā (Ignorance) has no existence without Vidyā (knowledge) or Vidyā without Avidyā. If one is there the other must also be there. That means that when the veil of ignorance is torn, Avidyā and Vidyā both are gone. Avidyā comprises the entire sphere included in both Avidyā and Vidyā. That is the state of Tam, which is beyond both. It is in true sense the state of realization where 'there is neither Avidyā nor Vidyā. What is there then? Neither of the two a state of perfect latency, not-knowingness, complete knowledgelessness, which may roughly be denoted as the state of Ignorance, just as it is at the age of intancy." Dr. Radhakrishnan also remarks, "Pidyā and Avidya are two ways of apprehending Reality. Both are forms of relative knowledge and belong to the manifested universe.

This complete ignorance transcends both Vidya and Avidya. The Ultimate Reality is the final end of the so-called process of knowledge. Kena Upaniṣad (1, 3) asserts a similar thought: "Other, indeed, is it than the known and also it is above the unknown. Thus, we have heard from the ancient ones who have explained it to us" (aftargut Iṣa Upaniṣad (10) also affirms this thought that it is other than Vidya and also other than Avidya. Dr. Radhakrishnan explains, "It knowledge and ignorance are both real, it is because consciousness of oneness and consciousness of multiplicity are different sides of the supreme self-awareness. The one Brahman is the basis of numberless manifestations." Kena Upaniṣad points towards this state of complete Ignorance as conceived in Sahaj Marg.

(I do not think that I know it well nor do I think that I do not know it. He, who among us knows it, knows it not and he, too, does not know that does not know. To whomsoever it is not known, to him it is known: to whomsoever it is known, he does not know. Those, who understand it, do not understand it.)

This brings to light that ultimate Reality transcends known and unknown. "It is above known and unknown but it is not unknowable." In this way the high level of attainment is the stage of 'complete ignorance and knowledge is an intermediary condition. This concept of Ajnāna should not be confused with the idea of Avidyā as conceived in the traditional history of Indian Philosophy. Adi Guru clarifies this difference by describing three types of human temperament, which is akin to the citta bhūmis of Pātanjala yoga.

1. Mudha (Stupid): The attention of such person does not go beyond the limits of gross body and they are at the waking (Jagrata) level of consciousness.
2. Cañcalu (unsteady): Persons of unsteady temperament have consciousness of subtle body, and besides waking level they also have the level of dream.
3. Ajñanī (ignorant): Such persons have consciousness of causal body and they also enjoy deep sleep.

Further, to clarify the superiority of ignorance over knowledge, Sahaj Marg system introduces the principle "Forget

thyself. Generally, in the Sādhanā aspect of Indian Philosophy realization of self has been the common ideal to be achieved at. They advocate the thought "Know Thyself" Thereby they mean that the knowledge of the self is the higher knowledge (parā vidyā). Maharshi Ramana also asks his followers to know 'Who am I'. But Shri Ram Chandraji remarks that the true knowledge of soul does not lie in knowing the self but in forgetting the self. "Sages say Know Thyself. But I prefer to say: "Forget Thyself". He also remarks, "A perfect human being is he who knows everything present in nature, or in all that it has made, remaining all the time ignorant of his knowledge. "Philosophy is the way of thinking, Yoga is the way of doing and Realization is the way of undoing

In this way ignorance in Sahaj Marg system imbibes all knowledge. It is a state of revelation whereupon sādhanaka forgets himself and listens to 'Voice Real'.

Now how can such transcendental spiritual level be achieved? Sahaj Marg system advocates that a man can achieve all this, if he follows proper technique of practice under the capable guidance of Master. The process of transmission provides great help to an Abhyasi in unfolding the knots of knowledge and transcending the coverings round the soul. Swami Vivekananda also emphasises, "There is nothing higher and holier than the knowledge which comes to the soul transmitted by a spiritual teacher.

Therefore, the knowledge in its real sense transcends subject-object relationship. For the purpose of having Teal knowledge, one should seek shelter of some capable and competent guide or Guru. Sahaj Marg system interprets 'Ignorance' as a higher level of achievement than the so-called knowledge. Shri Ram Chandraji has described this state as the state of Complete ignorance. It is the level of 'Tam', which is beyond light and darkness, Vidyā and Avidyā and is the final resting place of the aspirant engaged in spiritual pursuits. Hereupon the revelation of spiritual secrets is automatic and natural.

Constitution of Man (Psychology)

Indian Philosophy contains a large number of theories regarding the constitution of human personality e.g., the Upaniṣadic theory of three bodies and five sheathes, the Sāmkhya analysis of twenty-five elements; the Pañchīkarana process of Sankara, Atmavāda of Hinduism, Anālmavāda of Buddhism. and Dehatmavāda of Cāravāka. They provide numerous conceptions and views about man and his personality in the history of Indian Philosophy. But the being and becoming of man is still a baffling problem for man himself. Katha Upaniṣad (1, 11, 3-4) gives a figurative description of man.

(Know the self as the Lord of Chariot (Rathinam). Know the intellect as the charioteer and mind as, verily, reins. The senses. they say, are horses; the objects of sense the path (they range over): (the Self) associated with the body, the senses and the mind wise men declare is the enjoyer.)

In Maitri Upaniṣad also the embodied soul has been described as the owner of cart (rathinah). Dr Radhakrishnan remarks that "the conception of yoga derived from the root 'yuj' to yoke, to harness, to join is connected with the symbolism of the chariot and the team. Yoga is complete control of the different elements of our nature, psychical and physical and harnessing them to the highest end." Thus, yoga sādhanā is a process of harnessing the lower faculties of senses etc., to the higher ones and ultimately to realize 'complete oneness with God'. There is no limit to the longings of man because whatever a man reaches, he wishes to go beyond. If he reaches the sky he wishes to go beyond. If he happens to reach the (heavenly) world, he would like to go beyond." Maharishi Ramana advises to know, 'Who am I? Swami Ram Tirth asks to meditate over So 'ham' (I am that). They treat Self-realization as God-realization. Sahaj Marg system propounds that at least this much is certain that "our existence in the present grossest form is neither sudden nor accidental but is the result of the slow process of evolution."

Sahaj Marg system, as we have seen conceives Ultimate Reality as the Centre, which is the Base of the creation of manifold

objects of the world. The first stir, which led to be the cause of creation, gave rise to vibrations. These vibrations slowly and slowly, in due course of time, assumed grossness. Shri Ram Chandraji describes these vibrations as coverings, which enveloped the Reality as the silkworm in the cocoon. These covering proceed from subtleness to grossness. It is very hard to enumerate the number of the coverings because they are innumerable. Shri Ram Chandraji gives a broad division in the form of three regions the Central Region, the Mind Region and the Heart Region. These Regions too are further sub-divided into circles, which depict the stages of the evolution and an Abhyasi has to pass Over these stages during the course of his spiritual elevation.

Aspects of man in Sahaj Marg:

There are two aspects of man the apparent man and the real man. Apparently, man is a physical organism constituted of five gross elements and consisting of various limbs and organs of body; and the real man is identical to God. Essentially there is no difference between God and man. The apparent man meets its end after death but the real man continues its existence in its subtle form. Shri Ishwar Sahai remarks that the man in this subtle form after death "may also not be the real man, for, though relieved of the grossest coverings of the physical body, it is still enwrapped within numerous other coverings of lesser and lesser grossness. Thus, in order to trace out the real man, one has to go far back, beyond all these coverings from the grossest to the subtlest. He also clarifies that the real man is extremely fine and subtle being, which may be called soul or spirit for the sake of understanding and the soul that leaves the body after death is not the real man because though relieved of its most grosser covering it is still engulfed within numerous subtler covering of samskāras, Māyā and Ego. S. C. Sen also tells that man has a spiritual (ādhyātmika) as well as a material (bhautika) nature. In his spiritual nature he is one with Brahman. He is sat chit-ananda, as such knows no death or birth. He is the most abiding reality, which stands behind all phenomenal changes. But his atmic nature is engulfed in a material habitat, which makes him share the nature of matter and render him subject to death, birth and suffering.

Dr. S. P. Srivastava points out three approaches to human personality (i) Mask View, which deals with human being in terms of outer appearance, (ii) the essence view, which treats man in terms of his inner (essential) nature, and (iii) the organismic and dynamical approach, which result from the attempts to strike a synthesis of the above-mentioned two approaches. He also tells, "The approach of Indian Psychology predominates in the third view with the modifications in the light of the levels of consciousness; and existence that form the foundational fact for the Indian Psychologist.' The Mask view and the essence view do not seem to be developed or emphasised separately. These are treated as simultaneous with and complementary to each other. Even the dynamical and organization, which is taken to be the self - at a grosser level of consciousness and existence, which run parallel to each other, becomes a mask or veil for a subtler yet mightier gestalt of the self at a finer level. And thus, the search for the centre of the circumference progresses on and on."

The Three-body Theory:

Sahaj Marg system presents forth a synthetic view of human personality roughly akin to the organismic dynamical view, mentioned above, According to Sahaj Marg theory, there can be three levels of aspects of man's being:

- (i) The apparent man- as in his outer physical appearance,
- (ii) The subtle real man - that which survives after death enveloped with the subtle covering, and
- (iii) The real man: man, as identical to God.

Here the mask and essence views of the human personality are distinguishable though taking the three aspects or levels as constitutive of a single unit of existence, one has to emphasize the organismic dynamical approach. Sahaj Marg analysis is quite like that of K. C. Bhattacharya, who points out three levels of self (subject) viz. bodily, psychical and spiritual. We may briefly survey the treatment of these three levels of human existence in Sahaj Marg, and also compare it with that of the view given in the Upaniṣadic Philosophy:

- (i) The apparent man: This consists of the gross body of an individual. Garbhopaniṣad at the very beginning in the very first

verse (Sloka) points out: "(What is) of the character of five (elements), what is continuously engaged in the five (functions), what restores to the six (kinds of savoury food, standing as it does in need of pabulum for its substance) what harbours in six qualities intimately connected with it (which are not conducive to its well-being), what contains the seven Dhätus (primary humours), what is provided with the three Yonis (excretory receptacles) and what is built up of the body." This body is of four kinds -Jarayuja, Svedaja, Andaja and Udbhijja.

Adi Guru of Sahaj Marg system tells that the apparent man: is the gross body, which is constituted of five gross substances viz., (a) ether (ākāśa). (b) air (Vayu),. (c) fire (agni), (d) water (jala) and (e) earth (Prthvi). Heart is the regulating source at this level. It is heart that vitalises its functioning and enlivens With energy to perform action.

(ii) The subtle real man: is the subtle body of a man which is constituted of five subtle elements viz. (a) sound (sabda), (b) touch (sparśa), (c) form (rūpa), (d) taste (svāda) and (e) smell (gandha). This is the inner being that has been described as Jivātman by Sri Aurobindo. This Jivatman is the particle of Saccidānanda. It is the Centre of the Spirit in the Cosmos. There are innumerable centres of Spirit in the cosmos, as Jivatman are countless in number. It is our true being, the Supreme self in us. The Jivātman is the part of Divine, a portion of Paramātman and is transcendent to individuality. In Sahaj Marg the governing agency at this level is the mind. It is mind and its thought force that works in association with the samskaras.

The Jīva:: derived from the root Jiv', the word Jīva literally means 'that which breathes'. Sahaj Marg Sādhanā like the tradition of Vedic thought propounds that Jiva is nothing but atman. The Adi Guru tells that when ātman has the desire to live it is called Jiva or more broadly, that which has desire to live is Jiva. All the embodied existences are Jiva. Jiva of human being is an animated existence

Jiva is atman as well as Brahman. individual or personal soul enshrined in the human body. This is called Jivātman as opposed to Paramātman, the Supreme Soul

The principles of both ātman and Brahman work in Jiva, because it is Brahman or ātman imaged as and caged in physical frame. It inheres their attributes. For this very reason Jiva has motion and this motion is that of growing as well as that of thinking. Thus, Jiva is the embodied ātman. Being subjected to body, its vision does not go inside and it sees outside which causes illusion. It is the enjoyer (bhoktr) and the doer (kartr).

Jiva is specially related to heart. This is the only near most Reality of which a man is conscious. If there is no heart, there is no Jiva. But heart is not Jīva. Really Jiva is the name ascribed to the assembled state of three existence viz. Atman (soul), Mana (heart) and Sarīra (body). Thus, Jiva is the associated condition of soul, heart and body.

This Jiva has three forms: (i) Visva-Jiva associated with gross body and this is earthly, (ii) Taijasa-Jīva associated with subtle body and (ii) Prājña-Jīva associated with causal body.

(iii) **The Real Man:** is the causal body and according to Adi Guru is constituted of the five causal forms of the five subtle elements. At this level a man receives vitality from the Centre. One assumes identity with God. At this level the human person is the ātman.

Atman is a Reality next to Brahman. It has been accorded great importance so far as realization is concerned. Often ātman is used as equivalent term of Brahman. Western scholars have identified atman with Etmen and Oedm' meaning 'Breath' or 'Breath of life'. Shankara traces the origin of the word ātman to the root "āt", which means 'to obtain' or to pervade all. Hence ātman is that which is 'to be obtained' and which pervades' all over.

The Adi Guru of Sahaj Marg Sādhanā analyses the word atman as constituted of two roots 'āt', to go or move constantly and 'man, to think. Thus 'āt-man means moving along with thinking or say, thinking along with moving. That which thinks and moves is atman.

He also remarks that this ātman also has three bodies causal (kāraṇa), subtle (sūksma) and gross (sthūla) bodies. As ātman, the causal body (kāraṇa śarīra), is the seed and this causal body of

atman as manifested in the heart is the subtle body (süksma śarīra). Since subtle body exists in the heart, it is said that ātman is to be realized in the cave (Guha) of the heart. This is also what Lord Krishna tells Arjun in Gita (18, 61): "O Arjuna the God resides in the heart region of all the creatures." The physical or material organism is the gross body (sthūla sarira) of atman. The gross body is constituted of gross elements, the subtle body is made up of subtle, elements, and the causal body consists of the seed form of the above-mentioned elements. These three bodies come into existence out of the synthesis and organisation of these elements. There has been a lot of discussion over these three bodies. But really ātman is the causal body. The body, the heart, and the soul are respectively the gross, subtle and causal bodies and these are after all the bodies. Gross body has the characteristic movement of the senses of action (karmendriyas) and senses of knowledge (jñānendriyas). Subtle body remains engaged in the movement of thought of the subtle senses of action and of knowledge. It had both motion and (peaceful) rest. Causal body has perfect rest and enjoys peace, which is also known as happiness (ananda). In this way atman also is not devoid of action (karma). Thus, according to Sahaj Marg view atman is the causal body and is also subject to action.

Atman and Ignorance (ajñāna):

Sahaj Marg Sadhamā attributes the quality of ignorance to atman, Since atman is compound or admixture in its causal form as a seed of all the manifestations. People have conceived atman according to their capacity of understanding. The Adi Guru of the system, under reference also furnishes reasons why people feared to ascribe the characteristic of ignorance to ātman. There have been many learned ones, meditators, seers, sages, prophets and saints, but no body has said that atman (Soul) is ignorant (ajñāni) because of the following reasons.) They feared of death in leaving old traditional lore. (ii) They feared and moreover did not like to get defamed. They kept themselves confined to the limits of religion or sect in which their spiritual as well as worldly life was nursed and nurtured. They could not cross the religious or- communal limits, because, it was regarded, as a great sin for them to go against traditionally propounded thoughts and theories. (ii) They simply hinted at and spoke of this fact of ignorance about ātman; but in a concealed

and indirect way, that ātman is a limited Reality caged in the physical frame of body. No body lifted the veil and revealed the truth. (iv) Moreover, they introduce such practices and meditations that the heart may itself be awakened, and it was thought that people would themselves comprehend the truth. With such organization the truth was not clearly explained and the expression was kept concealed to the hints, proverbs and hymns.

Generally ignorance (ajñāna) means 'not knowing' but the Adi Guru tells that one, who tries to understand the implication of knowledge, is ignorant. Further, he also clarifies that ignorance (ajñāna) does mean 'absence of knowledge or understanding'. Ignorant ātman definitely has knowledge but is not conscious of it. In ātman it remains concealed as the tree remains concealed in the seed. That is to say that ignorant ātman has knowledge, but remains unconscious of it. Knowledge means thinking, understanding, discrimination, and all these are the affairs of heart.

Forget Yourself:

Sahaj Marg Sādhanā advocates forget thyself in place of 'know thyself (ātmānam viddhi)'. This also clarifies that not the knowledge instead the forgetful state is required for its realization. Sahaj Marg Sādhanā ascribes ignorance to ātman, which implies the absence of even realization. The real knowledge of ātman comes when even the awareness of ātman is lost.

Thus, Sahaj Marg also admits the three-body theory along with its constituent elements; but the description of these bodies differs from the traditional view. He tells that there are three circles (1) circle of gross body, which is covered with darkness (andhakāra); (ii) the circle of causal body, which is full of light, and (i1) Circle of subtle body, which has both light and darkness and this lies in the middle of the circles of the gross' and the causal bodies.

These three circles represent the three fields and have three governing principles - causal body is governed by the centre, subtle body is activated by mind and the gross body is regulated by the heart.

Referring to this three-body theory of human existence Shri Ram Chandraji opines that the outermost form is the gross body (sthūla śarīra) behind which there exist the astral body (sūksma śarīra) and the causal body (kāraṇa śarīra). Besides these three outer forms, there are innumerable other ones, which are so fine and subtle that thinkers do not call them as bodies, but only as the fine coverings round the soul. It is very difficult to put a name for each of them, which may be countless. With all these innumerable forms from the finest to the grossest the man is in existence in the material world as a true copy of the universe or the entire manifestation of God represented by a complete circle from the outermost circumference to the innermost centre or zero. In this way the three-body theory has received an accurate and a very plausible interpretation in the system of Sahaj Marg spiritual practice and it puts aside the mist and confused notions gathered around these concepts.

Five Sheath Conception and Sahaj Marg:

Upaniṣadic philosophy deals with the human personality as analysed in the five sheaths (kosas) viz.

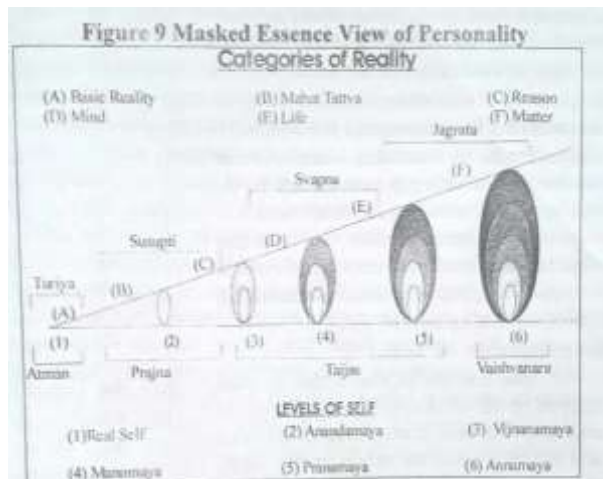
- (i) the sheath of food (annamaya kosa),
- (ii) the sheath of vitality (prānamaya kosa),
- (iii) the sheath of mind (manomaya kosa),
- (iv) the sheath of consciousness (vijñānamaya koṣa), and
- (v) the sheath of bliss (ānandamaya kosa).

S.C. Sen puts that "these five koshas, are arranged one within the other like the concentric circles. the soul of the Jiva being in the centre _of them all. The anandamaya is the innermost and the annamaya is the outermost shell while the three other kosas, viz. the Vijñānamaya, Manomnaya and Pranamaya are interposed between them.”,

Dr. S. P. Srivastava gives an illustration of these five kosas (sheaths) in a diagram and thereby he explains the levels of consciousness and the categories of Reality as in Figure

Figure 9 Masked Essence View of Personality

Figure



This explains the simultaneity of the mask and the essence view in the philosophy of the Upanisads. Dr. S. P. Srivastava remarks, "...the synthesis of the mask and essence view in the Upanisads is aimed at emphasising the organic unity of the human personality functioning at various levels of consciousness."

Sahaj Marg advocates a noteworthy approach to the Upanisadic conception of five sheaths (kosas). Shri Ram Chandraji tells that there are twenty-three sheaths or coverings round the soul which may be described in the form of concentric circles. These twenty-three circles are divided into three regions - (i) Central Region, (i) Mind Region and (ii) Heart Region (as shown in figure 15).

In this way Sahaj Marg describes the Upanisadic thought of five sheaths in the form of concentric circles round the centre. These circles from the centre the outermost circle convey the thought of increasing grossness. Shri Ram Chandraji tells, "Complete freedom from these kosas is an essential feature of realization and that is possible within the life time of a man too. All these things shall come during the course if one remains adhered firmly to his final object or goal. It would be greatest blunder to apply effort for the shattering of these sheaths because in that case one would be straying away from the real purpose." Thus, these sheaths or coverings are not to be shattered but to be transcended for higher progress in sadhana.

Dr. K. C. Varadachari remarks that Sahaj Marg sadhanā has made a startling investigation' in Yoga psychology by its conception of coverings in the form of concentric circles or rings. He also tells that Shri Ram Chandra thereby "reveals that all creation is of the Mind (Manas), which is the first Stir of the Reality. This Primal Manas radiating in vibration from that Centre or Reality created concentric circles."

Constitution of Man:

The Centre is the Ultimate Reality and the Central Region is the Godly region (īŚvariya desa). The becoming of man begins from the outermost circle of central region. It is true that the man owes his origin to the Centre but coverings up to the seven circles are very subtle and they are the divine or celestial rings of splendour. "As a spider moves along the thread, as small sparks come forth from the fire, even so from this Self come forth all breaths (prāṇah), all worlds, all divinities, all beings. Its secret meaning is the truth of truth. Vital breaths are the truth and their truth is it." This Centre is the Ultimate Truth. "This is the truth. As from a blazing fire sparks of like form issue forth by the thousands, even so, O beloved, many kinds of beings issue forth from the immutable and they return thither to Divine and formless is the person. He is without and within, unborn, without breath and without mind, pure and higher than the highest immutable." Mundaka Upaniṣad tells: "From Him come forth the seven life-breaths, the seven flames, their fuel, and the seven oblations. These seven worlds in which moves the life-breaths, seven and seven which dwell in the secret place."

For practical purposes, the constitution of individual being in Sahaj Marg has been analysed in two aspects the Mind and the Heart. They respectively denote psychic and physical spheres. The nature of Mind and Heart is determined by the distance of their location from the Centre. The Mind represents the inner mental properties and the Heart stands for the outer physical constitution of man. Sahaj Marg by these two regions paints the total picture of the psycho-physical built up of a man's existence on earth. Thus, the composition of man has two poles the innermost Circle representing the mental modification and psychic activities and the outermost circle of gross body. The

former pole is the mind and latter is the matter. In this way mind and matter are not different categories but two levels of one process. This may be spoken of as the organismic dynamical view of man. Swami Vivekananda gives a good account of the relation between matter and mind. He says, "Now that which we call matter and mind are one and the same substance. The only difference is in the degree of vibration. Mind at a very low rate of vibration is what is known as matter. Matter at a high rate of vibration is what is known as mind. Both are the same substance; and therefore as matter is bound by the time, space and causation; mind, which is a matter at a high rate of vibration is bound by the same law." Hence the external world is gross and internal is the subtler and finer.

Mind and Heart are the two main functionaries, which bring about the existence of man. Mind governs the psychical aspect and heart regulates the physiological functioning of body. Mind is the Ksetrajña and heart is the Ksetra.

Shri Ram Chandraji says, "The heart is the field for the action of the mind. Mind is always as it is. It is the heart which, as the field for the action of the mind, is to be set right."

In this way according to Sahaj Marg there are three main governing principles of human existence viz. Centre, Mind and Heart. Centre governs causal body, mind dominates subtle body and heart regulates gross body. They are the three successive manifestations. They are really one. The difference lies in the degree.

As Swami Vivekananda puts it: Just as in a rushing stream there may be millions of whirlpools, the waler in each of which is different every moment, turning round and round for few seconds, and then passing out, replaced by a fresh quantity, so the whole universe is the one constantly changing mass of matter, in which all forms of existence are so many whirlpools." Sahaj Marg system contends that from First Stir the process of evolution shoots forth and the latent thought in the Centre turns into manifestation. This first Stir is the First Mind and the mind of a man is also the same. Hence, the circle of universe is the Mind. In the words of Shri Ram Chandraji "the innermost centre of the man's existence and that of God's manifestation is really the same as the realization of the Self and Vice versa. The entire Universe came into existence from the

same point, the zero, through the process of evolution. Similarly, man's existence too developed from the same point." He also says, "The consciousness of individuality was the first covering in the composition of the man. Further additions continued one after the other. Egoism began to develop and ultimately assumed a grosser form. The working of mind senses and faculties began to contribute their share towards grossness. Action of the body and mind led to the formation of Samskāras. Finally, now the man exists in the grossest form consisting of outer gross body and inner finer bodies and coverings." In this way the constitution of man is similar to that of universe. Just as behind this solid external universe there are innumerable others of the finer and still finer type, so behind this gross physical form of a man there are numerous finer and still finer form of existence.

Shri Ram Chandraji gives good account of Jiva (individual soul) and points out the immanent Brahman-hood in Jiva. According to him originally Brahman and individual soul (Jiva) are one. "Jiva, the individual soul, becomes cognizant of its being when it assumes individuality, and that becomes the basis of his existence. Originally, Jiva and Brahman were quite akin to each other, and it is only the individuality of the Jiva, which affected a difference between the two. Now Jiva, as soul, bound up within the ego or individuality came into existence. The sphere, it was in, also began to cast its effect upon it. Various hues one after the other began to settle in and step-by-step, the ego began to develop and grow thicker and denser. Feeling's emotions and desires began contributing their own share to its grossness. Thus, Jiva like a golden bird, got itself completely enclosed within the iron cage of the body. All this resulted from the effect of actions and counter actions of thoughts, emotions, feelings, and desires (in the zone of ego), which went on adding to the capacity. This is in brief the whole history of Jiva.

The constitution of man continued to remain a riddle and numerous attempts have been made in order to sort out some solution and as a result there are various theories e.g., the three body theory, five sheaths theory, four levels of consciousness etc. The mention of Brahman, Atman, Jiva, samskāras, bandhana, and ajñāna are the numerous concepts depicting the various aspects rather the levels of human personality. The description of constitution of man in Sahaj Marg system unravels

and tackles the inherent implication of so far used notions and concepts. Now the succeeding chapters shall deal further the inherent implications. Thereby it would be easier to comprehend the constitution of man in a coherent and useful way for the purpose of spiritual practice

The Goal of Spiritual Practice

In any form of spiritual practice (sādhana), the consciousness of the goal or ideal (sādhyā) is essential. "The recognition of the destination makes the traveller on the path of life a pilgrim instead of a vagabond." The goal-consciousness not only paints the picture of the ideal to be achieved but also channelizes our efforts, and brings definiteness in practice. Moreover, it also helps in the choice of the means and in sorting out the resources in order to achieve the ideal aimed at, "If our; eyes are not fixed upon the aim and we go on performing worship, our condition ill be like that of a traveller who goes on boarding every train not knowing where to get down. The path of spiritual progress becomes visible only when one is aware of the goal or station he wants to reach." Indian philosophy has been throughout purposive". It has not been engaged in mystified supernatural conceptions garbed in the form of barren theories. It reveals what is concealed and curtailed behind the fascinating scenes of material gratification and physical satiation of the desire and impulses. Indian philosophy has unravelled the secrets of human existence and its purpose. People are prone to forget what Buddha preached in his First Noble Truth, viz., that life is a vale of sufferings and miseries (sarvam_duhkham). They ignore what Lord Rāma told of this woeful world in Yoga Vāsiṣṭha. Everybody aspired to get release from the weal and woe of human existence. For that very purpose numerous ideals by various schools of thought have come to light, viz., God-realization (Brahmasākṣātkāra). state of Balance (Sthitaprajna), the fourth level of consciousness (Turiyavastha), ideal of freedom, eradication of suffering, self- sufficiency. perfection etc. In whatever terms we may put it, the goal or ideal, must be supreme and highest so that the progress may also be highest. If one selects some middle-point ideal, the achievement is destined to be restricted to that limit. The aims and objects conceived in terms of worldly ends are almost meaningless. We forget that pains and miseries are only symptoms of a disease, but the disease lies elsewhere. To practise devotion to

please God in order to secure worldly comforts or gains is but a mockery. The problem before us is not mere deliverance from pain and misery but freedom from bondage, which is the Ultimate cause of pain and misery. Sahaj Marg sādhanā advises that "the goal must be highest otherwise the progress up to the highest limit is doubtful.

The Ideals of Yogic Practice

Before discussing the Ultimate ideal as conceived in Sahaj Marg we turn to the ideal aimed at by the various schools of Yogic practice (sādhanā) in the Indian Philosophy. Primarily the following ideals of Yoga are worth mention:

- (i) Ideal of Realization.(Saksatkara)
- (ii) Achievement of super human power (Siddhis)
- (iii) Balanced State (Samatva)
- (iv) Fourth Level of Consciousness (Turiyavastha)
- (v) Concentration (Samadhi)

(i) Ideal of Realization (Sākṣātkāra)

The ideal of God-Realization (Brahma-Sākṣātkāra) also known as Self-Realization (Atma-Sākṣātkāra) has been trumpeted to be the goal of human endeavours especially in India. The state of Brahmanistha (one established in Brahman), has been described as the transcendental state (parama pada) wherein a sādhanā forsakes bondage and achieves Perfection. One, who achieves this state is also called Brahmavettā, Brahmajia or Brahmibhūta Yājñavalkya (Brh. II) proclaims and proves himself to be the superior most Brahmavettā (knower of Brahman). In this way Brahman has been the ideal of spiritual practice (Sādhanā) and the same thought has figuratively been described in Mundaka Upaniṣad (11, 2, 4): (The syllable (Pranava) is the bow, one's self, indeed, is the arrow. Brahman is spoken of as the target of that. It is to be hit without making a mistake. Thus, one becomes united with it as the arrow (becomes one with the target).) The God-Realization is that which has been described as *Brahmasthanī and Brahmanirvāna' in Gita (11, 72). Gita (IV, 24) also explains: Brahman is that which is to be attained by him who realizes Brahman in his act Brahman has been described as the all-pervading existence in Mundaka Upaniṣad (1, 22, 12):

(Brahman, verily, is this immortal. In front is Brahman behind is

Brahman, to the right and to the left. It spreads forth below and above. Brahman, indeed, is this universe. It is the greatest.)

Hence, the realization of Brahman has been taken to be the ideal, which is regarded as the transcendental state (parama pada). Shri Ram Chandraji opines, "Most of the scholarly saints have defined the state of Realization in numerous odd ways, but to me it appears that so far as it can be defined, it is not realization. It is really a dumb-state which is beyond expression". He also tells, "Really it is a tasteless state unchanging and constant. There is no charm, no attraction and anandam in the popular sense of the word." "Generally learned men express their opinion about Realization or its conditions on the basis of learning and not on that of their experimental knowledge, which is the real one. For that reason, I regret to say that-realisation has now become a present-day art. The Reality, in fact, has sunk down deep leaving out its colours according to their 'mental taste and skill. The result is that people begin to focus their attention on those very paintings and get into them to the extent that is neither spirituality nor Reality. I believe that one must not have the right to touch the subject of realization unless he has attained it in the true sense, whereby the Divine Wisdom has awakened in him". This account of realization brings the fact to light, that realization as described by learned scholars is merely a result of verbal description and logical analysis. But the true realization lies in the direct experience, when by following proper practice, the Divine Wisdom is awakened. Ram Chandraji tells, "People often ask me to let them know first what realization is, and afterwards they would start worshipping. It is just one to say, "Let me first understand the thought of Shakespeare or Milton and afterwards I shall try to learn the alphabets." It is putting the cart before the horse, when one speaks: Let me first realise God, and then I shall start worshipping Him. "When the very thing you seek through worship comes to you, why should you worship at all? He alone can climb up heights, who has created in himself the recognition of his low-lying state"

Shri Ram Chandraji also tells. "The thought of people generally does not go beyond the points of liberation, which they call to be the final limit of human approach. But this is a wrong idea. As a matter of fact, liberation is one of the lowest attainments on the Divine path; hence it is just like a toy for the

child to play with, beyond which there is yet a lot to be achieved. The infinite ocean lies still ahead, which is but a limitless expanse. Have your eyes fixed upon That and That alone; and go on and on to trace it out".

Thus, under Sahaj Marg, realization in the sense of liberation is not the final approach of human endeavour on the path of spirituality in true sense. There is still a vast expanse to be traversed by Abhyasi after achieving the stage of realization, which is just the beginning in the Sahaj, Marg system of Raj yogic practice.

(ii) Achievement of Super Human Powers (Siddhi)

The ideal of the achievement of superhuman and supernatural powers (Siddhis) has been the object of Yogic practice, particularly in Hathayoga. Hathayogaprdipika (1,II) maintains that Hathavidya is followed by those who aspire to achieve superhuman powers (siddhis). There have been enumerated eight types of siddhis in Yoga Sufra (111, 45) viz. (i) Anima the super human power of becoming as small as an atom; (ii) Mahima- the power of increasing and expanding size at will; (iii) Garima the power to make oneself heavy; (iv) Laghima-the power of assuming excessive lightness; (v) Prāpti - the power of obtaining each and everything; (vi) Prakāmya the power of having irresistible will; (vii) Ishatva - the power of having godliness and (viii) Vashitva - one who has subdued all of his passions. Brahmavaivarta Purāna in Krishnajanmakhanda describes thirty-four forms of siddhis. These siddhis in Buddhist Tantra have been divided as superior (uttam) and common (samanya). Sekoddesha calls them post-worldly (lokottara) and worldly (laukika) respectively.

One can achieve these powers (siddhis) by arousing the coiled power (kundalini sakti) in the sacral plexus (mulādhāra cakra) and carrying it to sahasrāra crossing through the lotuses (cakras) in the spinal column. The exercises of Prānāyāma and Asanas also provide a great help in it. According to Yoga Sūtra (IV, 1) these siddhis are begotten by five means -janma (birth), auṣadhi (medicine), Mantra (sacred words), Tapas penance), and samadhi(concentration). There is also description of such Yogis who had the capacity to control pulsation and to stop heart beatings, to have double bodies, to see future, to converse with one

who is living far off etc.

The ideal of siddhis is primarily concerned with Hathayoga. It is also asserted that this Atman is not accessible by the weak. As such siddhis or miraculous powers may sometimes be treated as essential to Self-realization. Haṭhayoga Sadhanā aims at physical and organic health. Pt Gopinath Kaviraja asserts that the organic (bodily) purification is the immediate aim. of Hathayoga". Majumdar also explains, "Hafhayoga induces subtle changes in-metabolism and transmutes the organic substances which has been described as an alchemical change." So, siddhis are achieved, if one undertakes Hathayogic exercises. But the Ideal of Hathayoga should not be treated as the supreme object of spiritual practice (Sadhanā), because Hathayoga in its final phase culminates into Rajayoga Hathayogapradīpikā (I, 2) clearly puts that it is for the sake of Rajayoga alone that the practice of Hathayoga has been enunciated. Shri Ram Chandraji remarks, "I may also assure you that Hathayoga has no access beyond Ajñā Cakra. Besides, there is also another serious defect in it. When we start with the bodily exercise of Hathayoga, the consciousness of our physical efforts, with the idea of self in the background also emains all through. Thus, the ego instead of reducing goes on increasing thereby". He further, points out the draw back in the practice of Hathayoga: "No practice of Hathayoga can bring out true realization, as it fails after the Ajñā Cakra and there still remain very many stages still to pass after it. Therefore, the achievement of siddhis is of no avail if one wants true spiritual progress. Moreover, ideal of siddhis mainly pertains to material gain and welfare, and consequently it is a hindrance on the path of true spirituality.

(iii) Balanced State (Samatva)

Gita is regarded as the cream of Upaniṣads wherein Krishna puts forth the ideal of settled intelligence (sthitaprajña or sthitadhi) to Arjuna and asks him to follow the path of yoga and advises to perform non-attached action (anāsakta or niskāma karma). Gita (11, 55-59) provides an elaborate description of the ideal of sthitaprajna in the words of Krishna the following verses are worth mention and important for its comprehension:

(When (the person) has withdrawn the senses from their objects, verily like a tortoise, his intelligence gets established. The object-seeking tendency gets dulled in a fasting body but the lusciousness (of the object for the mind) does not drop out; on the attainment of the vision of the Transcendental Reality, even this lusciousness itself is gone.) Therefore, the ideal of balance which has been called yoga (samatvam yoga ucyate) is the ideal condition to be achieved by observing non-attached (anāsakta) action. Shri Ram Chandraji explains that "mere saying that I am not the doer (When all the desires of the mind settle down, O Arjuna! and the self becomes satiated in the Self itself - that is spoken of as (the state of) sthīlāprajñā with an unperturbed mind in distress, devoid of any craving for the pleasure, freed from attachment, fear and anger he is to be spoken of as the sage with a settled intelligence. One who is affectionless everywhere, and hence having come across the good and bad gets neither happy nor disgusted respectively, his intelligence is verily established will not make one to realise the ideal of non-attached action or sthīlāprajñā. Gita lays emphasis on desireless (niskama) and non-attached (anāsakta) action. But mere thinking that one is not the doer of action would never bear any fruit. "The state commences when all the senses are silenced. Mere saying or hearing is of no avail in this respect. It is only to

be practised and for it a broad heart is required." The Adi Guru of Sahaj Marg Sādhanā has also laid ample emphasis on the ideal of balance in the form of temperance (Etdāl).

(iv) The Ideal of Turīyāvasthā Turīyāvasthā or Turyāvasthā is enumerated as the fourth transcendental level of consciousness after the three successive levels of Jagra (waking), svapna (dreaming) and susupti (deep sleep). Describing these first three levels Dr. Radhakrishnan tells, "While the first condition is the waking life of outward moving consciousness, and the second is the dream life of inward moving consciousness, the third is the deep sleep where

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the consciousness enjoy peace and has no perception of either external or internal objects." Mandukya Upaniṣad (7) describes the negative and positive features of the state of Turiya:

(Turiya is "not that which cognises the internal (objects), not that which cognises the external (object), not what cognises both of them, not a mass of cognition, not cognitive, not non- cognitive. (It is) unseen incapable of being spoken of, ungraspable without any distinctive marks, unthinkable, unnameable, the essence of knowledge of oneself, that into which the world is resolved, the peaceful the benign, the non- dual, such, they think is the fourth quarter. He is the self; he is to be known.") Dr. Radhakrishnan remarks that it is 'a super- theism not atheism or antitheism. He also tells, "Man's highest good consists in entering into this, the self, making it the centre of one' s life, instead of dwelling on the surface. "In Turiya there is a permanent union with Brahman. The metaphysical reality is cognised in Turiya if such an expression can be used for the transcendent state. In Yoga Vasiṣṭha and Yoga Upaniṣads 1Turiyāvasthā is called by the name of "Tūryagā which is the seventh level of spiritual elevation according to these texts.

These seven levels are following:

- (i) Subhecchā (virtuous desire).
- (ii) Vichāra or vichāranā (investigation).
- (iii) Tanumānasī (functioning with attuned mind).
- (iv) Sattvāpatti (The attainment of Rhythmic state).
- (v) Asamsakti (detachment).
- (vi) Padārthabhāvini(the right conceptioof substance).
- (Vin) Turyagā (attainment of Turiya).

We shall consider in detail these stages in the ninth chapter. The Turyāvasthā has been termed as 'Sahajāavasthā' by Brahmananda. Yoga Upaniṣads also describe one more state and name it Turiyātita (beyond turiya) Adi Guru of Sahaj

Marg Sādhanā deals with these Turiya and Turiyātīta states in a more detailed way and differentiates various forms of Turiya e.g., Jiva Turiya i.e., the fourth level of individual centre of consciousness; Prakṛti Turiya i.e., the fourth level of consciousness in the total Reality or Being as such; Parabrahma Turiya i.e., the fourth level of Reality that transcends even the Being as such (and includes even Non-Being), and Adhiṣṭhāna Turiya i.e., fourth level of the Ultimate Base. Fourth level, in fact, is situated at the top of every form of the three-fold world or existence (Trilokī). " This has already been dealt with through the help of a diagram in Chapter 3 previously.

Thus, really Turiya is a state of spiritual wakefulness. It is a state of 'spiritual experience' according to Radhakrishnan Gita speaks of this spiritual and transcendental wakefulness:

(That which is night for all the beings, the self-controlled one (Sarimiyami) wakes up into it, that into which all beings are awake is the night to the mediating seer).

(v)The Ideal of Samādhi

Near most all the forms of Yoga Sādhanā have aimed to achieve the state of samādhi. Yoga in its true sense is achieved when man gains access to samādhi. Vyāsa in his commentary on Yoga Sūtra (1, 1) defining yoga tells that Yoga is samādhi (TAA:) Lord Krishna in Gita also asserts that when man gains unmoved intelligence in samādhi, he achieves Yoga. If we go through the various description of samādhi, we find that samādhi is a refined level of meditation (dhyāna), whereupon soul (Jivātman) and God (Paramātman) secure equipoise state. Yoga Upaniṣads describe that forgetting of meditation (dhyānasya vismṛtiḥ) is called right samādhi. Yoga Upaniṣads also remark that samādhi is a balanced or equipoise state (samatāvasthā) between soul (jivātman) and God (Paramātman). Dr. S. P. Srivastava gives a detailed analysis of the phenomenon of samādhi, and points out that "there is no controversy on two points viz. that (i) Samadhi is the last step in the process of Sadhana or yoga i.e. the efforts for the realization of

the Ultimate goal of human life, and (ii) Samadhi is a state of super normality."

Sahaj Marg System evaluates the ideal of samadhi and Shri Ram Chandrajii gives the following account of Samādhi "There are three forms of Samadhi or the stages of concentration, The first of these is wherein a man feels lost or. His senses, feelings and emotions are temporarily Suspended in a way that they seem apparently dead for the time being. He resembles a man in a dead slumber, unconscious of everything the second form is, in which a man though deeply concentrated on a point, does not feel actually drowned in it. It may be described as the state of consciousness within an unconscious state. Apparently, he is not conscious of anything but still consciousness is present within, though only in a shadowy form. A man walks along a road thinking deeply over Some problem. He is so absorbed in it that he is not unconscious of anything else; nor does he see anything in the way, nor hears the sounds or voices near about. He goes on in an unconscious state of mind. But still he does not collide with a tree by the nor is he knocked down by a car coming that way. In his state of unconsciousness, he unknowingly attends to these necessities and acts as occasion demands He has no Consciousness of these actions. It is consciousness in an unconscious state, in this state of mind the consciousness of other things appears to be in a sleeping state and creates little impression. The third form is the Sahaj Samādhi. This is the type of concentration. In this state a man is busy with the work, his mind being absorbed in it, but in the innermost core of his heart, he is still settled on the real thing. With his conscious mind he is busy with the external work, while at the same time his subconscious state of Samādhi although apparently, he is busy with worldly work. This is the highest form of Samādhi and little remains to be done after a man has entered this state permanently. Thus varied analyses of the state of Samādhi as Samprajnata and Asamprajnāta, Sabija and Nirbja, Savikalpa and Nirvikalpa etc. are well explained in the traditional thought and theory of Yoga Sādhanā.

Ideal of Sahaj Marg Sādhanā

So long as man remains confined within the bounds of one or other religion, the God of that particular religion remains in his view. The highest advancement is possible only when one has clear comprehension of the object aimed at. Shri Ram Chandraji gives a good account of the aim and object for the sake of understanding the truth and worth of the numerous religions systems in these words: "The end of religion is the beginning of spirituality: the end of spirituality is the beginning of Reality and the end of Reality is the real Bliss. When that too is gone, we have reached the destination. That is the highest mark which is almost inexplicable in words.

A man on the path of freedom from the bondage and of achievement of the Ultimate object of life should cross the barriers of religion because "God is not to be found within the fold of a particular religion or sect." The various religions present only the partial comprehension of the vast Existence which is "all-embracing". Religion now-a-days has become a form of sanctuary with numerous congregational performances of traditional and dogmatic rites and rituals without knowing their true significance and worth. "Universal love, the very fundamental basis of religion having disappeared altogether, the religion which was considered to be the link between man and God has now become barrier instead." This is why the present-day religion has become only relic of the past or the bones of dead. We have really buried the true religion in the grave. Only we clap hands in the name of religion and do nothing else. 36 The real spirit is lost and only formalities remain in its place." Hence according to Shri Ram Chandraji "religion is only a preliminary stage for preparing a man for his march on the path of freedom." Spirituality in true sense begins when one crosses barriers of religion. "So long as we remain confined within, the bounds of religion, the God of religion remains in view and we remain entangled within one or the other view. The highest spiritual attainment is only possible when we go beyond.

Spirituality is "the power which flows from the original repository, has the capacity in the forms of knots, both of creating and destroying. The sages in India have used the power of creation for reformation of humanity." 39 Spirituality is concerned with a form of energy or vital force which is utilized to maintain the order in the workings of Nature. Shri Ram Chandraji remarks that by the power of spirit. Nature of Darwin selects the fittest to survive in the struggle for existence and this is the point wherefrom the Malthusian preventive checks of Nature shoot forth to keep harmony and balance between the population and the edibles. At this level of spirituality, one is faraway from the final and ultimate object. When the field of spirituality is also crossed one reaches the sphere of Reality.

Reality is a harmonious or balanced state devoid of positive as well as negative characteristics (i.e., the power of creation and of destruction). Herein all the grossness and solidity dissolve into a fine and subtle form. This is a state which is extremely subtle, simple and fine. Perfect moderation prevails there without any thought of less or more. The permeating nature of Reality is such that it is the meaning and soul of all things. All things live and move and have their being in It without fully knowing it." Simplicity, peace and calmness pervade all over. "Reality begins where the steps of spirituality end

Further Shri Ram Chandraji explaining the true sense of Reality says. "The word Reality, as I have used, does not convey the true sense as all feelings and perception end there.", When this state of Reality is achieved one begins to enjoy bliss and when the experience of bliss is also transcended, one reaches the goal. Brahdāranyaka Upaniṣad (IV, 3, 10) also speaks of the absence of Bliss: "There is no bliss, no pleasures and no delight, but he creates bliss, pleasures and delights." In this way we find that the absolute God or State, to be attained is beyond the realm of bliss (paramānanda).

The Centre Absolute

Sahaj Marg system sets forth of ideal of Sādhanā in the form of Centre Absolute. "Intuitively this centre or the absolute point of human approach and existence is described as zero' Base, 'Nothingness etc. by the founder of Sahaj Marg System of Sadhanā." Shri Ram Chandraji says, "Whether you call it God or anything else for expression, this is the main point. This point is absolutely motionless and there is no energy, no power, nor any of the sorts. Just adjacent to it, is the latent motion which generates power that issues henceforth. The Centre only maintains the latent motion. The colour of his place can be expressed as faint reflection or colourlessness. It is throwing forth in the Central Region something in the shadow form, The shadow form of the region is due to it and it is the swimming place for the liberated souls. We can reach there even when having our bodies and can begin swimming like the liberated souls even in our life time."

The formulation of ultimate ideal as Centre in Sahaj Marg system is a noteworthy contribution to the field of sadhana, in the history of Indian Philosophy. One achieves super-consciousness of the finest type in this region. All the activities (karmas) end here. This is a ' Godly Region of Pure Form'. "Our goal is achieved and we are admitted into it. Self is realized. We are above actual consciousness... we are now free from the endless circle of rebirth."

Shri Ram Chandraji explaining the contradictory characteristics of Centre remarks that "the state I have described as nothing conveys the idea of something powerless. Centre in itself has no action within it, though near about it are the invisible motions, no doubt. It conveys the idea something motionless and mute. It T open it further, people will get puzzled. It is Infinite within Itself and one will plunge into the sea of wonder and amazement if he steps further. It concerns purely with Anubhava (experience) of the highest type.

Experience and imagination fail altogether...! Now God is described generally as having all powers. We call Him Almighty because we

have some force within us which we think to be a part of the big power. The power we see in us is the outcome of that BIG ACTION which develops into power. You can better understand it if you take up the example of an Electric Dynamo. This is a machine set up with magnets in a particular manner.

Now this dynamo has no power in itself. But when it revolves it creates a sort of electric field; and power begins to rush out from the field. The terminals that are fixed in the field at particular places pick up the power and the current begins to flow from the terminals, although the magnets of the dynamo are not connected with the terminals, nor do they touch them. In the same way Invisible Motion near about the Centre creates a sort of field of power which you may call as Central Region. But there it has no action and is quite silent. It only begins to rush out from the central Region through proper terminals in the form of different powers of nature.

Thus, the ultimate ideal of human existence is that state Where we are nearest to the super-active Centre or Zero, which is the primeval cause of the entire manifestation and to which everything will ultimately return after Mahāpralaya (complete dissolution). Dr. K. C. Varadachari remarks, "The goal of man is verily the divine nature and attainment of utmost peace. It is truly Bliss and the Source of all bliss, truth and consciousness or awareness. It is beyond all descriptions in terms of our human logic, nor could it be defined by means of our terms. It is transcendental to all our descriptions and definitions but not to our most intimate immanental experience, where one overcomes the ignorance and bondage, and all limitations to free oneness with all Reality qua reality. It is the experience of the Essence of Being which is also the source of all existence, from the most subtle to the most gross, from the verist homogeneity to the most prolific heterogeneity." Therefore, Sahaj Marg, like the earliest Vedic invocation says that our loyalty or goal must be for the Ultimate Reality. Nothing less should be aimed at."

"God thus is our goal (upeya). The Paramapuruṣārtha or Supreme goal is greater than even the freedom from birth-death cycle. Shri Ram Chandraji Ji has thus laid great stress on this most important goal of life. In this he has followed, the Vedic seer who affirmed that God is the greatest wealth (rayi) which is undiminishing, deteriorating and infinite (achyuta, ananta and amṛta) Thus Ramanuja also affirmed that Brahman or God is the goal of human life and in fact of all life." After the Indian tradition of treating Guru as equivalent to God, Sahaj Marg system also hails and lauds the same in the prayer prescribed for a Sadhaka as daily routine "O Master! Thou art the real goal of human life." Here 'Master means the Ultimate Reality and one should surrender himself to his shelter with firm faith and iron will.

Complete Oneness with God'

Shri Ram Chandraji gives the description of the ideal to be achieved by an Abhyasi in the third of the Ten commandments of Sahaj Marg: "Fix up your goal which should be complete oneness with the God. Rest not till the ideal is achieved". Herein the founder of Sahaj Marg unravels the Significance and importance of the ideal for the sādḥaka on the path of realization. The goal has been described in a very simple language as the 'complete oneness with God'. This 'oneness' is what has been described as God-realization or Soul-realization in Upaniṣads; and that state has been denoted by the terms Brahma-vid', Brahma-veṭṭā and Brahma-jñā. "But what is oneness With the goal, not merely the knowledge or even a vision of God but oneness with Him". Thus 'complete oneness does not mean the knowledge or the vision of Reality but a state of total mergence in the being of the Ultimate. It is what has been described as knowing (Jnatum), seeing (drstum) and finally entering (praveṣtum) Him. It is a mode of union with Brahman as described in the four successive states of sālokya, sampiyya, sāyyjya and finally sārūpya. Hence "complete oneness signifies the entrance into mergence in and dissolving ones being and assuming the form of God.

This state has also been described as the state of "living in God which means achieving the 'closest union with God. This thought has been expressed in the teachings as Sahaj Marg: Have firm faith in god, the one Absolute and live in Him". It refers to the state of closest union with the ultimate state of the real being which differs from our present state of being only in the respect of grossness. In is therefore, the dissolution of our grosser self or the attainment of the subtlest form of existence that is all needed for the purpose he Syatu aims t complete merging in that Ultimate state of subtleness or Oneness with Infinite Absolute. This can be achieved only when the grossness of being is dispensed with up to the last possible extent and complete freedom from bondage is se a Thu this living in God means dissolution of grossness and becoming subtler and subtler and remaining in the state of constant remembrance of God. It is a 'travel to wands infinity' and 'a march to freedom from bondage.

Return to the Origin'

In other words, it is the 'return to the Origin' and the unfolding of 'self by removing all the coverings of soul, Ishwar Sahai explains that "the final object of lite being our return to the origin or the attainment of primordial state of existence, the only process will be to remove all the coverings we are enwrapped in." This is a return to our Homeland "Where We are, we do not know, where we have been, we know but little. Is that not the clue of our Homeland? That is the target to hit at, first by force of will, then by total dissolution from will and intellect. "We have to return to that source; we have come down from. "For that, it is essential that we must, from the very start, fix our eyes upon that final state of super tiniest subtleness which is almost synonymous with Reality. The only solution can be to dispense with our grossness up to the last possible limit That is to assert that “. the final point of approach is where every kind of force, power, activity or even stimulus disappears and a man enters a state of complete negation, nothing or zero"

Characteristics of the Ideal of Sahaj Marg:

Dr. S. P. Srivastava sums up in general the notable features of all the concepts of the ideal of human personality in Indian Psychology which "More or less refer to (i) the loosening of ordinary human limitations (ii) through the sublimation and refinement of human mind (iii) resulting in the ennobling rather than the renunciation of the ordinary business of life. Beside these features the concept of ultimate ideal of Sahaj Marg System as conceived and advocated in the form of Centre Absolute bears in brief the following unique characteristics:

(i) The Centre absolute is the high-test of the various ideals conceived in Indian Philosophy because it is a state beyond Bliss (Paramāanda) and fourth level of consciousness, the Turīyāvasthā. The Central Region as described in Sahaj Marg System claims to unravel the unexplored regions in the sadhanā aspects of Indian Philosophy. The states of realization, liberation or salvation are short of mark in comparison to the Central region and there remains a lot to be attained after them.

(ii) It is simple and pure as it is easily comprehensible even by a man in the street and is confidently credible to be undertaken as the Ideal. It is pure since it is devoid of all grossness and solidity. There is no material touch. It is pure spirituality because it is the extremely subtle state wherein all coverings which enwrapped the Reality are dissolved.

(iii) It is not a state of non-activity (akarmayata) as having powerlessness and absence of motion of any sort. Really it is a state of potentiality as that of creating a tree in the seed for the sake of understanding. Shri Ram Chandraji himself tells: We searching for the potentiality which creates consciousness, and if that too is gone then we find ourselves on the verge of true Reality pure and simple. This philosophy is too high to be described in words. "He further adds, "Do you understand when I say we have to find out 'potentiality'? What is its origin or where does it come from? It comes from Tam, the last resting place of a true yogi." ,

(iv) It is not a state to be achieved after going through the cycle of many lives or after death but can be enjoyed even in the brief expanse of present life.

(v) it presents forth the natural solution of human existence on earth and subjects it to be matter of direct experience by the

individual himself.

Finally, we may note. "The goal of life means nothing but the point we have finally to arrive at. It is in other words, the reminiscence of our homeland or the primeval state of our present solid existence, which we have finally to return to. It is only the idea of destination which we keep alive in our minds and for that we practise devotion only as duty." The ideal or goal as conceived in the Sahaj Marg is the Centre Absolute and we have to reach that destination and acquire a state of close harmony with it.

The Technique and Method (Role of Aspirant)

Superiority of Yoga Sadhanā

Having determined the goal or end as Centre Absolute, Nothing, Base or Zero, we pass on the means (Sādhanā) for its attainment. Shri Ram Chandraji tells: "God is Simple and extremely subtle. In order to realise this subtlest Being we must take up means, which are equally fine and subtle. The difficulty arises only when intricate methods are applied for the solution of this very simple problem. In other words they apply huge cranes for picking up a small sewing needle." According to Sahaj Marg System, God-realization is very simple and easy and the difficulties faced therein are due to the application of intricate methods for a simple object. "Just as when we want to feed a baby we pose innocent like him, so also it is necessary for us to become Godlike in order to realize Him." There are various methods and technique of spiritual practice (sādhanā), but the superiority of yoga has been applauded and appreciated. According to Garuda Purāṇa (I, 14, 1;218, 1) yoga is helpful for the enjoyment (bhukti) of the world as well as for liberation (mukti). Vāsiṣṭha Dharma Sūtra (XV, 7) asserts: "Neither through severe austerities, nor through the daily recitation of the Veda, nor through offering

sacrifice can the twice-born reach the condition which they attain by the practice of Yoga." Atri Smṛti (, 11) also supports this assertion of Vāsiṣṭha Dharma Sūtra. Vāsiṣṭha Dharma Sūtra further tells, *Through the practice of Yoga (true) knowledge is obtained, yoga is the sum total of sacred law, all good qualities are gained through yoga. Therefore let one always be absorbed in the practice of yoga." Apastamba Dharma Sūtra exclaims that yoga eradicates faults (dosas): (There are) anger, exultation, grumbling covetousness, perplexities, doing injury (to anybody), hypocrisy lying. gluttony, calumny, envy, lust, secret hatred, neglect to keep the sense in subjection, neglect to concentrate the mind as the eradication of these (faults) takes place through the means of (salvation called) yoga." Svetāśvatara Upaniṣad (11, 12) tells: There is no longer illness, old age or pain to him who has obtained a body produced by the fire of yoga" Mahābhārata says that there is no strength equal to yoga (nāsti yoga samam balam)."This is the greatest religion (dharma) to realize Aman by Yoga. "Forsaking all the religions (dharmas) follow the path of yoga: (because) all (other religions) are full of faults Moreover, they cause birth (utpatti)." Lord Krishna in Gita also advises Arjuna to follow the path of Yoga Yogaśikhopaniṣad (I, 52) also points out, "Only through yoga the knowledge (of the genuine type) is attained in the course of a single incarnation. Hence, there is no royal road bestowing liberation besides yoga." Further "there is no religious merit higher than yoga, no subtlety transcending yoga (in fact) there is nothing beyond yoga." (I, 67).

As mentioned in the preceding paragraph the meritorious superiority of yoga over other forms of spiritual practice (sādhanā) has been acclaimed and emphasised in the numerous texts of Indian Philosophy. There are many forms of Yogic Sādhanā and among them Rājayoga is regarded as the best.

Rajayogic Technique in General:

The term 'Rājayoga is derived from the root 'ra to shine. Therefore, the plane on which peace and Light of spiritual illumination shines

forth is called Rājayoga according to Viṣṇu Tirtha. It is also said that since it is kingly among all the forms of yogas it is called Rājayoga (rajanat sarvayogānām). In this sense it is also called Rājādhirājayoga "The earth without Rājayoga, the night without Rajayoga the mudrā without Rajayoga even it (they are) lovely does not grace (look pleasant). Yogaśikhopaniṣad declares: "the conjunction of Rajas (Sakti) with Retas (Siva) it is called Rajayoga." Swami Vivekanandaa tells, "Rājayoga Is as much a science as any in the world. It is an analysis of the mind, a gathering of the facts of super-sensuous world and so building up the spiritual world." Rājayoga primarily concerns with 'thought' "Thought builds the universe. The mind only is real Samadhiyoga Sivayoga, Ajapayoga, Pūrnayoga (Sampūrnayoga), Mahayoga etc., also means or applies to Rājayoga There have been enumerated various steps or stages of Rajayoga, six-fold eightfold and fifteen-fold; but the eightfold yoga of Pantañjali is treated as the most perfect and adequate form of Rajayoga, which have also been enumerated in Hathayoga Rangeya Raghava has regarded Gorakhanatha as Rajayogi" But the Rājayoga as enunciated in Sahaj Marg system is more natural and simpler than the traditional Rajayoga as mentioned above. It introduces an efficacious technique suitable to the demands of the present environment and also as per the capacities of man. Really Rajayoga is a technique that teaches us how to gain the power of concentration (samadhi), In Rājayoga one is trained to get control over the wavering habit of mind, A sound body, no doubt, provides much help; but it is not an essential thing. "Good physique no doubt counts much but it does not mean that the weak and sickly have no chance of attainment. Surely, they have, under all conditions of health and body, only if they surrender themselves completely to, their Master, Guide or Guru." Shri Ram Chandrajī remarks, "Rājayoga really is a science and not a religion, It lays down lines along which to proceed in order to gain communion with God. The governing principle is thought power." He also says it is a Rāja yoga alone that can lead you on to your ultimate destination or the highest point of human approach, where you are in perfect harmony with nature, assuming your absolute and pure form."

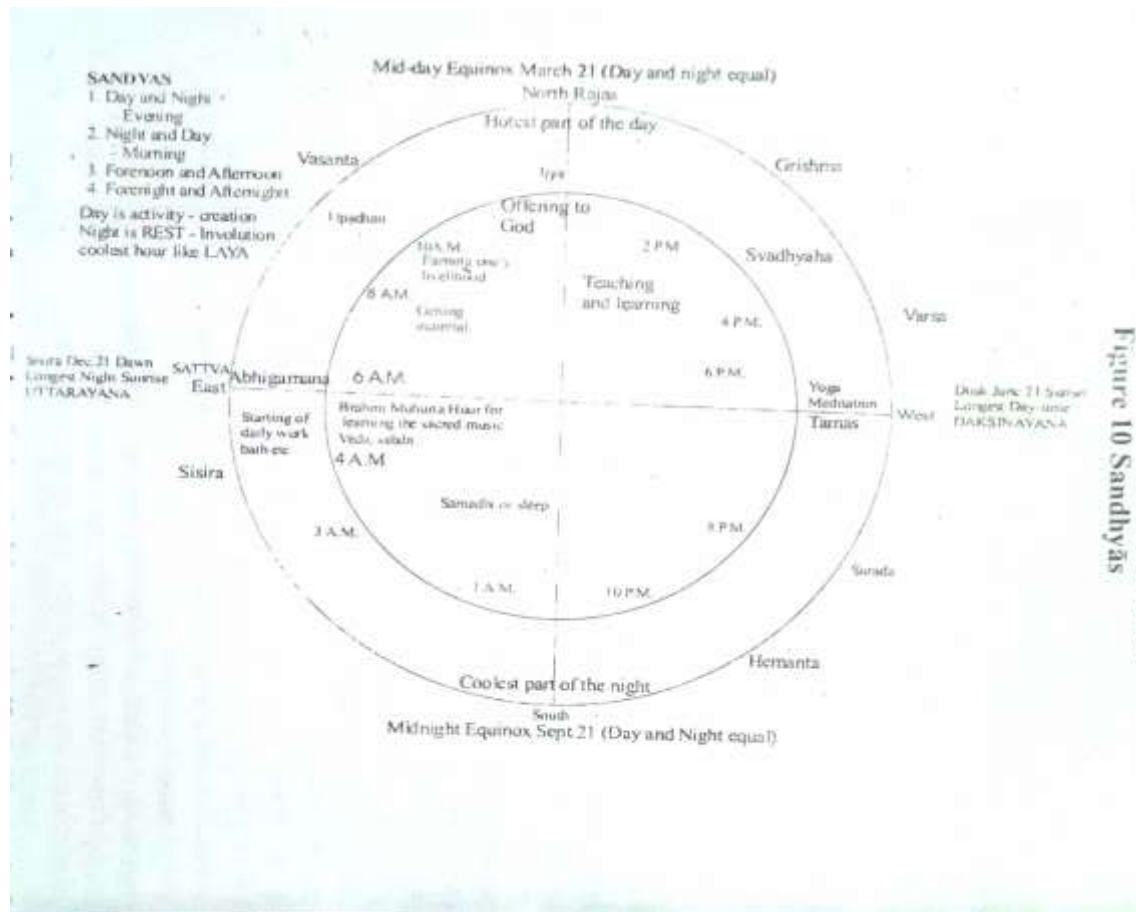
Simplification Introduced in Sahaj Marg:

The method of the practice of Rājayoga in Sahaj Marg System is so easy and simple that its "very easiness has become a veil to common understanding." The process as followed herein begins from meditation (Dhyana) enumerated as the seventh step in the famous eight-fold path of Patanjali. Shu Ram Chandraji remarks, "The previous steps are not taken up separately but they automatically come into practice as we proceed on with mediation. Thus, much of our time and labour are saved." The previous six steps are not observed separately but it is assured that the achievements and progress of all the six steps automatically originate in the aspirants, and this has made the practice of Rajayoga in this system simple, easy and natural the last three steps Dhāraṇa, Dhyana and Samādhi -in the yoga sādhanā of Patañjali are also known by the name of samyama (restraint). Ishwar Sahai remarks that these three steps really are the three levels or states of Dhyana, and therefore "of all the eight limbs of Asanga Yoga there remains only one the meditation, which covers everything physical, mental and psychic; and is all efficient in every way." Shri Ram Chandraji also explains the reason for starting practice from meditation, the seventh step: "People may ask why it is necessary to proceed with meditation at the first stage of Rajayoga The answer is quite plain and simple. We are now gathering ourselves at one point so that our individual mind may leave its habits of wandering about, which it has formed. By this practice we set our individual mind on the right path because it is not metamorphosing its habits. He also remarks, "By, the effect of our vicious thoughts and action we spoil our sense of discrimination and right cognition. Those who have reached this state of solidity do not like to come under the training of Rajayoga. This is why people turn a deaf ear to what we say the first of the commandments of Sahaj Marg puts forth a simple practice for sādhanā.

"Rise before dawn. Offer your prayer and P'uja at fixed hour preferably before sunrise, sitting one and the same pose. Have separate place and seat for worship Purity of mind and body be especially adhered to." Dr. K. C. Varadachari tells that "The first commandment is. comprehensive as it covers almost yama, niyama, asana and dhyāna stages of the yoga shastra. This commandment relates the method in which one should observe

meditation and by following it one will naturally begin to draw in power and spiritual progress during the course of his practice.

Figure 10 Sandhyas



Time: 'Rise before dawn'

The best time for meditation are the dawn and dusk. These are the times when the two phases day and night, light and dark coalesce. Dawn and dusk are really the two meeting (sandhi) points; and this is why they are regarded as the best time for offering worship and prayer. Since prayer or worship is offered at these conjunctions of day and night, they are called sandhyas. Moreover, sandhyā at midnight and mid-day is also suggested. Manusmṛti (11, 69, IV, 93) describes morning, noon and evening

prayers of the Brahman portion of Veda as sandhyā. Dr. K. C. Varadachari explains: "The times we know as SANDHYAS are, of course, relative to the sun, the earth and perhaps the moon also and finally our own time as determined by our waking and sleeping hours."

Ram Chandraji scientifically explains the characteristics of Sandhyās. "Performing sandhyā before sunrise is stressed upon for the reason that the external heat and other influences, which have been driven out of the body, may not creep in again by the effect of sun and thus we may be able to derive the best advantage of the time." According to Shri Ram Chandraji the dawn is the time of sattva and the dusk is the time of Tamas. Dr. K. C. Varadachari has aptly presented a good account of it in his diagram (Figure 10).

Therefore, one should rise before dawn' under Sahaj Marg system, for offering his worship. However, the time for meditation at dawn is not a fixed and strict rule to be adhered to by an aspirant. The main emphasis is laid on the 'fixed hour' convenient to an aspirant. There is a psychological reason behind it. When man determines to offer his worship at some fixed time, he naturally feels inclined towards worship at the approach of this hour which automatically pulls his mind from the habit of wandering and makes meditation more absorbing and natural.

Duration of Meditation

Sahaj Marg advises meditation for the duration of one hour in the morning and of another one hour in the evening. Beginners are asked to observe meditation at least for half an hour.

There is, however, nothing dogmatic about this duration, as well. The emphasis is on the development of the effect for which meditation is the means. Ritualistic adherence to the strict formalities may be necessary at initial stages for practical purposes, but once the conditions, aimed at, are arrived at, the ritualistic performances themselves get naturally modified in accordance with the demands of the Ultimate purpose, in view

Prayer

This System prescribes a prayer for the sādḥaka, which provides a great assistance in spiritual progress through meditation. The second of the Ten Commandments of Sahaj Marg tells:

“Begin your puja with prayer for the spiritual elevation with a heart full of love and devotion”.

A poet sings, "Prayer is the soul's sincere desire, uttered or unexpressed. The motion of a hidden fire, that trembles in the breast." Shri Ram Chandraji remarks, "Prayer is the sigh of devotion. It shows that we have established our relationship with the Holy Divine." Prayer is really a means or medium to keep communion with the God and seek his help for progress on spiritual path. Deep love with a feeling of devotion is also necessary for having full benefit from prayer because the state of prayer is that of a devotee and it is strengthened by love." Further he tells: "no particular time is fixed for the prayer. One can do it when he feels inclined to it or else he should try to create a disposition for it when required." It has also been advised for obtaining favourable results one should keep the feeling that he as a true servant approaches the great Master in the humble capacity of being an insignificant beggar engrossed upon the mind. He may put up everything before his Master, resigning himself completely to His will. In other words, he may assume his real form after surrendering everything to the Master. He should withdraw himself from all sides and turn completely towards Him losing all worldly chains. The remembrance of everything should merge in the remembrance of one the Ultimate, resounding all through in every particle of his being. This may be known as the complete annihilation of self. If one develops this storage, he should be considered as an embodiment of prayer. Every thought will be synonymous with that of the Master. He will never turn towards anything that is against the Divine Will. His mind will always be directed towards that which is the Master's command. This description as a whole outlines a psychological feeling and in brief tells to open one's heart and offer every fibre of one's being to God. This attitude of total surrender with a submissive mood is of great importance, while offering one's prayer. Tennyson, the poet, remarks that the "more things are wrought by prayer than this

world dreams of. Dr. Radhakrishnan also points out, "Prayer starts with faith, with complete trust in the Being to whom appeal is made, with the feeling of profound need, and a Simple faith that God can grant us benefit and is well disposed towards us

The Sanmhitā portions of all the four Vedas contain various hymns which are sung to pray to gods to seek their favour by Vedic Rsis. Dr. Radhakrishnan tells: "the prayer is the exploration of reality by entering the beyond that is within, by ascension of consciousness." Sahaj Marg system introduces the following simple and brief prayer: -

O Master!
Thou art the real goal of human life.
We are yet but slaves of wishes,
Putting bar to our advancement
Thou art the only God and Power.
To bring me up to that stage.

An aspirant is advised to offers this prayer before starting meditation and also at bedtime in a "most suppliant mood with a heart overflowing with divine love". The prayer should be repeated once or twice and be lost meditating over the sense and meaning of the prayer. Dr. S. P. Srivastava comments on the prayer: "In fact every word in the prayer of our Sansthā is irreplaceably significant. The first thought in the prayer asserts that the Master is the real goal of human life. Whatever the goal, it must essentially be exemplified in a member of human society itself the natural object of attachment and realization for man is man. The ideal or goal has, however, to be distinguished from the actual or the starting point. We, therefore, take Master or Man with capital "M as the goal." Dr. K. C. Varadachari explains that a prayer essentially has three parts- (i) refers to the goal, (i) refers to the obstacles and (ii) shows that God alone can lead us to the goal. All these three features are contained in the prayer. Shri Rajeshwari Prasad Srivastava remarks that there are four points in this prayer of Sahaj Marg (i). clearness of object, (ii) description of devotee's condition, (iii) complete surrender towards worshipped and (iv) calling the worshipped for help These features have been revealed in a very simple language in the

prayer of Sahaj Marg as mentioned above.

Method of Meditation

Offer your Pūja (Worship):-

In Sahaj Marg the Pūja or worship is offered in the form of meditation. The practice advised for a beginner is that, he should sit for mediation twice i.e. in the morning and in the evening at some fixed hour. The sadhaka is given following direction for meditation:

Sit for meditation in an easy posture keeping the same pose as far as possible. Offer prayer (O, Master...) twice or thrice and begin meditation on the heart point thinking there in the presence of Divine Light. Meditation is to be observed with mere supposition of light in a simple and natural way. There should not be mental effort for seeing the light in the heart because one may see light during meditation but vision of light is not the mark of meditation. Really light is subtlest conceivable object for the ordinary man to begin the meditation. The vision of light is an experience only in the beginning of one's march-on the path of sadhanā. Once should observe evening meditation in the same way, but he should also think that the grossness and complexities are going out of the system (body) from backside in the form of vapour or smoke.

The morning meditation is the inflow of spirituality poured into the heart and evening meditation is a cleansing process, which is an outflow of the grossness and materiality from the heart. Thus, meditation as advised in Sahaj Marg serves both ends as cleansing the being of man and making it fit for receiving the Divine Current. Shri Ram Chandraji asserts that this process of meditation will help one in purging one's mind and making the aspirant receive the efficacious influence of great Master.

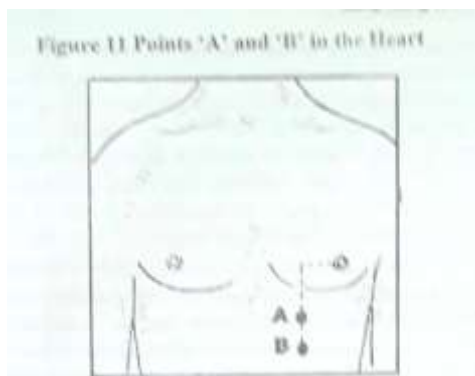
An Abhyasi is also asked to observe the process of cleaning as prescribed in the evening meditation for about five minutes before the start of the morning meditation also. "Suffice it to say, that the process of cleaning uses the original power of Thought in

the form of human will for the refinement of the individual soul to enable it to ascend the steep and slippery path of Realization of the subtlest Essence of Identity."

About the cleaning process, a word of caution is to be sounded. The abhyasi is not to emphasize that his or her system is full of impurities and grossness, needing continuous effort to get rid of these. The aspirant is simply to suppose, in a natural way, that whatsoever undesirable impediments may be there in the system, having been removed through the application of the current of divine grace. Sahaj Marg also advises to offer Prayer (O, Master...) before going to bed. The proper and most effective method for offering prayer is to sit in a suppliant mood and mentally repeat the prayer twice or thrice and then keeping in mind the sense and thought of the prayer go to bed and get drowned in it.

Sahaj Marg system advises meditation on heart. Further, Shri Ram Chandraji gives two points: A and B for the convenience of the Abhyasi as in following diagram in Figure 11. There are really three points the upper point is A', the lower point is B' and the third point lies between A and "B'. But two, of them are important for the practice of meditation as advised in Sahaj Marg

Figure 11 Points 'A' and 'B' in the Heart



Shri Ram Chandraji clearly describes the location of these two points in human organism. Measure two fingers of width from the left nipple towards the right nipple, then measure three fingers of width straight downward and this is the point 'A'; and straight-downward at the two fingers width from the point A is the point B'. This measurement should be undertaken by one's own fingers. Sahaj Marg also advocates the method and technique of meditation on these points, which positively tills the heart with divine transmission and negatively extricates defects and impurities from the mind. This point between these two points A and B has been kept a secret because this point is said to be concerned with miracles, and its improper use may cause unwarranted consequences for an Abhyasi.

The technique of meditation on points A and B is as following

(1) Meditation on point A is attention on the point A with a feeling that all men and women are one's brothers and sisters and get drowned in the thought.

(2) Meditation on point B' Meditate on point "B" and imagine that all the impurities and grossness is going 'out of the body in the form of smoke and divine light begins glowing's

It is suggested that during meditation, one should not try to concentrate but simply meditate on the heart because concentration is the result of meditation". It is also remarked that those who force their mind to concentration during meditation meet failure. But if one observes meditation properly would naturally culminate into concentration. Almost in all the forms of yoga practices, meditation (dhyāna) is treated as the preceding step of concentration (Samādhi). In Sahaj Marg proper process of meditation is treated as itself resulting in concentration.

It is but natural and common that numerous thoughts and ideas rush into mind at the time of meditation and these create disturbance. The forced avoidance of these ideas is harmful as it leads the mind away from calmness, which is the goal of meditation. It is better to treat the disturbing thoughts as uninvited guests and thus they would themselves run away. Shri Ram Chandraji also says that if thoughts and ideas still trouble even after treating them as uninvited guests, one should imagine

them to be Master's, not one's own. Thus, the thoughts and ideas would slowly reduce their force and will vanish.

Heart: As the point for meditation

It is necessary for the sadhaka on the path of yoga sādhanā to have some object external or internal, verbal or symbolic to meditate upon, and to regulate the mind and to channelize it towards That.

Sahaj Marg system takes heart as the point to meditate upon. Shri Ram Chandraji on the grounds of his personal experience tells that meditation on other points e.g., on the tip of the nose, middle of the eye-brows, mulādhāra etc., is not so simple and easy; and moreover, there is danger of having a physical complication, which may obstruct spiritual advancement. The following arguments may be summarised in favour of heart as the point of meditation: -

(1) Shri Ram Chandraji remarks *the heart is the pumping station of blood. It sends forth blood after purification to different nerves and cells of the body. Now we have taken Heart as the Centre of meditation. The blood that runs throughout our system is affected. The solidity due to our own thoughts and actions begin to melt away. This is the first thing we begin to gain from the first day by this method of meditation on Heart. Science treats heart and its beatings as the mark of life in organism. When the sādhaika begins his meditation on heart the inflowing Divine Currents pouring into heart, spread slowly in the whole of the organism along with the blood that comes out from heart after purification. Hence meditation on heart is more effective for bringing about spiritual transformation in the organism

(2) Giving a psychological reason, Shri Ram Chandraji remarks that "in my opinion meditation on the Heart is the easiest and most beneficial.... The purpose is only that we who have been extroverts, should now begin to introspect by detaching our mind from the external world to which it is accustomed and by turning it within. If we are successful in this attempt, we will begin to gain spiritual experience automatically, and will progress on the spiritual path."

Generally, heart is the primary organ to feel pain and pleasure. It is the point we feel near most to ourselves. Shri Ram

Chandraji writes, "I use the word 'heart' because it is the nucleus and creates the vibrant motion where to it is directed. ,39

(3) The most appropriate point for meditation can only be that wherefrom the current flows on, either upwards or downwards. It can only be the heart and nothing else. Trikuti (centre of the eyebrows) can also be taken for the purpose but that is not an easy job for common people as it requires more labour from the Abhyasi. It may also give rise too many complications in due course, if the meditation is not properly practised by the Abhyasi. Meditation on the navel point has no spiritual value except that it causes a tickling sensation which finally makes the mind and passions all the more powerful." Thus, heart is the point more suitable than other points, because really here from the human consciousness flows to all the directions of human organism.

(4) "Further, heart is the field for the action of mind. Mind is always as it is. It is the heart which as the field of action of the mind is to be set right." In other words, really heart "is the field for the action of mind to work and this is the instrument by which we develop the discriminative faculty." Since Rajayoga concerns thoughts and actions and tries to regulate mental activities in such a way as they may be diverted properly towards the ideal, the meditation on heart naturally regulates the Working of mind and its habit of forming samskaras. The subtle works in this place for the descent of Divine energy. If somehow our thinking conjoins with it or we train it so that it may percolate the right thing and direct it towards Reality, the problem is solved." ,

(5) The heart is the only point, at which the connecting link between the animate and inanimate is most clearly felt. This is the reason why meditation on the heart is very useful." As we have seen in the process of evolution of the world that heart is the knot between the material and spiritual. Sattva is soul, Tamas is body and Rajas, which is the admixture of Sattva and Kayas, is the heart, if one meditates on heart one can easily divert one's extrovert tendencies moving to the material objects inward towards the matters of spirituality.

Over and above these reasons, we may add more as Hindu mythology also regards heart as the abode of Divinity. Lord Krishna in Gita says, O, Arjuna, God resides in the heart of all the

living creatures." It is also described that thumb like soul lives in the heart cave. Therefore, meditation on heart is better

than other points.

Lights

An aspirant during meditation is asked to think that the Divine light is present in his heart. The thought of the light is also noteworthy, as it is very helpful for an abhyasi for meditation. Mundakopaniṣad also describes the Ultimate Reality, as the light of the lights (Jyotiṣam jyotih). Svetāśvatara Upaniṣad(V, 2, 11) tells:

(Fog, smoke, sun, wind fire, fireflies, lightening, Crystal moon, these are the preliminary lotms, which produce the manifestation of Brahman in yoga.) Mandala Brāhmanopaniṣad proclaims, "First is seen what Jooks like star then what looks like a well-cut sparkling diamond and bright mirror. There after what looks like the disc of the full moon.

Thence looks like the circular radiance of gems. Then what looks like the splendour of the noon-day sun. Then is seen a ring of flaming fire, as the next in order." Thus, the light is perceived in different forms and the thinking of light during meditation is to see the glimpse of Reality.

In Sahaj Marg system one is advised to think of light, but he is warned not to shape the light in any forms like moon or lightening etc If one forces oneself to see light in a particular form, psychologically the light may appear before him through the force of one's suggestibility. That light will not be the Real Light, but a self-imposition or projection of the imaginative will-force. Therefore, while performing meditation, according to Shri Ram Chandraji, the sādhaika should proceed with mere supposition o light with the thought of Divinity at the bottom. Really in this way one meditates on the easily conceivable subtlest Reality. Shri Babuji also reveals the significance and the place of light during meditation: "Every saint has used the Word Light and I too cannot avoid it because that is the best expression for Reality. But that creates some complications, because when we

talk of light the idea of luminosity becomes prominent and we begin to take it as glittering. The real light carries with it no such idea. It refers only to the real substance or more appropriately 'substanceless Substance'. Under our system an abhyasi no doubt sometimes sees Light. But the glittering light appears only in the beginning, when matter comes into contact with energy. In other words, it is only a clue that energy has begun to work. The real light as I have discussed in the book Efficacy of Raj yoga has the dawn colour or a faint reflection of colourlessness."

Shri Ram Chandra also explains a scientific fact that those who force their mind to see light and see it, 'really speaking they are on the verge of MAYA in solid form. I use the word solid for the light The scientists may object to it, but if they think in true sense of the Reality, where there is no light or darkness, they will find the former far heavier than the latter This thing happens generally in Trikuti and beyond it

Therefore, the light we see in meditation is material (pertaining to Ma) and it is perceived by some Abhyasis only in the beginning, and light is the result and the mark of the contact of matter with energy. It is perceived only during the preliminary stages of sadhana by some Abhyasis.

Posture: Sitting in one and the sane pose

Yoga Sutra (11, 46) of Patañjali defines: "Postures is that which is firm and pleasant" Mandala Brāhmanopaniṣad (, 1, 5) states that "wherein one can transport his mind (to the supreme Atman) comfortably, wherein one can abide for a long time (without discomfort), that is the right posture to be assumed. Trisikhibrāhmanopaniṣad tells, "The state of passivity to all things is the best posture."

Really posture (asana) particularly for meditation means keeping one's body, head and neck straight (scamam kayasirogrīvam). Hence, posture is a mode of keeping one's body during meditation or in other exercises of yoga. It is said that "by whom posture has been successfully attained by him are all the three worlds subjugated. Posture being conquered the dualities do not obstruct. (YS. 11, 48)

There have been enumerated numerous postures (asana) in Yoga Philosophy, but these postures primarily concern Hathayoga and are undertaken to maintain the health of the body, and to control and restore out flowing vital force in the body. But in Rajayoga, posture is not a forced folding of body, but is a mode of sitting steadily and comfortably. A great yogi Kuvalayananda divides asanas into two principal groups-(i) cultural and (ii) meditative. He points out that sirsa sarvānga, bhujanga, dhanuṣa salabha etc. are cultural; whereas Padma, Siddha, Svāstika and Sama are meditative. Individuals, who take to the practice of asanas, are also of two types (i) Those, who seek' only physiological advantages and

(i) those who are anxious for spiritual advantages. People of the first type may be called physical culturists and those of the second type may be termed as spiritual culturists.

Dr. K. C. Varadachari states, "For purpose of meditation and prayer we ought to take up the sitting posture, which is steady and easy, and which can be maintained for at least an hour without discomfort. It is clear that siddha and padma āsana are the only two good āsanas that one can assume.

Shri Ram Chandraji gives a very remarkable and noteworthy explanation of the main spiritual purpose of posture "in order to go upwards, he must start contracting from below. The form would only be to bring his legs and the allied parts to one pose and to keep them steady. In whatever way it might be done the form would finally be that of the asana. He further adds, "Performing of Sandhyā in an upright sitting pose has been thought to be most advantageous from very ancient times, because in that position the flow of Divine Grace descends straight upon the Abhyasi. If an Ablhyasi sits crookedly or obliquely, or in an unsteady pose, the flow of effulgence will necessarily be impeded or disturbed. The Abhyasi will thus be deprived of the full benefit of the decent. Therefore, in order to get the greatest benefit one must sit in a proper steady pose. Some may probably think that the upright steady pose may be reflecting a tinge of pride. It is not so. In principle, the devotee or Abhyasi should present himself before the Master in the same manner as a soldier does at the time of parade. At the call of 'Attention' it is essential for him to keep up the same steady upright pose, looking with attention and freshness of the body. The same principal holds goods in the case of the Abhyasi while sitting in service before the

Master."

Sahaj Marg system tells that one should not force to keep his body in a steady pose. One should be natural in one's posture. In whatever position one can sit comfortably, that only will be suitable according to this system. Shri Ram Chandraji asserts, "There is no harm in doing meditation lying on an easy chair even, but to sit respectfully before the Master alone is real devotion (and surrender), while at time of Pijā, it is better to do it by sitting unless there is any other compulsion, you may do the meditation lying or sitting whenever you feel like doing the meditation."

Place

It is also necessary to select some pure and pious place for meditation. Upaniṣad also advise to observe meditation in a pious place (Succau dese). The fact behind this, in the words of Shri Ram Chandraji, is that "the room or place we sit in for meditation is also charged by our thought force and a feeling of sanctity begins to prevail all over there. He further adds that it has been generally observed, and the sacred shrines are living proof of it, that this influence is not exhausted with the lapse of time and even today the pilgrims and visitors get benefitted by it.

The attitude of mind, however, is more important. A fixed place and a fine place, is important in so far as it helps in the creation of the right attitude of mind. Thus, finally the purity of body and mind is to be adhered to for having undisturbed meditation, because "it makes the meditation healthy and one's attention is not diverted to the body." Shri Ram Chandraji explains the fundamental reason of observing purity: "the principle of purity was based on the thought that the Eternal and pure Existence which we have to enter into is entirely free from all contamination. It is perfectly pure. The highest standard of purity free from all impurities (mala), distortion (viksepa) and covering (avarana) was taken up for the ideal. Our being is contaminated with all these, hence far below the ideal. Thus, our attention being directed towards the attainment of purity of that highest level, we began to imitate in all outward ways, looking particularly to the cleaning of the body. The external ways adopted for the purpose began to cast their effect upon the mind, and thus the internal purity too began to develop.

Sahaj Marg system advocates that merely taking bath and incensed atmosphere do not bring cleanliness and purity, which really is an affair of mind. This is why it is not necessary for an Abhyasi under Sahaj Marg to take bath compulsorily under pressing circumstances, but cleanliness should be looked to. If one feels the necessity of taking bath one should sit for meditation only after taking bath.

Common Errors in Meditation

Sahaj Marg system advocates a simple and easy process of meditation; but often there arise complications, which deprive an Abhyasi of the full advantage from it. For the purpose Ishwar Sahai endeavours to clear some of the technical points of the process, which are commonly misunderstood. While doing meditation one should observe the following things to avoid errors:

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1. One should practise meditation and not concentration. It is remarked that one should start with meditation and when one gets absorbed in meditation, he reaches the state of preliminary concentration (samādhi); and later it culminates into outcome of concentration. Concentration "is the natural meditation, when one's being merges into one thought or feeling. Thus, real concentration follows meditation in due course. It would therefore be a wrong process to take up to concentration.
2. All the efforts to localize the position of heart or to visualize light should be avoided.
3. Generally, it happens that after starting meditation with the conscious idea of the object, he is gradually drifted into a state of apparent forgetfulness. In such a case he generally concludes that he has drifted away from the point and had missed meditation for that time. But it is not so. Really it is a state of forgetfulness, which commences when an Abhyasi goes deeper into the finer layers of consciousness. The awareness is lost, but the meditation still continues unconsciously in sub-conscious level of mind. Thus, one should not consider such absence of awareness as an error in meditation.

4. We experience an abnormal rush of thoughts and ideas, which disturb meditation. IshwarSahai tells that in meditation "we try to create a thought-vacuum in our conscious mind. Now just as the rush of air towards the vacuum is stronger, so must the rush of thoughts be more forceful towards the thought-vacuum. One should pay no heed to, rather treat them as uninvited guests

5. One should not try to control mind by restraints and mortifications, because these forced efforts may give rise to other complexities and complication. Instead of control, we need proper regulation of mind towards the ideal

6. One should try to free himself from thought as far as possible

Keeping these things in view one should observe meditation. Thus, in Sahaj Marg system Dhuranā, Diyūna and Samidhi instead of being three different steps of Yoga to be practised separately one after the other. These are, in fact, the three phases of the one and the same process of meditation. Diyāna (meditation) begins with Dhāranā and ends in Samādhi (concentration)

Constant Remembrance

Beside meditation Sahaj Marg system suggests to practise constant remembrance, because mere consciousness of God cures many of the evils of the mind and removes difficulties from over path. And this is why simply doing meditation is not enough, because meditation associates us with Sacred thought of the Divine for a while; and some time after, we have no idea of God, and we remain away from the God throughout the day. Consequently, an Abhyasi feels himself at the low level of spiritual advancement. Hence, constant remembrance is of utmost importance. In Gita Lord Krishna remarks: "I am easily attainable to them, who constantly remember me." The method for cultivation of constant remembrance is to think with firm conviction during your leisure hours, whether in office or at home, in the street or in the market that God is pervading all over and everywhere and you are thinking of Him. Try to remain in the same thought as long as you can.

Therefore, this process of constant remembrance infuses the spark of spirituality in every action, and one performs one's duty with love and sacrifice, and fulfils the duties as if they are

entrusted to him by God. Such a practice brings rapid and speedy progress for an abhyasi.

Devotion

Constant Remembrance is naturalized when coupled with the feeling of devotion for the object of constant remembrance. It is common experience that the mind is absorbed most pleasantly with the thought of the beloved, when we are devoted to a real one in life. The constant remembrance in such a case needs no effort: it no more remains a task. If that could be done in case of the object of worship and Sadhanā, the progress on the path is bound to be most speedy.

The natural object of love and devotion is a person of your own species, about whose qualities you are convinced. It is, therefore, emphasized in some Bhakti traditions of Sādhanā that the capable guide is to be taken for the goal or object of Sadhana. Sahaj Marg system also emphasises the same. But the essential precaution in adopting such a course must have to be taken with the extreme care in choosing the guide, whose limitations are bound to impose limitations on the progress of the Abhyasi, attached and devoted to him. If a guide of real calibre is not available, abstract God or zero or Base or Centre or Nothing or what not may be taken for the object or goal of sadhanā, in the interest of safety from the pitfalls, which are, of course, far greater in case of accepting an incapable fellow being as guide in the sense of the ultimate object of Yogic practice.

Surrender

The culmination of devotion and attachment is surrender in the final phase of the role of the aspirant. Surrender to God (Isvara Pranidhāna) has been described as one of the means for the achievement of the state of cessation of mental modifications in Yoga Sūtra. Beside it is also said in Yoga Sūtra that the state of samādhi is accomplished by surrender to God. Lord Krishna in Gita (XII, 2) remarks that "in my opinion, the most superior yogis are they, who having surrendered their hearts to me and drenched through and through with faith supreme, worship me in eternal harmony." Lord Krishna also asks to "forsake all the sacred laws (dharmas) and come to my shelter alone and I shall

relieve you of all the sins. Do not grieve, (Gita 18, 66). Ahirbudhnya Samhitā (XXXVII, 28-29) describes surrender to be practised in six ways. There are various examples in Purāna, which relate the worth of surrender to God e.g. Prahlāda, Draupadi, Jada Bharata, Hanumāna etc.

Shri Ram Chandraji gives the following remark that "on account of my personal experience I suggest a simple process which can be followed by all quite easily. If 'one' can sell his heart i.e., make a gift of it to the Divine Master, hardly anything more remains to be done... The adaptation of this easy and simple technique makes the beginning of the process the very end of it. Really surrender means 'submission to the will of the Master. Shri Ram Chandraji says, "Self-surrender is nothing but a state of complete resignation to the will of the Master, with total disregard of self. A permanent stay in this condition leads to the beginning of the state of negation. When we surrender ourselves to the great Master, we begin to attract a constant flow of the highest divine force from Him. In this state a man thinks or does only that which is his Master's will. He feels nothing in this world to his belonging but everything as a sacred trust from the Master and he does everything thinking it to be the will of the Master." In order to affect surrender in the easiest way Shri Ram Chandraji tells that only an act of will is required. But lighter and finer the will, the more effective shall be its working. An act of will lying in the form of seed of an insignificant volume in the deeper cores of consciousness shall soon develop into a full-fledged tree stretching its branches all over. Adaptation of this method is sure to bring about desired result. Only a courageous start is all that is needed for the purpose.

Conclusion

To sum up, the practice of meditation as advocated in Sahaj Marg conveys the following important features: -

- (i) Cut off from this world and connect with that.
- (ii) Not know but forget oneself.
- (iii) The process of meditation is the natural transformation of the matter into spirit, gross into subtle, solidity into fine energy.
- (iv) It does not advise to restrain mental tendencies but to regulate them towards proper direction.
- (v) Prayer is begging and meditation is having.

(vi) Meditation begins in Dhāranā and ends in samādhi (concentration).

vii) Constant Remembrance- the practice of constant remembrance brings rapid and speedy progress for an abhyasi
Devotion- Constant remembrance is naturalized

(viii) when coupled with the feeling of love and devotion for the object of constant remembrance.

(ix) Surrender If one can sell his heart and make gift of it to the Divine Master hardly anything more remains to done.

The Technique and Method (Role of Guide)

After analysis of the role of an aspirant on the path spiritual elevation, it would be worthwhile to describe the function of the Guide/Guru. Now we tum to the part played by the Master and its place in assisting the spiritual progress of an aspirant.

The Emphasis on the role of Guide or Guru

For the sake of having speedy and smooth progress in spiritual pursuits the assistance of a capable and competent Guru or Guide is indispensable. Dr. B. L. Goswami writes, "The Guru is no longer in any conditioned domain whether of senses, of mind or of intellect. He is the Lord Himself imaged in human frame'. Such a human being is called Guide' because he shows us the path; is known as Master because he enslaves passions and desires; is named Achārya' because he teaches and preaches Vedas and sacred law (dharma) and is regarded as Sant' because he is the pure being. In general, he is called Guru. We may call him guide, Guru, Master, Sant, Peer or by whatever name we like, but he is after all a helper and supporter working in the spirit of service. His role is most important, for it is he who, as a matter of fact, pulls the real seeker up and enlivens him with the light, which is lying in him under the layer of grossness. Thus the role of Guide or Guru

in sādhanā also needs due consideration and evaluation so that the seekers in the field of spirituality may not suffer misguidance.

In the traditional schools of Sahaj sādhanā, it has already been seen that the help of Guru bears indisputable significance. His assistance on the path of sādhanā brings definiteness in the selection of means for the achievement of goal and makes Success sure. Hathayogapradipikā (IV, a), Mahopaniṣad (IV, 77) and Varāhopaniṣad (II, 76-77) proclaim in one voice that the sahajavastha (the ideal of a sahaj sādhanā) is unattainable without the grace of Guru. Turning over the pages of Vedic literature we find disciples going to the penance woods to seek spiritual knowledge from the holy seers and sages. The very word Upaniṣad' literally means 'sitting close' to Guru. The role of Guru has been accorded so much signification in the sādhanā aspect of Indian philosophy that people have whole heartedly sung the glory of the grace of Guru in various books viz. "Guru Pratāpa' by Malukadāsa, 'Guru Mahimā' by Arjun Dev, Guru Tattva' by Swami Shivananda. Moreover, Sikh religion has personified the Holy Scripture and has named it "Shri Guru Grantha Saheb'

Therefore, mere self-effort by observing practice is not enough, it should be supplemented by the help of a worthy guide or guru. "There have been cases, however, where sages have attained perfection by mere self-effort, surrendering themselves direct to God. But such examples, are rare. It is really a very difficult course and can be followed only by persons especially gifted with uncommon genius."

The word Guru' is etymologically derived from the Sanskrit root 'gr meaning 'sound' (sabda) and swallowing (nigarane). Hence, he who utters a sound (preaches of sacred law or one who swallows up the ignorance (ajñāna) is called Guru. Yajñavalkya Smṛti (1, 34) defines that he is the Guru who having performed all the rites imparts the Vēdas to the pupil" Manu Smṛti (II, 142) tells: "That Brahmin, who performs the rites of Niseka (conception-rites) etc. in accordance with the rules (of the Veda) and gives food, is called Guru" Advayatārakopaniṣad (16) gives the analysis of the word

"Guru', "The syllable 'Gu indicates 'darkness, the syllable "ru" means 'dispeller'. Because of the quality of dispelling darkness the 'Guru' is so termed."

Modern Sahaj Marg system advocates, "guru is the connecting link between God and man. It is through his medium. only that we can reach God. He is the only power that can extricate us from the intricacies of the path" Kabira figuratively applauds that this body is the poisonous- creeper. Guru is the store-house of nectar. If one achieves Guru even by offering (one's own) head it is cheaper'. Guru is the potter and disciple is the pot. Internally assisting with hand and externally applying touches (Guru) ousts the evil in (pot's) making. Let whole of the earth be made paper and the forests the pen. Let the seven seas be made the ink (but) the quality of guru is (still) indescribable. The Guru alone is the transcendent Brahman, the Guru alone is the Supreme goal; the Guru alone is the wisdom and the Guru alone is the ultimate limit; the Guru is the highest wealth. For the reason that he teaches 'That therefore, is the Guru greater than all else'. The Guru is Brahman; the Guru is Viṣṇu; the Guru is always the Lord Achyuta; greater than the Guru there is no one, whatever in all the three worlds. One should worship with extreme devotion (the Guru), who imparts divine wisdom, who is the spiritual guide, who is the Supreme Lord (Himself). For him there will be the fruit of knowledge. Even as the Guru so is Ishvara. Even as the Ishvara, so is the Guru. He should be adorned with great devotion. There is no difference between these two. One should not engage in debate on equality of status with the Guru anywhere. With devotion, one should conceive in his mind of the identical character of the

Guru, God and Atman. Guru Nanaka maintains that the word of Guru is the (sacred) sound; the word of Guru pervades all. Guru is God, Guru is Gorakha, Guru is Brahman, Guru is the mother parvati'.

Thus the assistance of Guru is a matter of supreme importance for sadhana. He is equal to God or say even more than God because it is Guru who makes us realize God. Moreover, if God is not pleased we can seek shelter of Guru but there is no place to get resort if Guru is displeased". Guru is God 'imaged in human frame', Christianity also advocates, "I am the way, "(John 14, 6). "No one come to father but through me." (John 14, 7), Hence

in order to realize the ultimate goal of human life one should seek guidance from the capable and competent Guru

Under Sahaj Marg, the importance of Guru is recognised As absolutely essential, But greatest care in the choice of Guru is advised. "it is better to remain without a Guru all the life than to submit to the guidance of an unworthy Guru. Now-a-days Gurudom has become a most profitable and easy business to earn enormous income and secure kingly respects and regards from their disciples" Swami Vivekanandaa has warned that Guruism must not be a trade; that must stop, it was against the Shastras Shri Ram Chandraji asserts, "It is high time for all the masses to open their eyes and see what havoc has been wrought by such persons. 149 Disciple hunters' and 'miracle mongers are not lacking. It has become extremely hard to judge the capability of a Guru and his worthiness, generally people are tempted by the coloured robes and the physical appearance of the posing gurus' and 'yogic charlatans'. Shri Ram Chandraji says that "It is not the royal robes alone that make a real King. Similarly, it is not the form or dress that makes a real saint or a yogi. Outward physical feature is not the sure indication of the heart within.

Qualification of a Real Guru

Now the question of the selection of a worthy guide legitimately arises. It is indeed very difficult to judge the capacity of a man by his external appearance. Spirituality concerns the innermost being; hence, the chances of deception in the matter of the choice of the spiritual guide are but natural.

In the context of spirituality, the source of deception concerns not only the externally observable appearance but even intellectual qualities. Often people are impressed by the high-toned lectures of eloquent speakers who put forth the knowledge borrowed from books. It must be kept in mind that "knowledge is only an achievement of brain whereas realization is the

The Technique and Method (Role of Guide) awakening of soul" Hence true realization is far beyond the scope of books. Shri Ram Chandraji says, "Books are of no avail to us in this respect. They may help us to acquire superficial knowledge of things and enable us to deliver eloquent discourses on spiritual topics and to win arguments, but practical approach in spirituality through them alone is impossible. Yogic practice and Sadhanas based on knowledge acquired through books are mostly misleading and even harmful to our spiritual advancement.

Further Sahaj Marg Sadhanā deprecates that there is a tradition of hereditary Guruship and these 'Kula-Gurus shall never be helpful for us in any way. Now there are world-gurus (Jagadgurus). Swami Vivekanandaa tells, "What is Guru? Let us go back to the Shrutis He who knows the secrets of Vedas, not book-worms, not grammarians, not pandits in general but he who knows the meaning. An ass laden with the load of Sandalwood knows only the weight of the wood, but not its precious qualities so are these pandits.

The Adi Guru of Sahaj Marg system takes into account all the physical, intellectual and spiritual characteristics, when he points out some qualification of a worthy guide or guru as following

- (i) He should be established in Truth (Satyaniṣṭha) i., he should have his access up to the fourth state of consciousness (Turiya) and should be Jīvanmukta.
- (ii) He should have a control over all the points in the mind of a man.
- (iii) He should have bright and shining eyes and also have a broad forehead.
- (iv) He should have understanding of knowledge (jnana), devotion (bhakti) and action (karma) and he should be able to answer the question to the satisfaction of an enquirer.
- (v) He should have concern only with spirituality.
- (V) He should have the power of the transmission (praāhuti) of divine energy.

This last qualification is most important and those who do not have the power of transmission are not worthy of being called a guru.

It has become a common practice of Gurus to enlarge the numbers of their disciples and if they suspect that the disciple is going to forsake their Gurudom, they use to horrify the initiate by the terror of hell and the curse of God. Actually "a conscientious Guru must himself, under circumstances, direct his disciple to seek another more advanced and better qualified Guru, so that the disciple's progress may not in any way suffer. This is the sacred duty of a true, selfless Guru". Contrary to the usual practice of most schools of Gurudom, concerning the problem of Guru-disciple relationship, Shri Ram Chandraji declares, I hold it to be the birth-right of every man to break off from his Guru at any time if he finds that he had made a wrong selection or had misjudged the Guru's capacity and worth. He is also free to seek another Guru if at any time he finds that his Guru has not the capacity to take him beyond what he has already acquired,"

"A Guru should be free from even the least feeling of pride or egotistic self-respect. He should forget even the idea of being a teacher or Guru." Shri Ram Chandraji believes that "if the idea of being a Guru crosses his mind even once in life, he becomes unworthy of being a Guru for all his life. Further Guru should regard himself as a humble servant of humanity at large. Shri Ram Chandraji remarks, "they say that by touching the feet of Guru or massaging his limbs the magnetic currents pass on from the Guru to the disciple, who helps the disciple to form pious samskāras. Thus, by this practice the disciple draws much of purity and piety from his master. It may be true, but let me question them for a while whether same thing is not possible. of the Guru renders the same service to the disciple. I think none can dare deny it. Evidently then the motive at the back, is nothing but personal comfort and ease

Therefore, true and worthy Guru is one who serves humanity selflessly. He should know the secrets of spiritual facts and have the direct realization of the Ultimate. Such a man should be pure at heart full of selfless love. His motive should neither be fame nor

amassing wealth. His objective is to awaken the dormant souls for spiritual pursuits and to dispel darkness from the adherents and from the humanity at large.

Kinds of Guru:

Shri Ram Chandraji enumerates five forms of Guru:
(i) Quacks: They preach to people, the method and technique of the worship of trees, animals, insects, diseases, ghosts and spirits. Such Guru practise black art and befool people by their magic tricks.

(ii) Book Moths: Those who preach and teach by the knowledge borrowed from books. High sounding lectures and eloquent discourses are their chief marks. They tell us what they learn from books.

(iii) Practical Teachers: They tell us those practices which they experienced in their past. Such persons also mislead people because they do not know the merits and demerits of what they do or have done.

(iv) Inspired Teacher: They guide people by the inspiration they feel in their heart. Such inspired teachers. Without understanding the true significance of inspiration, often get misguided. It is also necessary that they should know its worth in practical life.

(v) Inspired Experienced Teacher: Such a Guru listens to the inspiration in their hearts. They have the direct experience of inspiration and know well the process of its practical application for the good of humanity. Really if one gets a worthy Guru there remains nothing more to be achieved.

The Technique of Transmission (Prānāhuti)

This is the important feature of the spiritual practice followed in Sahaj Marg. Gopinātha Kavirāja describes transmission as 'pouring in of energy (Saktipāta) and Viṣṇu Tirth calls it an 'injection of Shakti. In Tāntric practice it is known as Dikyā (initiation) of the pupil. This is what is known as Bhagvadanugraha or Bhugvatakrpā (the grace of God). D S. P. Srivastava says that it is a form of voluntary conduction of subtlest energy. Swami Shivananda calls it infusing vibration in energy, the Shakti

Sañcara'. It is 'descent of Divinity in the teaching of Sri Aurobindo. Sahaj Marg system calls I pranāhuti'. Dr. K.C.Varadachari has described it as "taming the animal in man Shri Ram Chandraji himself has characterised it as 'awakening the sleeping beauty in man."

This technique of transmission was prevalent among the Vedic seers and they practised it while initiating their pupils The transformation of Angulimāla by Buddha, imparting of a number of sublime spiritual states to Arjuna by Krishna at the outset of the battle of Mahābhārata, and recently the changes brought about by Parma Hamsa Ram Krishna in the personality of Swami Vivekananda may be quoted as examples of the application of this technique. Ishwar Sahai points out the example of Lord Rāma having imparted the condition of calmness and enlightened detachment to the distressed restless condition of queen Tarā, at the time of the killing of her husband Bali, brother of Sugrīva. According to Sahaj Marg System transmission is the essential qualification of a worthy Guru Swami Vivekanandaa gladly calls Guru a 'transmitter of divine energy in the disciple. He tells that "A Guru was not a teacher alone; that was a very small part of it. The Guru, as the Hindus believed transmitted spirituality to his disciples "Thus "that soul from which this impulse comes is called Guru, the teacher; the soul to which the impulse is conveyed is called the disciple the student". Dr. S. P. Srivastava presents a noteworthy account of transmission, "transmission or conduction of energy is a very common phenomenon in the field of nature. Heat is transmitted from a hot piece of iron to a cold one in contact with it. A cold black piece of charcoal catches fire and acquires radiance on coming into touch with red hot burning piece of charcoal. In the mental field too we know the communication of emotions and ideas through the use of words or other symbolic processes, and even of the transmission or irradiation of mental characteristics without the use of words or other signs etc. Individual traits and personality traits also get transmitted

unconsciously from person to person. Moral education takes notice of the fact that a confident and courageous person imparts confidence and courage to his companions even without using words or displaying the virtues in a concrete way. The fact that many individual moral characteristics of a teacher are many unconsciously acquired by the student attached to him reverently is a matter of common experience in educational situations." Further, he also points out the conditions of transmission (a) presence of, in an appropriate form, the energy, quality, material or state to be transmitted in the object or person that may function as a transmitter; (b) adequate capacity or ability in the object or person functioning as the receiver to receive the transmitted energy, quality etc; (c) appropriate contact or link between the objects or persons involved in the process of transmission, and (d) presence of the phenomenon of transmission e. g. certain quality of oxygen in the air to make the conduction of fire from one piece of charcoal to another possible

The spiritual transmission of Divine energy is a scientific technique. The will-power of the Master or Guide is the only medium through which transmission works. It is not necessarily having some solid or concrete medium because the force of transmission as advocated in Sahaj Marg is so potent that it can work on persons living in a far-off distant land.

Transmission is the influx of spirituality and brings about uplift of an Abhyasi in shortest possible time. Transmission is not a mystic innovation but a scientific fact in which the Master by his will power awakens the dormant tendencies of the aspirant. It sows the seed of spirituality, which watered and cared by the abhyasi in due course of his sadhanā. Transmission helps in removing the impurities from the organism. Dr. K. C. Varadachari explains, "transmission is a process by which one is connected from above with that overhead cosmic or supra-cosmic or primal Being. This is an initiation literally it means the beginning of the evolution of man to cosmic being. It is the beginning of passing from the individuated or personal, limited, circumscribed, physical being to the world of cosmic functions.

Dr. Radhakrishnan also says, "the great teachers of past did not claim any credit for themselves, but maintained that they only transmitted the wisdom of the ancients." Ancient seers and sages also possessed this capacity of transmission and they utilized it in spiritual affairs. One may easily conceive that Vedic knowledge come to our hands after a long list of teachers who handed over or transmitted the sacred wisdom to their successor disciple. In Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad also we find that a father, when about to depart, calls his son and transmits his being into him.

The Kinds of Transmission:

In Tantric literature transmission (Saktipāta) provides an extraordinary help to the practicante, According to Viṣṇu Tīrtha the magnetic influence of inflowing divine energy also awakens the Kundalini power. He also remarks that "Shaktipāta can be affected by sight, touch, mantra or simply by will power of the master. In the last case, it works at long distance as well. One can never realize God by mere self-effort, by the knowledge derived from books or by attending and listening to eloquent discourses. It requires the help of a worthy guide. Śhrīnivāsa Dattatreya Guḷvarṇi describes the process of God-realization through Saktipāta (transmission). Referring to Kulārnavatantra he tells that Saktipāta (is affected through four means-(i) by touch (sparṣa); (i) by words or mantra (śabda); (ii) by vision or simply by seeing (darśana) and (iv) by the will-power (śankalpa) of the master. These four kinds of Saktipāta are respectively gross, subtle, subtler and subtlest form of Saktipāta.

Further each of the Saktipātas can also be divided into two forms (i) **complete**: when transmitted becomes equal to transmitter and gets the power of further transmission also; and (ii) **partial**: when transmitted does not become equal to transmitter and he cannot further transmit to other. To illustrate these four kinds of Saktipāta along with its complete and partial forms the following description with examples may be taken up.

(i) **By touch:** complete transmission the touch of a burning lamp can make another lamp burn and the second lamp can equally make a third lamp burn and so on. Partial transmission the touch of a touch-stone can change an iron into gold but this gold cannot turn another in iron into Gold

(ii) **By word:** Complete transmission A crow fed cuckoo simply by listing the singing of cuckoo learns that he is cuckoo and further by his singing can do the same. Partial transmission a peacock dances on listening to the thundering clouds but by his singing cannot make his friend peacocks dance.

(i) **By vision:** complete transmission A female tortoise looks after her young ones when they by seeing and the same power are also found in young ones when they grow up. Partial transmission - the chakora, a bird enjoys happiness by seeing the moon but chakora, cannot transmit happiness to others.

iv) By will power: complete transmission - A fish feeds its young ones simply by will and they too get the same capacity. Partial transmission - a hypnotist cannot transmit the capacity into the hypnotised person. Gopinātha Kavirāja also points that the force of the transmission of divine energy has three forms – (i) intense (tivra) transmission. (ii) mediary (madhyama) and (iii) slow (manda) transmission.

The transmission in Sahaj Marg is conducted by the will-power of the Master and if the need be the transmission by touch, by word and by vision too are affected; but these are also backed by the will-power. The transmission incorporated herein is so natural and automatic that there does not remain any chance of any harm in spiritual growth. The abhyasi enjoys its benefits as much as he can as per one's own capacity. Further, this transmission is not a partial but complete transmission. The spiritual transformation affected by in due course brings about total divinisation of human existence.

Hypnotism or Mesmerism and Transmission

This technique of transmission (prānāhuti) should not be confused with hypnotism or mesmerism. Viṣṇu Tirtha remarks, Saktipāta should "not be confused with mesmerism or hypnotism. because the effect of shaktipāta is ever-lasting and elevating and there by A person acquires a power of rousing the same in others, ail become himself by gradual development a magnetic pantonality with a capacity to make others like himself by touch, thus continuing the line of succession The following marks of difference may be pointed out between mesmerism or hypnotism and transmission

Mesmerism/Hypnotism and Transmission

Mesmerism	Transmission
1. It has some material gain as end. 2. Being engrossed With abnormality, senses and mental activates are lulled to dormant condition. 3. After mesmeric or hypnotic trance one feels highly fatigued. One experiences dullness and becomes heavy hearted. 4. Its effects are transient and ephemeral and last for a short duration 5. The will and intelligence of the subject is completely weakened and subjugated; and one becomes a play thing the hands of mesmerist or hypnotist. 6. It is a forced and imaginary control of the activity of organism.	1. Its aim is spiritual elevation to achieve the goal of life 2. It maintains the normal functioning of senses and mind; and it energies them with vitality. 3. After the conduction of transmission one feels oneself charged with divine effulgence, and experiences freshness and lightness. 4. Its effects are everlasting and elevating and survive for long duration. 5. The will and intelligence win self-confidence and slowly the spiritual powers get revelled into the subject and finally achieves liberation from cycle of birth and death. 6. It attempts at natural regularization of the functioning of organism.

7. It makes an individual a means in the hands of mesmerist or hypnotist.
8. It primarily functions when subject or subjects are before the experimenter.
9. It is a partial kind of transmission because the hypnotised subject does not gain the capacity for further hypnotisation on other subjects.

7. It does not make an individual a means rather the subject has freedom of will.
8. Its functioning is possible even if the subject is far from the transmitter.
9. Spiritual transmission is complete and perfect as subject becomes equal to transmitter and has capacity of further transmit to others.

But the technique of transmission in Sahaj Marg system should not be limited to the thought of imparting divine vision, descent of divinity, pouring in of power, influx or injection of energy, the radiation of pious particles or the handing over of divine wisdom, but herein it is a scientific technique of the transformation of human personality by the subtle spiritual will-power of the Master, It is the unfolding of the coverings, loosening or untying of the knots finally resulting in the total divinisation. It is a process of purification and removal of the unwanted elements from the organism. It is nothing but spiritual dynamism which connects man with the divine and brings about the total spiritual over-hauling.

It is also said that an aspirant engaged in spiritual pursuits can himself by practical experience verify the efficacy of the technique. A Guru is Guru if he has power of Transmission, It is only through this power that he establishes the link between God and man.

The technique of transmission (prāṇāhuti) followed and introduced in spiritual practice of Sahaj Marg system is the process of the offering of vital breath (prana) into abhyasi by the will-power of Master. Shri Ram Chandra explains that "in our Samstha the Reality is infused at the first stroke of will, which serves as the seed to flourish in the long run. The process generally set in by one's Master so that the seed may grow easily and

scorching winds may not blow it up. The disciple waters it by constant remembrance which is the only thing needed on the path of realization." Hence, the transmission, as introduced in this system, is affected by the will-power of the Master and that is the best and supreme stage out of the four forms of traditional śaktipāta. Moreover, the transmission by such, word and vision is also utilized, but they are also backed will power of Master. Therefore, the transmission introduced this system is a refined presentation, and it makes one to feel the touch of Divinity, to listen to the "Voice Real and to have the direct vision of Supreme Reality. Thus, transmission works extra-ordinary services for an aspirant by unravelling the mysteries in the field of spirituality. Shri Ram Chandraji marks, "power of transmission is a yogic attainment of a very high order by which a Yogi can infuse by his own will force the energy of the Godly effulgence within anyone and remove anything, unwanted in him or detrimental to his spiritual progress. He can exercise this power not only on those who are assembled around him but on those, too, who are away from them. The power can be utilized in any way at any time. He also tells that transmission "Is not only a vain assertion but a bare fact and may at any time be practically verified by anyone who pleases to do so."

Some may say that while transmitting there are chances of the transfer of diseases from the transmitter. But it is not so. Ram Chandraji confidently and clearly remarks: "Rest assured that the diseases will not enter the body of the abhyasi through our process of transmission. This is my experience as that of my Master. On the other hand, it has often been observed that some of the diseases do go out by the effect of the process of purification.

The Role of the Preceptor in Sahaj Marg

The appointment of preceptors brings more efficacies in the technique as well as at the administrative level of the organization. In Sahaj Marg system some preceptors are trained to work at the various branches or centres of the Mission all over India and abroad. Their duty is to supervise meditational practices of the aspirants, and serve as local transmitters, available close by to the members of the organization. Their training consists in the ability to guide the practice of meditation and to use the technique of the

cleansing of the various points and to use the technique of the transmission on the various points, centres and cakras in the organism. These preceptors are so trained to impart transmission to individual and groups under their charge that the practicant feel themselves as basking in the Divine sunshine. They serve as concrete links between the Master and the Abhyasis, figuratively as the nearest pole to connect to the original source of power. They are generally at a certain stage of spiritual development, at least, technically known as the Brahmāinda Mandala, beyond the Pinda-Deśa. These will be elaborated in the Next Chapter

Importance of the Technique of Transmission

The following function and characteristic features of the technique of transmission incorporated in this system may be pointed out:

(i) Transmission reverses the out flowing tendencies and trends of mind and senses. The spiritual practice in this system discards the effortful mentation and tells that if an abhyasi wants to achieve progress in spirituality, he should be natural in his practice; because the forced restraint or control of the workings of mind may prove dangerous and harmful. The real form of practice (sādhanā) lies in the regularization of mental energy towards the goal through proper channels. When transmission is conferred one cultivates the feeling of disinterestedness in and disinclination towards worldly objects and one gets charged with the Divine energy, which in due course weakens the evil feelings and vicious tendencies. Shri Ram Chandraji says that the worthy trainer by the power of yogic transmission weakens the lower tendencies in the mind of the trainee and sows the seed of Divine Light in the innermost core of heart. In this process the trainer uses his will-force, which has Divine Infinite at his back. In a way he is conscious of That; and he just focuses it through the lenses of his goodwill upon the heart of the trainee. The trainee may not feel anything in the beginning. The reason is that one is accustomed to feel only through the senses. After sometime, however, one may feel only through the senses and in due course one may feel the results of such transmission, which are in the form of subtle changes of the

working of vital parts and tendencies of mind.

(ii) Transmission establishes the link of relation of the abhyasi with the God. Yoga sādhanā primarily aims at the complete union with and finally mergence in the Ultimate Reality and the same is done in Sahaj Marg through the process of transmission. Dr. K. C Varadachari says that "the first aim of transmission is actually to connect the individual's heart with Supreme trans cosmic force of spirit that is the goal of the individual.

(iii) Transmission is a method of initiation, which brings about spiritual transformation in the personality of the aspirant and finally confers God-realization. It is a process of spiritual dynamism giving new life, progress and success on the path. Dr. K. C. Varadachari tells, "The method of initiation into the spiritual life had been stated in Sahaj Marg to be transmission of spiritual energy in order to (i) give impetus to the seeking aspiration of the abhyasi and (ii) to bring about a change in the very nature of the mind and its modifications. Transmission does not effect some radical changes but it is "a setting up of new kind of vibration, which makes one feel 'the quiet amid the chasing thoughts, "the quiet" amid the noise of the surroundings, a withdrawal of the senses from hearing from the outer world and also a giving up of a desire for anything other than the 'quiet itself' Thus, the influence of transmission causes peace and calmness. An abhyasi feels stillness and spiritual dynamism overhauling to bring about divinization of his very existence at its root.

(iv) Transmission is pacificator and cleansing both in physical and astral spheres. It is believed that in yoga cleansing mind by the observance of yama and niyama is a necessary preliminary stage for the attainment of undisturbed concentration. In Sahaj Marg this work of cleansing has been recorded enough significance as it makes transmission more effective. Dr. K. C. Varadachari asserts "Ancients called this process a kind of nādi-śuddhi' a purification of entire psychotic (nādn) system, which is subtler than the nervous system. In one sense the psychotic system cleans both the nervous and circulatory systems, as these

two are all pervading the organism. One enjoys lightness in organism, when impurities are extricated and the same lightness is experienced, when transmission charges the organism with Divine energy.

(v) Transmission helps an abhyasi to cross over the numerous difficulties faced on the path of yogic practice. Often people complain that even after being engaged in the practice of yoga for a long time, they do not experience any progress in themselves. Shri Ram Chandraji tells that during the course of sādhanā an abhyasi comes across states which may be called 'slippery condition' wherein an abhyasi ascends a little but after sometime he slips down, consequently no progress is gained. Under such condition the help of Guru is indispensable. The charge of transmission helps the sadhaka to overcome such difficulties. As believed, sādhanā has to cross various cakras (lotuses) during the course of sādhanā. Sahaj Marg system advocates that there are many cakras and points to be crossed. The spaces, between two points are called buffers in this system. Shri Ram Chandraji asserts: "The buffers or the inverting spaces between points are innumerable. They are all to be crossed through, during the course of our journey with help of a worthy Master of calibre. The process of bhog is considerably reduced and the abhyasi's stay at these places is much shortened, saving thereby a lot of time and energy

Thus, the modern Sahaj Marg system of spiritual practice revives the indispensable technique of yogic transmission and attaches highest value to it for speedy progress on the path of spirituality and realization of the Ultimate. Self-effort on the part of the aspirant is essential but not sufficient for the achievement of the desirable result. It has to be supplemented by the activation of the pulling force of the Goal for effectiveness of sādhanā. Everywhere in the scheme of Nature the pushing force has to be greater initially, but gradually the influence of the pulling force goes on increasing. Beyond a certain point and as one draws closer to the goal, total dependence on the pulling force even application of pushing force in the reverse direction to enable soft landing become absolutely essential. That serves to illustrate the relationship between self-effort

(abhyāsa) and divine grace (krpa) the age-old controversy in the sphere of yogic practice. Transmission, as presented in modern Sahaj Marg system, consist in the effective technique of the utilization of human will residing in the capable guide to smoothen the course of efficient co-operation between the pushing force of self-effort on the part of the aspirant, and the pulling force of the Ultimate Goal, at all stages of the spiritual journey. Traditionally, the attitude does sublime seekingness has been advocated for the purpose. Figuratively the metaphor of the relationship between the beggar and Master has been used to convey the idea. Shri Ram Chandraji utilizes the same, in a letter to an abhyasi. "All of us are like beggars at the Master's door, having a begging bowl in hand, which the Master readily Tais. The expression, no doubt, is simply metaphorical, and not perfectly real. It is begging which is the best way for having; as such the difference between the abhyasi and Master, is nominal and for practical purpose alone.

Stages of Progress on the Path

Various schools in Indian philosophy have given an account of the stages of spiritual ascent in their own way, The multifarious and multileveled account introduced by them needs due consideration to assess the description of points and stages put fourth in the modern Sahaj Marg system.

Yoga Sūtra:

The Yoga sutras ascribed to Patañjali enumerates eightfold path viz. (1) Yanma, (2) Niyama, (3) Asana, (4) Pranayama, (5) Pratyāhāra, (6) Dhāranā, (7) Dhyāna and (8) Samādhi. These stages have also been described in Yoga Upaniṣads Shrimadblhāgavata Ahirbudhnya Sarnhitā Puranas, Smṛti and Hathayogapradipikā.

This eightfold path of sādhanā has two aspects (i) external practice the first five steps from Yama to Pratyāhāra and (ii) inner practice - the last three steps viz. Dhāranā, Dhyāna and Samādhi. Yamas and Niyamas train a man in order to qualify for the practice of yoga. Their fruits (phala) have separately been discussed in Yoga Sūtra (1, 35-45). Asana avoids the obstruction of dualities. Pranāyāma helps to attenuate the covering of light (aa: 8iad and Pratyāhāra brings supreme control over the senses. Thus, external practice qualifies a Yogi to Win over gross physical existence

The last three stages of Dhāraṇa, Dhyāna and Samādhi have also been called 'Samyama' by Patañjali: and if an Abhyasi practices Samyama, he achieves light of knowledge Besides the eightfold path there is also description of six-fold yogic sādhanā, which excludes the first two steps viz. yama and Niyama. On the other hand, Tejabindopaniṣad adds seven more steps making the process fifteen-fold. Amrtanādopaniṣad gives the following sequence of the six-fold path (i) Pratyāhāra, (ii) Dhyana. (iii) Pranayama, (iv) Dhāraṇa. (v) Tarka and (vi) Samādhi.

Thus, so far as the number of stages of spirituality is concerned there is a large variety of a description of these stages. Under modern Sahaj Marg System the journey starts from the seventh step, meditation (Dhyāna), which is presented in such a way as to make the relevant advantages of all the previous stages get manifested automatically and naturally to the practicant during the course of practice.

The Four Stages:

There is also description in Yoga Upaniṣads regarding the four stages (avasthās) of spiritual elevation viz. (1) Arambha avasthā (the initial stage). (2) Ghata avasthā (the incubation stage) (3) Paricaya avasthā (the introductory stage) and (4) Nispatti avasthā (the final matured stage). Varāha Upaniṣad (V. 11-15) explain these stages (1) Arambha avasthā (the initial stage): Giving up all external functioning brought about by the three Karanas (Mind Speech and

Body). wherein the novice begins to function internally - that is known as Arambha stage.

(2) Ghata avasthā (the incubation stage): That is known by the wise as the Ghata stage wherein the vital air after filling the body, through the nether (susumnā path) and piercing through (the three granthis) firmly takes its stand.

(3) Paricaya avasthā (the introductory stage): That is known as paricaya stage wherein the air, which (being endowed with vitality) is alive and owing to the absence of functioning is dead, stands motionless and firm in the ether (of the Sahasrāra) of the body.

(4) Nispatti avastha (the final matured stage): That is known as Nispatti stage, wherein (the Yogin after performing) the functions of creation and dissolution (of the phenomena of waking, dreaming and sleeping). through the (/svara) Atman. reaches the state of Jivanmukta in the natural course and performs the yoga. Dr. Radhakrishnan also gives an account of these four stages and says. In securing bodily health we have the commencement of the yoga Yoga pravrti. In attaining freedom from sorrow, he reaches the second stage. In the third stage the trace of duality disappears Mahā sūnyo tato bhavati sarva siddhi samāśrayam. In the fourth stage there is the identity of the individual with the Supreme Self.

The Seven Levels (Saptabhāmikās):

Dr. B. L. Atreya presents forth a good account of the seven levels of spiritual elevation described in Yoga Vasiṣṭha These levels are also known as the Yoga Bhūmikas (the levels of yoga) or the Jnana Bhūmikas (the levels of knowledge). Yoga Vāsistha (II, 118, 5-15) enumerates seven levels on the path of sādhanā,

- (i) Subhecchā (virtuous desire): Why do I remain only an ignorant one? I am to be regarded along with the śāstras and the virtuous people. Such desire, which has detachment as its antecedent, is what is known as virtuous desire (Subhecchā).
- (ii) Vicaranā (investigation): proneness to good conduct proceeded by (steady application to the study of) the śāstras, the company of virtuous people, and the practice of detachment is

what is known as investigation (vicāranā).
 (iii) Taumānasī (functioning with the attenuated mind): wherein passionate attachment to investigation and Virtuous gets attenuated, as a result of investigation and virtuous desire that is called functioning with the attenuated mind.
 (iv) Satvāpatti (Rhythmic state): when the mind takes stand on the pure Atman possessed of the Rhythmic quality. owing to the practice of the three stages (above-mentioned) and the cessation of indulging in the objects of sensual pleasure, that is known as the Rhythmic stage (Sattvāpatti).
 (V) Asatmsakti (detachment): That state. Wherein admiration for the Rhythm (of the Atman) gets ingrained, and there is generated detachment as the fruit of the practice of the (aforesaid) four stages, is named detachment (Asatmsakti).
 (vi) Padārtha Bhāvanā (conception of the substance): the sixth stage known as the right conception of the substance (of the Brahman), is the perception (of the Brahman) resulting from the projection (of the mind) for a long time, in the (direction of) the transcendent (Brahman), owing to the cessation of the conception of things. external and internal (other than the Brahman) due to the intense delight (experienced) in one's own Atman, as the result of the practice of the (aforesaid) five stages
 (vii) Turyagā (attainment of the Turiya state). That should be known as the approach to the Turiya state, wherein there is entire devotion to the state of the Atman, due to the non-recognition of difference of any kind (between the conception and the actual state of the Atman), as a result of the practice. For a long time, of the (aforesaid) six stages.

This description of the seven levels has also been given in the Varāhopaniṣad (IV, 2, 1-10). Vasiṣṭha holds that those who attain Turiya state, become jivanmukta and videhamukti is achieved when one goes beyond Turiya (Turīyātīta) (YV.III, 118, 16) These are the levels of knowledge (Jnana Bhūmis).

Buddhism:

Buddhism presents forth an account of eight-fold path of sādhanā

consisting of the following steps (1) Right view (Samma ditthi), (ii) Right resolve (Sammā Sankappa), (iii) Right Speech (Sammā Vaca), (iv) Right Action (Sammā Kammanta), (v) Right livelihood (Sammāājiva). (vi) Right Effort (Sammavayāma), (vii) Right Memory (Sammāsati) and (viii) Right Concentration (Sammā Samādhi).

This eight-fold path (Atthangika Muggu) in Buddhism leads to Nirvāna, which liberates man from the sufferings of old age and death (Jarā-marana). Nagasena describes the levels of consciousness on the path of sādhanā, which may be treated at par with the five-fold account (Mūdhā, Ksīpta, Viksīpta, Ekāgra and Niruddha) of Citta Bhūmis in Patañjala Yoga (1) Samklesa citta (consciousness of suffering individual); (11) Srotapanna citta (consciousness of those who have turned to the right path); (111) Sakradgāmi Citta (consciousness of those in whom craving, aversion and delusion have subsided); (iv) Anāgami Citta (consciousness of those who have advanced on the path of no-return of suffering): (v) Arhat Citta (consciousness of the person whose dirt has become cleaned, whose suffering has come to an end, whose strings of bondage have been cut asunder, who has completed the course of all duty, and got rid of all loads in the form of impressions and the tendencies arising there from): (vi) Pratyak-Buddha Citta (consciousness of the perfectly self-controlled, who have risen above the need for a guide, who have acquired aloneness after the analogy of the horn of a rhinoceros who have attained to the highest ideal of the purity and dirtlessness of human life); and (viii) Samyak-Sambuddha Citta (consciousness of the perfectly enlightened omniscient self-Victorious Buddha)

Later A sanga enumerates ten stages as (1) Muditā, (11) Vimalā, (ii) Prabhārī (iv) Arcismatī, (V) Sudurjayā, (vi) Abhimuki, (vii) Durangamā, (viii) Achalā, (ix) Sādhamati and (x) Dharmamegh or Abhiseka.

Buddhist thought and its development has a long history. Primarily the basic thought of Buddhism lies in the four noble truths i) there is sufferings (a), (ii) there is cause of sufferings (ii) cessation of sufferings and (iv) the path of cessation of sufferings. In the fourth noble truth the path of cessation of suffering Buddha

describes the eightfold path as mentioned above. The peculiarity of this path is that like Patañjali he also mentioned eightfold path having concentration (samādhi) as the final culmination. All the previous seven steps in Buddhist thought are different than those of mentioned in Patañjali's yoga system. It is noteworthy that Buddha enunciated a simpler and more natural path of spiritual practice against the prevalent tradition of in Hindu orthodox system.

Jain System:

Primarily the Jain teaching of spiritual practice is attributed to the preaching of 24 Tirthankaras. They basically mentioned seven substances: (1) Jiva, (2) Ajīva (3) Asrava, (4) Sarinvara, (5) Nirjara, (6) Bandha and (7) Moksa.

According to Jain Philosophy ignorance is the cause of bondage and Liberation (1) can be acquired by knowledge (ama ;). They divide individual being into five categories

(1) Tirthankaras, the liberated ones. are they, who have completely annihilated or stopped the influx/inflow of the alien matter to the soul. They are liberated from the bondage of the cycle of birth and death.

(2) Arhat (the Perfect Souls): they await the attainment of nirvana after shedding the body of action (karmana śarīra)

3) Acharya (the preacher): they head the group of ascetics

(4) Upādhyāya (the teacher): they teach people the message of Jain thought and theory.

(5) Sādhus (the mendicants) a class which includes all the rest.

As means for the attainment of liberation Jain thinkers advocate for gaining the so-called three-gems (triratna) viz., (1) Right Vision it is firm faith in the teachings and philosophy of Jain. (2) Right Knowledge it consists in the doctrines of Jain Philosophy and (3) Right character

The Jain system is comparatively more rigorous than that of Buddhism. It does concede to the place of women in spiritual practice.

Tantra or Hathayoga:

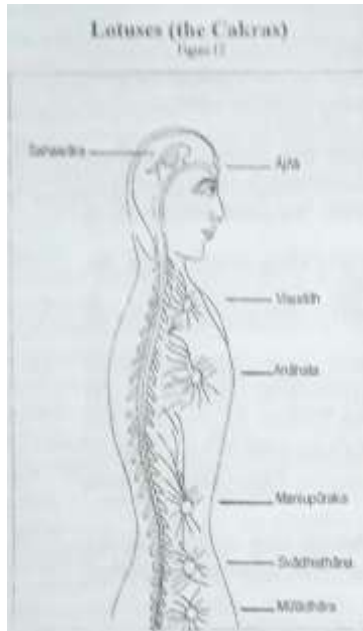
There is description of the stages in the form of the journey of kundalinī from Mulādhārā Cakra to Sahasrāra Cakra. said to be located in spinal column (Susumnā Nād).

They enumerate seven cakras:-

- (1) Mūladhāra (at the bottom of spinal column);
- (2) Svādhīsthāna (near about the prostrate region);
- (3) Manipūrakā (close to the navel);
- (4) Anahata (close to the heart);
- (5) Visuddha (at the base of neck);
- (6) Ajna (at the middle point of the eye brows);
- (7) Sahasrara (topmost region of the brain)

C.W .Leadbeater tells that “these chakras are force centres of connection at which energy flows from one vehicle or body of a man to another.

Lotous (the Cakras)



Sahaj Marg System of Yoga Sadhqnā proposes a modification in this process of traditional scheme of Chakras: "The Sahaj Marg recommends meditation on the heart as the

most efficacious process. From this point our march is directed upwards to the higher cakras mainly; Višuddha and Ajñā. Thus of all the six cakras our march remains continued to the three higher ones setting the other three, which get automatically cleaned to some extent by the effect of the process undertaken for the purification of the heart Sahaj Marg also presents a fresh approach to the concept of kundalini alone and it is of no use to hanker madly after its awakening. Every particle, in the Composition of the kernel (nucleus) of the various brain cells, has its own powerful force which surpasses that of Kundalini. Traditionally the description of Kundalini is given as a coiled serpent residing in Mūladhara cakra having its mouth downward (as in figure 13)

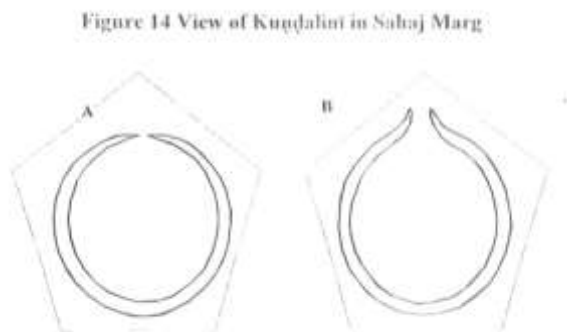
Figure 13 Tradition View of Kupdalini



But Sahaj Marg gives another approach to this Kumdalini power. Shri Ishwar Sahaj remarks: "The wonderful discovery of the Master about this Mysterious force offers a more scientific explanation. He says that Kundalini instead of being a coiled serpent apart from each other. They face each other and serve as poles for the flow of energy (as given in Figure 14)., One of them is a positive pole and the other is the negative. From each end, one type of energy flows on into the other forming a circuit within itself. For this reason, the action of the Kundalini force remains confined within itself, without affecting any part of the human system. But

when awakened, its ends get a little more apart and turn slightly upwards (as given in Figure 14), The energy then flowing out of the ends does not remain located within the Kundalini. but goes up through the medium of the Susumna Nadi covering a large circuit extending from the base up to the centre of the Sahasrāra. It is not that the physical nerve itself actually straightens to stretch forth through the spinal column but that it is only the Extension of the circuit of power located in the Kundalini". In this way it is asserted that kundalini is derived from the word kundala' which also means ear-ring around ornament worn in the ears. This view of Kundalini has been illustrated in the following figure.

Figure 14 View of Kupdalini in Sahaj Marg



Stages of progress in Sahaj Marg:

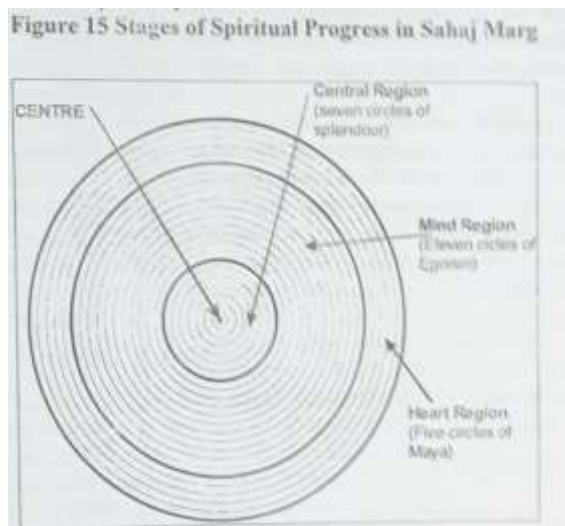
The description of stages in Sahaj Marg is based on direct experience and has scientific value. However, the levels of spiritual progress/elevation have been described in a variety of ways-Circles, Rings, Knots, Mandala, five Koṣas, four levels of consciousness simply for the sake of comprehension even by common man. The analysis of them would prove their scientific validity and worth.

(i) Circles & Rings

The spiritual journey is performed stage by stage Sahaj Marg system contributes a fresh approach by its conception of the stages on the path of the realization of Ultimate goal of human existence.

It gives following analysis of the stages of spiritual advancement in the form of twenty-three concentric circles divided into the three regions viz. Heart Region, Mind region and Central Region or spheres of Maya, of Egoism and of splendour respectively: -

Figure 15 Stages of Spiritual Progress in Sahaj Mlarg



Sahaj Marg system attempts to expose unexplored horizons in the field of spiritual progress and reveals the worth and significance of the various conceptions and notions of Indian philosophy. which were so far concealed behind the mystic garb. The representation of the various stages of spiritual elevation in the form of circles or rings is a noteworthy and significant approach of Sahaj Marg to the Sadhanà aspect of Indian Philosophy. Dr. K. C Varadachari writes, "It is an original discovery of Shri Ram Chandraji that there are rings which bind the individual. These rings seem to rise from about the Centre of God, and move towards the farthest limit of grossness or concentric spirals

The original cause of creation is the First Stir, which gives rise to vibrations in the shape of rings or circles and later layers of coverings go on forming one after another. If we throw a stone into stagnant and calm water, we perceive numerous rings running towards the shore, similarly, the rings or circles one after another are formed during the course of evolution after the commencement of First Stir. As farther away the process of

creation moves out from the Centre, the density, solidity and grossness goes on increasing, and slowly it covers the Reality like a silk-worm in cocoon.

Shri Ram Chandraji points out that it is hard to give accurate number of these circles or rings, because, if minutely observed, Centre itself is a circle, which has its own centre. Broadly, there are seven rings in the beginning which constitute the field of Central Region. This region is the highest mark of field, worthy of being aimed at and explored out by a true aspirant in the field of spirituality. These seven rings are enumerated as the rings of splendour. After it, there is the Mind Region, comprising of the eleven circles of the stages of egoism. After it come five circles which are known as the Heart Region denoting the stages of Māya.

(ii) The Three Regions

Thus, the whole of the journey of an Abhyasi on the path of Sādhanā in Sahaj Marg has been divided into three regions containing in all the twenty-three concentric circles. An Abhyasi has to begin his journey from the outermost circle in the heart region towards the Centre. Dr. K. C. Varadaclari tells that this description of the individual's personality as comprising the five gross circles, eleven subtle circles and finally seven innermost circles round the central nucleus or Centre, is not indicated in any earlier literature. These circles round the Centre roughly stand for the spiritual spheres; an Abhyasi comes across during his advancement on the path. An Abhyasi starts his march from the outermost ring and proceeds towards the Centre crossing each circle to achieve the next stage. Shri Ram Chandraji points out: "I have given all this only to enable people to judge those so-called great Doctors of Divinity, who are said to have attained perfection and are generally accepted, as such by the ignorant masses who judge their worth only by their outward form or elegance. These circles are the various stages of creation, and in spiritual development an Abhyasi has to march through these circles. It is also said that each of the circle has in itself numerous points, As an Abhyasi advances closer and closer to the Centre the grossness and solidity slowly goes on dissolving and diminishing. The treatment of the stages under Sahaj Marg is thus, simultaneously, ontological and psychological: on the one hand these are the evolutionary stage of Existence at finer and grosser

levels, and on the other these constitute the stages of spiritual progress for an Abhyasi on the path of Yogic Sadhana. Hereunder follows a more detailed description of these regionwide stages, before passing on to another description off the path knot-wise.

(1) The Heart Region

According to Sahaj Marg system generally the condition of an ordinary person lies in the outermost circle of Heart Region, and an Abhyasi begins his spiritual journey from there. proceeding towards the Centre. This Heart region contains five circles of the stages of Māyā.

Traditionally heart bears a significant and important place in Indian Philosophy. It has been regarded as the seat of Divinity, the cause of bondage and the source of life. Brhdāraṇyaka Upaniṣad (V, 3,) as it provides implication of the three syllables used in the construction of the word Hridayam (Hr-da-yam):

This Prajāpati is (the same) as this heart. It is Brahman. It is al. It has three syllables Hr', 'Da', and 'Yam'. Hr' is one syllable. His own people and others rob off to him. and who knows it thus; 'Da' is one syllable. His own people and others give to him, and who knows it thus; 'Yam' is one syllable. He who knows it thus carries
(a) to the heavenly world."

Chandogya Upaniṣad (vii, 3, 3) maintains, "Verily that self is (abides) in the heart. Of it the etymological explanation is this. This one is in the heart; thereof it is the heart. He who knows this goes day by day into the heavenly world." Gita (XII, 17) also speaks of the significance of heart:

(The Light even of lights that is said to be beyond darkness; knowledge, the knowable and what is to be reached through knowledge: particularly is located in the hearts of everyone.) Also: "And I am seated in the heart of all. Further Gita (XIII, 61) presents a note-worthy description similar to the thought of Heart Region containing five circles of Māyā advocated in Sahaj Marg System as it mentions the "Heart Region and also "Māyā as its abode:

(The God swells in Heart region of all beings, O! Arjuna, causing

all beings to revolve through the principle of Maya (as if) mounted
on a machine.)

Herein we clearly comprehend Maya as the working principle governing the heart region and Sahaj Marg also treats Heart region as the stages of Maya. Kaṭha Upaniṣad also asks to aspire for the condition beyond the region of Heart. (When all desires that dwell within human heart are cast away then a mortal becomes immortal and (even) here he attain the Brahman. When all the knots of the heart here, are cut asunder, then a mortal becomes immortal thus tar is the teaching. A hundred and one are the arteries of the heart; one of them leads up to the crown of head. Going upward through that, one becomes immortal, the other serves for going to various other directions. The person of the size of thumb, the inner self abides always in the heart of men. Him one should draw out with firmness, from the body. as (one may do) the weed from the reed. Him one should know as the pure the immortal, yea, him one should know as the pure, the immortal) Mundaka Upaniṣad asserts:

(The knot of the heart is cut (bhichyate), all doubts are dispelled (chiyante) and all his deeds get dissolved (ksjante), when He has seen the higher and the lower.)

It is noteworthy herein that Shri Ram Chandraji also divides heart into two parts upper and lower. (See Figure 16) Patañjali defines yoga as the restraining of mental modifications, and these mental propensities have their being in the heart (hrdaye cittasavit) Brahma Sūtra of Badarayana also advocates the existence of God in the heart of man. All this description clarifies that heart is the abode of Divinity and a Sādhaka should begin his march from here The ideal of liberation comes before us in such a mystic garb that its achievement is considered to be a long process of many lives (Janmajanmāntara). The tendency of being the process consuming many lives in order to reach the goal of self realization has thrown cold water over the hopes and aspirations of many aspirants engaged in spiritual pursuits: and consequently, the desire to know the God (Brahman) has been often nipped in the bud. Sahaj Marg attempts to reveal the mystery and encourages an Abhyasi to understand the value of the numerous notions and concepts. The path of liberation according to Sahaj Marg system is not as hard and difficult as conceived and

formulated in Indian Philosophy. Really such hardships are presumptuous and baseless impositions, having no solid ground to stand upon, and to prove their validity. This System enlivens spirit in the heart of an aspirant and enables him to see the truth directly and realize the powers lying behind his terrestrial and organic existence. Shri Ram Chandraji tells, "If I speak of liberation, people will think it to be a very far off thing, which can be achieved by the persistent efforts for a number of lives. In the diagram (figure 15) the state of liberation lies between second and third circle. The various conditions, we have to pass through in order to secure liberation are all acquired within about a circle and a half. This may help the reader to form a rough idea of what still remains to be achieved after we have reached the point of liberation, which really, as commonly believed, is not an ordinary achievement. After achieving this state we go on further crossing other circles till we cross the Further, still there are many more levels to be reached and many circles or rings are to be crossed. After crossing the fifth circle, and abhyasi reaches the stage of avyakta gati (undifferentiated state) and he becomes completely free from the bounds of Maya, people generally call such a man as Jivanmukta.

Sahaj Marg System propounds that heart Region should not be limited to the physical heart. This Heart Region neither stands for the Anāhata Cakra in Tantric literature; nor for the spiritual heart said to be located on the right side, according to Maharshi Ramaia. Shri Ram Chandraji says the people generally think of the heart as made of flesh and blood only. Whenever the idea of heart comes to them, they locate its position as that of the heart made of the thing said above. This is one of the limitations in viewing the Heart Region in its broader sense. It is really a vast circle consisting of everything inner and outer. The things after the First Mind all belong to the Region of Heart. All the lotuses or Cakras are set within its limits. In other words, they can well be called a part of this big region. The stages of human approach are lying hidden in it, Super-consciousness lies there; Susupti is a part of it. We are all playing like ducks in the water in that region. The stage of intercommunication with the liberated souls of the brighter world starts from this place. Individual mind plays its part in this region. It is the main artery of God. We cannot reach Him unless we proceed through it. "The top most portion of the body is the end of this big Circle. Such is the sphere of this circle. There

are very many things in this vast circle which can only be felt. No words can express them. The various powers of nature reside here. Hence the meditation on heart brings about all-round progress.

Mind Region

After crossing the five circles of Heart Region one enters Mind Region' comprising of the eleven circles of egoism. Katha Upaniṣad hints towards this region:

(There is a city of eleven gates (belonging to) the unborn, uncrooked intelligence. By ruling it one does not grieve, and being freed is freed indeed.) According to Sahaj Marg system when an abhyasi enters mind region his condition turns finer and subtler. It is said to be the region of intuition and sādḥaka at this level of achievement develops anubhavat śakti (experiential power) in himself. This region is the essence of heart region.

It is through mind that the Supreme manifests itself in the gross form. As Mohopaniṣad puts it: "The magical charm, investing the phenomenal world, is a fancy of the mind alone As long as this persists, there no hope for salvation The universe is created by Brahaman, the Svayambhu, out of his mind, Being the product of mind it receives significantly the name Vishva Upanisads advise to meditate on Brahman as mind, The subtle portion of earth becomes mind in man. The word 'Mind is pretty confusing Vey often it is treated as an equivalent of the word 'Maas which sometimes is spoken of as a synonym of Hridaya also, in Sanskrit language. In Samkhya and Nyaya epistemology, Manas is the internal sense of cognition (Jyanendriyas). In Western psychology 'Mind' roughly speaking, connotes the individual consciousness', constituting the broad base for an individual's psychological activity of knowing, feeling and willing. 'Manas' in this sense has been characterized as tickle. uncontrollable etc. in Gita and Patanjala Yoga. In German and British idealism, however 'Mind', as equivalent of 'consciousness is the basic constituent of Reality, as such. The 'neo-Vedāntism' in India also more or less has collaborated with the same trends in the heydays of Bradley's philosophy in the British Empire. The use of the expression, 'Mind Region in Sahaj Marg is to be understood in this last context. Under Sabaj Marg 'Mind Region' is the subtler level of Existence universal or personal- beyond the phenomenal reality of

the universe of self, but not the current Idealism of the early part of the twentieth century, and yet clearly transcends it. The Samkhya cosmology speaks of Manas', Buddhi and Ahamkāra etc as subtler levels of becoming. Under Sahaj Marg, the "Mind Region" is spoken of as covering the eleven circles of 'egoism' or Ahamkāra, which means the bare consciousness of 'self as an identity, recognizable as such. "Mind Region" of Sahaj Marg, therefore, is not to be confused with 'Manas in the sense of internal sense organ or fickle individual consciousness etc these or descriptions manifest the significance of mind and its place in the Universe.

As it has already been told, five circles of heart region denote the stages of Māyā. Generally, people conceive that when man wins over Mayā he enters Godly region (Iśvariya desa) but according to Sahaj Marg system the field of Maya does not come to a close and Mayā in its most subtle form still survives. The Mayā in the heart region is gross manifested Māyā and mind region is the subtle potentiality in the form of egoism. Dr. K. C. Varadachari gives more accurate account "We can state that egoism is a subjective factor whereas Māyā is objective. So much so we can either consider that all Māyā is due to egoism or we can consider egoism to be a subtler kind of Māyā. This is because Māyā is having its essence in egoism This concept of Egoism in Mind Region needs due consideration. The egoism is not to be confused with the feeling of pride or boastfulness. Shri Ram Chandraji explains: "From here the things come in shape and light. There is no motion. Invisible. Motion when multiplying together with the idea of creation increases the force downwards. The outcome is the innumerable varieties we find in the universe. It is beyond essential force. Air does not blow there This is the most powerful region of God. For your understanding you may call it the power-house for setting the Godly Machinery agoing." To locate this region in human organism this system advocates that from the top of the head to the occipital lobe is the mind region.

Central Region

In the matter of spiritual sādhanā, Sahaj Marg System propounds that Central Region is the real goal of sādhanā. Here in really one enters Godly region (Iśvariya desa) after getting complete release from Mayā. Perfect calmness prevails all over. There is

simplicity and plainness. A sādḥaka now enters the stages of the seven circles of splendour after crossing the eleven circles of egoism in Mind Region. One, experiences super-consciousness of the finest type. All the activities cease and one achieves access into the Godly Region in pure form. Now our goal is attained. Shri Ram Chandraji tells, "Our goal is achieved and we are admitted into it. Self is realized. We are above actual consciousness which abides in the Region of Heart and its potentiality which is rooted in the Mind Region. We are now free from endless circles of rebirth

Physiologically this region is beyond occipital lobe and cosmologically it is beyond Brahmāanda mandala and Pāra Brahmānda Mandala etc. of Saints and Suli Systems of Sādhanā.

This region is the unique discovery and opens a new chapter in the sādhanā aspect of Indian Philosophy. The seven worlds of the Vedie seers V1z.- Bhulh, Bhuvah, sva, Mahah, Janah, Tapalh and Satyan are well known. But this region is even beyond Truth (satyam). Shri Ram Chandraji says, "People may call this stage as Truth. It is not really Truth; we have arrived at. Truth has been left behind and we are no more abiding in it. Truth carries with it the sense of something which is not there A sādḥaka in this region is beyond Truth-world (satya loka). It is a region of divine splendour, which is indescribable. This region is of vast expanse. If the Heart Region grants actuality, Mind Region reveals potentiality and Centre Region brings latency. The rings of splendour are the focusing rays, which radiate from the Centre to the end of the last ring of this region. The colour of this region is said to be 'a faint reflection of colourlessness'. The liberated souls swim in this region. "One who reaches there controls the universe as he is directed. Special powers are allotted to him and he begins to work with them. He feels the wave of Godly work and sets himself to it according. Every order of God passes through him. He catches and reads everything in Nature. Everything remains vivid to his eyes. Oneness is predominant. He is everywhere the same, in and out. He cannot judge a stone, a man or a plant in the solidity of forms, as they are. Limitations end here. This is the final goal and the problem of life is thoroughly solved. No worship or meditation is required here. The various powers of nature are his command and he takes work from them. They obey him,

Further Shri Ram Chandraji remarks, "When a man enters into the Central Region there is no journey at all but expansion, knowledge, vision of the Absolute and so on These things come after crossing the seven rings of splendour."

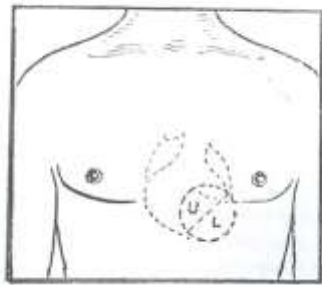
Points in various regions:

Apart from the general description of the conditions experience by Abhyasis in various regions, modern Sahaj Marg provides an account of conditions at certain points in the various regions. Shri Ram Chandraji speaks of every pore in the organism as a Centre of energy; and records his researches on conditions attainable through meditation and transmission at various points, in his works. Some of his most recent researches are contained in the confidential instructions to Preceptors. All those details are not being incorporated here. We have already referred to points A and B' in Chapter VII previously in connection with the account of meditation on heart by Abhyasis.

Taking the physical heart of the human organism Shri Ram Chandraji divides it into upper and lower regions as in the following diagram:

Figure 16 Lower and Upper Regions of Heart

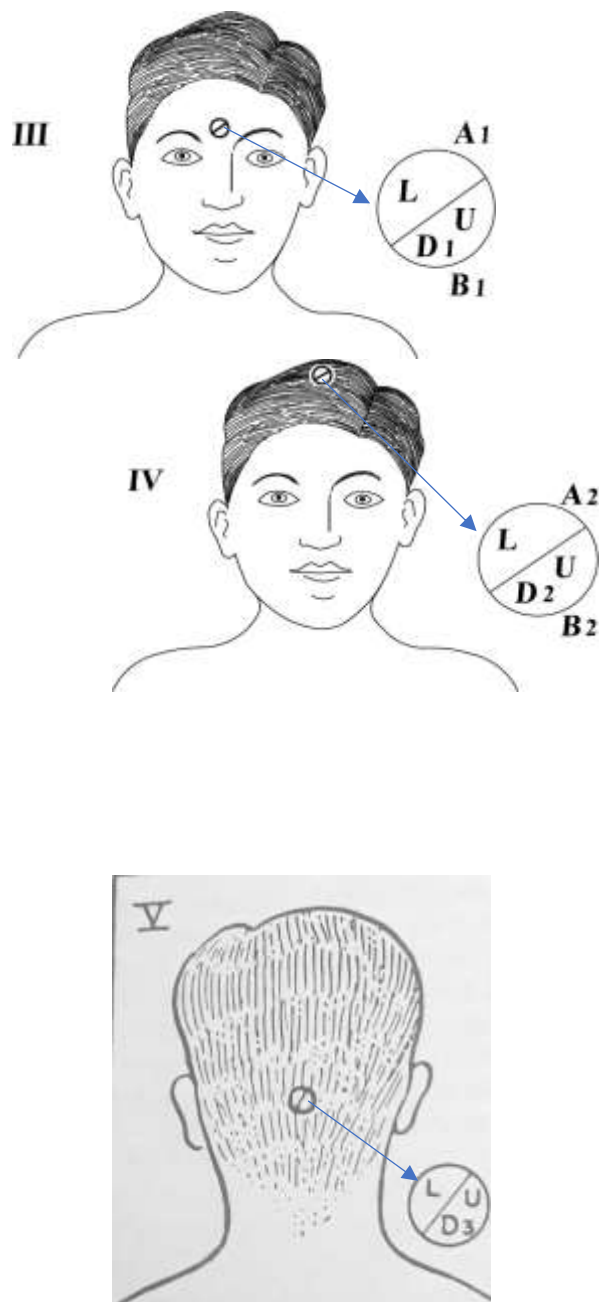
Figure 16 Lower and Upper Regions of Heart



The upper region "U is the region for the descent of great Rşis and the lower region is the place of common man. This is the technique of Sahaj Marg system that while meditating at the point "A and "B (as in-figure 1 these upper and lower regions are charged with Divine energy and cleansed of impurities. Further Shri Ram Chandraji repeats this cription of upper and lower regions in the higher stages of development and illustrates it in the following: -

The Lower and Upper Regions in Higher Spiritual Growth

There are also A and B points in higher regions akin to those located in the heart as illustrated in Figure 16.



It is said that if a sādḥaka meditates on those points, it has accordingly corresponding results in higher regions too. In higher regions these 'A and B points may be described as A1, 'A2, A3. and B1: B2. B3 and so on.

Therefore meditation on points A and B' in the heart regions serves deal in a good producing the effects in higher regions also and this makes the journey points of those at more regions convenient in onward progress.

(iv) Broad knots in the Evolutionary and Evolutionary process:

Sahaj Marg system also outlines the progress of a sādḥaka in terms of the loosening or crossing of thirteen knots (granthis). As Dr. K. C. Varadachari puts it that these various knots come into existence during the evolutionary course of creation: and during the evolutionary process of realization these knots area not to be cut or pierced but to be loosened and transcended. "This does not mean the extinguishments of the ray of creation in the individual on his attainment of the Mukti', leaving the world poorer and God without a ray of 'Lila' . According to Sahaj Marg system the creation is the result of stir (ksobha) and when the current out flowed these knots were formed. The principle of invertendo also clarifies that these knots were formed at the points of inversion.

A sadhaka experiences the following four conditions successively at the loosing of each knot.

- (1) A peculiar state of awaking within the mind, a consciousness of the Divine force, pervading all over.
- (2) A Divine state prevailing everywhere and everything absorbed in its remembrance.
- (3) Neither feeling of the Divine force nor that of remembrance, but only a feeling of negation.
- (4) Everything gone. No impression upon the heart, not even that of existence.

These conditions refer to the general feelings experienced by an Abhyāsi at every point or knot. Shri Ram Chandraji gives an account of the various thirteen knots. At each knot an Abhyasi feels mergence, and he acquires knowledge (jñāna) up to that limit

and in the final state he reaches the condition of knowledge lessens, and he calls it Complete ignorance' "At each point the process of merging and identically repeats itself, the latter being the final stage the knowledge of the points. Thus, one gains knowledge up to that limit.

Concluding Remarks:

Thus modern Sahaj Marg system of Sadhanā has introduced very significant modifications in the traditional practice of Yoga in respect of the account of the stages of progress on the path of Sadhana. The conclusions, no doubt, depend on the intuitive insights of the two Masters of this system; and need verification through strict scientific procedures to be of scientific merit. On his own part, Shri Ram Chandraji, the founder president of this system, has attempted to get verification of his intuitive insights through the narration of conditions by the sensitive Abhyasis, practicing under his supervision. The voluminous correspondence of Km. Kasturi Chaturvedi in Hindi contains very detailed accounts of the conditions experienced at various points and knot in the different regions and rings or circles from the very start of the spiritual journey in this system at the points of Heart onward. Some of these letters were anonymously published serially in the SAHAJ MARG (Quarterly) magazine of Shri Ram Chandra Mission, under the column The Infinite Pilgrimage (Ananta Yātra). There are other accounts in the correspondence of several Abhyāsi. This need be compared and a systematic objective picture of the path of spirituality evolved. This work may be taken up at the Sahaj Marg Research Institute, Tirupati, which has brought about a volume consisting of papers submitted by meritorious Abhyāsi to the Seminar on 'Sahaj Marg and Personality Problems. These papers contain the experience of Abhyāsi. In due course of time, the institute may succeed in placing the age-old system of spiritual sādhanā on a rigid scientific foundation. Of course, the concept of 'Science' and Scientific method' must need a modification to include the spiritual and divine subject, hitherto relegated to the regions of the occult and religion by respectable scientists.

Sahaj Marg and Other System of Yoga (An Evaluation)

Sahaj Marg Sadhanā as practised under Shri Ram Chandra Mission is said to mark out a new era in the field of yoga sādhanā. There has been laid increasing emphasis on the revival of yoga for modern man in various renascent movements in the modern period of Indian Philosophy. Ramkrishna Paramhams and Swami Vivekanandaa laid down the foundations of such a renascent movement, and then followed Swami Ram Tirtha, Shri Aurobindo, Maharshi Raman, Professor Remade, Sat Sri Sai Baba, Swami Shivanand, Mehar Baba, Dr. Sampurnanand, Swami Chinmoyanand and Mahesh Yogi etc. Sahaj Marg movement constitutes a very important link in the same chain. As proclaimed by its founder: "Sahaj Marg closely runs along the lines of Raja yoga: but of course, with certain amendments and modifications to purge out superfluity from that system." It is also asserted therein that "the old mechanical method involving austerities and penances, most ill-fitted to the environments of present-day life, must necessarily be set aside and replaced by simple and natural means. The chief characteristics of this system have already been discussed and herein it would be plausible to turn to the comparative assessment of the significant contributions of Sahaj Marg in relation to the ancient, medieval and modern traditions of Yoga Sādhanā.

Ancient Traditional Yogic Sādhanā and Sahaj Marg:

Traditionally yoga sādhanā consists in following the eight-fold path as enunciated by Patañjali in Yoga Sūtra (II, 29) Swami Vivekananda gives a pragmatic survey of it in his famous treatise 'Rajayoga'. He remarks, "This study of Rajayoga takes a long time and constant practice. A part of this practice is physical, but in the main it is mental Sahaj Marg presents forth a natural course of practice and introduces such an efficacious method as to make the journey through these eight stages, speedy and smooth. The path is shortened by making a start with meditation. the seventh step

of Patañjali and attempting to make the essential benefits of the earlier steps. available automatically to the abhyasi during the course of practice. It is not necessary to undergo all the stages. Moreover, meditation in Sahaj Marg is not a stage or level of sādhanā but it is a means to establish union with the Ultimate.

Sahaj Marg, therefore, practically brings to light a Simple and easy process of a briefer course of sādhanā and theoretically it explains and clarifies misunderstandings and wrong conceptions. Shri Ishwar Sahai compares Sahaj Marg with the old system of yoga and points out the significant marks of difference between them. His account may be summarised as following:

- (i) Sahaj Marg explores the highest comprehensible ideal of yoga sādhanā, viz. complete 'oneness i.e., merging with the Ultimate, conceived as Centre or Zero.
- (ii) It introduces a simplest and subtlest possible methodology of practice, and avoids application of intricate and complicated method.
- (iii) Sahaj Marg advocates a natural and simple process of detachment (vairāgya) and does not treat domestic life as an impediment in the spiritual pursuits.

(V) The description of spiritual progress in the form of cakras (plexus/lotuses) starting from muladhara to Sahasrāra has also been brought to fresh limelight, which previously aimed at the attainment of some superhuman powers (siddhis). "Sahaj Marg, not aiming at the acquisition of powers, makes a diversion from the set old path and starts from the anāhata cakra (heart plexus) omitting the lower three at the initial step. This again shortens the course of journey of an aspirant on the path of sādhanā

(vi) The qualifying features of an aspirant in the Vedanta conception of sādhanachaturstaya, comprising of viveka, vairāgya, satasampatti and mumuksatva, has also been accorded a fresh approach. The system of Sahaj Marg practice advocates that only the last undaunted desire for liberation (mumuksarva) is all that is needed for the proper regulation of mind.

(vi) The practice of meditation in Sahaj Marg is such as to cover all

the stages mentioned in the eightfold path of Patañjali. (vii) It introduces the application of technique of transmission, which makes the sādhanā of Sahaj Marg smooth, speedy and certain

As discussed at relevant places in preceding chapters, Sahaj Marg sādhanā seems to bear greater affinities to Upanisadic yoga summarised in Gita. The synthesis of niskāmakarmayoga, jñānayoga, and bhaktiyoga as propounded in Gita comes very close to the ideal of Sahaj Marg sādhanā and it makes Sahaj Marg a confluence of all the three streams of knowledge, devotion and action.

The medieval Devotional Sadhanā and Sahaj Marg:

The history of Indian Philosophy presents forth yoga sādhanā in a large variety of forms. Samhitā and Brāhmana emphasized the performance of various rites and rituals as duties (karmas) and Upaniṣadie seers laid down emphasis on knowledge Ghāna). In Purāna devotion (bhakti) to God has been revealed to be the best means for the achievement of liberation from the cycle of birth and death. Medieval saints advocated the path of devotion. The yoga of devotion (bhaktiyoga) can be traced to the Vedic hymns and Upanishads. Vedic seers (rsis) clearly want to become devotees of the Ultimate in Atharvaveda (tasyā te bhaktivāmsah syama). Svetāsvataropaniṣad (VI, 23) asserts: "These subjects, which have been declared, shine forth to the high-souled one, who has the highest devotion for God, and his spiritual guide as for God. Yea they shine forth to the high-souled one. This devotion (bhakti) in the form of the remembrance of the name (namasmarana) has been treated to be the best means for the achievement of union with God in Kaliyuga. What was achieved by the practice of ten years in Salayuga, of one year in Tretā and of one month in Dvāpara is gained by the recital and remembrance of God's name in Kaliyuga. Kalisantarana Upanishad recommends the recitation of sixteen worded couplet consisting of the name of God, for practice i.e.

"Hare Rama Hare Rāma Rama Rama Hare Hare
Hare Krishna Hare Krishya Krishya Krishya Hare Hare."

Thus, devotion comes to be treated as the best means of spiritual practice. A devotee achieves all that is acquired by action (karma), penance (tapas), knowledge (jnāna), detachment (vairagya), yoga, offering (dāna), dharma etc. Valmiki, Shabari, Prahlad, Bharat, Tulsidas, Meera, Chaitanya etc., are enumerated as the great devotees of God." Naradabhakti Sutra (25) clearly asserts that devotion is superior to Karma, Jhana and Yoga. Lord Krishna tells Ajun that one can know, see and enter into God by devotion (Gita XI, 54). I am known really or truly (tattvalah) by devotion. (Gita XVII, 15).

This devotion is spoken of as capable of being practised in nine ways (navadhā bhakti) viz.

- (1) Sravana-by listening the Name;
- (2) Kīrtana -by reciting the Name;
- (3) Smaranam- by remembering the Name,
- (4) Pādasevana - by serving the feet;
- (5) Archanam- by worship
- (6) Vandanum-by adoration,
- (7) Dasyam-by service or servitude;

- (8) Sakhyam -by friendship; and
- (9) Atma-nivedana - by self-dedication.

This devotion according to Sāndilya is actually the complete and supreme attachment to God (parānuraktirīsvare). Shri Ram Chandraji provides a notable assertion that "the man with faith, devotion and self-confidence wins." He further explains: "Devotion and love, of course, remain so easy; and yet so difficult of achievement at once. Real devotion has no tinge of affectation in it and goes hand in gloves with enlightenment. In the initial stage, the devotee may be conscious of his feelings towards the object of his love; but at higher stages the foam and fury is dimmed to the extent of an almost total loss of awareness of attachment at the Ultimate stage, The superfine level of devotion may be spoken of as total self- surrender, from which the awareness of surrender

has entirely been withdrawn by the grace of the Supreme Master Himself"

Modern Yogic Sādhanā and Sahaj Marg:

In the modern period of Indian Philosophy, quite a large number of religio-socio-philosophical schools have come into existence. As such the yoga sādhanā, as followed and prescribed in some of these schools and systems, also needs due evaluation and comparison with Sahaj Marg sādhanā. We have already enumerated Swami Vivekananda, Maharshi Raman, Swami Ram Tirth, Aurobindo, Sai Baba, Mehar Baba, Mahesh Yogi, and Shivananda etc. as the chief exponents of Yoga Sadhana in modern Indian Philosophy. They advocated yoga sādhanā in one or the other form according to needs and requirements of the present day society and prevailing conditions. In general, their object was one, viz., to secure complete union with the Ultimate as Sahaj Marg conceives it. They also strived to introduce a Simple and natural technique of yoga sadhanā to be observed by the aspirant on the path of realization.

The journey on the path of spirituality begins from the heart. Swami Vivekananda remarks: "The pure heart is the best mirror for the reflection of truth, so all these disciplines are for the purification of the heart. And as soon as it is pure, all truths flash upon it in a minute; all truths in the universe will manifest in your heart, if you are sufficiently pure." Shri Aurobindo also asserts, "There is no method in this Yoga except to concentrate. preferably in the heart. and call the presence of the Mother (the Divine Shakti) to take up the being and by the workings of her force transform the consciousness." However, unlike the systems, set up by these masters, Sahaj Marg sādhanā starts with meditation on heart. An aspirant begins his journey from the outermost ring of heart. He is asked to think of divine light in the heart. Swami Ram Tirth also assigns importance to the concept of light and remarks, "The only remedy is Light, and Light is living knowledge, living faith in your Divinity. That is the remedy, there is no other. He further contends: "Light simply means realization of truth to such a degree that all the apparent bodies and forms may dwindle into nothingness Dwell upon the idea that

you are Light of lights. That am I. I am the Light of lights. identity yourself with the Light of lights. That is your essence but the sādhanā of Sahaj Marg does not give so much of importance to the concept of light. It points out that an aspirant begins with the idea of thought in the heart. An aspirant is also warned not to force his mind to conceive light. Really, light may be perceived in the beginning of one's practice. The vision of light is not final but a subtlest comprehensible means to begin with. Swami Ram Tirth also hints to it, "We do not worship light as a material thing, as the Roman Catholics do with their idols. The course of sadhanā as advised by Swami Ram Tirth primarily emphasises to imagine and to think that "I am Brahman. "Just as you think, so you become. Call yourself a sinner and you must become a sinner, call yourself a fool and you must become a fool, call yourself weak and there is no power in this world that can make you strong the technique as advocated by Swami Ram Tirth definitely reveals a high state of Brahmanhood. but that is not so easily attainable. simply by thinking oneself and all the objects as Brahman. It requires proper course of practice. Particularly the technique of transmission by a worthy Master, as emphasized under Sahaj Marg. and for which there seems to be no provision in the system, advised by Swami Ram Tirth.

Herein it is worth mention that the yoga sādhanā in the modern period of Indian Philosophy primarily deals with the process of meditation (dhyina). A large variety of techniques of doing meditation can easily be traced among the numerous rejuvenators and propounders of sects and systems. They regarded their respective methodology to be the proper and superior one. Traditionally Patañjali regarded meditation (dhyana) to be the refined stage of the previous step known as dhāranā. Traditionally as per definition of Yoga Sutra (1, 2) that when dhāranā gains constancy in thought the level of meditation (dhyāna) culminates by itself. Upanisad also indicate that meditation destroys worldliness The modern Indian thought presents meditation in a refined and more comprehensive way, Swami Ram Tirth tells that dhyāna "is the poise of mind rather than a forced action." T. L. Vasvani. also known as Dadāji' explains in his Book Born to serve': "What is meditation? Briefly, turning inwards, in a quiet and steady gaze, to absorb, with closed eyes, rays of inner light. This Light appears when you are being led into the city, the Ashram of

the Light of Krishna." Herein Aurobindo hints and advises to "concentrate there not on the place, but on the Divine. Swami Shivanand explains the result; rather says the consequences, of proper meditation in these words: "Meditation is the only royal road to the attainment of salvation or Moksa. Meditation gives vision of unity. Meditation produces the sense of oneness. Meditation is an aeroplane that helps the aspirant to soar high in the realms of eternal than connects earth with heaven and takes the aspirant to the immortal abode of Brahman." Maharshi Ramana treats God, Guru and Self as one and the same; and asserts that for the purpose of realization, "two things are to be done; first, to find the Guru outside yourself, and then to find the Guru within. Hence, meditation is the process of search and research within till it starts revelation of divine secrets and manifestation of the spiritual facts. Maharshi Ramana remarks that there are two ways either ask yourself who am I? or surrender to the Guru. It is true that thoughts arise to disturb the meditation, but that should not be treated as hindrance, because what was suppressed should come out. Unless it rises up, it cannot be washed out. Ramana advises to meditate on who am I by focusing one's attention on the heart, not on the physical heart but the spiritual heart that lies on the right side of the chest. Shri Ram Chandraji provides an accurate explanation in this respect: "The followers of Maharshi are even to entangled in and controverting over the view regarding exact position of the heart in human body: whether it is on the right or on the left. There is however, no mystery about it. It will be quite clear if we take the whole structure of the physical heart in consideration. Maharshi insists upon enquiring 'who am I' In my humble opinion it would be far better instead to try to forget 'who I am. The body- consciousness and the soul-consciousness must both necessarily go away, and this view is based on my personal That is to say, the complete union of soul with experience." the Ultimate gets establish, when all the consciousness is merged and instead of knowing Who am I' one should forget even one's own T entity. He should be free from ego-sense Searching to know Who am I? will naturally cultivate ego sense. Mehar Baba, as it is said about him that he was the perfect Master and it is also asserted that he came down to earth not to teach, but to awaken. He remarks, "God reveals Himself only to that mind, which is entirely devoid of egoism or egotism. Sri Aurobindo also asserts, "Eliminate egoism in all its forms eliminate it from every; movement of your consciousness."

The Integral yoga of Aurobindo "is not a yoga of knowledge alone. Knowledge is one of its means, but its base being self-offering, surrender and Bhakti, it is based in the heart and nothing can be eventually done without this base." Sahaj Marg sādhanā begins from the outer most region of Heart, passes through the region of Mind - the stages of egoism; and finally achieves union with Centre or Zero, the Ultimate Reality. Shri Ram Chandraji remarks, "Sri Aurobindo has talked much about the Supermind, which he claimed he was bringing down upon the earth. But as a matter of fact, it always comes down upon the earth when some superior force in the form of Special personality is in existence in the world. It is not actually the supramental that works by itself for the changing of the character of the world, but a still stronger power of the subtlest nature which I might, for the sake of understanding, call as Super-supra-mental. which is above the level of sattva, rajas and tamas. Higher above, there is a still greater force, which is used and can be utilized, by the Personality, who comes down for the special work of Nature. 1This is the highest mark, which Sahaj Marg aims at" In this way Sahaj Marg sadhanā conceives meditation as means of the process of loosening the grossness and solidity. It is efficacious and steady process of elevation of subtle and finer levels of consciousness and finally, merging in the Centre. Aurther Osburne writes, "The Master is both within and without, so he creates conditions to drive you inwards, and at the same time prepares the interior to drag you to the Centre. Swami Ram Tirth advocates: "Keep yourself always in the Centre. Be not Centre out." By Centre, Swami Ram Thrith herein meant the light, the Divine light. Sahaj Marg enunciates that meditation observed under the influence of transmission by the capable Master leads one to the Centre, which is the Original Homeland, we have to return back. Swami Vivekananda explains, "The solid melts into liquid, that into gas and gas into ether. then mind and mind will melt away, all is spirit Sahaj Marg Sādhanā is also a technique in which gross dissolves into subtle and solidity merges into the finer levels. As an abhyāsi marches onwards on the spiritual path, the subtlety goes on developing into its finer forms, and finally Identity with the Ultimate is secured.

Thus, Sahaj Marg sādhanā consists neither in the ascent of humanity or/and descent of Divinity; nor in knowing Who am I?

but it is a process of revelation and manifestation of the Centre encircled in the rings of increasing grossness. Like Mahesh Yogi it does not advocate to meditate on some mystical Mantram: nor do the abhyasis under this system meditate on 'I am Brahman'. They begin with the simple idea of light in the heart and that too vanishes in due course of elevation on the spiritual path.

It would be worthwhile to mention that an organization, which developed in Bengal under the banner of Ananda Marg, which has a multi-pronged socio-cultural program together with a system of spiritual practice (Sādhanā), which also proposes simple meditation and prayer etc., to begin with; but prescribes complicated mystical Tantric practices to its trusted initiates, probably aimed at acquisition of some spiritual powers. There are whole-time workers, who after undergoing some prescribed course of training are allowed to propagate the message of the system to the masses. They wear a set of grey-coloured uniform. The movement is openly opposed, almost militantly to communist ideology; and aims at far-reaching socio-political reform in India. It has come to be suspected as a militant political organization in the garb of a system of yoga sādhanā and the ban on its membership for government servants; raised controversial issues. Confining ourselves to the theory and practice of Yoga, advised under the System, we find it advocating the harmonization of the vibrations in oneself with those of in something else through will-power, and thereby acquiring spiritual advancement by and by. On the other hand, modern Sahaj Marg, as does not suggest or prescribe any mysterious or complicated processes. Moreover, it is purely a system of Rajayogic practice and does not involve itself with socio-political problems. beyond what may be necessitated in connection of its chief purpose.

The system of yogic sādhanā, propounded by Maharshi Mahesh Yogi, which has gained meteoric popularity in Europe and America, and which is also characterized occasionally by the Maharshi, as 'Sahaja Mārga'. It consists in the technique of transcendental meditation together with some incantation, advised individually with regard to the tendencies, inclinations, aspirations, background etc., of a particular abhyasi. This consideration to the whims of an individual is strictly guarded against in the modern Sahaj Marg system of Shri Ram Chandraji.

who clearly declares that there should be no secrets in spiritual pursuits; because spirituality is a open book devoid of all the mystification.

There may be many more systems and traditions with their own contributions in spiritual field and undertaking them for the sake of comparison and contrast may provide some skill in evaluation in the light of the main features of modern Sahaj Marg system. Before passing on to the consideration of some possible sources of defects and drawbacks in the System, it will be proper to have a brief synoptic view of the theoretical and practical aspects of Sahaj Marg.

Sahaj Marg ontologically conceives Ultimate Reality in the form of Centre or Zero; cosmologically it regards stir (ksobha) to be the root cause of the creation of manifold objects of the world, and epistemologically it treats the state of complete ignorance, as the final goal of Sādhanā. In its practical aspects, it strives to achieve 'complete union' with the Ultimate. For the purpose of achieving the ideal aimed at there is bifurcation in the methodology i.e., it has two aspects First, the role of the aspirant' in observing prescribed practice of meditation with devotion rising to the stage of surrender, and second the role of Master as a support through transmission. For meditation, one is asked to meditate on the heart with the feeling of the presence of light therein. It is said that this practice of meditation runs on natural lines of spiritual progress, and various levels have automatic revelation in due course. The Master's support through transmission (pranāhuti) makes the Journey smoother and speedier. Sahaj Marg conceives the stages of spiritual progress of sādhanā in the form of twenty-three concentric circles or rings divided into three regions Heart, Mind and Central, representing the stages of Māyā, Egoism and Splendour respectively.

Critical Evaluation of Modern Sahaj Marg system: -

An analysis of the brighter aspect of Sahaj Marg system brings into light the various significant features of this mode of sādhanā, which glorify it to be a unique system in the history of the sādhanā aspect of Indian Philosophy. Its comprehensible

theory and a simple mode of the practice of meditation have a universal appeal. But the possible sources of defect and danger should not be ignored, as is likely to be the chances under the enthusiastic zeal. Constant vigilance and watchfulness is the essential price of the healthy growth of any plantation.

First of all an academic researcher is faced with the difficulty due to the insistence in making sometimes the research subjective in putting forth the subject to be the supreme and perfect one; and thereby not only criticizing other modes without giving any consideration to the merits of those systems. The approach should always be objective and it should adhere to presenting all the issues in plain and judicious way and so as to be impartial in one's application of assessments and appreciations. The possible demerits should also be assessed in a diligent way.

Modern Sahaj Marg system circumscribes to limit and confine its thought and theory to the contributions of two Masters the Adi Guru of the System and the Founder-president of Shri Ram Chandra Mission. This is, perhaps, in keeping with the ways of founder of all the system whatever they are in their theory and practice. All the schools of thought whether Vedic or Non-Vedic have a history starting with the work of some propounder in whom the followers of respective traditions have pinned their confidence and faith. Buddha revolted against the decadent Vedic tradition of his time and though he derived positive inspiration from the fundamental Vedic thought, he avoided, acceptance of any such influence, through his famous silence. Mohammad and his followers frankly denied any debt of Aryan, Buddhist, Hindu, Hebrew or Christian tradition on their system. On the face of it this posture of hundred percent originality totally delinking itself like bolt from the blue is untenable, on serious unbiased examination. But, perhaps, such a posture is necessary to provide a positive stable base to a revolutionary movement, trying to wean away its adherents from the burden of the past. For practical purposes. it is not only useless but even harmful to bother about the real source of water you draw out from your well to quench your thirst. But all Scientific investigations in the fields of geology and mineralogy etc. will be hampered, if the practical purpose is over emphasized beyond a certain limit. In spiritual matters, however, this analogy does not speak the whole

truth. The source of spiritual benefit alone is to be tapped for effective progress on the path of spiritual advancement. Unnecessary involvement with history may create wrong attachments to antiquated objects of the historical museum, thus creating permanent blocks to the flow of spiritual benefits into the being of the abhyasi, As such, to cut the matter short, what may be definitely necessary in the interest of the adherents of any system, for all practical purposes, is equally well an impregnable defect even if a necessary defect for the purposes of academic research.

We have already gone through the brief accounts of the various schools of Sahaj Sādhanā in the history of Indian Philosophy in Chapter 2 previously; and we have also noted that the modern Sahaj Marg sādhanā has nothing in common with all these schools of Sahaj Sadhanā except the identity in respect of the use of the term Sahaja'. The whole history of the Philosophy of Sahaj Marg has been kept limited and confined to the experiences of the Adi Guru and the Founder-president. The system claims to expound Raja Yoga which, the founder of this system asserts, was first introduced by a great Rishi, who lived seventy-two generations, prior to Raja Dasharatha of Surya Varmśa (Sun dynasty). Dr. K. C. Varadachari comments, "Shri Ram Chandraji (of Shahjahanpur) states in his 'Efficacy of Rajayoga' that the technique invented by his Master Shri Ram Chandraji of Fatehgarh was originally the earliest having been invented by a Rishi who lived far earlier than Shri Dasharatha, the father of Lord Ram Chandra, the incarnation (avatāra) Therefore, the Adi Guru was the earliest man to invent this Sahaj Marg sādhanā. It has been kept a mystery as to who was the teacher of Adi Guru, how and wherefrom he received all this knowledge, or what was the source of his inspirations? These legitimate questions are bound to be a source of trouble to an academic researcher, whatever the attitude of the faithful adherents of the System, to these problems, may be. There is surely no need to doubt the efficacy or necessity of the attitude for practical purposes of spiritual progress of the abhyasis and devotees of the system, but the attitude has got to be characterized as religious rather than scientific.

This brings us to another knotty problem, viz. of the experimental verification of the stages of spiritual progress. There

have been enumerated twenty-three concentric circles, which represent the stages to be covered during the course of practice in Sahaj Marg sādhanā. The various stages of spiritual development in different schools of Yoga sādhanā have already been enumerated in Chapter IX, and we have had an account of these' twenty-three rings divided into three regions Heart Region. Mind Region and Central Region. They respectively represent the stages of Maya, stages of egoism and stages of splendour. Truly, this region wise description of the stages in the forms of circles or rings is an important feature of Sahaj Marg Sadhaná, the founder of Sahaj Marg has also pointed out that the discovery of the Central region is the unique contribution in the field of Yoga Sadhaná.

This circle wise description is a matter of subjective experience and its objective verification is almost impossible, It is very difficult for an abhyasi to judge by himself he location of his progress in the circle-wise or region-wise or knot-wise scheme. How does the passage from one stage to the next stage take place? What is the criterion to differentiate between an abhyasi travelling in one particular circle, and another abhyasi travelling ahead or behind? This is decided almost entirely by the words of the Founder-President, the actual practical experience of these stages in the form of twenty-three circles divided in three regions seems extremely difficult even for the most sensitive abhyasis. Moreover, the Centre of these concentric circles is also described by Shri Ram Chandraji s consisting of many more circles in it, this clearly means that even he finds it difficult to be definite about the exact nature and number of these circles and rings. He also describes the spiritual development in terms of thirteen knots, which are loosened and transcended during the course of spiritual illumination. The mutual relationship between the twenty-three circles and thirteen knots has nowhere, in this literature of Sahaj Marg, been clarified adequately. Hence, the practical compatibility, experimental verifiability and objective analysis of these stages are such problems, as leave such to be desired. The most ticklish problem remains the method or criterion of the verification of the state of an abhyasi in general, and of the stage of his spiritual elevation, in particular. The exponents of the Sahaj Marg system assert that the sādhanā advised for practice in this system is scientific and that it discards the dogmatic religious

attitude. Reverence to authority is significant feature of religion. Science plans its work on experimental verification and objective analysis. The explanation in science is based on rational exposition of the facts in the hands of a researcher for objective study. Sahaj Marg Sadhana proceeds on the principle of 'do and Teel and its Founder-President Shri Ram Chandraji advises the abhyasis to apply this principle in order to verily the various spiritual experiences. It is desired that one should rationally adopt the technique of Sadhana. This makes the system less dogmatic and more scientific. It expects an the abhyasi himself to verily the various facts of spiritual experiences in this system. The practicant of the system are desired to maintain diaries, which they submit to their preceptors periodically. There is an emphasis on the observation of one's own inner condition by the abhyasi, and on the reading of the abhyasi's inner condition in his own intuitive vision by the preceptor. 1There can be no quarrel over the reasonableness and scientific character of this method. But in practice difficulties are bound to be there. Most of the abhyasis do not, perhaps cannot maintain diaries, and the number of preceptors, endowed with or having developed the capability to read the condition of an abhyasi in terms of the stages of spiritual progress, stated in the literature of Sahaj Marg, is quite rare. Even in case of the most capable preceptors, the final verification of the correctness or otherwise of their reading inevitably rests on the verdict of the Founder-President's intuitive vision. There is a very systematic diary of Km. Kasturi Chaturvedi in the form of her huge correspondence with the Master Shri Ram Chandraji. She is regarded by the Master a one of the most sensitive abhyasis, and also as one of the most capable preceptors. But even in this test case, there are long periods of no progress. The usual effort on the part of the abhyasi has been there, but appropriate response from the side of the Master has been impeded. No doubt, such phenomena are bound to be there in the case of such a soft and delicate mechanism as constituted by the rhythm of purified human wills. It goes immensely to the credit of the founder of this system, that he treats his own will as subject to human failings. When purely mechanical processes are subject to the laws of statistical probability rather than to those of mathematical certainty, one should scarcely be justified in expecting the operation of fixed laws in the case of human wills and divine grace. The nature of the subject matter of spirituality and Divinity

(Brahmavidyā) is such as to demand the modification and adjustment of the process of scientific verification suitable to the field. With these inevitable provisions, the potential source of defect and danger in making the process of verification solely dependent on the subjective intuition of some individual, however perfect, has to be noted. In the case of the modern Sahaj Marg system, however, there is a guarantee against this danger in so far as the ego of the Founder-President stands negated to such an absolute extent, as not to get involved at any point in the process of the verification or mutual co-operation of the wills of the abhyasi and the Master, whatever He stands for. The Master as an individual is only the most concrete symbol of the Ultimate. This same has to be the case about the wills and visions of preceptors. The assurance of the preservation of this guarantee remains the only way to guard against this potential defect and danger. Some objective criteria of the inner stages of abhyasis at various stages of spiritual progress have to be worked out through comparison of the diaries of different abhyasis at identical points or knots or rings. Sahaj Marg Research Institute at Tirupati established under the Directorship of Dr. K. C. Varadachari rendered valuable service in this direction. It is trying to verify the conditions at various stages and the efficacy of the technique of transmission by the comparative analysis of the experiences of the abhyasis at various levels of spiritual elevation. So far, no tangible results have come to light in this direction; but it is expected that in near future it will unravel the experimental verifiability of this mode of sādhanā. Suitable co-operation from various centres in this task remains an inevitable condition for success in this direction.

There may be other points of criticism, but the merits of the System far outweigh the possible defects. The system, has responded adequately well to the demands and needs of the time. Physical science has- made awe-inspiring progress; and the Science of human spirit stands in need of being placed on suitable scientific foundations to make useful contributions to the welfare and uplift of man. The Science of Yoga needs to be rid of mystifications and made available for experiment and study at par with many other practical subjects associated to human existence and welfare. This demand is being adequately met with by the modern Sahaj Marg system of Yoga sādhanā. It

however has to be dissociated from the conventional attitudes of religious orthodoxy, and associated with the enlightening attitudes of scientific enquiry, in the interest of the healthy growth of the System. For that purpose, healthy criticism should be welcome and encouraged with a view to introducing modifications and reforms. The orthodox scientific technique also may not quite suit the nature and conditions of the unique science of human spirit and divine grace. Its laws need to be worked out in their own right. Let us hope with Dr. K. C. Varadachari, one of the chief exponents of the System, that it has come to fulfil the hopes and aspirations of the ages of human, existence on earth.

GLOSSARY
of
the term 'Sahaj' and its constituents

(The word 'sahaja' is a unique and significant word being profusely used by the spiritual masters. Even the word 'adhyatma' is a later coinage as compared to 'sahaja'. Numerous terms coined in association with it are given here under to manifest and explicit its meaning in various context)

Sahaja: Natural (adjective) literally what is born or begotten with, together, or at the same time of one's birth and those who are equal in age, born from the same mother or twins. It also means innate, inborn, congenial, hereditary, original or natural state of disposition. In Astrology it is the third mansion in the horoscope by which the consideration of the well-being of brother etc., is ascertained and the planet (graha), which fall in this place (mansion) is called 'sahaj', 'sahjendra' or 'sahajādhinatha'. It also stands for the Ultimate Reality in traditional schools of Sahaj Sādhana. Dr. Hazari Prasad Dwivedi tells that in "Kabira Mansūra" the word 'sahaja' is the name of one of the six sons of Satyapurusa'.

Sahajā: One of the four energies (sahajā, kulajā, antyaja and mahādevi) as mentioned in "Kaula-jiāna-nirnaya". It is svakiy and has been described as housewife (grhan) and it is to be realized in one's own being.

Sahaj-ariprakrti: The king, who is neighbour of the winner king and internally, keeps enmity.

Sahajācarana: The simple and natural way of conduct and living.

Sahajāmnāyapañjikā: A name of the book in Buddhist literature edited by Har Prasad Shastri by the name of "Bauddha Gāna Au Doha".

Sahajāmrta: The nectar enjoyed by an aspirant achieving the state known as sahajāvasthā.

Sahajānanda: The blissful experience enjoyed at the attainment

of final
level of elevation or say emancipation.

Sahajātapaccaya: Same as saha jātapratyaya

Sahajāta/sahajāti: Name of a place referred to in Buddhism.

Sahājavasthā: The final state of achievement in sahaja sādhanā wherein the aspirant realizes 'sahaja', the Ultimate Reality and enjoys natural bliss (sahajananda)

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Sahaja-angithi: Gorakhabani likens Sahaja Samādhi to a hearth, which makes an aspirant cook in such a way that neither the vapour will come out nor the drop will fall down.

Sahaja-asana: Observing posture of sitting crossed legs in a natural way avoiding forced folding of limbs.

Sahaja-bala Innate, inborn strength or power.

Sahaja-beli: Kabir figuratively describes sahaja as a creeper, which blossoms when cut and fades when watered.

Sahaja-blhai/blhau: See 'Sahaja-bhava'.

Sahaja-bhava: A state wherein one surrenders one's total being to God or

Master, forsaking the thought of duality.

Sahaja-bhāvanā: Keeping in heart the thought of Sahaja".

Sahaja-bhava-yoga: The yogic technique of saha j sādhanā.

Sahaja-bhojanam: Eating in company with friends (sahabhoja).

Sahaja-buddhi: That mental capacity of understanding which is innate and

inborn in living creatures as building nests in birds, and sucking in the child.

Sahaja-citta: A name ascribed to Gautama Buddha.

Sahaja-deva: The twin brothers born of Mādrī by the AśVins. He is regarded as the type of manly beauty.

Sahajadhārī: A kind of followers among the Sikhs in Punjab. Acharya Narendra Dev refers to Chinese

Sahaja-dharma-grāha: Buddhism and tells that Shu'n Chuang enumerated two types of dharma grāha (dharmābhiniveśa) Sahaja-dharma-graha' and Vikalpita-dharma-grāha. The former arises when one is motivated to religion by pre-existing inner emotions (antarbhīūta vāsanā) and the latter when man is

motivated to religion by external reasons.

Sahaja-dhārmika: Innately honest.

Sahaja-dhuni: The 'anahada-nāda, the indestructible sound.

Sahaja-dhyāna: A natural mode of meditation observed in sahaj
sāadhanā

devoid of austerities of Hathayoga.

Sahaja-dvīpa: Dr. Hazari Prasad Dwivedi tells that in "Kabīra
Mansūra" Sahaja-dvīpa has been enumerated as one of the ten
worlds above the earth wherein 'Sahaja one of the six sons of
Satyapuruṣa dwells. Same as sahana patha.

Sahaja-ghāta: Same as sahana patha.

Sahaja-hāta: Same as sahana.

Sahajai: A kind of tree, which produces vegetables cooked up for
Sahajana:
eating.

Sahaja-japa: Ajapā jāpa, in which radiation of the mantra
(incantation) is
to become automatic and has unconscious recurrence.

Sahajajit: Victorious at once.

Sahaja-jīvana-paddhati: The natural mode of living.

Sahaja-jnana: The impartial knowledge of Sahaja, the Uuimate
Reality
devoid of duality or contradictions.

Sahaja-kāya: A name of one of the four bodies (of Buddha) viz.
nirmanakāya, sambhogakāya, dharmakāya and sahanakāya,
enumerated in Sahajayana Buddhism. Mahayāna Buddhism
enumerated only three bodies and in later development of
Sahajayana added one more body of sahanakāya.

Sahaja-keli: The Bliss (ātamānanda) in Sikh religion of Punjab.

Sahaja-kīrti: Name of a Jain author.

Sahaja-klaibya: One who is impotent since birth.

Sahaja-kti: The gold.

Sahaja-kumbhaka: The natural suspension of breath after
inhaling or exhaling.

Sahaja-lalita: Name of a man in Buddhist literature.

Sahaja-mala: There have been enumerated seven impurities
(sahaja malas)

in Mātang Pameśvara Tantra viz., (1) moha, (2) mada, (3) raga. (4)
viṣāda. (5) śoṣa. (6) vicitta, and (7) harṣa

Sahaja-malina: Naturally dirty or spotty.

Sahaja mānava: The ideal form of man in Vaiṣṇva Sahajiyā Cult.

Sahaja-mānuṣa: Same as Sahaja-mānava.

Sahaja-mata: The theory of Sahaja Sādhanā.

Sahaja Marga: The Natural Path. It is the name of the path followed by

Sahajayāna Buddhists. Presently it is a revolutionary system of spiritual practice enunciated as a modified form of Rajayoga by Revered Shri Ram Chandraji of Shahjahanpur (U.P.).

Sahaja-mārgī: Follower of Sahaj Marg.

Sahaja-mitra: Natural friends, one who are friends by birth or by nature.

Sahaja-mitraprakrti: The king, who is neighbour of winner king and

internally also has feeling of friendship.

Sahaja-mtā: A woman, who burns herself alive with her departed husband

the satī.

Sahaja-naukā: Figurative way of describing sahaja as a boat (naukā) to be

used for crossing the ocean of world (samsāra sāgara)

Sahaja-nāda: The anahada nāda

Sahaja-nirvāṇa: The natural release from the cycle of birth and death.

Sahaja-niṣṭhā: The inner feeling of natural faith and dedication.

Swami Shivanand regards it as the level of saccidānanda.

Sahajani: The wife.

Sahajanma: The twins, born of the same mother i.e., real brothers and also

born along with one's own birth.

Sahajanya: Name of a Yakṣa in Mahabharata.

Sahajanya: Name of nymph (apsarā) in Satapathabrāhmaṇa.

Sahaja-pada: See Sahajāvasthā.

Sahaja paddhati: The technique of spiritual practice through sahaj methodology

Sabaja-pantha: The name ascribed to the path of a Gaudiya Vaisnava school

Known as Sahajiya Samprdaya. There is also figurative description of spinal column known as ism symbolizing the path between the two rivers of Ganga and of Yamuna

symbolizing Ida and Pingala, This sahaj panth of Nuuma s also called 'Sahaja ghata', Sahaja hata in the tradition of medieval saints.

Sahaja-path: The figurative name of the practice followed by sahayayani Buddhists

Sahaja Parikṣā: One of the eight tests of man enumerated in Sahajayana Buddhism involving four characteristics of being wise (sumati, friendly (suhrdi). coolness (Sitala) and providing happiness (sukhadayi).

Sahaja-pāśa: Those malas (impurities) with which we re associated since the beginningless time and which stays on until liberation. It has been enumerated as one of the three pasas of Lord Siva in "Siva Jnana Bodha"

Sahaja-prakaśa: The natural enlightenment

Sahaja-prāñāyāma: Observing the practice of breathing exercise naturally.

Sahaj-prema: The simple and natural feeling of affection, particularly the love of Vaiṣṇva Sahajiyā towards his beloved Mudra,

Sahaja-rahani/rahiba: The natural mode of living described in medieval saints and in Sikh religion

Sahaja-sādhana: An easy, simple and natural mode of spiritual practice of realization devoid of forced efforts and physical mortification of Hathayoga.

Sahaja-samādhi: The final state of concentration of mind achieved following the natural path (sahaja sadhana). Swami Shivanand calls it sahay-nivikalpa-samadhi, a unipoised or uniform state in which there is the absence of vikalpas (the alternatives) since there is one and one alone.

Sahaja-samāgama: The state of union between sakti and &/va, prajna and upaya, kamala and kulika or nāda and bindu.

Sahaj-asamai: The state of natural mergence.

Sahaja-sarmvalita: Connected or associated with sahay

Sahaja-sarmvara: A name of Buddha in Sahajayana.

Sahaja-śakti: The innate inborn power. Dr, S. N. Dasgupta describes that there have been enumerated four forms of power (akti) - (a) acintya-sakti, the mysterious power as in God; (b) sahay sakti or karana-śaki, which exists in things and by virtue of which they are able to produce the things: (C) adheya-śakti,

brought about or got infused by the operation of installation ceremony known as pratis/ha, and (d) pada-śakti, the significant power residing in words.

Sahaja-sarovara: The reservoir of knowledge in Panjabi language.

Sahaja-śatru: The natural enemy or on who is hostile by birth.

Sahaja-śila: A natural disposition of virtuous life in Buddhism.

Sahaja-śūnya: In the tradition of medieval saints Dadu describes four types

of Sunya viz.. (i) kāya-śūnya, (ii) parama-śūnya, (iii) atma- Śūnya and (iv) sahaja-śūnya. This sahuja-Sinya is a state of union between atman and Brahman, when both become one and their duality is lost. Kabira treats sahaja-śūnya as the Ultimate Substance (Parama-tattva).

Sahaja-sthāna: The third mansion in the horoscope for ascertaining the well being of brother etc.

Sahaja-subhāu/ Sahaja-subhāya: Same as Sahaja-svabhāva',

Sahaja-suhrda: Same as 'Sahaja-mitra'.

Sahaja-suhāga: Figurative description of getting 'suhāga', the vermilion used by married women as a mark. In this context the suhaga refers to being in the grace of union with God (as husband) in a natural way.

Sahaja-sukha: The natural pleasure as enjoyed in the fourth state of consciousness known as turiya.

Sahaja-sundarī: A name for Nairātmā or śūnyatā in Sahajayāna Buddhism.

Sahaja-sunna: A Panjabi use meaning same as sahaj-śūnya.

Sahaja-sunna dā

ghata (Panjabi) - The passage of suṣumnā between Idā and Pingala.

Sahaja-svabhāva: The innate and inborn nature.

Sahaja-tattva: Stands for Ultimate Substance in sahaja sādhanā of Sahajayānīs, Naths and saints.

Sahajatā: Simplicity or naturalness.

Sahaja-tyaga: The simple and natural mode of renouncing the ties of worldly objects and its pleasure.

Sahaja-udāsīna: One who is neutral or who is the feeling of neither being/having any friend nor any enemy.

Sahaja-vāda/vādī: The thought and theory of sahaja methodology/one who follows it.

Sahaja-vairāgya: The simple and natural way of disinclination

towards worldly life.

Sahaja-vāsa: Dwelling together.

Sahaja-vicāra: The deliberation or reflection in a simple and natural way.

Sahaja-vilāsa: Name of man in Buddhist literature.

Sahaja-vīryam: The fresh butter in Sanskrit-English dictionary of Monier- Monier-William.

Sahaja-vrtti: The tendency of naturalness.

Sahajayoga: A mode of yogic practice which is devoid of physical mortification and severe austerities of Haṭhyoga. It observes easy, simple and natural technique for realization. That is to Say that sahaja yoga is yogic technique which primarily lays emphasis on remembrance of God's name (nama smarana) and offering total surrender to God.

Sahajayogi: one who follows sahajayoga

Sahaja-yoginī Cintā: A name mentioned in Buddhism

Sahajendra: In Astrology the planet that falls in the third mansion of the horoscope. Also see 'sahaja'

Sahajetara: Other than sahaja i.e., what is not innate, inborn or congenial

Sahajiya: Followers of Vaiṣṇava Sahajiyā cult.

Sahajiya Sampradāya: A Vaiṣṇava school of spiritual practice inaugurated by Chandidas, Jaidev etc.

Sahajikarana; The process of simplification or naturalization

Sahajivana: The peaceful co-existence of various nations.

Sahajivi: One who passes one's life in association with some one else.

Sahajobai: Name of a saint poetess disciple of Charanadas.

Sahajodasina: See 'sahaja-udāsīna'

Sahajoli: A state of Divine elevation in yogic practice, beside Amarolī and Vajrolī.

Sahaju(Punjabi): Same as 'sahaja'

Sahojit Jaitarāyana: The name of a prince who celebrated the Rajasūya (the Royal Consecration) in Kāthaka Sarmhitā.

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