I liked your question "how do I choose between the paths?". You have expressed the answer as well, so my answer below may be a poor repetition. Let me know if I got it right.

My answer to "how do I choose between the paths?” is “chose the path where you get the maximum amount of sensations with awareness”. Let me explain – but first basic question.

We can go about finding “who am I?” by many ways. We can broadly classify them into two types. **The first type is to gain the knowledge of our true nature directly.** It leads to the experience of our true nature. **The second type is to do some kind of process or action or method etc. that will give an experience of our true nature. It will indirectly lead us to same knowledge of our true self.**

**#A) Gain the direct knowledge of our true nature**: **All you need to read is one page! Read 18 verses of Isavasya Upanishad.** When you understand it, you will get answer to your question ‘who am I?’ There is no need to do anything else. **Let’s call it our best and ultimate goal as #A.**

Even the first verse **Isavasya Upanishad is sufficient. Mahatma Gandhi once said (not sure about the quite) “If the we lose all the literature related to the religion, but saved this single verse, then nothing is lost”.**

**So, we read it and we don’t truly understand it. Hence, we need the some kind of process or action or method.**

There are two options here and they are completely interdependent.

#B) Practices related to consciousness: Basically, here instructions to just sit and be aware. The consciousness has characteristics of witnessing, isolation, indifference, perception and inactivity. Hence, consciousness related practices focus on them. You mentioned this as path of liberation in your post.

#C) Practices related to energy: Here there are countless practices. These are opposite of consciousness practice, meaning they are active, creative, discovery, dependent upon something else, merging type of activities. Here again, we choose the practice that suites us. (See below) In all practices, the goal is to conserve energy (Yama-Niyama), generate more energy (Pranayama-Kundalini), remove blocks in path of energy (Asana), and send it up via spine towards the top of head (Dhanya). Why? – because at the top of head, the energy merges with the consciousness and in process it generates higher consciousness that descends down the body. In addition, to be able to send Prana to the Root Center and feel the vibrations of the energy there (Kundalini), you need the higher consciousness present at the Root Center. Thus they are truly interdependent.

Thus, in short, to succeed in #B, we need #A. When they work together, cyclically, we get to know #A. To simplify #B + # C = # A.

How to choose the practice? The answer is “choose the practice that gives maximum amount of sensations with awareness”. The sensations in body can be direct (like touch) or indirect (like thinking the thoughts in mind that make changes in body). Either way, body generates sensations. If you can remain neutral about of that sensation, meaning, not react that “I like it, want some more” or “I do not like, let me make it go away” etc. then that sensation releases the energy component associated with it, which travels upwards to the head and generates higher consciousness.

For example, every though is a sensation. Right now, I am thinking about this post, which could be a Root Center Activity. (I want to impress people, I want them to like me etc.). Partly it is a Third Eye Center activity. This is an activity of energy. When I am aware (happens to me only when sit in meditation) these thoughts create sensations (I am smart – I feel good), and I remain aware, they will give up their energy and it will travel up to the head.

I believe this is the core principle in Yoga as well as in Tantra. Male and female are different in the way their bodies generate sensations. Also, all males and females are not the same – actually, we all are so unique! Hence, the practices are different and we need to choose the practice that gives us maximum benefit.

Do you think my analysis is correct? Please feel free to give your feedback.