

Namaste

INTRODUCTION

In the sixth volume of 'Deivathin Kural' (in Tamil) by Ra. Ganapathi (4th impression, 1998), pages 225 to 574 give the Discourses of Kanchi Maha Swamigal (1894 - 1994) on the subject of Advaita Saadhanaa.

(Editorial note by VK: Earlier when we were on the Soundaryalahari Digest, we were referring to the Kanchi Maha Swamigal as the 'Paramacharya'. Later I was corrected and I realised that 'Kanchi Maha-Swamigal' is the more proper usage, particularly after he has reached 'siddhi')

It is now intended to summarise these Tamil discourses on advaita-saadhanaa in English in these posts (starting Sept.12). I am trying to write the English version as close to the original as possible. I pray to His Holiness the Swamigal himself to guide me in this respect.

For those of us who want to have a start (in advaita) fresh from scratch this might be a right opportunity. Questions, even of an elementary kind, are welcome. There are several knowledgeable members on this list and so suitable answers can be expected to be forthcoming to supplement our understanding.

V. Krishnamurthy.

We shall mostly follow the section headings as given below by Ra. Ganapathi:

1. Essence of the other philosophical schools
2. Advaita different from all of them
3. Appears to be easy, but really difficult
4. Moksha is by Grace of God
5. Takes time but effort has to be started
6. Saadhana chatushhTayam - Acharya's demarcation of the path along vedic lines
7. Preliminary to JnAna: Karma and Bhakti
8. ShraddhA (Faith) necessary
9. Eligibility for Atma-Saadhanaa
10. Apex of Saadhanaa is only for the sannyaasi
11. Why then tell others, what is suitable only for Sannyaasis?
12. Two different paths for two different aspirants
13. The subject of Bhakti Yoga
14. Knowledge of advaita basic requirement for every one
15. Nitya-anitya vastu viveka (Discrimination between the permanent and the ephemeral)
16. Vairaagya (Dispassion)
17. Six characteristic-treasures
18. Shama and dama
19. Uparati
20. Titikshaa
21. Shraddhaa
22. SamaadhAna

23. Who is qualified to receive the teaching of the Upanishads?
24. Rigour in 'samaadhAna'
25. The six of the paramAtmA and the six of the JIvAtmA
26. Mumukshutvam
27. Why is the ultimate stage termed as 'Release'?
28. Mumukshu: Definition of the Acharya
29. Mumukshu - Intermediate and Ultimate
30. Guru's Grace
31. On Mumukshu - Traditional scriptures and the Acharya
32. Four tiers of the army of Spirituality
33. Even before the third stage of the third tier
34. Bhakti and its place in the path of JnAna
35. What is Love?
36. Inner Organ and Heart
37. Ego and Love
38. The Object of Love of an Atma-Saadhaka
39. Nirguna Bhakti and Saguna Bhakti
40. Cooling life-giving Love
41. To get rid of the pride of the ego
42. Two stages of Ego in SaadhanA
43. Bhakti and the Heart
44. The NaaDis of the heart: JnAni's life rests, Other's lives leave.
45. Correct meaning of Death in Uttaraayana
46. Two different results of Karma Yoga
47. The NaaDi that goes to the head: Mistaken impression
48. Bhakti of the path of JnAna higher than Bhakti of the path of Bhakti
49. Atman not just a lifeless abstract principle
50. Bhakti of the path of JnAna, enunciated by the Vedas
51. Also in Sutra Bhashya
52. JnAna itself is Bhakti: Krishna
53. The third Tier
54. Sannyaasa
55. Linked names in Vishnu Sahasranaama
56. Shravanam et al: Vedic Commandment
57. Shravana and Service
58. Is an Enlightened Guru available?
59. Involvement in single Goal
60. Shravana, Manana and Nididhyaasana
61. Penultimate stage of Siddhi
62. Manana that transcends intellect; Nididhyaasana that transcends mental feeling
63. To get rid of two different conceptions of the mind
64. Greatness of Manana and Nididhyaasana
65. Worm becoming the wasp; Making the worm a wasp
66. Immediate responsibility

PraNAms to all students of advaita.
 PraNAms to the Maha-swamigal of Kanchi.
 profvk

Namaste.

If you want to refer to the Introduction, please go to
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/advaitin/message/27766>

KDAS - 1

1. OTHER PHILOSOPHICAL SCHOOLS

"There is a Supreme Entity as the Cause for all this universe. For us also there is the same Cause. That is what created us. We are only a finite Jivatma. But that is Paramatma, the infinite Supreme. This Jivatma has to go back to join that Paramatma. Only then this samsAra, the repetitive cycle of birth and death, the tortures to which this karma subjects us, and the unending turbulence in the mind will all end and we may reach the state of eternal happiness. It is that state which is called 'Release' or 'moksha'. Once we have reached it then there is no more death and there is an eternal peace".

So says Religion and it also shows us the way to reach that Paramatma. Each religious or philosophical school gives a name to that Paramatma. One school says it is 'Shiva'. Another says it is 'Vishnu'. Still another says it is 'Shakti'. Do this and this, then you can go to Kailasa where Shiva resides and that is the world of moksha, says one school. Another says that world of moksha is only Vaikuntha, the residence of Lord Vishnu. In the same way the Shakti school says moksha-world is the world of Amba, called Shri-puram. 'Moksha is the Ananda-Bhuvana where Ganesha lives' says another. 'No, it is Skanda-giri, where Subrahmanya resides'; 'Even Rama and Lakshmana did not go to Vaikuntha after they left this world, they have their own separate loka called 'Saketa'; 'Krishna has his own world of bliss, called 'Goloka' - thus the different schools of thought wax eloquent. Each one gives a methodology of worship and also mentions that the goal of all that Upasana is to reach that world of Infinite Bliss, to which they give separate names.

What would be the relationship between Jivatma and Paramatma? This is an important question raised and answered by each of the schools in its own distinct way. One school says that the Jivatma will always be distinct from the Paramatma; and in that state of moksha, the Jivatma would enjoy infinite bliss by worshipping the Paramatma with Bhakti - that is the Dvaita conclusion. Another says: Even though the Jivatma will be a separate soul doing Bhakti towards Paramatma, it will have the feeling of the Paramatma immanent in it as its soul; this is Vishishtadvaita. Still another says: When the Sun rises the stars do not lose their existence; they just disappear from view, because of the luminosity of the Sun; so also in moksha, the Jivatma, though it does not lose its existence, will have its own little consciousness submerged in the Absolute Consciousness of the Paramatma - this is the doctrine of Shaiva-siddhanta. There are still other schools of thought.

2. ADVAITA DIFFERENT FROM ALL THESE

The school of philosophy propagated by Adi Shankara Bhagavat-pada is called Advaita. It says something totally

different from all the above. It discards all that talk about the Jivatma escaping from this world, from this samsara, about the Jivatma going and joining with the Paramatma and all the consequent underlying assumptions about this world and the so-called world of moksha and the relationship between the two. There is no such thing as 'this world'; it is only mAyA. Moksha is not a place or a world. When the Atma is released from the bondage of the mind, that is moksha. It may be right here and now. One can be 'released' even when alive, not necessarily only after death. He whom we call a jnAni may appear to be living in 'this world' but in reality he is in Moksha.

There is no such thing as the union of Jivatma and Paramatma. A union occurs only when there is more than one. Only when there are two any question of relationship between the two arises. In truth the Jivatma and Paramatma are not two distinct entities. Atma is one and one only. It is itself by itself; other than itself there is nothing. The Self being the Self as such is what it is. That is called by the name 'nirguna-brahman'. However, with that Brahman as the support and at the same time hiding that very support, there appears a mayic show, as if it is a magic show, in the form of this universe. The movie appears on the support of the white screen. There is no show without the screen. Still that very show hides the screen itself which is its support. The screen has in no way been affected; it is still the screen and it remains as the screen. In the case of Brahman there is an additional mystery. On one side Brahman remains as Brahman; but on the other hand, by its own mAyA shakti, it has become several individual Jivas each with a distinct inner organ (antaH-karanam). By a proper Sadhana if we can dispose of this antaH-karana, the Jiva itself turns out to be Brahman. In other words there is no 'union' of two things called Jivatma and Paramatma. The one knows himself as the other. The same entity that does not know its own real nature thinks of itself as a Jiva, and knows of itself as Brahman when the real nature is known. There are no two entities. It is Brahman that has the name Jiva when there is the bondage with the mind and when the bondage is thrown off, it remains by itself as itself; thus no one gets united with some one. There is no question of relationship here. Where is the question of 'relation' of ourselves with ourselves? It is the release from this bondage that is called moksha; so there is no place for calling it a different 'world' or 'place' of moksha. This is the bottomline of advaita.

One may wonder: 'Dispose off the mind - we are ourselves Brahman. That is moksha'. This statement of advaita seems to make it all easy for us. All along, the other schools are saying that there is something higher than us, above our world, that is called a world of moksha; there is a Paramatma above us, we are only Jivatma, far below Him and we have to strive to reach His world. But advaita says there is no high, no low; we are ourselves that Paramatma and in order to reach this moksha we don't have to 'go' anywhere; right here we can have that. One may think that

this should then be very easy.

KDAS - 2

3. APPEARS TO BE EASY - BUT REALLY, DIFFICULT

Because that is a big 'if!' 'If only, we can dispose off the mind, ..', then there is the advaita-siddhi. The difficulty is exactly there - to dispose off the mind. When our shirt loosely fits us we can take it off easily. But if the shirt is tight, the taking off might have to be made with some effort. And when we are required to take off our very outer skin, imagine how difficult it could be. Just as the skin is sticking to our body, our mind is sticking to us, but in deeper proximity! A dirty stinking sticky cloth becomes pure when the dirt, stink and stickiness are off the cloth. It is not necessary to look for another cloth. The same cloth, when the dirt, etc. are off, becomes the pure cloth. So also for our Jiva we don't have to look for a new entity called Brahman; if we can remove the present dirt and stink of the mind, that should be enough. The same person will emerge as the pure Brahman. But that is exactly the formidable task - to remove the dirt and stink that is so deeply adhering to mind!

Mind refuses to be disposed off. What exactly is this mind? It is the instrument which creates thoughts. If the creation of thoughts stops, mind will also not be there. But we are not able to stop the creation of thoughts. All the time it is galloping to go somewhere. We go through lots of experiences and enjoyments. We also keep seeing them; those of this birth that we know, and many more in the other births that we do not know. Each of them has left an impression in our mind. They keep running in our mind and sprout numberless thoughts. It is like the smell that persists in the bottle in which we kept spicy asafoetida. So also even after we have gone through experiences and enjoyments, their smell persists in our mind. This is what is called Vasana, or JanmAntara VAsana (Vasana that comes from other births), or SamskAra VAsana. What does it do? It keeps surfacing thoughts about that enjoyment and becomes the cause for further thoughts about how to have that experience again. These thoughts are the plans which the mind makes. This 'smell' of the past has to subside. That is what is called 'VAsana-kshhayam' (Death of the VAsana). And that is the 'disposal of the mind'!

'Disposal' implies the 'end'. What keeps running all the time has an end when it stops running. When a large flow

of water is dammed, the flow stops. In the same way when the flow of the mind is stopped, it means that is the end of the mind.

When I say mind is stilled or stopped I do not mean the staying or resting of the mind on one object. That is something different. Here when I say the mind is stopped or stilled, I mean something else. When the mind stays on some one object, it means the mind is fully occupied with that object. No other object can have then a place in the mind. Even to keep the mind still like that is certainly a difficult process. This is actually the penultimate step to 'dispose off' the mind. When a wild animal is jumping and running all around, how do you shoot it? It is difficult. But when it is made to stay at one place, we can easily shoot it. Similarly the mind that is running in all directions should be made to stay at one place in one thought. It does not mean the mind has disappeared then. No, the mind is still there. Only instead of dwelling on various things it is now full of one and only one thought. This is the prerequisite to what I call the 'disposal' of the mind. After this the mind has to be vanquished totally. That is when Realisation takes place -- Realisation of the Atman. In other words the being as a Jiva goes and the being as Brahman sprouts.

This process of stopping the mind at one single thought and then vanquishing even that thought in order to dispose off the mind along with its roots is a Himalayan achievement. Our scriptures very often refer to "anAdyavidyA-vAsanayA", meaning "because of vasanas of ignorance going back to beginningless antiquity". This is the reason for the dirt of the mind being so thick and dense. Removal of that dirt is no doubt a most difficult job.

4. MOKSHA IS BY GRACE OF GOD

However, if we persist with our efforts, by the Grace of God, if not in this life, maybe in a later life, that noble goal of Brahman-realisation, that is, the realisation that we ourselves are Brahman and being-in-Brahman happens.

Who is this God (Ishvara) that is bestowing this Grace on us? Jivas and the universe are just a show of mAyA, but even in that 'show' there is a lot of regularity. It is not a haphazard mad show; it is a well-enacted play. The mind, which is a part of this 'play' may be weird in its ways of

dancing hither and thither, but the entire universe of the Sun and stars down to the smallest paramAnu's vibration within the atom, are all happening with a fantastic regularity. Even this mind has been stilled to silence by our great men and they have chalked out ways for us in terms of what they called Dharma, to follow their footsteps and still our minds. Further, there are thousand other things which happen according to the rules of cause and effect that our ancestors have discovered and left as a heritage for us. The affairs of this universe are happening in spite of us according to some schedule chalked out for them so that we may live in peace. If we observe all this carefully, maybe from the absolute point of view everything is a mAyA but in the mundane world of daily parlance, there is an admirable order that must have been initiated or chalked out by a very powerful force, far more powerful than all the powers that we know. That power is what is called Ishvara (God).

It is Brahman that, in association with mAyA - even the words 'in association with' are wrong; for Brahman does no work and so does not 'associate' itself with anything; so we should more precisely say 'appearing to be in association with' - is the Ishvara that monitors and manages both the universe and the Jivas. It is in His control all this world of Jivas rolls about. When that is so, for us to transcend this curtain of mAyA, and to get out also of His control so that we may realise the Brahman that is the core of Him as well as us, is not possible without the sanction of that power, namely Ishvara. In other words only by the Grace of Ishvara can our mind be overcome and Brahman-realisation can happen.

In this mAyic world, the dispenser of the fruits for all our actions is this Ishvara. What fruits go with what actions - is all decided by Ishvara. Every single action of ours has a consequence and the dispenser of this consequence is the same Ishvara. It is this cycle of actions and the cycle of the fruits of our actions that result in the revolving recurrence of new and newer lives. Only when karma stops may we ever hope to become the karma-less brahman. What prompts the Jiva to be involved in karma is the mind. It is by the prompting and urging of the mind that we do action. So action will stop only if the mind stops. But the mind refuses to stop. How can a thing destroy itself by itself? Can a gun shoot itself out of existence? So what the mind can do is only this: In the total agony of anticipation of its own death, it has to

keep thinking all the time about the Jiva-Brahma-Aikyam that would happen after its (mind's) death. This is what 'nididhyasana' means. It has to be done with great persistence. The essence of advaita-sAdhanA is this kind of persistent thinking. Of course this is also 'action'. Walking is the action of the legs. Eating is the action of the mouth. Thinking is action of the mind.

I just now said that all actions are carefully watched by Ishvara and it is He who dispenses the fruits of actions. He also watches this 'thinking action', namely the nididhyasana. When we do this persistently and sincerely, He decides at some point that this person has done the nididhyasana sufficiently enough to destroy his balance of karma and dispenses His Grace that will kill the mind that has been always struggling to establish our individuality that shows this Jiva to be distinct from Brahman.

This is the meaning of the statement that by God's Grace one gets Realisation of Brahman. That does not mean however that God waits and calculates whether we have done enough Saadhanaa to get our karma from all our past lives exhausted. If He does so then that should not be called 'His Grace'! A mechanical calculation like a trader to balance the positive and negative side of our work does not deserve the name of Grace. Love, sympathy, compassion, forgiving and allowing for marginal errors - only these will constitute what is termed as Grace, or 'anugraha'.

You may see a Table of Contents, under the Introduction in <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/advaitin/message/27766>

KDAS - 3

4. MOKSHA IS BY GRACE OF GOD (Continued)

The word 'anugraha' may also be interpreted as follows. The prefix 'anu' stands for concordance or conformity; also continuance. The word 'graha' connotes a catching up. When we try to catch up with the Lord by following or conforming with His attributeless nature, by the same principle of conformity He comes and catches us up. That is 'anugraha'. The mind of us, instead of being steadfast in its work of 'catching up' with the Lord, may also run away from Him. Even then the Lord's Grace follows us and makes us 'catch up'. That is 'anugraha'. Here catching up with the Lord includes both the MAYA-associated Almighty and also the attributeless Brahman which is not associated with any MAYA. We may be subject to the whims and fancies of MAYA but He is in total control of it. So even when He 'does' so many activities under the guise of MAYA, He is always the actionless Brahman. Thus even if we aim at the MAYA-associated almighty, he absorbs us into the Brahman

that has no trace of MAyA.

It is actually a running race between Ishvara and the Jiva. The Jiva tries to catch up with Ishvara. But Ishvara thinks it unfair to grant the Realisation of Brahman to this Jiva 'who has so much balance of karma'. And the Jiva having failed to catch up gives up the attempt and allows itself to be carried away by all worldly distractions. That is the time when Ishvara follows him with compassion and makes the 'catching-up' possible. But this compassionate easing up is done in a subtle way. It turns the mind towards spiritual matters; that is what it means for Ishvara to 'catch up'. At the same time it is done so gradually that the full 'catching up' of the Jiva with Ishvara does not happen before the time for it is due. To that extent Ishvara 'slips' away. But that itself makes the Jiva fall headlong into the bottomless pit of sin and again the compassionate grip of Ishvara tightens. This tightening and loosening goes on and on until the Jiva fills up its mind fully with Ishvara and nothing else. And that is the time for the consummation of the 'anugraha'.

The Lord is called 'karma-phala-dAtA' - the dispenser of the fruits of actions. Like the decision of a judge He has every right to be very strict in His dispensation of justice. When He does so, we have no right to fault Him for His strictness. But He does not do it that way. He very often condones our failings with His supreme compassion. He is neither too strict nor too lenient in His dispensation of justice. When the supreme-most status is granted to us it is not fair to expect Him to grant it without any concern whether the grantee deserves it well enough. Justice may be tempered by mercy but it cannot go to the extent of denial of justice. In all these, it does not stop with just doling out the punishment for the karma done. It is in fact supplemented by the process of destruction of all pending karma, end of the mind and finally the benefit of Brahman-realisation. With such a prospect, the condoning or forgiving nature of Ishvara cannot be expected to go too far!

5. TAKES TIME BUT EFFORT HAS TO BE STARTED.

There are two categories: 'JnAnavAn' and 'JnAni'. Both are above the level of any ordinary human being. A JnAnavAn, by learning and hearing, has convinced himself that the Atma that is called JivAtmA is nothing but Brahman itself, and is trying hard to bring that knowledge into one's own experience. A JnAni on the other hand has gone to that peak of realisation of that knowledge as own experience. The JnAnavan who is making efforts to have that Brahman-realisation 'reaches Me', says the Lord, 'only at the end of several births' (*bahUnAM janmanAm ante jnAnavAn mAM prapadyate*) (B.G. VII - 19). Here 'reaches Me' means he attains the consummation of the realisation that Atman is Brahman). At another place (B.G. VI - 45) He says: *aneka-janma-samsiddhis-tato yAti parAm gatiM* -- meaning, slowly graduates to perfection only by several births. Even this attainment of Realisation after several births

happens only by His Graceful Hand that lifts us up. Otherwise the 'bahu' of (VII - 19) and the 'aneka' of (VI - 45) will be several times larger!

The reason is: The goal is great and grand. 'To become Brahman' is something really great. But the one who wants to win that high prize is so small! Naturally it has to take several several life-times. Just to conquer another kingdom like his own a king has to make elaborate preparations for war. When that is so, for a small man to win over the kingdom of brahman-realisation, he has to take enormous efforts. It is the kingdom of the Atman that the Jiva is set out to conquer!

From one point of view the whole matter appears simple. We are not aiming for the kingdom of heaven in Vaikuntha or Kailasa which are far away from us. What we are aiming at is to know ourself, to know what is within us. Just to be what we are is the goal. There should not be any difficulty here; because we are being asked to be what we are and nothing more. When it is said that way it looks simple. But when we attempt it we come to know there is nothing more difficult than this SADhanA. It is like walking on razor's edge, says the Katha Upanishad. But don't lose heart, adds the Upanishad. Wake up, there are excellent teachers to guide you. Even if it be razor's edge you can walk on it and come out successful! Thus the Upanishads speak of the difficulties of the path but also give you the path. The Guru's Guru of our Acharya has also talked of these in very formidable terms. "Advaita is the only fearless state. Even great yogis fear to tread that path. It requires that relentless effort of emptying the waters of the ocean by using blades of grass, soaking them in the water and shaking the water off from the ocean. Only by such unceasing effort can the mind empty itself of all its thoughts and be in the Atman."

Note: This is from Mandukya Karika: III-39, 41

At the same time what we learn from this is that to be the real Self instead of the false Self it is so difficult. The false self is the mind, a creation of MayA. The real Self is the Truth that is Brahman.

It may take many life-times; it may be very difficult and long. But the effort has to start right now. The more you postpone it, the life-cycle will get more extended. Suppose we don't start this ascent of the spiritual ladder now. What do you think will happen? We will be continuing to commit further sinful activities and these will accumulate more and more dirt and trash in the mind. More life-times have to be spent. That is why I said the effort has to start rightaway, in order to escape from this life-cycle.

I said just now 'escape from this life-cycle'; I also said 'efforts have to be done'. These two together constitute the definition of SaadhanA. Instead of doing certain things in a haphazard fashion as and when the mood or the occasion arises, those great ancestors of ours who have reached the

goal have prescribed for us specific methodologies for us.
To walk that path is what is called Saadhana.

KDAS – 4

6. SAADHANA-CHATUSHHTAYAM – THE PATH CHALKED OUT BY ACHARYA

With great compassion our Acharya Shankara Bhagavat-pAda has mapped out a Saadhanaa-kramaM (the methodology of Saadhanaa) towards the goal of advaita. Whatever he has done is only according to the Shruti (the Vedas). The body of the Vedas has a head and that is the Upanishads. They are called 'shruti-shiras', meaning 'the head for the body of Upanishads'. The lofty edifice of Saadhanaa that the Acharya has built for us has these Upanishads as its base.

What he has chalked out is a Saadhanaa program, called 'Saadhana-chatushhTayaM' (the four-part Saadhanaa). In his monumental work of Brahma Sutra Bhashya right in the beginning, in his commentary on the first sutra where he explains 'After what we shall embark on the enquiry of Brahman?', he starts with 'ni tya-ani tya-vastu-vivekaH' and mentions the four parts of this chatushhTayaM.

Just as his Sutra-Bhashya is at the top of all his scriptural commentaries, so is the Viveka-Chudamani at the top of all his expository works called prakaranas. And there he has given very good definitions of the four parts of Saadhana-chatushhTayaM.

sAAadhanAny-atra chatvAri kathi tAni manI shi bhi H /
yeshhu satsveva sannishhTA yad-abhAve na siddhyati //
(Verse 18)

This is how he begins. 'To hold firm to the Real absolute is impossible without these four means' – so says he emphatically. Only when these four are accomplished, there will happen a hold on the Real absolute. (yeshhu satsu eva sannishhTA). If these four are observed, there is success; otherwise not. These have been enunciated by manishis.

Who are these manishis? Ordinarily we are all manushyas, that is, persons. Among us, those who are learned in the shAstras, and who can distinguish between right and wrong and who observe all ethical, moral and religious standards are manishis. "Saadhana-chatushhTayaM" is what has been chalked out by them. This is how the Acharya introduces the subject in his Viveka-chudamani.

There is another prakarana of the Acharya called "aparokshAnubhUti". 'aparoksha' means 'direct'. In place of somebody else telling you that the Self is Brahman, or instead of learning it from books, if it is a fact of one's own experience, that is 'aparokshAnubhUti'. That prakarana book also talks of these four means. There is another elementary first book called 'Bala-bodha-sangrahaM'. Even there he talks about this Saadhana-chatushhTayaM.

In the Tanjore Mahal Library there is a book called

'Saadhana-chatushhTaya-sampatti', whose author is not known. 'sampatti' means a treasure. This sAdhanA is itself a great treasure for us.

The word 'chatushhTayaM' means an integrated four-fold formation. Though there are four, the third part of these, namely 'samAdhi-shhatka-sampatti' has itself six parts in it; just as the one part called 'head' has within itself several parts called ear, eyes, nose, mouth, etc. Thus the four-fold formation has, included within itself, six parts in one of its parts, and so we have actually nine steps in our sAdhanA regimen. I have gathered you all here to tell you about these nine steps.

But note. These nine steps are not steps of a staircase where you go from step 1 to step 2 and from step 2 to step 3 and so on. The analogy should not be carried that way. It is like our studying Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry in the lower class and then when we go to a higher class we study all of them once again but now more intensively and extensively. And when you go to college, you concentrate in one of them as your 'main' subject and study the others as an auxiliary subject. In our SadhanA regimen also we learn the basics of all of them in the beginning and then in due time give each a special attention as we go along. Another analogy is what a housewife does in the kitchen. She is cooking several things, she makes the preparatory work for almost all of them, has more than one thing on her several stoves, and gives the necessary attention to each one of them at the right time almost simultaneously. Even in our eating, we drink something, we chew something, we swallow something, we have something to go with something else, and each one of us has a different order in which we consume different types of food. So also in the SaadhanA regimen, what is a side instrument at one time becomes the main instrument on another occasion and for another purpose. Thus the different parts of the SaadhanA come in mixed fashion and at different stages come singly also.

After all that I must add the fact that there is, globally, some sequence of the different parts. The rock bottom beginning is to learn about Atma-vidyA. Even that has to be learnt properly from a guru. It is the guru's grace and blessings that prompts one to go the right path. Secondly the teaching of the guru must be firmly established in one's mind. And lastly, what has been retained by the mind should now be brought into one's nature and experience.

7. PRELIMINARY TO JNANA: KARMA AND BHAKTI.

There is another set of three: karma, bhakti and jnAna. The advaita saadhanaa that the Acharya has taught us is the path of jnAna. But the person who wants to go in this path must have purified his mind to such an extent that he should have the capability of one-pointedness (*ekAgratA*); only then he can traverse the path of jnAna. If the mind is full of dirt it cannot go the path of JnAna-saadhanaa. For jnAna-yoga the mind has to become one-pointed; a vacillating and vibrating mind cannot hold on to anything.

It is for these twin tasks of purification of mind and of

making it one-pointed that the Acharya has prescribed karma and bhakti as preliminary to jnAna yoga. The prerequisite to starting jnAna yoga are karma yoga and bhakti yoga.

The barren land of the mind has to be tilled through karma yoga and then watered through bhakti yoga. Without this tilling and watering, nothing can be made to grow in that barren land of the mind.

When one keeps on doing his svadharma, meticulously and according to the shAstras, the impurities of the mind slowly disappear.

When our mind becomes one-pointed in its devotion to the Lord, this training in one-pointedness towards one form leads it to do the one-pointed enquiry into the formless Atman.

Thus when the mind is purified by karmayoga and gets the habit of one-pointedness by bhakti yoga, it can easily ascend the steps of jnAna yoga.

Of course I have said it easily; purification of mind by karma and one-pointedness by bhakti. But none of these things would seem to happen if one does not know what the right karma is and what the right bhakti is.

KDAS - 5

8. SHRADDHA (FAITH) NECESSARY

Therefore let me warn you rightaway. All this is going to be a slow process. It will take a long time to see progress. So let no one despair. The feeling that 'nothing is happening' may always be there. 'Maybe I am not capable of achieving anything on the spiritual effort' - is the frequent thought that may appear. Don't despair or give up.

Where there is a will there is a way. Efforts will not go waste. Keep going with all your efforts, persistently. Don't worry about the time it takes. In due time, you will see the signs of progress and will also reach the destination. Faith is the fundamental requisite. That is what they mean by 'shraddhA'. 'The Lord will never forsake us. The path shown by the shAstras and the Guru will never go unproductive'. It is that strong conviction that goes by the name of shraddhA.

Whenever we say that someone has done this with shraddhA, we mean it has been done with the whole heart, most sincerely. In fact the sincerity has come from that faith which is implied in the shraddhA.

Whenever we have a direct proof, there is no question of 'faith' coming in. But many of the things which religious books talk about do not have this kind of 'direct proof'. Indeed some of them may be the exact opposite. 'Punya (Meritorious action) results in good and sin results in

'bad' is a statement that every religion adheres to. However, what we see right before us in the world is the sight of the suffering of people who do good and that of the happy living of those who do evil actions. To this our Hindu shastras say: 'You should not expect the results of good and bad actions in this one life itself. The consequences will be had only in the course of several lives of the individual. If a sinner is happy today and if a good man suffers today, it only means that the sinner has done something good in his previous lives and similarly that good man must have done something evil in his previous lives'. There is no way to 'prove' this. This is where 'faith', that is, 'shraddhA' becomes necessary. In the same way several other things have to be agreed to only by our shraddhA.

In ordinary parlance we talk of believers and disbelievers (aastikas and naastikas). An aastika does not mean simply that he agrees that God exists. Just by accepting that there is an ultimate power which is the source for everything, one does not go very far. 'Believing' (aastikyaM) is far more than that. That Ultimate Power is watching all our thoughts and actions and is meting out results accordingly; in His compassion He is constantly directing us, through the various scriptures, to do good; and, to boot, He is often sending His messiahs (Acharyas) to show us the right path; and therefore we have to follow these Acharyas and the Shastras that they communicate to us; only then we can reach the Absolute. A faith in all this constitutes aastikyaM or Believing. So ShraddhA is what makes you a believer. In Chandogya Upanishad (vii.19) it is said that only he who has shraddhA will do the enquiry into Atman; and our Acharya in commenting on this, says 'ShraddhA is nothing but aastikya buddhi'. In other words, ShraddhA is the faith in all the above.

Let me dare say here that the westerners have gone one step ahead of us in this matter. The word for religion in our language is 'matam'. It means 'what is obtained by the intellect'. When the intellect researches on a maxim and convinces itself by elaborate inquiry, it arrives at a 'matam'. Also when we cannot 'prove' something, but great men and shastras have accepted that something and therefore it must be right - Such a faith is also 'matam'. But the real meaning of 'matam' is that conviction which arises from the intellect that is convinced by reason - not by another's word. The latter means of conviction is what ShraddhA means. On the other hand the English people call 'religion' itself as 'faith'. They have given that much importance to faith, in matters of religion. In later times of course, they started giving importance to 'reason' in matters of religion also - and also pulled us into the same pattern of thinking. But in earlier times they thought of faith in the scriptures as religion, 'matam' and must have used the word 'Faith' for 'religion' in that manner.

ShraddhA is most important. We shall come back to this topic much later. In the peak stages of advaita saadhanaa,

there will come a stage when shraddhA will have to be talked about more formally. What we are now talking is only a simple plant which will grow into a grand tree of Shraddha with deeper roots, in that peak stage of discussion. But remember. It is this plant that has to grow into that big tree. When we learn to dive into the depths of the ocean, first we have to stay near the shore and learn to hold our breath under water just for a short time. But in due time we learn to dive into deeper waters and also collect gems from the bottom of the sea. The shraddhA that we are talking now is like learning to swim in shallow waters near the shore. The ShraddhA that will come later is like diving deep to gather pearls and gems.

I note a coincidence of language here. The word 'pearl' ('muttu' in Tamil) is of significance. The Sanskrit word 'mukta' means 'the released one'. The Tamil equivalent is 'muttar'. And that is very near to 'muttu'. The concept of 'release' is there in both the Sanskrit 'mukta' and Tamil 'muttu'. Muttu is what is released by being pryed out of the shell of a pearl oyster; and a 'mukta' is the one who gets his release from the cycle of births and deaths. Well, that was a digression.

Just as the collection of a pearl from the deep sea is a goal, the goal of mukti has 'ShraddhA' as one of the important requisites in the last stages of the ascent to mukti. But the ShraddhA we are talking about now is what is required in the very beginning of the ascent.

So let us begin the ascent with ShraddhA. Let the start be made with ShraddhA. The Vedas and Upanishads have recommended it; Lord Krishna has confirmed it in the Gita and our own Acharya has elaborated it with all accessories. Following all these we shall surely aim to reach that stage of Brahma-anubhava, the being-in-brahman.

The start has to be with karma and bhakti; then only jnAna. Our mind is like a mirror, covered by lot of dirt and at the same time it is not steady, it is vibrating. So in this kind of mind, nothing of spiritual value reflects. The dirt has to be washed off by repeated performances of rightful karma. The vibration has to be stopped by continuous observance of bhakti. Only then will the mind be both steady and pure and that is the mind wherein things of spiritual wisdom will reflect. [And the Swami says smiling]: Then we will also be equipped to 'reflect' on them!

KDAS – 6

9. ELIGIBILITY FOR AATMA-SAADHANAA

Let us not forget one thing. The regimen for Atma-Sadhana is to be undertaken only after the dirt in the mind and its vacillation have been removed. This is what our Acharya has prescribed. It is to eradicate this dirt and shakiness of the mind that karma and bhakti have been prescribed. He

says so clearly that Saadhana-chatushTayam is only for him who has crossed this barrier of dirty and vacillatory mind.

*sva-varNAshrama-dharmaNa tapasA hari -toshhaNAt /
sAdhanaM prabhavet pumsAM vai rAgyAdi chatushhTayaM // *
(Aproksha-anubhUti: 3)

It is 'sva-varNAshrama-dharmaM' (the dharma of one's own varNa and own Ashrama) that is the karma-yoga of the individual. 'Hari -toshhaNaM' is the satisfaction of Hari, the Lord. In fact all our actions (karmas) are to be done for the satisfaction of the Lord (*Ishvara-prIttyarthaM*). It is not necessary to do a separate puJA (worship, propitiation). According to the Gita, to dedicate one's svadharma-karma is itself bhakti. In Acharya's 'Sopana-panchakam' (also known as Upadesha-panchakam) (first shloka) he says "Do your svadharma-karma well and consider that as the puja done to Ishvara". However, to do it that way, that is, to have the attitude that all our actions are actually a propitiation to the Lord, is not such an easy task; and so bhakti has also been prescribed as a distinct loving worship of Ishvara. Karma is for purification of the mind and bhakti is for obtaining the one-pointedness of mind towards God. It is bhakti that is called 'hari -toshhaNaM' here. 'Hari' does not just mean Vishnu only. Every time when we say 'HariH OM' the 'Hari' means saguNa-brahman that denotes all possible deities.

That is what it means here also. The word 'toshhaNaM' means 'to give satisfaction' or 'to generate contentment'. If we show bhakti towards Bhagavan, He gets satisfaction and contentment that 'this child of mine is coming back to good ways'. So 'Hari -toshhaNaM' means 'bhakti -yoga'. The above quotation adds a 'tapasA' to 'svadharma' and 'hari -toshhaNaM'. 'tapas' need not be a third. The 'svadharma' and 'hari -toshhaNaM' have both to be done as a penance (tapas), with the whole heart, regardless of any physical discomfort. Only for such of those who do this will 'Sadhana-chatushhTayaM' be possible and be acceptable. That is what "sAdhanaM chatushTayaM prabhavet" means. Only after graduating from school you go to college. So also, he says: 'First you purify your mind; make your mind capable of one-pointedness. Graduate from this and then come to me for admission to my college. Then you can step into the process of Enquiry into the Atman. Further up the ladder you can do the Enquiry more deeply. And still further on the question of its becoming an experience will arise. It is as if one finishes college, then goes to the master's level and then on to the doctorate. In other words it is actually only after one gets Sannyasa".

This should not be taken to mean that one should not go anywhere near Atma-vi dya unless he has completely purified his mind and obtained one-pointedness. If that stage has really been reached, there would be no more necessity to have any elaborate Atma-Saadhanaa or regimen. The mind will then be ready to firmly establish itself in the teaching of the Guru and Realisation will be almost automatic. The Acharya has not taken all the pains to elaborate the methodology of the Sadhana ChatushhTayaM to

such a highly evolved person. If we understand him right, it is only this: A pure mind and the capability to be one-pointed are surely basic to a certain extent; with that basic equipment, one should read the shastras and enter the kingly path of the Saadhanaa. Only then he can make real progress. Otherwise he will only be touching the fringes and have a false feeling that he knows everything.

The Buddhists said that they have opened the gates to all; but what happened thereafter was seen by the Acharya. That is why he prescribed that only those with preliminary qualifications can make real progress in Atma-Sadhanaa.

There are people who say: "Every one is fit to carry on advaita-saadhanaa. No prerequisites are necessary. After all it is about learning about the truth of oneself by oneself. Why are qualifications necessary to become ourselves? It is enough to have the urge to know oneself. By the tempo of that urge, once we discard our mind then that is all that is needed to have Realisation. Self-Realisation is every one's birthright. No qualifications need to be prescribed". Maybe some of these people who proclaim this are really true jnAnis who know. And some who follow them even if they be young, be a householder, be in business-like professions, be a westerner, could have done the Atma Vi chara with real fervour and single-minded dedication and could have obtained clarity of jnAna. But even among these who speak of such things and who listen to such things there may be possibly one or two percent who have really attained the Realisation. They read a lot of Vedanta topics, they are smart, and they have thought for long about Atman and the Vedantic knowledge; and they can construct beautiful arguments for what they say, present papers, submit theses and so on. When one looks at all these one is amazed and one feels that they are really Enlightened JnAnis. But in truth, among such talkers and claimers there may be one in thousand who have really SEEN what they claim to have seen! The real ones who have SEEN it usually don't talk about it, like Dakshinamurti. For the welfare of the world (*LokAnugrahArthaM*) the Lord Isvara Himself prompts a few like our Acharya to talk and write about Atma Vi dya.

Certainly there may be rare ones who may have directly obtained Realisation, without really renouncing in due manner, due manner meaning, proper observance of svadharma and then of bhakti yoga, and then embarking upon the deep study of Atma-Vi dyA. But they cannot say that others also can do what they have done. What they have obtained is by their prior samskara and that has given them the necessary spiritual qualification in their previous lives itself and in this life they have the Grace of God in full. Such people are not the ordinary run of people. Maybe the Acharya himself would give them only very special treatment for spiritual uplift. But when the Acharya writes or talks to all humanity for their general good, he writes only keeping in mind the ordinary run of people and therefore he talks about karma yoga and bhakti yoga as prerequisites to Atma Sadhana.

Accordingly he has chalked out the four-fold regimen of

Sadhana-chatushhTayaM. First with a purified and one pointed mind study the Shastras, find out what is eternal and what is ephemeral, use discretion to accept and reject, and go on until the state of 'mumukshutA' being the only breath. This itself is not the end of it. The final end of all this graduation through bachelor's and master's degrees ends when the PhD of 'MumukshutA' leads him on to the final Realisation.

KDAS – 7

10. APEX OF SADHANA IS ONLY FOR THE SANNYASI !

MumukshutvaM -- the yearning for moksha – is the end of the second stage. The first stage is that of eradicating the mind's dirt and vacillation by karma and bhakti. Sadhana-chatushhTayaM is the second stage. The SadhanAs remove mostly all the defective vAsanAs and perturbations adhering in the mind; if at all there are any that may be only five or ten percent.

It is in such a circumstance that the moksha-seeker (mumukshhu) feels he has only one work to do, namely to get the Release. So he renounces his home and possessions, takes Sannyasa and goes to the third stage. In other words, the Acharya's conclusion is, in that last stage, it is the Sannyasi that has the right qualifications for Atma-SadhanA. Having renounced all attachments, bondage and worldly obligations, Atma-vichara (Enquiry into the Atman) becomes his whole-time job. It is only for such a seeker that the most blissful gift of Realisation of Brahman happens. That is the maxim of the Acharya, as also confirmed by the Upanishads.

Thus, in that third stage, he takes Sannyasa under a proper Guru, gets his upadesha of the mantra which tells him about the identity of Jiva and Brahman, constantly rolls it in his mind, and in due time even that thought process stops and he comes to be in union with his own aim, namely the Great Experience of Brahma-anubhava. This is the prescription of the Acharya.

Some do ask: "The Acharya himself has said that the teaching of the maha-vakyas that proclaim the identity of Jiva and Brahman is only for the Sannyasi. On the other hand how come the Sama Veda maha-vakya was taught to the Brahmachari Svetaketu by his father?"

The Vedas, in each of its branches (ShAkhas) has one Upanishad in which there is a mahavakya that proclaims the identity of Jiva-Brahman. From 1008 branches that were there originally, we have come down to only seven ShAkhas that are still extant, glowing like little torches. Though every shAkha has a mahavakya, traditionally we resort to four mahavakyas corresponding to the four vedas, for purposes of giving initiation to new Sannyasis. Accordingly in Rigveda the mahavakya occurring in Aitareya Upanishad does not mention who taught it to whom. But it occurs at the end of the Upanishad revealed by a Rishi called Mahidasa Aitareya. Just from what has been said in

the penultimate mantras and from the previous chapter where it is said that even as he was in the womb the Rishi Vamadeva had obtained Brahma-jnAna, we can infer that this mahavakya has been sparked from his intuition to Vamadeva by God's Grace. In other words it has been taught to a Brahma-jnAni by Ishvara Himself. Therefore it appears fair to conclude that it is to be taught only to a Sannyasi, namely one of the fourth Ashrama.

The mahavakya of the Yajurveda occurs in the first chapter of Brihad-Aranyaka-Upanishad in what is called Purusha-vidha-brAhmaNaM. It says: "whatever Rishis or Devas saw it in their experience as declared in this mahavakya, they all became Brahman" and then gives one name, namely, Vamadeva. Therefore again one may conclude that this mahavakya also was sparked into the intuition of the Guru Vamadeva, who was a jnAni, and therefore those eligible to receive this teaching are only Sannyasis.

The mahavakya of the atharva-veda occurs in MANDUKya-Upanishad. In the Upanishad called Mukti kopani shad, Shri Rama teaches Hanuman that this one Upanishad (MANDUKya-Upanishad) is enough for a seeker of Moksha to obtain Moksha. Thus this mahavakya also is to be taught only to Sannyasis.

The question now is only about the mahavakya occurring in Sama-Veda. The objectivists are raising only this. Of the four mahavakyas this is the only one which is directly taught to a disciple by a Guru. Naturally it gets a special status. And that disciple is a youth, a Brahmachari. Not a sannyasi. Hence the objection: "How come a teaching that was offered to a 24-year old Brahmachari, is being recommended to be taught only to Sannyasis?"

KDAS – 8

10. APEX OF SAADHANAA – ONLY FOR SANNYASI ! (Continued)

The point is not about 'young' or 'old'. The point is about the attainment of spiritual maturity. Generally that maturity comes only to one who has gone through the ups and downs of life and who has observed faultless karma yoga all through. That is why the Acharya prescribed, as a general rule, that the teaching of the mahavakya is to be done at the time one is initiated into Sannyasa. In worldly parlance, they set a minimum age, like fourteen or fifteen, for graduation from school; but however, there are some 'prodigies' who are considered brighter than even a B.A. or M.A. even when they are seven or eight. On this account does it mean that the general rule is wrong? Every rule has its exception. Even the general rule of minimum age for high school graduation is exempted for very bright students. So also the rule that only a Sannyasi is eligible for Brahma-Vidya has been exempted for that Samaveda boy, Shvetaketu. First he studied under his own father, then went over for twelve years of study under other gurus and then came back with his collar high up! When such proud individuals get the shock of a setback of their pride they go to the other extreme of total modesty and are prepared

to do the full SharaNagati! Nothing can beat the circumstance of a good and scholarly man when he reaches a stage of defeat where he realises that all his intelligence and scholarship are of no value in the face of real experience. And that is when he dedicates himself totally. That is what happened to that Samaveda boy before his father who put to nought his high opinion of his scholarship and sparked him to spiritual heights of intuition. That is when he was given the upadesha of the mahavakya. This should not be shown as a precedent for the claim that the upadesha of the mahavakya should apply to all.

The Brahmasutra (III – 4 – 17) gives a rule for the study of Atma-VidyA: Eligibility is only for 'Urdva-retasi'. Who are they? They are the ones who have not wasted their energy in sensual-experience but have conserved all of it for the uplift of their spirituality. The one who has thus destroyed his lust will become a Sannyasi. Even as a boy one may be as pure as fire to such an extent that later the thought of kAma never arises in him; such a person can be given Sannyasa-Diksha and the knowledge of non-difference between Jiva and Brahman may certainly be formally given to him. Our Acharya himself belonged to this category. And that tradition of giving Sannyasa to young Brahmacharis has also been established by him for some of his mutts.

At a town called Shribali, a father brought to him a boy who was totally inert to everything and prayed that the Acharya should relieve him of his 'disease' of inertness. But the Acharya was able to see the maturity behind that inert silence of the 'patient'!. He gave Sannyasa to the boy and kept him with himself. This is the famous Hastamalaka, one of his four prime disciples. Again, younger and much smarter than our Sama Veda child, there was a seven-year old who dared argue with the Acharya himself. How can some one win our Acharya in argument? But the point is not about who won or who lost. The fact was the newcomer was so full of modesty after the event and actually surrendered to the Acharya. The Acharya gladly accepted him as disciple, gave him the Sannyasa-Diksha, and also gave the name 'SarvajnAtman'. I am saying all this in order to point out that the Acharya who was very regulatory did loosen his regulations in the case of extraordinary individuals. The Sama Veda boy we were talking about, though he was just twenty-four and full of youth, did have the maturity to deserve the teaching of the mahavakya and that was why the Rishi gave the Upadesha to him.

Citing cases of exceptions and asking for withdrawal of regulations in all cases is not right. Vidhura, of the Mahabharata, when looked at from the way he was born, would not be eligible to receive jnAnopadesha; but he was a jnAni. Dharma-vyAdha was running a butcher shop; still he had jnAna alright. The Acharya himself cites these cases in his Sutra-bhashya (I – 3 – 38) and says these are cases that happened because of the Samskara in earlier lives. In the previous lives one gets good spiritual maturity, but is born again because of some tiny fault; however the maturity of the previous life sticks on to him and very soon he reaches an advanced stage in the spiritual ladder. Such

persons are very rare. They cannot form our model for making the general rule.

The general run of people whose Samskara is rather dubious are to do Karma yoga only. This is the rule. Even to carry on the karma yoga properly they will find it difficult. To burden them with an impossible sense-control, and control of the mind that are needed for jnAna yoga is of no use.

That is why the third stage

[Note by VK: The Saadhana-chatushhTayaM is the second stage].

in the Advaita-sAdhana is prescribed only for those of the fourth Ashrama (Sannyasa) who has already thrown off all his obligations of karma and has totally dedicated himself to the enquiry of jnAna. Only if one throws off the burdens that make one run around for the family establishment, the responsibility of feeding oneself or the household and also the bondage of relatives as well as of money and position and sit whole time as a Sannyasi for the purpose of Atma-Vichara, -- only then can one eradicate the inner burden of thoughts and also wash off the long-lasting dirt and moss of the mind. Upto a certain stage the composites of right action, svadharma and obligatory duties do help to wash off this old dirt; but after a stage they themselves become a potential for further dirt and moss of the mind. They stick to one's mind and prevent the mind from losing itself in eternal peace. When we wash sticky and dirty vessels don't we apply tamarind and earth on them and even allow them to stay there for some time? But even they are ultimately rinsed off and only then the vessels become bright and pure. In the same way, the karma that helps to purify should themselves be eradicated in full in order for the inner organ (antahkaraNaM) to become pure and crystal clear. That is exactly what Sannyasa means. After one becomes a Sannyasi, the inner activities have also to stop and give relief. Activity means peacellessness. Total peace is an ocean of bliss; one should dissolve in it and be Brahman. That is immutable peace. If it is possible to reach that state from our present state of perturbation and restlessness, then is it not our duty to put in the maximum possible effort for it? If we don't, then we are only duds, whatever position or status we hold in whichever field it may be.

KDAS – 9

11. WHY THEN TELL OTHERS,
WHAT IS SUITABLE ONLY FOR SANNYAASIS?

I might have named you a dud, but you may raise the question: "How is it right to call us a dud without understanding reality? Talking without any concern for actual state of today's world – how is it proper?" One may also think "Eternal Peace is of course very tempting. But to attempt it in the third stage if one is required to don the ochre robe of Sannyasa, it is not practical. We are not

ready for it, nor do we have the maturity for it. To obtain Peace one is asked to run away from all relationships, household and profession. But there is always the lurking fear about what will happen if one runs away from all this; that fear itself will take away all the peace that one is after. In the context of our bondages of desires and attachment how can we do justice to the Ashrama of a Sannyasi? Will it not end up in a mess? And being in that Ashrama, every fault will be a major sacrilege. By taking up Sannyasa now itself and attempting to live by it is only equivalent to cheating ourselves by ourselves. And the Swami who recommends all this to us is not such a dud as to think that we can live a Sannyasi's life and do Atma vichara all the time. Then why does he insist on our sitting here and keep listening to his lectures?" In other words, you are asking why I am telling all and sundry what is only applicable to Sannyasis and to those mature ones who are capable of Sannyasa and are willing to take it up.

12. TWO DIFFERENT PATHS FOR TWO DIFFERENT ASPIRANTS

Your question is legitimate. JnAna teachings may be done in abundance, conferences on advaita may be held in plenty, books on the subject may be published in cheap editions as well as for free distribution – all these paraphernalia may draw large crowds certainly, and the books may be in high demand, but finally those who actually carry the teachings in practice will be few and far between. "One in a thousand makes the attempt; and even among them a rare one persists and succeeds" says Bhagavan Himself. That is His play of mAyA! Except for those rare ones whose good samskara from previous lives is really strong all others are just unable to think seriously of getting themselves out of the rut of worldly activities and of the pulls and pushes of the mind.

Therefore the Lord distinguishes two categories of people in the Gita and calls one of them eligible to do only karma and demarcates the other to be eligible to go the jnAna path. Not only that. He says clearly it is not He who has now made this distinction, but it has been there ever since ancient times, by the use of the words "purA prokta". This word 'purA' is what occurs in the derivation of the word 'purANa'. The very first ShAstra, the Vedas, have themselves made this distinction. "prokta" means 'well-declared'. It is Ishvara who has given this message through the Vedas and so He says "This has been taught by me in ancient times". And what are the two paths?: "jnAna yogena sAnkhyAnAM karma-yogena yogi nAM". They are jnAna yoga and Karma yoga.

It is jnAna yoga that is our topic of advaita-saadhanaa. It is only for them who have very noble samskaras. They are called sAnkhyas by the Lord. Several kinds of meanings are usually given to this. I am thinking of one in a lighter vein. 'sankhya' means counting. Population is called 'jana-sankhya'. Therefore why can't we take that 'sAnkhyas' means those who can be counted easily! It is for them and for them only that jnAna-yoga or advaita-saadhanaa is meant. Karma yoga is meant for the others.

Karma is talked of as pravRRi tti (involvement in the world) and jnAna is talked of as ni vRRi tti (renunciation from the world) The two have been clearly distinguished by Manu himself -- who gave us the most important ShAstra -- *pravRRi ttaM ni vRRi ttaM ca dvi -vi dhaM karma vai di kaM* (Manu-dharma-shAstra XII – 88). Two different types of people who have different mental make-up, maturity and samskAra have been given two different paths. The same thing has been said in Brahma-sutra III – 4 – 11. Just as we partition one hundred rupees into two parts and give fifty rupees each to two different people, the paths towards Atman have been divided as karma and jnAna and have been given to two differently qualified people – this is what that Sutra says. This Sutra actually occurs three-fourths way in the text of the Brahma-Sutra. But right in the beginning itself, the same matter has been built into the very first Sutra *athAto brahma-jijnAsA* which says "Thereafter, hence forward, deliberation on Brahman". This 'thereafter' has been explained by the Acharya in his Bhashya. Having attained perfection in the first stage, namely the path of karma, then having done all the Saadhanaas in the second stage (which we are about to see), -- after all these, getting the Sannyasa through the Guru and also the Upadesha (formal teaching) of the Mahavakyas and after this, one is ready and eligible to devote whole time in a dedicated fashion to pursue the deliberations on Brahman: this is what the Acharya says in his explanation of the first Sutra.

KDAS – 10

12. TWO DIFFERENT PATHS FOR TWO DIFFERENT ASPIRANTS (Continued)

Those who are gathered here -- maybe there are one or two exceptions; but the others – are only eligible for karma yoga. Certainly they cannot cast off their karma. "Do your karma, persistently. But don't look for the fruits, don't keep them as your sole desire; do your karma because it is svadharma, it is your duty. Leave the fruits as the responsibility of the dispenser of fruits". This teaching is karma yoga.

Only after the mind has been purified by such desireless karma does one become eligible for JnAna-yoga. In his Gita Bhashya the Acharya has made this crystal clear. Though in modern times several persons – Tilak, Gandhi and others – say that the gita teaching is that karma yoga is a direct path to salvation, the Acharya has shown that it is not so. We are not directly concerned with that topic now, but I have touched on that unknowingly; so let me 'clear' some cobwebs.

svakarmaNA tam-abhyarchya si ddhi M vi ndati mAnavaH -- A person by doing his svadharma as a dedication to God, attains the goal – so says the Gita in its last chapter. Those who say that karma yoga is a direct sAdhanA for moksha, interpret the word 'siddhi' here as 'mokshaM'. But the Acharya explains: "The siddhi that is spoken of here is only the eligibility for jnAna-yoga; the end-goal (siddhi)

of karma-yoga is the transition from the stage of renunciation of the fruits of action to the stage of renunciation of karma itself so that one can enter the stage of jnAna yoga and pursue the enquiry of the Atman all the time". Reading his impeccable logic with all its pros and cons one is sure that this is the correct understanding. Wherever the Gita extols karma yoga to the skies, it should be taken as 'artha-vAda', says the Acharya. To cheer us up and encourage us to go by a certain path is what 'artha-vAda' means. It is like telling the child to learn its alphabet in order that 'the child may become king of the country'! This cheering up is nothing but 'artha-vAda'. In other words, it is an exaggeration done in the best interests and well-meant. When we wail in desperation: "Only jnAna is the path to moksha; but I am not able to go the jnAna path; I think I have to only sweat it out with this karma" – the Lord, in order to cheer us up in the path which is suitable to us, says: "Don't under-estimate karma yoga like that, my dear; this karma yoga can do this, can do that, in fact it will give you such and such merits". However when he talks about the JnAni, 'The JnAni is nothing but myself' (*jnAnIt-vAtmaiva me matam*), 'The jnAnis are those who have reached my bhAva' (*mad-bhAvam-AgatAH*) – so says He in right earnest.

The Lord has thus in His own words demarcated JnAna yoga for sAnkhyas and karmayoga for yogis.

Bhagavan uses the word 'yogi' for those who are eligible for karma-yoga. We think that a yogi is some great one who sits with breath control and has controlled his mind. But then why does he say that such a one does not have yet the maturity for JnAna, but is only on some right path along karma yoga? For this also I have a novel explanation. 'Yoga' implies uniting. 'Union' is the direct meaning. A union requires two entities, at least. There may be three, four, or anything higher. Only then can we talk of a union and 'yoga' can occur. When there is only one thing, there is no question of that 'union'. That remains as Itself. There is nothing outside to unite with it. When we see it this way, a 'yogi' is always a dualist, 'related' to something else; in other words, he is still revolving in the mAyA world. He is not someone who can stand alone as an advaitin. [The Swami says smiling]: I am saying this in a lighter vein. Let not scholars and pundits mistake me!

Most of us are attached to karma ('karma-sangis'). The utmost that we can do is to do the karma without attachment to the fruits. That itself is difficult. All our labouring is for some kind of result. When that is so, to do the karma without any thought for the fruit of it is certainly most difficult. And to be asked to go a step higher – why one step, in fact several steps – to renounce the karma itself and be only doing the dhyana all the time, is to do the impossible! It is to 'karma-sangis' the Bhagavan says: "You don't have to do anything in the matter of the Atman. Just keep doing your karma as a yoga. Let the purification of the kind happen in its own course. After that you can enter the Jnana domain". It is the same Bhagavan who says "That path is for the Sankhyas but this one is for you" and has thus demarcated the paths. We are

going in a certain path, and we actually are only struggling to keep in our own path; what is the use of our knowing about another path which is supposed to be inaccessible for us. [And the Swami says smiling]: In short, why this headache of this sermon to us?

I shall tell you now.

KDAS - 11

REASON FOR TELLING EVERY ONE

What we are supposed to be doing is to renounce the desire for the fruits of karma; to try to do so. That itself is formidable. Without a thought for the fruit of the action, to keep on doing the present svadharma just to exhaust our previous karma balance and thereby attain a purification of the mind is an uphill task. Just to do this – not as a means to be able to do the nididhyasana of the Jnana path; but just to reduce the attachment to the fruits in the karma path itself – we have to clarify our minds by learning several abstract concepts and meanings and practising several regimens of exercise. But as a matter of fact, ultimately, all these are the same steps that are prescribed in advaita-saadhanaa. To take sannyasa and do shravana, manana and nididhyasana, there are saadhanaa steps prescribed; the same steps are also necessary for progress in the right way of doing karma yoga. But one need not have to swim in such deep waters; it is enough to keep oneself in shallow waters – the necessity is only that much.

A History (of India) book for the fourth grader also starts from Mohenjo Dhara civilisation, Vedic period, Buddha's times, Age of the Mauryas, Gupta period, Age of the Turks, and Period of English rule, thus covering the entire spectrum. And the same sequence of lessons is also there for a student at the Master's level. Certainly there is a large difference between the two levels, but what is taught at the elementary level is also needed here at the higher level. In the same way, on the path of Jnana also the subject-matter that occurs at the higher level are also to be taught to the school students of the karma yoga level, though in a smaller dose.

Going to Switzerland, playing ice skating there, and having a pleasant sight of the lofty mountains there -- one may think that these are inaccessible and get a little satisfaction by seeing them only in colour photographs. But this very preliminary satisfaction sparks a desire to look forward to an actual experience of these things and makes one put in an effort for the same. Finally one may or may not go to Switzerland. By going there one may not obtain permanent happiness. But there is a spiritual world which gives permanent happiness. This desire for this permanent happiness is a must for everybody. Let the actual attainment of this be far away. But that attainment is our birthright and it is our only goal of life and we must create a longing for ourselves in that direction. It is to generate that longing, that this permanent happiness is projected here as if in a photograph.

There is another reason also. Every one may not be ready for the advaita saadhanaa right now. But that does not mean that every one is at the bottom rung of the (spiritual) ladder. There may be different types of people: those with a little purified mind and a little of discrimination and dispassion; and those with a reasonably good purity of the three 'karanas' (trikarana-shuddhi) and of discrimination and dispassion. For them to know the Saadhana-regimen is to provoke their interest in an eager thought: "Let me make a little more effort, correct myself so that I may go in that direction". Just because it has been said that "here is a path", they may start first of all just to know what it is and then later to actually make efforts to go along that path. Thus it all ends up turning different types of people in the right direction. A mantra or a Kundalini method, which might be disastrous if even slightly wrongly done, must be protected as a secret without being made available to all and sundry. Jnana-yoga is not like that. By revealing it to all there is nothing wrong.

One point has to be emphasized here. Though the Acharya has prescribed Sannyasa-Ashrama only for those who take Jnana yoga itself as their Saadhanaa; he has declared that those who are not so qualified (though they should not do it as a Saadhanaa exercise), should know about Atman and should be at least aware of the thoughts of the Atman.

He has written a small expository work called "Bala-bodha-sangrahaM". 'sangrahaM' means a summary. The very name 'bala-bodham' indicates that it is intended for children. In those days an eight-year old child would have his upanayanam. And then when the child goes for gurukula-vasam, for the first few years, he still is a child. It is for such children the teaching of Bala-bodham is intended. It is designed by the Acharya as if a child is asking questions and the guru is answering. The teaching is actually an advaita vedanta education. The basic points of advaita are all given there in a nutshell. He has also mentioned the different angas (parts) of advaita saadhanaa. Is it not clear from this that the Acharya never intended the contents of advaita vedanta only for those who practise jnana yoga after acquiring all the preliminary qualifications? Shouldn't we understand from this that he thought that nobody should be ignorant of the permanent truths of advaita philosophy? A direct practice of it may happen at any time; but the methodology of the regimen, the path of saadhanaa, should be in the knowledge of every one – that must have been the Acharya's contentions.

We usually think that the moment we speak of the Acharya, it is only about advaita. His greatness however is in the fact that he did not insist on it for every one. Just because he has structured the philosophy of advaita so strongly and beautifully he did not keep it as a regimen of practice for all. He understood human nature very well. So with great compassion and sympathy he allotted to certain people only the karma path and kept advaita for the rest.

13. THE MATTER OF BHAKTI YOGA

An important point. Why did the Acharya, as well as Lord Krishna Himself, demarcate only two classes of people: those who qualify for karma yoga and those who qualify for jnAna yoga?

[Note by VK: cf. B. G. III – 3]

Why did they not make one more classification, namely, those who qualify for bhakti? This is because, both the karma yogi and the jnAna yogi need to have bhakti. In both the classes, bhakti is an important part and both have to do it. That is why it was not separated into a class by itself. The karma pathfinder has to show bhakti at a certain level while the jnAna pathfinder has to do the same at a different level. Already I told you about two levels of shraddhA. Just as we use the word bhakti-shraddhA, in bhakti also there are two such levels! – as we have two levels of courses in Shorthand and Typewriting!. The lower level – karma pathfinder does bhakti in order to recognise the thought that there is an Ishvara above us who watches us and gives punishment. He should then progress in the same level and continue to do bhakti now to focus the mind through Love. A further progress – still in the same 'lower' level, not 'higher' – would make him carry on bhakti with the attitude of surrender of all fruits of action. And now at the higher level, the jnana pathfinder does his bhakti with the thought: 'The Brahman or the Atman for which I am doing my saadhanaa, it is the same brahman that, in its saguna, is the Ishvara; it is that Ishvara who has granted me the taste in this path and it is only by His Grace that I should obtain siddhi (success).

Above this -- above or below, higher or lower, none of which is applicable now – is the bhakti of those 'siddhas' who have reached that experiential stage (of Brahman Realisation). For them there is no reason why they do bhakti, says Sukacharya, one such realised soul. (Shri mad Bhagavatam I – 7 – 10).

Thus, at all levels, there is bhakti in both karma and jnAna; that is why bhakti is not separately mentioned.

14. KNOWLEDGE OF ADVAITA BASIC REQUIREMENT FOR EVERY ONE

Thus the entire society was conceived of by the Acharya as two classes – karma pathfinder and jnana pathfinder – and he kept advaita saadhanaa only for the jnana pathfinder. But though it was kept like that, the general knowledge about that shastra should be there for all, including the karma pathfinder – so did he feel.

I happen to hold his name. So I have the duty to tell every one about the advaita siddhanta that he propagated so meticulously. That is why I began to talk on this topic. Usually I don't talk on this. Because there is too much talk about advaita from every quarter and mostly it all ends up in talk and nothing in execution; and in the process, every one has a false feeling that they have become advaitins by just talking!. And I did not want to add to this talk and add to the Illusion of the general run of people. But recently,

[Note by Ra. Ganapati: He is referring to the Shankara Jayanti celebrations at Tandiarpet, Chennai in 1965. This talk of his and a substantial part of the other portions were delivered to a select group of devotees, just a few days after that celebration]

there was a jayanthi celebration here and also a vidvat-sadas (symposium by scholars). Some persons came to me and requested: " Why can't we be taught some advaita?". So I thought, in the name of the position I hold as an advaita-guru, I ought at least to tell people about what the requirements are for advaita saadhanaa and what the restrictions are therein. Those who so requested me are also here; so without further postponement, I am now beginning

I was telling you how from his elementary treatise entitled 'Bala-bodham', we can easily conclude that the Acharya holds the view that every one should have the thought about the Atman and should know about the basics of advaita shAstra.

Another of his prakaranams for the general public is called "Prashnottara-ratna-mAlika". This is also written for the average householder. It is in the form of Questions and answers. 'Prashna' means question and 'Uttara' means reply. The two are combined in a raga-malika fashion and called prashna-uttara-malika.

'Who is dead even while living?' is one such question. *kohatah*. The reply is: *kriyA brashhTaH*, that is, the one who avoids doing the karma that is his due. The same Acharya, who has said in works of Jnana like Viveka Chudamani that "Only he who renounces all his karma regimen, takes Sannyasa and enquires into the Atman does justice to this human birth, all others have killed their Atman; in other words they are dead even though living" – the same Acharya now says that man has to do only his bounden karma, otherwise he is 'dead even while living'. This shows that this work has been aimed at an audience of average people. Again, to the question 'By what is a man free from unhappiness?', the reply is given: 'By an obedient wife' (Verse 31); 'Who is the friend?' – 'Wife' (Verse 49); again to the question 'Who is a true friend?' The reply goes 'certainly the wife'. All these show that he keeps as his audience the householders who are living in the grahasthashrama. But even in such works the Acharya does not avoid things that pertain to the Atman. And he has done it very artistically. What I mean is, whenever he talks about the situation of the jnani and his state of mind, he subtly indicates "This is not for you. You need not be right away like this. This applies to only those who have fully taken up the Atma-Saadhanaa", though he is actually describing the lakshana (characteristic) that pertains wholly to a jnani. When he talks about generalities applicable to all, he just carries on his teaching without delineating any characteristic behaviour. An example will help the understanding.

14. KNOWLEDGE OF ADVAITA BASIC REQUIREMENT FOR EVERY ONE

(Continued)

(For instance) Right in the beginning he talks formally about the Guru – of course, in the style of question and answer. Then (verse 3) the first question itself is *tvaritaM kiM kartavyaM vidushhAM*. It means 'What should the knowing ones do immediately?' Mark the word 'knowing ones' here. 'VidvAn' means a scholar, a person who knows. The plural of this is 'vidvAmsaH'. The genitive case of this is 'vidushhAM'. The question raised is: 'What is the immediate work of the knowing ones?'. The question is not about the common man. It is only about the higher level 'knowing ones'. What is it that they should do with a sense of urgency? This is the question. The reply comes: *santatic-chedaH* -- 'to cut asunder the chain of samsara'. In other words, it means to obtain the release from the repetitive deaths (and births). Thus the path to moksha should be recalled even right at the beginning to the common man – this view of the Acharya is implicit here. However the urgency about it is not for the common man, it is for the 'knowing ones'.

Later one meets with the question: *kasmAt udvegaH syAt?* (Shloka 19) -- Of what should one tremble? The word 'udvega' means trembling or fearing. That is the direct meaning. Nowadays many use 'udvegam' to denote an excessive haste or a speed of action sparked by a motive or urge. That is wrong. 'udvegam' means just 'trembling' or 'fearing'. The question is: "What deserves to be feared?". The reply comes: *samsara araNyataH sudhyaH* -- he says it is the forest of samsara that has to be feared. And when saying this he characterises it by adding the word 'sudhyaH'. This means 'those with higher knowledge'. In other words what is implied is that only the people who are qualified for the higher knowledge think of samsara as a thing to be feared as a dangerous forest and so they should get out of it and obtain sannyasa. The common man should just know that this will be the response of the man with higher knowledge and that is why this question and this answer.

The 'knower' scholar should break off from the samsara; the man with higher intelligence (sudhiH) should fear the forest of samsara – an average man like us should be aware of such things. Not only that. The Acharya has said one more thing that all of us should do; and that he says in an interesting manner.

kiM samsare saraM (Verse 5) is the question: What is the essence of samsara?

The answer is given: *bahusho'pi vicintyamAnaM idaM eva* -- "to keep thinking of this again and again".

"Of what?"

"Just now you asked: 'What stuff is there in samsara?' –that is what you have to ask again and again and keep thinking of. The objective of this birth is to ask oneself repeatedly whether there is any fruit for this birth and keep enquiring about it. That is what he means by *idam eva

bahusho' pi vi ci ntyamAnaM*''

If one keeps asking himself like this and analysing it by one's intellect, one will get to know there is nothing of essence (sAra) in this samsAra. And there will come an urge to know the Atman that is the real essence. That is when we realise it is only by pursuing the question 'kiM samsAre sAraM' relentlessly we have come to this stage of longing for this most noble quest (of the Atman). It is only this question that opens our eyes from our being a samsAri (involved in samsAra) and thinking that that is all there is to our life. And so if there is anything worthwhile in samsAra, it is this question; a relentless pursuit of the question.

In other words the shloka means that we should be constantly engaged in the thought of the Atman. Note that he does not add the words of qualification like 'vidvAn' or 'sudhIH'. So this is a teaching for all people. The Acharya thinks that even the common man who was spoken of as 'dead even when living' if he leaves off his karma, has always to keep thinking of the release from the samsAra.

Here he has said that the question 'What is worthwhile in samsAra?' should be repeatedly asked of oneself. A little later, he raises another question (Shloka 16) "What is it that should be thought about, day and night?" : *KA ahar-ni shaM anuchi ntyA?*

And he gives the reply: *samsAra-asArata* -- namely, "the samsAra has no worth in it".

The Acharya has blessed us with a work called 'SopAna-panchakaM'. When his devotees come to know that he was winding up his mortal journey and was ready to reach Brahma-nirvANaM, they requested of him: "You are leaving us all. You have given volumes of advice and teaching to us in writing. But we may not be able to read all of that. So before you are done with this incarnation can you please condescend to summarise them all and give us an upadesha?". In reply to this he delivers what is called 'upadesha-panchakaM' also known as 'sopAna-panchakaM'. 'SopAnaM' means staircase. In this work he gives a step-by-step procedure for us ordinary people to start from the rock bottom starting point and go all the way to that peak stage of Brahman-illumination. The beginning is

vedo ni tyam adhyatAm taduditaM karma svanushhTIyatAM

"Daily practise the recitation of the vedas and perform the karmas prescribed therein". So obviously all this is for those who are to proceed by the karma path. But in the very same teaching it says: "Nurture the taste for the Atman! Get out from the household! Get the mahavakya upadesha from the Guru!" and then finally "Settle yourself in the Absolute Brahman". Naturally the Acharya means that even those who are at present qualified only for karma should be aware of subjects connected with jnAna-yoga.

If we continue our scrutiny like this it is confirmed that though the Acharya has distinguished between those who

are qualified for jnAna and those who are qualified for karma just like the Lord distinguished very clearly between sankhyas and yogis, he did feel that the majority who were qualified for karma only should also have a basic knowledge of jnana. Bhagavan (Krishna) also thought in the same way. He classified Arjuna only as suited for Karma. All of us know the familiar 'karmany-eva adhi kAras-te' teaching. He brought back to the battle that Arjuna who was ready to run away from the battlefield saying he would not fight. But even in that very Gita which constituted that advice, he has not stopped with karma yoga but has elaborated about jnAna yoga in detail. Right in the beginning it begins only with Sankhya yoga in all its abstractness.

[And the Swami gal adds with a smile] : All this is 'justification' for me (and my talk)!

Experts in music pursue a lot of study about the svaras and the ragas, their elaborations and nuances and the nyasas and the vinyasas associated with them before they decide on a particular mode of delivery. The child beginning to have music lessons also has the same sa-ri-ga-ma-pa-da-ni for his practice. He may not be taught all the elaborations and the nuances of the svaras, but the sharp and abrupt voicings of the svaras are supposed to be enough at that stage. In the early stages it is the coordination of the shruti and the rough fixation of the svara-sthanas that are considered to be enough. Starting from these elementary and rough beginnings, one is taken up to all the different nuances and gymnastics about the nyasas and vinyasas in the higher stages of practice. So also sannyasa comes at the end of life. What subtle realities and techniques of practice one gets to know at that end stage, the same realities and techniques have to be learnt by all in an elementary way like a child learns sa-ri-ga-ma-pa-da-ni.

Sec. 15. NITYA-ANITYA VASTU VIVEKAM

(Discrimination between the permanent and the transient)

The first one, like the 'sa' of music, in SadhanA, that is, in Sadhana-chatushtayaM, is NityAnitya-vastu-vivekaM.

Doing our karmas sincerely and systematically as per the ShAstras, dedicating all of them to Ishvara, doing bhakti towards that Ishvara, by means of these attaining a certain purification in the mind, as well as obtaining a capability to keep the mind steady on one thing – all these constitute the first stage. First stage, not in jnAna yoga, but in the spiritual dimensional journey of the jIva. This belongs to karma yoga only. The second stage begins after this and that is the first stage in jnAna yoga. And in that, the first subject of mention is 'nityAnitya-vastu-vivekaM'. So now let us assume that we have all reached that maturity resulting from the observance of karma and bhakti. [The Swami gal adds with a smile]: Let us build castles in the air, or cheat ourselves so and start to learn the ways of jnAna yoga. We certainly do a lot of castle-building and self-cheating; let us now do it for some good purpose!

If one wants to get involved in matters of the Atman, what

should lie at the base of all that? It is the knowledge that the Atman is the only permanent entity all other things being only ephemeral. If this knowledge is not there, man will always remain a samsAri and continue to suffer as he does now. The basic conviction that 'everything that gives us pleasure in this world, that gives status and honour, all of that is transient; nothing will ever give us permanent happiness; what gives permanent happiness is only the Atman, the only permanent entity' – this faith is the most important thing. Now and then the mind may be distracted and drawn towards several other things. At every such time one should beware and keep the mind steady. "Should I go into this just because it gives me pleasure? Is this an unmixed happiness? Even if it be unmixed happiness, will it be permanent? Once the mind enters into it will not the taste of it entice it to make efforts to go into it again and again? Would that not be a bondage of the mind? If something will not help the mind to become pure and restful, should I enter into it?" Such analysis has to be done by the intellect. It should keep weighing the pros and cons about what is permanent and what is impermanent. Only then can we hope to go the spiritual path.

This balancing analysis by the intellect is called 'vivekaM'. The analysis of balancing between what is permanent and what is ephemeral is what is called *ni tya-ani tya-vastu-vivekaM*. This is the very first step in Atma-Sadhana.

About impermanent things we certainly know well. In fact whatever about which we know well are all impermanent! Though what is permanent transcends the mind and speech, the shAstras do tell us about it. It is from them that we learn the fundamental information about the eternal Atman. Dwelling in thoughts of That which can give permanent peace and permanent happiness, we should be able to throw off the the transient things which can give only impermanent peace and happiness.

It is not necessary to throw them off right in this beginning stage. Though they are not the permanent entity, Atman, there are several things among the impermanent ones that can help us go towards that permanent one. The shastras about the Atman, the teachings of great men about it, the holy pilgrimage centres that produce a pure state of mind, puranas and stotras and several similar ones, are all there. Of course none of these is the Atman. Only when even these are nullified, the Realisation of the Atman takes place. The experience of Permanence is that of being the Atman alone, without any thought or action. The only Absolute Truthful experience is that and nothing else. Even if God Himself stands before us and gives darshan, even if we are in the lap of Mother goddess (Ambaal herself) and She pets us – even that is not the experience of the Permanent Reality of the Atman. However, all these can lead us to a close proximity to that. Thus there are things of happiness – what we then consider to be happiness – that range all the way from those which take us to that Permanent experience to those which take us away very far. At the beginning stage we should choose, by our discretion,

the good ones among these and use them to take us on the right path. Recall what the God of Death (Yama) told Nachi ketas: 'By means of impermanent entities we should reach the Permanent One' (Kathopani shad: I -ii - 10).

The true Sadhaka on the JnAna path would have already escaped from the sensual pleasures that are nothing but obstacles to spiritual growth and from those others which are far away from the Atman, like the pleasures of gossip, and the pleasure of being an idler doing nothing. But ordinary people like us who have to start from these beginnings, have to use our discretion (vivekaM) that can distinguish between the Permanent and the impermanent. Movies, gluttony, addiction to coffee or cricket commentary, reading senseless fiction, excited gossip about politics – thus there are many more that attract us very forcefully. We have to be alert and keep thinking: 'Would these things contribute even an iota to my spiritual growth? Should I give them so much importance?' What will lead us to That Permanent One and what will not? – a mercilessly strict balancing analysis is what nitya-nitya-vastu-vivekaM means. I said 'mercilessly strict' because our mind always tries to rationalize doing what it likes to do; it will discover all sorts of justifications. Use the discriminatory power that does not give in to that kind of imagination and that judges this analysis very strictly, to assess yourself. See that it does not allow itself to 'pass' what deserves to 'fail'.

SEC. 15. NITYA-ANITYA-VASTU-VIVEKAM (Continued) (Discrimination between the permanent and the ephemeral)

What I have just said is for the majority of us who are the average. Those who have done the Atma-SadhanA exclusively and attained a certain maturity must have probably released themselves from the fascination for coffee, cricket, etc. . But even they would have some small weaknesses connected with the satisfaction of the senses. Such things may even be good for us at our level and might help us go up the spiritual ladder but these might not be necessary for them. So they should carefully search for these and release themselves of these things also. Atman-Realisation is the only thing to be looked for; in the absence of it one should feel like a fish out of water. It is with that kind of anguish one should stay out of , say, even social service which may prove to be right for the average karma yogi, even pilgrimages, and even the upAsanA method of bhakti. Remember I told you about lying on the lap of AmbaaL – even that! All these are impermanent; he should have the discretion to be able to avoid all this and resort only to those that can take him deep into the Atman. "Atman is the only thing desired; everything else is anAtma and all of them should be discarded" -- this should be the fervent conviction.

nityAnitya-vastu-vivekaM is also known as AtmAnAtma-vastu vivechanaM. 'vivechanaM' and 'vivekaM' are the same. It means the capability to sort out what is good and what is bad. The only discretion that advaita shAstra recommends is this capability to sort out what is AtmA and what is

anAtmA. The work "Vi veka-chUDamaNi" is also called "AtmAnAtma-vi veka-chUDamaNi". As soon as the mangal AcharaNaM shloka – that is, the verse of benediction in the beginning of a work – is over, the text begins with the topic of sAdhanA path. There he talks about the performance of routine as per vaidika dharma, then scholarship in the vedas -- these two being common to all paths – and then he mentions just one thing, namely "AtmAnAtma-vi vechanaM" which is the route for the JnAna pathfinder and then goes to talk about svAnubhUti (Personal experience) and Mukti (moksha). Later in the book the Acharya defines, at the highest level, the concept of 'vi veka' (discrimination) that decides between the permanent and the impermanent.

*brahma satyaM jagan-mi thyety-evaM rUpo vi ni shcayaH /
so' yaM ni tyAni tyA-vastu-vi vekaH samudAhRRi taH //*

It means: Brahman is the only Reality. The Universe is mi thyA, that is, it may appear real but will become unreal; such a firm conviction is what has been well declared as ni tyA-ani tyA-vastu vi vekaM. "Who has made the declaration? The Vedas. The authority to declare such Truths is that of the Vedas only. The Acharya follows that tradition and so even if he does not say "in the Vedas" he knows people will understand it that way.

The Upanishads constitute the 'anta', the finishing portion of the Vedas. Therefore we find this matter in abundance there. Is not the very purpose of the Upanishads to take us jIvas who are stuck in this worldly impermanence out to the Permanent One? Starting from the small boy Nachiketas all the way up to Indra himself several have been known to have understood the impermanent as impermanent and comprehended the Principle of Ni tyA – such stories have come down to us in Kathopani shad, Chandogyopani shad, etc. The Lord of Death himself offered several rare gifts to child Nachiketas, but the latter turned all of them down, saying "All these are ephemeral; one day or other won't they all come back to you?". And, he insisted on having the tattva-upadesha from the God of death himself and finally got it! Among all the impermanent things, there is only one thing that is ever permanent – said Yama-dharma-rajA *ni tyo' ni tyAnAM*. "Whoever finds it, to him there will be eternal peace; not for anybody else". All that we call wealth is ani tyA; nothing that belongs to ani tyA will ever lead to the ni tyA-vastu, that is the Atman. In the Chandogya story, Vi rochana the King of Asuras, as well as Indra the King of the Gods, both of them pursue the question: "What is the Atman?". The asura comes to the conclusion that the body is the Atman. It is 'Asura-Vedanta'! On the other hand, Indra does an analysis of experiences in the waking state, dream state and the sleeping state, discards them one by one as unreal and finally comes to the Reality that is the Atman. This kind of discarding is nothing but 'ni tyA-ani tyA-vastu vi vechanam' – the discrimination between ani tyA and ni tyA. In the Taittiriya Upanishad Brighu Mahari shi begins from the anna-maya kosha, and goes through all the koshas, first thinking that it is Brahman and then after enquiry discarding it and finally comes to the right

conclusion that Brahman is what remains as the substratum of even the Ananda-maya-kosha. Another way of looking at it is to say that by proper discrimination he discarded the five koshas as impermanent and finally got to know that the Atman is the only Permanent entity.

neti neti -- "Brahman is not this, is not that; it is nothing that can be circumscribed by anything; it is not related to another; it is not limited to anything; it is not that which suffers; it is not that which is destroyed" so says the Brihad-Aranyaka Upanishad. Whatever has been said here not to be Brahman, they are all matters for the mundane world. In other words, what is circumscribed, what is related, what is limited, what is destroyed, all these are material entities. So the "neti, neti" analysis means to pick out the impermanent entities of the world, discard them as such, and hold on to the Permanent entity, Atman. "anyat ArtaM" – "all others are having an end" . In other words, except the Atman, everything else without exception meet their end. This idea coming again and again in BrihadAranyaka Upanishad mantras is to distinguish the Nitya-vastu (Permanent One) from the anityas (the impermanents).

15. NITYA-ANITYA-VASTU-VIVEKAM (Continued) (Discrimination between the permanent and the ephemeral)

Right in the beginning of His Gitopadesha, Bhagavan makes it clear: Atman is the only Permanent entity. The body from the killing of which Arjuna retreats, is nothing but ephemeral (anitya). All experiences of the body come and go: *AgamApAyiNaH anityaH*. That which is permanent, immeasurable is only the Atman: *nityasyoktaH sharIriNaH anAshiNaH aprameyasya*, thus runs his elaboration. Later *anityam asukhaM lokaM imaM prApya bhajasva maM* (IX – 33) -- you have obtained a life in this impermanent miserable world; in order to get out of this, worship Me, says He. What does He mean by 'Me'? He is the Atman, He is the Brahman. *ahamAtma guDHakeshaH sarva-bhUtAshayaH sthitaH* (X – 20) [I am established as the indweller in the hearts of all beings]: this is His own statement. So worshipping Him means only the meditation on the Self. The sum and substance of what He says is: "In this world everything is impermanent; hold on to the Atman". The thirteenth chapter of the Gita is called 'kshhetra-kshhetrajn-a vibhAga-yogaM'. It is the yoga that distinguishes the body that is the 'kshhetra' and the conscious Atman inside that is known as 'kshetrajn-a'. This kshetra-kshetrajn-a yoga is nothing but the discrimination between the permanent and the ephemeral. When the Lord defines (XIII – 5, 6) 'kshhetra' as made up of the five elements, senses, the objects that senses run after, desire (icchA), hate (dveshhaM), happiness and misery, etc., he is actually dissecting all those that are impermanent. In the same way, he shows the Permanent One as the kshhetrajn-a. It is clear from his further statements: "It exists in all the universes enveloping them all; without and within all beings, moving and unmoving, near and far away is that". (XIII – 13, 15). Then as He goes along distinguishing kshhetra and kshhetrajn-a, Bhagavan says: "He who knows the

distinction between prakRRiti and purusha does not have another birth" (XIII – 23). In other words, such a person attains moksha, says He. Suddenly he seems to switch over to two other categories; no, kshetraM is prakRRiti and purusha is kshetrajn-a, as is clear from the context.

This is where he gives in a crystallised essence the matter we have been discussing – namely ni tyA-ani tyA-vastu vivekaM. What is known in sAnkhyA shAsTra as purusha is the Absolute Reality of advaita shAsTra known as Atman and Brahman. What is called prakRRiti there (in sAnkhyA) is mAya here. Of course there is a slight difference; but the fact that prakRRiti and purusha is the mAya and the Atman, respectively, is 99 percent. true. It is well known that the Atman is the eternal Truth (ni tyA). So what is meant by ni tyA-ani tyA-vastu-vivekaM is nothing but the comprehension of the Atman as separate from the effects of mAya. In the word 'AtmA-anAtmA-vivacanaM', the anAtmA is nothing but mAya. So, to know the distinction between prakRRiti and purusha is to distinguish between anAtmA and AtmA.

For an Atma-jnAni there is nothing like anAtma. But being an Atma-jnAni is in the future. There is a work called "prouDhAnubhUti" by the Acharya, a wonderful rendering in a majestic manner of the status of a jnAni, written in such a 'madness' full of advaita-Ananda, that could be even mistaken by unknowing people as a kind of pride. In fact, [the Mahaswami gal adds smiling] the 'pride' justifies the name 'prouDhAnubhUti'. In this the Acharya says very emphatically: "It is absurd to talk about Atma-anAtma – vivechanaM. Is there a thing like anAtma? If there is one such then how can it be negated out of existence?". But remember, this is the statement of one who has had the anubhUti (the Experience). But, for those who have yet to reach that stage, the question that looms large is: "Is there something like the Atman? It is only anAtmA that seems to be everywhere"! For all those who have not yet reached that apex of jnAna, it is necessary, during their efforts on the journey, to be alert and to keep sorting out with discrimination, which is the one that is really eternal, which is the one that is the impermanent anAtmA, and what those are that, though impermanent, would be able to help us go to the Eternal Permanent entity, and what those are that, being impermanent, would drag us deep into further impermanence. The Acharya, in the last but one shloka of his Bhaja Govindam, has recommended us to do this sorting between Atman and anAtmA very carefully: *prANAyAmA pratyAhAraM ni tyAni tyA-viveka-vichAraM*. The shloka after this in Bhaja GovindaM is a phala-shruti.

The Acharya has his own doubts whether we can do this sorting in an intelligent way; so he gives in his prakaraNa work "anAtma-shri-vigarhaNam" a long list of anAtma items. In each shloka therein, the first three lines end with *tataH kiM?*. It means, "So what? What is the use?" Status, wealth, dress and decoration, physical beauty, fine health – there are many of this kind that we hold to be highly esteemable and in each line one of them is mentioned, followed by a "tataH kiM". Three such lines in every shloka are followed by the fourth line *yena svAtmA

nai va sAkshhAt-kRRi to' bhUt* (if one has not realised the Self). This is repeated in every shloka. The meaning of this refrain is to say: If one has not realised the Self, what is the use of his status? Of his wealth? Of his decorative show? Of his beauty? Of his health?. One does not know the truth of oneself; and without knowing that, what is the value of adding one's status, wealth and health? – this is the substance of the shlokas. Will it not look absurd if “we don't know somebody; but still we are going to honour that somebody with a presentation of a purse of money”? That is the situation here, says the Acharya. Atman is the truth of oneself; if this truth is not known what else is going to be of value? On the other hand if one knows the Self, to him also all these are of trivial value. In fact only if one discards all these as trivial, one can know his own Self. Thus in any case, status, wealth, decoration, beauty, health and whatever other things we hold to be great – all of them are undesirable. The discarding of all of them as anAtmA (non-self) is “anAtma-shrI vi garhaNaM”. The meanings of the word 'shrI' known to everybody are: Lakshmi, auspiciousness, wealth. But there is another meaning also: 'poison'! Lord Shiva is keeping the poison in his throat and that is why he is also called 'ShrI-kanTha'. The pleasures that we consider to be of value from wealth and auspiciousness, should be devalued as poison – this is 'anAtma-shrI-vi garhaNaM'. And this is nothing but another name for AtmA-anAtma-vivekaM, that is, ni tyA-ni tyA-vastu-vivekaM.

Note: "The (Our) Acharya(1)" always stands for Adi Shankaracharya.

16. VAIRAAGYA (DISPASSION)

One has to distinguish between nitya (permanent) and anitya (impermanent), discard what ought not to be and take what ought to be. In fact the discarding of what ought not to be is more important. In life itself, between what ought to be done and what ought not to be done, it may not matter if you don't do what ought to be done; but by doing what ought not to be done one invites great trouble. Take the common cold,, for instance. They say: 'You should have rice mixed in mustard powder, but no icecream.' One may not eat rice with mustard powder. But by having icecream the cold intensifies and one ends up in fever. Thus by eating prohibited food one experiences bad consequences immediately; on the other hand by eating the prescribed things do they immediately help? Not necessarily; they may or may not. Again bathing in the river Cauvery, if you do it near the shore, it is good both physically and mentally. Those who don't know swimming should not go into deep waters; if they do they will be drawn into the vortex of the flow. A bath in the Cauvery may even be missed; even if it is not missed, though the mind gets refreshed a little, one does not observe any great improvement in health or spiritual merit. But if one goes into deeper waters the danger of the vortex swallowing you up is great. Thus it

always happens that in this play of mAyA in the world, the negative forces have usually more power.

It therefore follows that once we have made an analysis of what is good for the spiritual ascent and what is bad, thereafter we should give first priority to the discarding of those which are bad.

Here, as I have said earlier, the 'thereafter' does not mean there is a strict 'one after the other' rule in sAdhanA. It happens that we have to exercise all the different steps of the sAdhanA together in a mixed fashion. At one stage some one of them becomes important or prominent and we usually talk of it as coming 'later' or 'earlier'.

When a foetus grows into a baby, does it grow in sequence such as, first the feet, then the stomach, then the chest and so on? All of them grow up simultaneously. So also these sAdhanAs have to be done side by side - not one after another. At each stage the concentration may be more in one or the other.

Thus we begin with sorting out the good and bad. The very sorting will teach us something about the task of discarding the bad and taking the good. And in due course of time this sorting will become automatic, by sheer practice over a long period of time! And that is when we have to start concentrating on the discarding of the undesirables.

And that is the part Number Two in the four parts of Saadhana-ChatushhTayaM. That is called *VairaagyaM* (Dispassion). It is also called *virakti* .

rAgaM and *rakti* both mean desire or liking. The discarding of desire or liking is *vairaagyaM* or *virakti*.

Sensual pleasures are the greatest obstacles to Spiritual wisdom. They are pleasures of the senses. When we run after a pleasure it means there is a desire for experiencing that pleasure. If we have no such desire, do we run after them?

So what it means to discard those obstacles to spiritual growth is to be rid of all desires - from the little desire for consumption of a snack to the great one of a desire for the obtaining of Bharat Ratna Award. This absence of desires is exactly what VairaagyaM means.

Tirumoolar, the Tamil mystic, describes Vairaagya parAkAshhTA (the apex of Vairaagya) as follows:

Cut off your desire; cut off your desire!
Even with God cut off your desire!
As you keep desiring misery follows
Cutting off desires - that is Happiness, Bliss!

[Tamil original: Asai arrumingaL, Asai arrumingal !

IsanoDAyinum Asai arrumingal !
 AsaiippaDappaDa Ayvarum tunbam
 Asai viDa viDa AnandamAme !]

If desires are eradicated totally, moksha is right there!.
 Nammazhvar has also sung: *atradu patrenil utradu veeDu*,
 which means exactly the same.

'tRRishhNA' is thirst. Desire is a thirst. When thirst
 arises, the tongue craves for drinking water; so also
 desire is the thirst for the enjoyment of sensual
 pleasures. Only when it is gone you can get NirvANa - that
 was the great discovery of the Buddha, say the Buddhistic
 texts.

Whatever religion there is among civilized society it does
 not fail to give importance to the eradication of desires.

Our Acharya also has given great importance to Vairaagya
 that eradicates desires. In his work *aparokshhAnubhUti*,
 when he refers to the sAdhanA regimen, he calls it (shloka
 3) the *vairaagyAdi chatushhTayaM* -- 'the four parts
 consisting of VairaagyaM etc.', thus mentioning VairaagyaM
 as the chief part.

How does the Acharya define VairaagyaM, let us see:

16. VAI RAAGYA (DI SPASSI ON) – (Conti nued)

tad-vai raagyaM jugupsA yA darshana-shravaNAdi bhi H /
 dehAdi -brahma-paryante hyani tye bhogya-vastuni //

This is the Acharya's defi nition of Vai raagyaM in
 Vi veka-chUDamaNi (shl oka 21). 'That is indeed Vai raagyaM',
 says he dramati cally!

'What is?'. Revul sion from objects of enjoyment by thi s
 human body, all the way from those things seen, heard,
 etc. in thi s human world to those objects of enjoyment in
 Brahma-l oka – that is Vai raagyaM.

"jugupsA" means the feeling of di sgust that causes one to
 reject it. An alternative reading is 'jihAsA'. The meaning
 is the same.

Once jnAna has been reached, then one feels love towards
 everything. There is no questi on of revul sion then.
 Because, then none of the objects whether bad or tempti ng,
 will affect him. In stages that precede that, it is not
 so. All objects of enjoyment of pleasure that cause us to
 slip down have to be di scarded with di staste -- only then
 one can save our Self. For the later sprouti ng of the
 personal ity of Love, one has to create for oneself thi s
 feeli ng of aversi on!

Revul sion is not of people. Certain ly not. The aversi on or
 di sgust is only towards the bondage that origi nates from
 our attachment to them; it is only of the pleasurable
 things they may offer. If one runs away from household,
 it is not out of aversi on or di sgust of the mother, or of

the wife, or son or daughter; certainly not. The repulsion or distaste is because of the obstacles to spirituality created by the bondage of attachment to them. The mother spoils our efforts at soul-cleaning when we fast for the purpose, by pitying with us on our fasting and tempting us with tasty food; when the spouse is at your side, the mind becomes vibrant.; the son has got to be admitted in an engineering college even if it costs a bribe of money; the daughter has to be married to a doctor according to her own wish and accordingly a costly dowry has to be met --- thus, each one of them binds you in a certain way. The repulsion is from this binding. The revulsion is from such bondage of these actions and from the enjoyable things that arise from them, not from the people concerned. Nor from the community of animals. Even in the shloka that we are discussing, it says "bhogya-vastuni jugupsA" – meaning, the disgust towards 'the objects of pleasure' and not towards jIvas. In other words, if we isolate ourselves from the Jivas, it is not out of hate or disgust for them but because through them we get attached to enjoyment of experiences.

Thus by discrimination between the permanent and transient objects we learn that all objects of sense-experience are transient and therefore we develop a distaste for them *jugupsA... hyani tye bhogya-vastuni*.

Note the words *hyani tye* instead of *ani tye*. It is actually *hi ani tye* that has become *hyani tye*. The word 'hi' gives an emphasis to what is being said.

Only when we develop a disgust do we stay away from those objects which generate a bondage of mAyA. An attitude of "Leave it alone; let it be" in this matter will not be a sAtvic attitude. It is only foolishness. "Not being afraid of what has to be feared is ignorance" says Tiruvalluvar. *anjuvathu anjAmai pethamai*. His Tirukkural teaches us to be courageous men not to be afraid of anything. Even then before one gets that courage, we should not bungle by our foolishness; so he says: "In this world one should certainly avoid those things of which we should be legitimately afraid; otherwise we shall only be foolish". Ignorance and foolishness are not far apart. Our Acharya who taught us to love everything – the same Acharya teaches us, to develop, in the early stages of spiritual ascent, a disgust towards those things which are in the nature of an obstacle to the growth of spirituality.

He gives a really telling analogy that actually may hurt us deep. It is an example which itself can be disgusting. The same example is given by him in three books, 'Bal a-bodha-sangrahaM', 'aparokshAnubhUti' and 'sarva-vedanta-siddhanta-sara-sangrahaM'. In the first two, he says *yathai va kAkavi shhTAyAM* and in the third, he says: *kAkasya vi shhTAvat asahya-buddhi H*. The analogy is to the leavings of a crow. Just as we have a natural disgust for the leavings of a crow, so also there should be a disgust towards things of sensual experience – this is the purpose of the analogy. Suppose we are having a picnic under a tree in its shade and suddenly from the branches of the tree a crow's leavings fall on your plate full of

excellent food. That very moment we move away from the food in total disgust, don't we? Even if the crow is hushed away and we sit at another plate of good food, our mood would have been upset and the good food refuses to go in! That kind of disgust is what should be developed in objects of sensual enjoyment -- that is *vai raagyaM*, says the Acharya. When such a disgust becomes really intense, even a picnic will appear only as disgusting as the leavings of a crow! One will start thinking that there is no need for a picnic when, as the Acharya has said, it is only necessary to calm the disease of hunger by eating what one gets by *Bi kshhA* (ritual begging).

It is not as if we are talking only about the pleasures that one enjoys through this human body in this world. Our distaste has to be even in those enjoyments one hopes to experience in the world of BrahmA. The *jugupsA* has to extend that far. **dehAdi brahma-paryante**.

The Absolute Truth that is formless and attributeless, called Brahman – that is the only thing to be aimed. The enjoyments that may be offered by The Lord whose form is Creator BrahmA, in his world, -- all these have to be discarded as valueless.

SEC. 16. VAI RAAGYA (DISPASSION) – (Continued)

In *Sadhana-chatushtayaM*, when the Acharya mentions *vai raagyaM* he actually refers to it with a long qualifying adjective as **ihAmutrArtha-bhoga-vi rAgAM** or **ihAmutra-phala-bhoga-vi rAgAM**. (Brahma-sutra- bhashya: I. 1-1; *Vivekachudamani*: 19).

'iha' + 'amutra' is 'ihAmutra'. 'iha' means this world we live in now. 'amutra' means the *pitR loka* or *indra loka* etc. which are not 'here' or 'near' but 'far, somewhere'. The world of the divines where several of the *devas* live as well as the farthest 'brahma loka' where Brahma lives – all of these are included in the 'amutra'. *Tiruvalluvar* says: "Those with no Money miss this world; those with no Grace miss the other world" – 'this world' here is 'iha' and 'the other world' here is 'amutra'. The experiences in that brahma loka are also not the spiritual experiences; nor are the bliss of the Brahma-loka the Bliss of the Atman. The pleasure of Brahma-loka also vanishes during dissolution at the end of the kalpa. It is not eternal or permanent like the Bliss of the Atman. Further, even there one gets only the pleasure that keeps the distinction between *jIvAtmA* and *paramAtma* and so it won't be even an iota of the great Bliss of identification of the two. Thus the 'virAgA' is the 'vai rAgya' in the experience ('bhoga') of the objects ('artha') that one gets in 'iha' or 'amutra'. That is why it is 'ihAmutrArtha-bhoga-vi rAgAM'. When we talk of this in another way as 'vai rAgya' in the experience of the fruits of this world or the other world, he calls it 'ihAmutra-phala-bhoga-vi rAgAM'. 'artha' is an object; 'phala' is that which we get from the object.

Those who have 'vai rAgya' are known as **vI ta-rAgA**'s. The '*vAtApi GanapatiM*' song has **vI ta-rAgI naM vi nata-yogi naM**.

In Mundakopani shad (III – 2 - 5), the Rishis are said to have obtained contentment in their Enlightenment, to have been established in the Atman, to be 'vIta-rAga's (free from attachment) and finally are described as 'prashAnta' – those who are fully composed.

It is the distaste that arises from vai rAgya that is called *ni rvedaM*. When one obtains complete indifference to worldly matters, that is 'ni rvedaM'. Incidentally, it is this feeling that is at the source of 'shAnta rasa' – says the alankAra shAstra. 'vai rAgyaM' and 'ni rvedaM' are similar words. It is also spoken of in the same Upani shad (I – 2 – 12) that speaks of *vItarAga*'s. The Acharyal comments in his bhashya: The prefix 'ni' added to the root 'vid' gives rise to the word 'ni rvedaM' and the meaning is 'vai rAgyaM' -- *vai rAgyArthe*. Two things that are spoken of very highly in the path of karma is what is known as *ishhTA-pUrtaM*, namely the yajnas and social services. But even they are only preliminaries (*pUrvAngas*) to be renounced after they have taken us to jnAna-yoga. Instead of taking them to be part of karma yoga, those who think they can lead us to the goal are only downright fools -- *pramUDha*'s, says the Upani shad. 'Not just ordinary fools, but totally deluded fools'. "An intelligent brahmin should discover by analysis that even the heavens that one obtains even by the highest type of karma are only 'ani tyA' (impermanent) ; should get the knowledge that brahman which is actionless cannot be obtained by any action; and thus get *ni rvedaM* , that is, he should get vai rAgyaM. Thereafter he should seek a Guru who is a brahma-ni shhTa, get the upadesha from him and himself get brahma-jnAna".

Earlier we saw that Karma yoga is the first stage; to get the formal teaching for brahma-jnAna after becoming a sannyAsi is the third stage; what comes in between as the second stage is the sAdhana-chatushhTayaM; and the second item in this four-fold Sadhana is Vai rAgyaM. But here the first stage is spoken of as karma, then is mentioned only vai rAgyaM and then quickly the teaching of brahma-jnAna, which is actually the third stage, is mentioned. From this it is clear that vai rAgyaM alone suffices and if one holds on to it steadfastly, all the four parts of sAdhana-chatushhTayaM will be acquired automatically.

When the Acharyal is writing the BhashyaM for this Upani shad, several mantras earlier, when the matter of the worldly apara-vi dyA and the spiritual para-vi dyA comes up (I – 1 -5) he says: "All can study the Brahma-vi dyA intending to give Brahma-jnAna and become very knowledgeable; but if one wants to get the experiential knowledge of Brahman, one has to go, with vai rAgyaM, to a Guru, and get the upadeshaM – *gurvabhi gamanAdi -l akshhaNaM vai rAgyaM*" . Thus he refers only to vai rAgyaM here.

SEC. 16. VAI RAAGYA (DISPASSION) – (Continued)

We saw that the Acharyal has given the definition of 'vai rAgyaM' as *darshana-shravaN- Adi bhi H jugupsA*, that is, "a distaste for all that is seen and all that is heard". He thus talks about two things 'seen' and 'heard'. Recall that Lord Krishna also mentions (in II – 52) two

things *shrotavyasya shrutasya ca* -- that which is to be heard and that which has been heard. All the nonsensical things that we have heard and stored up in our memory constitute those that have been 'heard'. Further those about which we are dead curious and itching to know – 'I should know about that and about this' – these are the ones 'to be heard'. From both of these we should get 'nirvedaM' – is what the Lord is saying (in II – 52). When the Acharya writes the Bhashya for this he interprets 'nirvedaM' as 'vairAgyaM'. The Lord says here that when the intellect which has been totally tainted because of its being immersed in the gutter of delusion comes out of that gutter, then one gets vairAgyaM in whatever that is heard or whatever is to be heard. The point of taintedness by delusion is explicitly named by the Acharya as "the confusion of the intellect in discriminating between Atman and anAtman". That is what was listed as number one in chatushTayaM. The next one is vairAgyaM. The Lord also lists them in the same order in this shloka.

VairAgyaM is the absence of 'rAga', that is, desire. One who has VairAgyaM is VairAgi, also Bai rAgi. The bai rAgi homeless renunciates of north India are so called because they are VairAgis. In other words we have been equating sannyaAsa with vairAgyaM. One who has renounced rAga is VairAgi. One who is subject to rAgas (desires) is rAgi. He who has rAga is rAgi. Such desire-prompted individuals are called 'kAmayamAnaH' in the Upanishad (Br. U. IV-4-6). Desires actually destroy a person; so the Upanishads speak of him as 'kAma-hataH' (Tait. U. II – 8; Br. U. IV-3-33). Analogously, he who is not subject to desires is called 'akAmayamAnaH' or 'akAma-hataH'.

Usually we interpret 'rAga' and 'kAma' both as 'desire' and identify them. But there is a subtle difference between the two. At one place in the Gita (VII – 11) Bhagavan says *kAma-rAga-vivarjitaM*, to mean 'without kAma and rAga'. This shows that 'kAma' and 'rAga' are two different things. What is the difference? These are the subtle situations where our Acharya by his extraordinary intelligence helps us with explanations. " 'Kama' is the thirst or 'trishhNA' in objects not yet attained; 'rAga' is the attachment in objects already attained" – thus does the Acharya distinguish the two. We shall not need this minute distinction here. Let us take both 'kAma' and 'rAga' to mean the same thing, desire.

The Upanishad says: He who has no vairAgyaM is a 'kAmayamAnaH' and he who has vairAgyaM is 'akAmayamAnaH'. The Upanishad further talks about them. The 'kAmayamAnaH' thinks that karma is everything and keeps on performing his karmas, then he reaps their fruits in the other world; when that gets exhausted he is born again here and revolves in the same rut of karma. On the other hand the 'akAmayamana', that is, the one who has vairAgyaM, is, the Upanishad goes on, 'akAma', 'nishkAma' and 'AptakAma'. When he throws off his desires he is 'akAma' (desireless). Instead of his making efforts to get rid of desires, when they themselves run away from him, he is 'nishkAma' (devoid of desires). Then he becomes an 'AptakAma' – one who has attained his desires! When the Upanishad speaks like this, one gets the

doubt: 'How does an 'akAmayamAna' (one who is not subject to desires) have desires? What does he desire to obtain?' . But this is explained by the next epithet which the Upanishad uses in the series: 'akAma', 'ni shkAma', 'AptakAma' and 'AtmakAma'. 'AtmakAma' is one who has desire for the Atman only. When he gets that he becomes an 'AptakAma' – he who has attained his desire. Thus the one who has vairAgyam becomes an akAma, ni shkAma, AptakAma and AtmakAma; when he dies his jIva does not go to any other world. The Upanishad says that he is Brahman even while living and when the body falls, he is still immersed in Brahman (Br. U. IV – 4 – 6) . It is the state of desirelessness, that is, VairAgyaM, that has been said to be so qualified for Brahman-experience.

If one is not just a 'shrotriya' – a scholar with deep understanding of the vedas – but is also an 'akAmahata' , that is, one who is not destroyed by desire, he is the one who rises step by step, each time a hundredfold, in the bliss that starts from that of a ruler of this world to the ultimate bliss of Brahman, says Taittiriya Upanishad (II – 8) and also (though slightly in a different way) Br. U. IV – 3 – 33. Thus here also, it is the destruction of desire, that is, being with VairAgyaM, is the prime qualification.

SEC. 16. VAI RAAGYA (DISPASSION) – (Continued)

In the Gi ta also Bhagavan has emphasized as important, only the two things: "Practice and Dispassion" *abhyAsaM* and *vairAgyaM*. To still the truant mind in one place persistent efforts have to be made. Persistent effort is what 'practice' means. For stilling the mind the other important requisite is Dispassion (VairAgyaM), says He.

In the very beginning of Gi topadesha, when he talks about the characteristics of a 'sthi ta-praj na', he mentions the first characteristic: *praj ahAti yadA kAmAn sarvAn pArtha manogatAn*. This itself is nothing but VairAgyaM. In the last chapter, when he talks about what should be done in the jnAna path, after having attained success in the path of karma, he says *ni tyam vairAgyaM samupAshri taH* (XVIII – 52) – "Dispassion to be practised uninterruptedly".

VairAgyaM is the distaste in everything that you see or hear. This is Acharya's statement (in Vi vekachudamani). Of these, putting aside 'the seen', the Lord says in the Gi ta, as I told you already, two things "what is heard, and what is to be heard". Now in the same Gi ta when the Acharya is doing the bhashya for *ni tyam vairAgyaM samupAshri taH*, he says "The absence of a thirst of desire in both the seen and the unseen" -- *dRRi shhTA-dRRi shTeshhu vi shhayeshhu vai tRRi shhNyam*. What does he mean by desire in the unseen? It is the desire for experience of heaven and in things like the post of Indra, etc. If one goes through the regimen of veda-ordained karmas as if they are an end in themselves, one obtains such pleasures of the divine world. But they are not visible to our perception now, so they are called *adRRi shhTaM*. *dRRi shhTaM* means what is seen. The unseen is *adRRi shhTaM*.

Thus we see Vi arAgyaM from three different angles. One:

The abandonment of the desires in everything that we see or hear; two: the abandonment of the desires in what we have heard or what we are going to hear; and three: the abandonment of desires in the seen and the unseen.

[Note by Ra. Ganapathy: In Gita XIII – 8 the word 'VairAgyam' occurs. When the Acharyal is commenting on this, he explains: "In the senses like sound etc. , a desireless attitude towards the experiences seen and unseen" . The etc. connotes all that can occupy the mind through the senses – just as the Mahaswami gal would want us to understand.]

Putting all this together we get the meaning for *sarvAn pArtha manogatAn*, that is, any desire that can occupy the mind has to be tabooed; that is what VairAgyaM is.

This is a very important part of SadhanA.

BhartRhari was a great man. He has composed a *shatakaM*, that is, a piece of hundred verses, with great feeling and majesty, about Sannyasa and Sannyasi. He could have as well named it "Sannyasa shatakaM". Instead he has named it "VairAgya shatakaM". If VairAgyam is there Sannyasa is not far behind – seems to be the thought.

What else is 'San-nyAsaM'? Is it not a total 'renunciation'? Unless you renounce that which is called desire, how can you renounce everything else? So it is not surprising that Sannyasam, as well as Renunciation, are both synonymous with VairAgyaM.

The great Tiruvalluvar has told us in Tamil about Dharma. In the chapter on Renunciation, he says that renunciation is when we attach ourselves only to the attachmentless God, thus renouncing all other attachments. It is by desire, by rAga, that one gets attachment. Alternatively, when we have an association with something, that is when we are attached to something, then there arises desire towards that – just as the Lord has said *sangAt sanjAyate kAmAH* (II – 62). Thus both desire and attachment are mutually cause and effect for each other. Therefore when Tiruvalluvar says *patru viDarkku* (abandonment of attachment), he is actually referring to the rise of VairAgyaM. He calls that renunciation and closes that chapter with the words *patru viDarkku*. In the same section of chapters there is another chapter called "cutting off of desires" (*avA aruttal*), which is also only VairAgyaM.

VairAgyam is the walking off from all wealth. That VairAgyam itself is a great wealth, There is nothing equivalent to that in the whole world, why, nothing in the divine world either – says he very beautifully:

*VenDamai anna vi zhucceIvam INdiI lai
ANDum akdu oppadu il*.

SEC.16. VAIRAAGYA (DISPASSION) – (Continued)

Almost the same thought (about renunciation and vairAgyam)

has been expressed by Sadashiva Brahmendra. In his Atma-vidya-vilasaM he visualises the Sannyasi as a king (of the spiritual kingdom) and says:

svIkRRita-vairAgya-sarvasvaH -- the one who has appropriated all the treasures of vairAgyaM. He himself was like that! Men like BhartRhari, Tiruvalluvar and Sadashiva Brahmendra were themselves in possession of great vairAgya. Their thoughts about vairAgya touch our hearts -- at least for that moment! From their mouths we learn how, though acquiring that kind of vairAgyam may be most difficult, once we achieve it we then really have the treasure of the bliss of the Atman, -- the treasure that belittles as trash all those treasures that we have been holding as great. Did not our own Acharya run away with the utmost vairAgya at the age of eight from home, from town and from the very mother who was treating him with extraordinary affection as her own very soul? In fact he has produced a panchakaM (a piece of five shlokas) where each shloka has the ending refrain: *kaupInavantaH khalu bhAgyavantaH* (Blessed are those with nothing but a loin cloth). In BhajagovindaM also he asks *kasya sukhaM na karoti virAgaH* -- Who is the one that will not get Eternal Bliss from vairAgyaM?

The moment one thinks of vairAgyaM one will not fail to recall the famous PattinattAr! He was born as an amsha of Kubera and was doing even overseas trade. But one day there came the boy, an amsha of Lord shiva, who left a written message "Not even a useless needle will come along with you on your last journey" and disappeared. As soon as Pattinathar saw that, he renounced all his immense wealth and left home clad only in a loin-cloth, carrying only a begging bowl ('Odu' in Tamil), singing the couplet

*VIDu namaakku-tiruvAlangADu vimalar tantha
Odu namakkuNDu*.

In course of time even that begging bowl was thrown away by him since holding that 'property' was thought to be unbecoming of a renunciate. And he sang:

Hometown is not permanent; nor are relatives
Neither is the name they gave you

(In Tamil: *Oorum cathamalla, uRRaar chathamalla
[uRRup-peRRa]
perum chathamalla ...*)

When we hear the innumerable songs he has composed, vairAgya arises in us, even though temporarily just as one gets after a child-birth (called *prasava-vairAgyam*) or after visiting a cremation (called *smashAna-vairAgyam*) !

I told you about BhartRhari. There is a story that even he was a disciple of this Pattinathar. BhartRhari is also known as Bhadrageeri. This Bhadrageeri was a king of Ujjain; but he renounced his kingship and came to Tiruvidaimaruthur where he was sitting as a renunciate begging for food with a bowl in hand. He used to get Biksha (alms of food) for

both his Guru Pattinathar and himself. It is amazing to note that one who was an incarnate of Kubera and another who had a kingdom to own both became renunciates with that much of dispassion! Even then Pattinathar thought that Bhadragiri did not have enough vairAgya! Because the latter had kept a begging bowl for his begging! A poor man went to Pattinathar and asked for alms. It is said that it was the Lord Himself of the temple (Mahalinga Swami) who went so disguised. And Pattinathar told him: "I myself have nothing; why do you ask me? Go and ask that 'family man' sitting at the western gate of the temple. And tell him that I sent you there!" When Bhadragiri heard this statement reported to him, he realised the force of the words 'family man' and in that very instant threw away his begging bowl!

There are more interesting things in this story; but I am not going to continue the story, for, then I won't have time to tell you about all the things I want to say about SadhanA. When we are talking of VairAgyam I thought the mention of these great role models of renunciation would add to the depth of the ideas.

Here the one who sang *Odu namakkuNDu* ('we have the begging bowl') later came to the conclusion that even one who has the Odu (Begging bowl) is actually a family man! There is a similar story in the life history of Sadashiva Brahmendra. He sings in his Atma Vidya Vilasam (#46): "With the folded hand as pillow, the sky as blanket, the bare ground as bed, and dispassion as wife - thus sleeps a renunciate in the blessed state of samAdhi". Once he was himself in that blissful pose of sleep on the ground in an open field. A farmer girl who was passing by, remarked to her friend, with a sarcastic smile: What a sannyasi! He needs a head-rest for his head; what type of renunciation is this? This made Sadashiva Brahmendra think: 'How come I am thinking like an ordinary man that the head has to rest above the level of the rest of the body in order to sleep? Unless I get rid of this attachment to the body my sannyasa is not worth the salt. It is only Mother Goddess who has come in the form of this low-caste woman to give me this upadesha'. Thus thinking, he removed his hand that was used as a head rest and lay on the ground without any headrest.

But the same woman who had commented earlier passed that way again, saw the change in the posture of the sannyasi and again gave a sarcastic laugh followed by an equally sarcastic comment! She said: "A Sannyasi should know things for himself. Just to keep reacting to comments made by passers-by does not speak well of renunciation!"

That was the day when Sadashiva became an honest-to-goodness non-reacting, non-acting, non-responding inert-like entity, Sadashiva Brahman!

SEC. 16. VAI RAAGYA (DI SPASSI ON) – (Conti nued)

Thus even the commonfolk seem to be knowi ng what ki nd of

vai rAgyaM should a Sannyasi possess.! It is in such a land of ours we have modern Sannyasi s who say they cannot remain without coffee or ovaltine! And if you ask, they may say: "We are ati-varNAshramis, who are above the Sannyasi level; as that low-caste woman said, we know what to do and what not to do"

Instead of showing off like this, if one wants to be really in possession of Atma-jnAna, the one single thing very, very necessary, is VairAgyaM. It is said (e.g., in Jabala Upanishad IV and other Sannyasa Upanishads) that when that vai rAgyaM has been acquired, then that very day one can leave home as a Sannyasi -- *yad-ahareva vi rajet tadahareva pravraj et*.

But one should not leave home or karma in disgust of the present life not giving any permanent happiness. Such a thing will turn out to be dry. The disgust about the present impermanent life should be accompanied by the thought about the permanent bliss of the Atman. Then only it will turn out to be a right sAdhanA and in turn lead to everlasting bliss. Once the Realisation is reached, the disgust also will disappear and everything will be full of Love. In other words it is in association with the comprehension (vi vekaM) of the syndrome of the permanent and the impermanent that one should practise vai rAgyaM. Neither vai rAgyaM without that vi vekaM nor vi vekaM without the vai rAgyaM will suffice. They have to combine.

The very fact we are asked to analyse the distinction between the permanent and the impermanent is to discard the impermanent through dispassion. To get that dispassion is the first step of the spiritual ascent. That is why 'AparokshAnubhUti' gives importance to vai rAgyaM and classifies vai rAgyaM as the first step. In 'Vi vekachUDamani' also *mokshhasya prathamo hetuH* (Verse 69/ Verse 70 in another reading) – An extreme vai rAgya in things impermanent is the first cause for Moksha – thus combining the two in a symbiotic way.

Thus these constitute the first two of Sadhana-chatushhTayaM.

Let us go to the third now. Vi veka and VairAgya are at least known to all people in a general way. But the sAdhanA parts that we are going to describe now may not be so known, even by name.

Sec. 17 : THE SEXTAD OF TREASURABLE QUALITIES

The third part of Sadhana-chatushhTayaM is called *shamAdi shhaTka-sampatti* -- the sextad of treasures beginning with 'shama'. These are: 'shama', 'dama', 'uparati', 'ti tikshhA', 'shraddhA' and 'samAdhAna'. Of these people know about 'shraddhA', but even here, they usually think it means a deep interest or involvement. It is not so. A firm conviction or faith is called shraddhA; I have already mentioned that shraddhA is faith in what the ShAstras and the Guru say. Again, the sixth one, called 'samAdhAna' is also a well-known word but not a well-understood word in its connotation of one of the six 'sampatti'. We shall take

it up when we come to it in due turn.

The six are referred to as 'shamAdi' by our Acharya. Note that it is 'shamAdi' and not 'samAdhi'. The 'sha' is not the 'sa' of 'sa-ri-ga-ma-pa...' but the 'sha' of 'Shankara'. *shama-damAdi upetaH syAt* says Brahma-sutra (III – 4 – 27). For the attainment of jnAna one should have shama, dama and the like. *tad-vidheH* -- that is the rule, adds the Sutra. Who made the rule? Obviously, the Vedas. It is Ishvara who has so ordained through the vedas.

Where exactly do the vedas prescribe shama, dama and the like? In Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad, (IV – 4 – 23) where Yajnavalkya teaches Janaka, he says a jnAni has to be a *shAnta* (one with shama), *dAnta* (one with dama), *uparata* (one with uparati), *titikshhu* (one with titikshhA) and *samAhita* (one with samAdhAna). In other words, only he who has practised and acquired all these can become a jnAni or can obtain jnAna. Here five of the six have been mentioned. The same order among them is also maintained by the Acharya. 'ShraddhA' is the remaining one. It is actually basic to everything. The shruti talks about it in several places. Thus we always talk about the sextad of " 'shama" and the like".

SEC. 18: SHAMA AND DAMA

What is 'shama'? The Acharya gives the following definition:

Vi raj ya vi shhaya-vrAtA doshha-dRRi shhTyA muhur-muhuH /
svalakshhye niyatAvasthA manasaH shama uchyate //
(Vi vekachudamani : 22)

The conglomerate of all sensual experience in the form of sound, touch, form, taste and smell by the five sense organs is called *vi shhaya-vrAta*. By discretion (vi veka) and dispassion (vairAgya) one has to analyse and discover that all these are only obstacles on the path to Self-Realisation and so we have to discard them. This is what is said by *muhur-muhuH doshha-dRRi shhTyA vi raj ya* -- meaning, 'often, by realising they are bad, discarding out of disgust'.

Our mind is always thinking about what it considers pleasurable and is perturbed because of the inability to reach them. Thus it misses peace and happiness. Once we discard the sense objects as bad then it would be possible to fix the mind on the goal of SadhanA, the Atman, which is full of peace and happiness. In other words the mind that is frantically running after multifarious matters can be made to stop that running and can be tethered to one goal. That kind of control is what is called *shama*.

One should think about the negative effects of 'vi shhaya-vrAta', the gang of sense experience.
'vi raj ya' : discarding them out of disgust.
'sva-lakshhye' : in one's own goal.
'manasaH niyata avasthA' : keep the mind tethered under control

'shama uchyate' : is said to be 'shama'.

In short, the control of mind is 'shama'.

Why does the mind run after sense objects? It is because of the footprints of past experience. They are called 'smell' or 'vAsanA'. This continues life after life. This inter-life vAsanA continues in a latent form in the subtle body, even after the physical body dies. When the soul takes another birth and thus obtains a new physical body, the latent vAsanAs begin to show their mettle! If those vAsanAs can be eradicated in toto, the mind will be calmed automatically. It is thus the Acharya defines 'shama' in 'aparokshhAnubhUti'. (Just now what we gave was the definition from Vi veka chudamani).

sadai va vAsanA-tyAgaH shamo' yam-i ti shabdi taH

Abandonment always of desire-promptings through vAsanAs is said to be 'shama'.

It is enough to understand that 'shama' is control of the mind.

The thing that comes next is 'dama'. It is control of the sense organs. In fact there is a lot more to say about 'shama'. But mind-control and sense-control have both to go hand in hand. So let us talk about some basics of 'dama' also now and then we can go more deeply about both together.

Sense organs are ten – five organs of action and five organs of perception. But the latter cannot 'do' anything themselves. The organs of action do action themselves: actions done by hands – the names 'kara' (hand) and 'kAryaM' (action) are themselves indicative, the legs do action by walking, jumping and running, the mouth speaks or sings, and two remaining organs excrete waste or vIryaM from the human body. On the other hand the organs of perception are those which cognize (or perceive) things in the outside world and 'experience' them. The ear experiences sound, the skin experiences the smoothness or otherwise and the coldness or hotness of something outside, the eye perceives colour and form, the tongue experiences the taste like sourness, bitterness or sweetness and the nose knows the experience of smell.

When we do not keep these sense organs under control all the mischief happens. The Jiva is bound to this mayic world through the experiences by these sense organs. Only when we control these organs may we hope to enter the world of spirituality. Such control is called 'dama'.

The direct meanings of both 'shama' and 'dama' is control without any specific qualifier as control of the mind or control of the senses. But traditional usage recognises two controls – one, control of the sense organs which either receive or respond to knowledge from outside and control of the sense organs which do actions to help such perception or response and two, control of the mind which creates its own world of thoughts and constantly is

roaming about with or without aim in that world. Usage distinguishes these two controls and so uses 'shama' for mind control and 'dama' for sense control. Since anyway both mean control the Acharya himself, in the beginning of his 'shhaTpadI stotraM' goes against traditional usage and uses 'damaya manaH' where he wants to say 'control the mind' and uses 'shamaya vi shhaya mRRi ga-tRRi shhNAM' where he wants to say 'control the senses that run to the mirage of outside sense objects'.

SEC. 18: SHAMA AND DAMA (Continued)

The Prakarana works of the Acharya are unique in describing the advaitic experiences. One can also get from them the rationale and procedure of Sadhana regimen in a systematic way. On the other hand when we want to get at the siddhanta (conclusion) by analysing the pros and cons of Vedanta, we have to give weight to his Bhashyas. And we may be surprised to note that in these very Bhashyas he has sometimes interpreted shama and dama in a way contrary to their traditional usage! In fact this has raised even some controversy among scholars. Remember I told you earlier that the sextad of qualifications with the exception of shraddha has been mentioned in Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. In his commentary at that point, the Acharya has interpreted 'shAnta' (one endowed with shama) as 'one who has controlled the goings-on of the outer senses' (*bAhyendriya vyApArata upashAntaH*), that is, the one who has reached a position generally accepted to be the state of 'dama'; and he has interpreted 'dAnta' (one endowed with dama) as 'one who has released himself of the thirst (tRRi shhNA) of the inner organ, the mind, (*antaHkaraNa-tRRi shhNato ni vRRi ttaH*), that is, the one who has reached a position generally accepted to be the state of 'shama'. On the other hand, in his prakarana work, Viveka-chudamani, he goes with the general trend of meaning. But this need not raise a debate or controversy. He wrote the Bhashyas almost soon after he was initiated into Sannyasa in his youth. Shama, dama both point to 'control' and he might have thought it fit to talk of sense-control first and then only of mind-control. And later when he travelled throughout the country he might have decided to follow the accepted tradition among the scholars.

'dama' and 'shama' both imply a control on oneself by oneself. So when we generally talk of self-control in an integrated sense of both mind-control and sense-control, we may rightly use either 'dama' or 'shama' alone. In BrihadaranyakaM when Brahma teaches the divines generally to be humble, he just says "dAmyata" thus using only the word 'dama'.

An alternate name for Bharata, the son of Dushyanta and Shakuntala is 'sarva-damana', meaning one who controls and reigns over all. It was because of the dominance of her beauty that Damayanti is so called. The God of Death, Yama, is called 'shamana' because he calms away the life of every one, be he a king or a pauper, when the time comes for it.

From the word 'dama' the two words 'damanaM' and 'dAnti'

have been derived; so also from the word 'shama', the two words 'shamanaM' and 'shAnti' have come. The words 'shamanaM' and 'shAnti' are more frequently in use than 'damanaM' and 'dAnti'. We say 'ushhNa-shamanaM' and 'pi tha-shamanaM' for controlling heat and bile, respectively. Also 'krodha-shamanaM' for controlling anger. Though 'control' is generally the intention here, the connotation is more mild and points out only to a softening rather than a violent control. The word 'shAnti' itself connotes a calming down and stands for a peaceful process or state where the intensity of control does not surface.

'shAnti' is the state of calmed mind; 'dAnti' is the state of calmed senses. Usually sannyAsis are given the attributes like 'shAnti dAnti bhUmnaM'.

Note by Ra. Ganapthy: In the Mutt the Shrimukham of the Pi thAdi pati (head of Mutt) includes this as one of the attributes.

The eyes and ears can close themselves and stop seeing or hearing. The hands and legs also can be tied so that they are incapable of any action. But even then the mind will be having its own goings-on without any discipline. Even though the senses are not experiencing anything, the mind can imagine them and go through all the rumblings and turbulences. When the senses act they act only by the promptings of the mind and for the satisfaction of the mind or fulfillment of the desires of the mind. So what is necessary is to immobilise the mind in order to stop all the multifarious activities of the senses.

It is because of this importance of mental control and discipline that sAdhana regimens talk first of shama and dwell on dama later.

Of course an objection may be raised: "If shama is achieved then automatically dama is also a part of it; so why has it to be dealt with separately?"

The complete control of the mind – what is also called the 'death of the mind' (*mano-nAshaM*) occurs only almost at the last stage. We are here talking about the penultimate stages. Of course one has to try to control the mind right from the beginning. But the attempt at such control will only succeed temporarily. The moment the eyes see a tasty dish or the nose smells something familiarly pleasant, all discipline goes to the winds. The legs take you to the dish, the hands grab it, and the mouth begins to chew it. Thus even the mind was having a little control of itself, the senses perceive the sense object and that starts a yearning and that does havoc to the control of the mind. Until we reach a spiritual height, our mind behaves like this – that is, controlled when the sense objects are not in the perception-range of the senses, and losing control when the senses 'sense' the objects of temptation. Those are the situations when the 'eyes', 'ears', 'nose', 'legs', 'hands' etc. have to be imprisoned and bound. This is why, 'dama' is mentioned as soon as 'shama' is mentioned.

SEC. 18: SHAMA AND DAMA (Continued)

Kathopanishad gives a beautiful analogy for mind and the senses. Jiva is like the master seated in a chariot. The body is the chariot. The intellect is the charioteer. The chariot has several horses. Which are the horses? They are nothing but our senses. The charioteer steers the chariot by pulling the reins thereby controlling the horses. Those reins are the mind. The intellect - the one which has already been tempered by viveka and vairAgya, the first two of the four parts of Sadhana-chatushhTayaM - is now the wise intellect and therefore the right charioteer who pilots the chariot of the body along the path of life. The right path is the spiritual path. The charioteer has to pull the reins (the mind) the proper way, not too hard, not too loose, so that the sense-horses go only in the direction of the highest experiences in life. When the destination of Brahman realisation arrives, one releases the horses (senses) as well as the reins (the mind) and also the charioteer (the intellect), the Jiva (the resident of the chariot) who is the master can enjoy the Self by himself for himself!

'dama' denotes sense-control; but here only the senses of perception (jnAnendriyas) are indicated. Just as it is the mind which is the force behind the five senses of perception so also it is the force of the senses of perception that motivate the karmendriyas (senses of action) into action. That is why, the control of the senses of action are not dealt with separately. The control of indriyas usually means control of the five senses of perception only. In Viveka Chudamani a little later (#76 or 78, depending on what reading you are using) these five senses are shown to be the harbinger of all evil. "The deer obtains its ruin by the sense of sound through the ear (Hunters play the flute, the deer gets charmed by the music and stands still; that is when it is caught). The elephant reaches its ruin by the sense of touch through the skin (The he-elephant is caught when he forgets himself in the pleasure of contact with a she-elephant, already known to him and now lured into his track). The moth meets its death by sensing the form through the eyes (Does it not burn itself by being attracted by the form of light-flame which deludes it?). The fish meets its ruin by the sense of taste realised by the tongue (The bait of the fisherman is the worm that prompts the fish to taste it and gets caught). The bee meets its ruin by the sense of smell (The smell of the champaka flower attracts the bee and it goes and sits inside the full blossom of the flower; when the flower petals close up the bee still remains there, being enchanted by the smell and that is when it dies, starved of fresh air). Thus each of the five different senses of perception prove to be the cause of death for one of the five different species of beings. The human, on the other hand is a prey to all the five senses of perception. What to speak of the crisis in store for him?"

However, in shloka #23 he refers to *ubhayeshhAM indriyANAM*, where he defines 'dama'. He says 'dama' is the

control of both types of senses, of perception as well as of action; the control is of the experience of pleasures obtained by both:

vishhayebhyaH parAvartya sthApanaM sva-svagolake /
ubhayeshhAM indriyaNAM sa damaH parikIrtitaH //

'dama' is said to be the withdrawal of both kinds of senses (jnAna as well as karma) from their objects of enjoyment and limiting them to their own spheres (*sva-sva-golake*).

Here the 'withdrawing of the senses' makes sense; but 'limiting the senses to their own spheres' is not so clear. Let me tell you how I have myself understood this. It does not mean that one should not see anything, should not hear anything, should not eat anything, should not move about or do anything with hands and feet. No, the Acharya does not mean that. If we stop all activities that way then the journey of life itself would become impossible. And then where comes the sAdhana? Only if the base screen is there you can draw pictures on it. Whatever is necessary for life's journey - like seeing, hearing, eating, walking, moving - has to be done. Thus what is necessary to be done automatically defines a limit, a limiting sphere of activity, on all the senses. This is what is called *golaka* by the Acharya. That particular activity of the particular sense (indriya) which is necessary for life to continue, that range of activity is its golakaM. Once you transcend it, it is detrimental to the spirit. That boundary shall never be crossed. An automobile for instance can go at a particular speed; the very purpose of an automobile is to go places. But there is a speed limit. In the same way in the journey of life so long as the journey is on, there is work for the senses. You cannot stifle them by cutting them off from their work.

The Lord says in the Gita (III - 8) : Do what is prescribed for you; Without doing any work you cannot carry on this journey of life. This has to be brought into concordance here.

Don't take *golaka* as 'orb'. Take it as 'orbit' - the path of the movement and not just movement. When all the planets keep to their orbits around the Sun the solar universe and the inhabitants of this universe carry on their routine normally. In order for life in the universe to be normal the movement of the planets has to conform to its schedule. What will happen if one of the planets just go out of its 'orbit'? What will happen if the planets do not get into their respective orbits? Either way there will be chaos. In the same way the ten senses of man have to keep staying in their orbits and keep doing their prescribed work; otherwise, there will be no life - only death. Maybe everything will then have to start all over again according to the maxim *punarapi jananaM*. And we do not know whether we will get a human birth in that 'punarapi jananaM'. At least now we talk of the Atman and we have occasion to talk of 'Sadhana' to reach that Atman.

Our new birth may not be anywhere near the availability of these opportunities. In short, we have to see to it that the indriyas do their necessary work but do not get out of their limited sphere of action. The *sthApanaM* (fixation, establishment) of the senses in their spheres of action is not a stoppage of the senses, but is a fixing of them in their own path.

Recall that all this applies to both jnAnendriyas (senses of perception) and karmendriyas (senses of action).

SEC. 18: SHAMA AND DAMA (Continued)

Usually the five senses of perception and the five of action are counted along with the mind as eleven indriyas. The eleven rudra forms of Lord Shiva are the adhi-devatas, the deities pertaining to these senses. When we fast on the Ekadasi day (the eleventh day of the Lunar cycle) it is for starving these eleven indriyas. Manu has said:

ekAdashaM mano jneyaM svaguNeno-bhayAtmakaM /
yasmin jite jitaVetau bhavataH panchakau gaNau //
(Manusmriti II - 92)

meaning, "Know the mind as the eleventh indriya, that has an interactive relationship with the pair of five indriyas each ; Just by vanquishing that one, we would have conquered the other ten".

There is another kind of classification. Mind and the five senses of perception (*jnAnendriyas*) only are together counted as six. In the Gita the Lord says *indriyaNAM manashchAsmi* (X -22). More specifically, he says in XV - 7, *manaH shhashhTAnIndriyaNI* -- 'the six indriyas including the mind'.

There are contexts where the Acharya also has the same opinion. For instance, the indriyas are sometimes called 'karaNas' (instruments); because, it is the instrument which implements the actions that fulfill the will of the jIva. On the other hand, the actions of thinking, planning, enjoying happiness and sorrow -- these are done by the mind which is within. So mind is called 'antaH-karaNaM'. Along with the five 'karaNas' that do work outside, the Acharya visualises that sextad as a bee and says in Soundaryalahari (#90) *majjIvaH karaNa-charaNaH shhaT-charaNatAM*. The bee has six feet and so the Jiva with its six indriyas ('karaNas') is taken as a bee. All movement is with the help of the legs. In life, all the movements of the jIva take place because of these six 'karaNas'; so they are as good as 'legs' for the jIva-bee! This is the 'karaNa charaNa' of the shloka. The creature with six legs is the bee. The bee immerses itself in the lotus flower and remains there in enchanted forgetfulness. So also the plea of the devotee is to be immersed in the lotus feet of Mother Goddess forgetful of itself like a bee inside the lotus flower. That is when the mind and the pair of five indriyas are calmed down and the Jiva with shama and dama achieved, is immersed in the Absolute. Mother Goddess (ambaaL) has in Her hands a sugarcane bow and five

arrows; the bow is to help us with 'shama' for mind-control and the arrows are to vanquish the five senses thus helping us achieve 'dama'.

In short, both mind-control and sense-control have to go hand in hand, complementary to each other. In fact all the parts of SAdhanA have to move in one wavefront and so are to be practised as such in mixed fashion. I already told you they are not supposed to follow one after the other in isolation. I have to emphasize this further in the case of 'shama' and 'dama'.

Sometimes the senses do act involuntarily; maybe we can say those are the times when the mind has nothing to do with them. But generally almost all the time, the stopping of the actions of the indriyas or of the mind, does need the sanction and prompting of the mind from within. The movement of the indriyas are in fact the deliberate prompts of the mind which tries to fulfill its desires through them. Of course there may be a little involuntary movement of the indriyas on their own. Movement, maybe, but never the stoppage of movement. It is the mind that has to stop the movement of the senses. Thus, not only is shama, the control of the mind, but dama, the control of the senses, also is the responsibility of the mind. Therefore it is that we also have to contend with shama and dama together.

Lord Krishna at one place talks of 'dama' as the work of mind: "indriyANi manasA niyamyA" says He in III – 7. The same structure of expression occurs in VI – 24 where he says "manasai vendriya-grAmAM vi niyamyA" – that is, the gang of senses has to be controlled properly by the mind itself. 'By the mind itself' – 'not by oneself' is what is underscored by the words "manasai va" (= manasA eva). Thus controlling, gradually and slowly (*shanaIH shanaIH uparamet*) one should calm down, says he. In fact 'uparati' is the next in *shhaTka-sampatti* starting from shama and dama. 'uparamet' means 'one should reach 'uparati', namely the calming down of everything.

The Lord usually talks about shama and dama both together. *sarva-dvArANi samyamyA mano hRRi di ni rudhya ca* (VIII – 12) : Here 'sarva-dvArANi samyamyA' (damming all gates) is 'dama'; 'mano hRRi di ni rudhya' (fixing the mind in the heart) is 'shama'. The dvAras are the gates; these gates are the indriyas, namely, ears, nose and mouth – in which the gates are visible and explicit; and the skin, in which the gates are not visible, but we know every hair on the skin is only a gate-like equipment, though invisible; and finally the eyes, which we know is just a fixture in one of the openings of the skull and further light passes through the eyes and creates all the images that we see. So the controlling of these five gates is nothing but the dama that controls the senses. And the process of controlling the mind and stabilising it in the Atman is the shama described in "mano hRRi di ni rudhya".

"bhavanti bhAvA bhUtAnAM matta eva pRRi thak-vi dhAH" – All the different attitudes of the beings emanate from Me, says the Lord. And then He gives a list of the highest among them: (X – 4, 5) Intellect, wisdom, non-delusion,

forgiveness, truth, self-restraint (dama) , calmness (shama), And when he makes a list of all divine qualities in the 16th chapter, he includes both dama and shama in "dAnaM damashca" and "tyAgaH shAntiH" (XVI – 1, 2) . As I have already mentioned, what is obtained by shama is shAnti (Peace) and what is obtained by dama is 'dAnti'.

SEC. 18: SHAMA AND DAMA (Continued)

A sannyasi is called 'yati'. The Tamil name 'Ethiraj' is only a mutilated version of 'Yatiraja'. 'Yati' means a Sannyasi. The direct meaning of the word is one who has the quality of control or one who has controlled. Shri Ramanuja is usually known also as 'Yatiraja'. The words 'yama' and 'yata' both indicate 'control' or 'discipline'. The divine Yama is one who controls every one by fear. He takes them to his locale where they are controlled and punished; so his locale is called 'samyamanI'. That matter of Yama pertains to control of others. But the matter of 'Yati' is control of the self. So the Shastras such as the Gita talk of such a 'yati' as 'yatAtmA' or 'samyatAtmA'. The forced controls take place in the city of SamyamanI whereas the Sannyasi who has strict self-control is called 'samyatAtmA' or 'samyamI'. Here the control is of the mind and of the senses. In other words he who has acquired 'shama' and 'dama' is the 'yati' or 'sannyasi'.

The Lord says (IV – 39) *shraddhAvAn Iabhate jnAnaM tatparaH samyatendriyaH* -- the one who has, with shraddhA (faith and dedication), controlled all the senses and thus is a 'samyatendriya', attains JnAna. Actually He has symbiotically combined here shraddhA, shama and dama , all three occurring in sAdhana-chatushhTayaM!

In describing the attributes of a sthita-prajna, He says: "Just as a tortoise draws its head into the shell whenever there is danger, a human being should withdraw his senses from the sense objects into himself" and thus emphasizes the need for sense-control, by giving this beautiful analogy. Whenever the senses go outward helter-skelter on their own, it is danger time for the human. The tortoise has to draw its head into the shell only when it smells danger; but the human has always to do this withdrawal. The Lord underscores this fact by using a simple additional word, almost innocuously as it were, namely, the word *sarvashaH* in that verse II – 58. *sarvashaH* means 'always and by all means' ! : *yadA samharate cAyaM kUrmo'ngAnIva sarvashaH*.

In Brihadaranyaka Upanishad the entire divine community gets the advice: (V – 2 – 1) *dAmyata*, meaning, 'Keep your senses under control'. The story goes as follows: Not only the Divines, but the Humans as well as the Asuras – all three species went to Prajapati, their Creator to get advice. They were told by BrahmA only a single letter "da" and were also asked whether they had understood it.

Generally every one knows one's own weakness. So if somebody tells him a message in a disguised way and asks him to understand what he needed to understand, they will

get the message in the way they think it was applicable to them. To understand something oneself this way has also a greater value. It will stick. One will not find fault with the fault-finder, for the curiosity to decipher the message will win!

That is how, in the story of Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, the single letter 'da' was conveyed by BrahmA to all the three species (devas, asuras and manushyas) at the same time but each one of them understood it to mean differently. They understood it to stand for the first letter of a message specially intended for them. The divines took it to stand for 'dAmyata', that is, 'control your senses'. The Creator agreed with their interpretation of the message.

The humans took it to mean 'datta' that is, 'Give: Do acts of charity; be charitable'. This also was approved by the Creator.

The asuras took it to mean 'dayadhvaM', that is, 'Be compassionate'. Again the Creator gave his approval of this interpretation.

The Acharya in his Bhashya has commented on this that the three categories of people – devas, manushyas and asuras – are all of them in the human kingdom itself. People who are generally known to be good, but still do not have their senses in control are the 'divines'. People who have no charitable disposition and are greedy are the manushyas in the classification, because man's greatest weakness is greed and the consequent absence of a charitable disposition. People who have not even an iota of compassion in their hearts are classified as asuras. In other words, all the three messages of advice are for humanity.

The moral of all this is that even those who have many good qualities do lack the quality of self-control. This is because the attractions of sense-objects have power to draw man into the vortex of mAyA. So the process of getting out of those attractions can be very difficult. 'dama and shama' -- it is not necessary to separate them as two things; even for the divines the control of both the mind and the senses was what was advised – this control is what should be achieved with great effort. One should not leave off the efforts after a few failed attempts. One should not have a feeling of let-down by defeats in this effort. Trust in God and persistently make the efforts. Keep the practice without losing heart.

SEC. 18: SHAMA AND DAMA (Continued)

Even when the objects in the outside world though perceptible to the ears, the eyes, and the tongue, are not within the reach of these senses, the mind may be thinking all the time about the experiences pertaining to those objects. The control of these thoughts is what is called control of the mind. It is not at all easy to be achieved. What is to be successfully attempted at first is, even though the desires in the mind do not vanish, at least in the outer world of activity the indriyas may be restricted

not to graze around – in other words, dama (control of the senses of action). A vrata, a fast, a starving of the eyes from objectionable sights, avoidance of sense-pleasures on certain days – such are the efforts that must be practised with some persistence. This will lead to the mind being trained for the practice of shama and becoming a little more mature. When the sense objects are not around, it may be possible to control the mind from thinking about the experiences with them and the mind may remain at rest; but once we come out from that solitude to the outside world, immediately the ears will long for movie music from the radio and the tongue will yearn for that tasty coffee or other drink it used to have. Thus each indriya, without even the prompting of the mind, will run after its old vAsanA. Independent of the reins the horses now are ready to run! Now again the 'weapon' of 'dama' has to be used. Thus controlling the indriyas from running after the external objects, in spite of their availability around, the other weapon of 'shama' of the mind has to be applied so that the mind also does not run after them. Thus the processes of 'dama' and 'shama' have to be used alternately as well as simultaneously until one is really sure that one has achieved the needed control of both kinds. The finishing line is of course the total peace that one obtains at the fulfillment of 'shama'.

Thus what can be somehow accomplished is the process of 'dama'. In the Mahanarayana Upanishad, with great sympathy, it prescribes 'dama' regimen for a Brahmachari and a 'shama' regimen for the renunciate muni who has renounced everything. "The Brahmacharis hold that 'dama' is supreme, and revel in the implementation of that; whereas the dwellers in the forests (the munis) hold that 'shama' is supreme and revel in the implementation of that" (Narayanopanihad: 78 – 3,4). The intended meaning is that both 'dama' and 'shama' are to be started right from the Brahmachari stage so that when one gets to the stage of sannyasa, one can attain the total fulfillment of 'shama'.

Where the mind finally calms down and settles, that is the Atman. When the mind stops, the Atman shines. Even in the previous stage, the senses would have stopped running involuntarily and the mind would have of its own volition controlled the senses. Thereafter the residual vAsanAs of the mind would be the ones still to be eradicated. This eradication happens when 'shama' is totally achieved. Such a complete cessation of the mind will generate the realisation of the Atman. Thus it is that 'shama' is the final calming down. That is why we say "shAntiH shAntiH shAntiH" and also refer to it as "Atma-shAntiH". The word 'dAnti' (controlled mind and senses) is also of the same kind. The controlling action implies a force, whereas what follows is 'shAntiH'. In other words it is not 'control', then shAnti' but 'control', that itself is shAnti'.

All the great people pray mostly for the controlled calm of the mind. Lord Krishna also advises us:

Yato yato nishcharati manash-chanchalam-asthiram /
Tatas-tato niyamyai tat Atmanyeva vasham nayet // (VI – 26)

The use of two words 'chanchalAm' (wavering) and 'asthirAm' (unsteady) to describe the turbulent nature of the mind is significant. By whatever prompting this wavering and unsteady mind runs outward towards objects, from each such prompting shall the mind be pulled back and drawn into the confines of the Atman, says the Lord.

SEC. 19: UPARATI (Cessation)

Thus when finally one settles in the Atman, that stage is the next, called 'uparati' in the sextad. 'uparati' means stoppage, cessation. There is a meaning of 'death' also. In one of Tayumanavar's songs (*parAparak-kaNNi * #169) he says 'mind should learn to die'. That is the stage when mind has reached a no-work state and has calmed down thoroughly. By the continuous practice of shama and dama, mind has released itself from all the objects outside and remains quiet, without any activity for itself – that is uparati. That is the definition in Vivekachudamani (#24):

*bAhyAvalambanaM vRRitteH eshho' paratir-uttama *

This uparati is mentioned here as the highest (uttama). 'bAhyAvalambanaM' is the hold of the outside. The 'outside' does not just mean what is sensed by the senses of perception, like seeing or hearing or moving the hands and legs. Whatever is 'outside' of the Atman, other than the Atman, is all included in the 'outside'. Indeed all the thoughts that rise in the mind belong to this 'outside'. Mind stands thus released from everything. But this word 'stands' is almost equivalent to 'death' – that is why it is called 'uparati'. Mind has no action now. But still Atman-realisation is not there. Once that happens it is just opposite to 'death'; it is the state of immortality (*amRRitaM*). But Atman is not yet realised, though the mind has no turbulence or vibration now, as if the mind is dead.

In the Upanishads we meet several arguments between opponent schools. A spokesman for one set of arguments might have answered all the opponents' objections and the opponent may become spell-bound and ultimately totally silent. The word that is used on such an occasion is "upararAma". It means the opponent "rested, devoid of arguments". In other words, he reached 'uparama', the state of rest. The words 'uparama' (the noun form describing the action implied in the verb 'upararAma') and 'uparati' are both the same. In fact 'yama' and 'yati' both connote the state of actionless rest. 'uparati' is of the same kind.

He who has reached 'uparati' is said to be an 'uparata'. Such a person is described by the Acharya in his Bhashya of BrihadAraNyaka-upanishad as *sarvai shhaNA vini rmuktah sannyasi* (IV – 4 – 23). Here 'EshhaNA' means desire, longing. At another place in the same Upanishad (III – 5 – 1) a Jnani is said to be roaming about like a beggar, having abandoned the 'eshhaNA' for son, 'eshhaNA' for money and 'eshhaNA' for worldly life. Generally the three desires, namely 'putra-eshhaNA' (desire for son) 'dAra-eshhaNA' (desire for wife) and 'vitta-eshhaNA' (desire for money) are said to be the triad of desires

(*eshhaNA-trayaM*). In LalitA-trishati, Mother goddess has a name *eshhaNA-rahitA-dRRitA*. It means She is propitiated by those who have no desires.

VairAgya (Dispassion) also connotes the state in which desires have been eradicated. But in that case it is disgust in objects that is dominant. That is the state where one has discarded things because of disgust. But now in 'uparati' there is neither disgust, nor desire.

When we say 'VairAgya' there was an implied disgust towards all desires and so the main aim was to eradicate the desires. In 'shama-dama' the sole purpose was to subdue the mind from its desires and to subdue the senses from acting to fulfill those desires. Thereafter no further action. The mind has rested after all this vairgya, shama and dama. But the rest is not a total rest – such a total rest, annihilation, is still far away! The present rest is only like a recess. The AtmAnubhava, its bliss etc. are not there. It is almost as if there is a void; yet there is a peace since the turbulence is absent.

Since at this point the desires have been thrown off, the Acharya calls this itself (in Brihadaranyaka Bhashya) as sannyasa: that is, he calls this 'uparata' a sannyasi. Actually out of the sextad of qualities, there are still three more: titikshhA, shraddhA and samAdhAna. We have yet to see these three. After those three, there is again 'mumukshhutvaM', the anguish for Release. Only after that, sannyAsa. Then, how did he bring it here? Let me remind you what I said earlier. These SadhanAs are not supposed to be sequenced as if one follows the other strictly. They come only in a mixed fashion. When they come like that, when some one obtains a complete fulfillment in VairAgya, described earlier, he may take sannyAsa even right there : *yadahreva virajet tadahreva pravrajat*, as I quoted for you. If one is dead-set even on one one of the sAdhanAngas, all the others have to follow. They will. That is why he might have thought: When 'uparati' is fully achieved, sannyAsa has to follow. The direct meaning of 'sannyAsi' is 'well-renounced person'; that could be the reason why an 'uparata' has been called a sannyAsi. For, the qualities that are yet to come are 'titikshhA', 'shraddhA' and 'samAdhAna' – in none of which there is any aspect of 'renunciation'. You will know it when I explain them. When the external holds (*bAhyAvalambanaM*) are all dismissed, that is 'uparati'; and the discarding of all of them is 'sannyAsa'. 'nyAsa' is throwing off or discarding; doing it well is 'sannyAsa'.

In 'Viveka-chUdAmani', right in the beginning itself the Acharya talks of 'Sadhana-chatushhTayaM'. Again, far inside, he talks about viveka, vairAgya and uparati. You may wonder why he talks about these well after a person has taken sannyAsa and has gone almost to the peak of sAdhanA. A little thinking will clear this. All the SadhanAngas mature gradually into perfection as you go spiritually higher and higher. That is viveka-vairAgya, elaborated in the beginning, is again taken up in shloka 175 (or 177) and he says that only by their 'atireka', that is, extra growth, the mind becomes pure and becomes

eligible for mukti. Again, further on, (shloka 376/377) he says, in a superlative way,

*vai rAgyan-na paraM sukhasya j anakaM pashyAmi
vashy-AtmanaH*

'For the yati who has controlled his mind, I know of nothing other than vai rAgya that gives him happiness'.

Similarly, after vai rAgya comes knowledge and after knowledge, uparati – thus the complete fulfillment by uparati is mentioned in shloka 419/420.

But then the mind has now come to a certain uparati; will the ascent end there in almost a dry manner? No. It may appear so. But God's Grace will not leave it so. This seeker who, with the single goal of seeking to know the truth of the absolute Brahman, has controlled all his desires and rested his mind with such great effort, would not be left alone by God just like that. Nor would He give him Brahman-Realisation immediately. His karma balance has to be exhausted, before that happens. Before that time comes, He would give him the opportunity to reach the samAdhAna stage that makes him ready to receive the upadesha of the mahAvAkya. And then the sannyAsa and then the mahAvAkya. It goes on thus.

But between 'uparati' and 'samAdhAna' there are two more: namely, 'ti tikshhA' and 'shraddhA'.

(Note by VK: At this point we shall take a break and resume after six weeks)