

## ***Importance of Proper Performance of a Ritual***

As per Jain literature, sutras are to be recited in certain physical postures along with proper reflection in order to obtain spiritual benefit from a particular ritual. Both physical postures and internal reflection are the various forms of Yoga. In general, Yoga is defined as that which connects with the soul or leads to absolute emancipation or liberation.

Jain rituals are practiced using two forms of Yoga namely; Kriyā Yoga and Jnāna Yoga.

### **A1. - Kriyā Yoga**

During the ritual, we recite sutras and perform activities in certain physical posture known as Kriyā Yoga. It is of two kinds:

#### **Āsana Yoga (Physical Posture):**

The proper physical postures nurture and strengthen the different thoughts and feelings in our pursuit for liberation.

#### **Varna Yoga (Pronunciation of Sutra):**

The proper pronunciation of the phrases and words which lend strength and fortify the feelings and thoughts will help in achieving absolute liberation.

Āsana Yoga and Varna Yoga together express the positive energy and vibrations of a soul (Atma) in the external form. They become the source of the destruction of Karma and the generation of virtuous qualities. These two states of physical postures are also known as Kāya Yoga.

### **A2. - Jnāna Yoga**

The knowledge about the ritual along with the proper internal reflection during its performance is called Jnāna Yoga. It instills the feelings and thoughts as per the meaning of the ritual and absorbs it in the consciousness.

Jnāna yoga is of three forms: Artha Yoga, Anāmbana Yoga and Nirāmbana Yoga. These are, in fact, the three states of activities of mind (Mano Yoga).

#### **Artha Yoga (Meaning):**

To absorb the meaning of the phrases properly in the consciousness while pronouncing them.

#### **Āmbana Yoga (Feelings):**

Generating thoughts and feelings based solely on the phrases and their meaning.

For example: - When offering salutations; to utter the word "Namo" combined with the salutation posture and to deeply feel the thought of complete surrender to the teachings of Tirthankars with the "help" of the word and its meaning.

#### **Nirāmbana Yoga (Pure Meditation):**

To elevate the mental conscious condition of Āmbana yoga to a point where even the external awareness of the word and its meaning merges with the consciousness, thereby no external reliance remains.

All these five Yogic forms of Kriyā Yoga and Jnāna Yoga together, are critical to the proper performance and execution of a religious ritual. These lead to the purification of the soul and manifest its unlimited powers.

[jainaedu@gmail.com](mailto:jainaedu@gmail.com)

[www.jainelibrary.org](http://www.jainelibrary.org)

919-859-4994