

CRIMSON DAWN

SADHANA

With prayers for His Grace and Blessings I wish you a very Happy Ananda Purnima 2015 !!!

Brotherly yours;
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ANANDA VANII

Shrii Shrii Anandamurti

ANANDA PURNIMA 2015

Editorial

Sadhana or spiritual effort is a science of spiritual development. Although spiritual development cannot be measured in an objective way there are signs and stages that point in the right direction in order to achieve the desired results.

In this publication we have combined the original writings of Shrii Shrii Anandamurti on the Stages of Psycho-Spiritual Development with original articles written with the purpose to bring Sadhana in the grasp of science and analysis.

Shrii Shrii Anandamurti has written extensively on the subject of Sadhana and we have selected only a particular subject in order to focus an initial work of investigation and research which we hope will harbor more interest and practical application in the field of meditation and spiritual practices.

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Yatamána, Vyatireka, Ekendriya and Vashiikára

By Shrii Shrii Anandamurti

In the course of sádhaná the sádhaka [spiritual practitioner] has to pass through four stages: yatamána, vyatireka, ekendriya and vashiikára. There is a shloka [couplet]:

*Yacchedváuṅmanasi prajinastadyacchejjinána átmani;
Jinánamátmani mahati niyacchettadyacchecchánta átmani.*

[Wise persons first merge their indriyas, sense organs, into their citta, then their citta into aham, then aham into mahat, then mahat into jivátma, and finally their jivátma into Supreme Consciousness.]

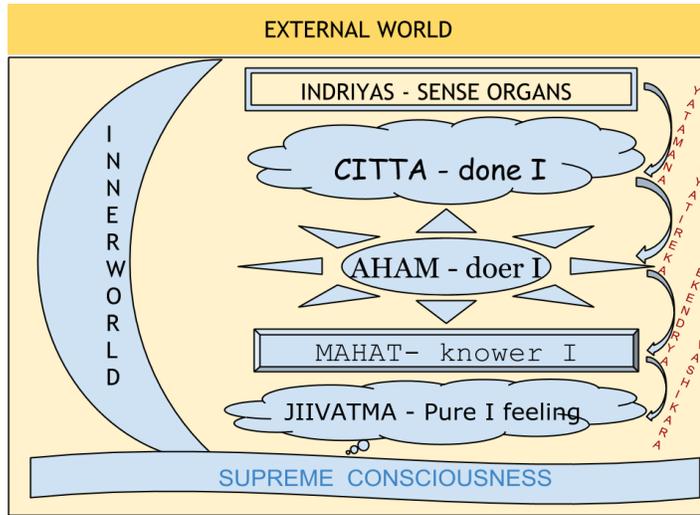


Table 1 - Stages and Inner World

In yatamána, the first stage, the mental propensities are directed towards the citta [objective mind, mind-stuff]. It is a very difficult stage: difficulties arise from within as well as without. The internal difficulties are created by the untrained mental propensities, which misbehave like wild animals. After a moment of control, off they go again, dashing about like unbroken horses. The external troubles arise from concerned friends and relatives who resent the spiritual beginner's efforts. They fear that he will become an ascetic and renounce worldly ties. These internal distractions and external pressures try the patience and steadfastness of the spiritual novice.

In the second stage, vyatireka, the propensities

are directed from the citta to the ahamtattva [doer "I"]. This stage is less trying than yatamána. In fact, occasionally it is slightly pleasing. The kicking wild horses have been broken to some extent, and for brief intervals these partially-tamed mental propensities do follow the direction from the citta to the ahamtattva. During these intervals the sádhaka enjoys bits, shreds, and glimpses of bliss. Tears of such bliss may roll down his cheeks. In this period the external pressures are also lessened, because friends and relatives have become somewhat reconciled to the other-worldly pursuits of the sádhaka.

In the third stage, ekendriya, the upward direction is followed from the ahamtattva to the mahattattva. As the very name ekendriya implies,(1) the sádhaka gains control over some single propensity or organ, which brings to him a corresponding occult power.

Occult power (called vibhúti or aeshvarya in Sanskrit) is the supernatural power gained from the practice of the psychic mystic cult. The eight vibhútis are ańimá, laghimá, mahimá, prápti, iishitva, vashitva, prákámya, and antaryámitva. This stage marks a great step forward. However, this is a dangerous stage also. The danger comes more from inside than from outside. The sádhaka may get intoxicated with the feeling of the occult power and be tempted to abuse it. Moreover, there is the external threat that somebody may provoke him into such abuse. Any misuse of these powers causes a setback or even a downfall in the spiritual journey. Abuse of power is bad in any sphere. Even in the temporal sphere misuse of power leads to downfall. Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely – unless there is the strength to control the power.

The fourth and last stage of sádhaná is that of vashiikára, when the propensities are all completely directed from the mahattattva towards the one original and ultimate Self: that is, the sádhaka is established in his svabháva [nature] and svarúpa [own form]. As the very word vashiikára implies

[vash means “control”], all the propensities are completely under control. Worldly friends and relatives have already deserted the sádhaika as they desert a dead body after cremation or burial, and he becomes merged in the permanent and lasting Self, Brahma.

The sádhaika should ask for and pray for the Lord Himself and nothing else. He should not even pray for worldly power without at the same time praying for the ability through sádhaná to restrain that power. Better still, if the Lord is so omnipotent as to be able to grant the worldly power and the spiritual strength to restrain that power, then why not pray for the Lord Himself? Boons (baradána) may be pleasing to some, but in reality they are simply an adjustment in time, shape, or [degree of concentration or dispersion] of what the sádhaika is entitled to by virtue of his karma. If one attempts to acquire power that is beyond his due, he may find that his inability to handle it makes a menace out of a seeming boon.

ey represented the insurance payment of his son, who had suddenly died in an accident. The grantee, who regarded himself as a clever person, demanded as the second request that the son should be brought to him alive. In a few moments there came the clattering sound of somebody approaching the house. When the father looked out, to his horror, what was coming was the skeleton of his deceased son. It was walking by itself and therefore might be said to be alive, but it was nevertheless a skeleton. The father was so terrified that he asked the dried hand of the monkey to drive the skeleton away. The dried hand did this, but it was the last of the three wishes and the dried hand was exhausted of its power. So the father got his fifty thousand rupees, but lost his son.

Footnotes

(1) Eka in Sanskrit and Sanskrit-derived languages means “one”. –Eds.
c. 1969

Tables has been added by Editor of Crimson Dawn for this special edition and are not part of the original trascription from the Author discourse.

OBSTACLES OR DIFFICULTIES		
	EXTERNAL WORLD	INNER WORLD
YATAMANA	Concerned friends and family	Untrained mental propensities
VYATIREKA	Less pressure than previous stage	Tamed mental propensities (presence of slight pleasure)
EKENDRIYA	Manifestation of occult powers Tempted by provocation	Control over some single propensities Danger of downfall
VASHIKARA	Sadhaka established in his own form and nature	All propensities directed towards the original self

Table 2 - Stages and Obstacles

There is the story of the grant of a dried hand of a monkey to an aspirant. The dried hand was powerful enough to fulfil three wishes. The grantee first of all demanded a fortune of fifty thousand rupees from the dried hand. In a few moments there came a knock at his door and a man appeared with fifty thousand rupees; but this mon-

It is said that the path of human progress is chiefly divided into four stages: yatamána, vyatireka, ekendriya and vashiikára (the four stages in the development of a spiritual personality). These stages are applicable to the three strata of human life: the material, psychic and spiritual worlds.

“Yatamána” is derived from the Samáskṛta root verb “yata” + suffix “shánac” and means “one who is endeavouring” (the effort is still continuing). In a previous Dharma Maha Cakra (a spiritual congregation) I spoke at length about yatamána. Now is yatamána only a mental effort, or only a physical effort, or does it emanate from a realm higher than the mind? When people perform actions consciously, those actions must have the sanction of the mind. But even if an action is sanctified by the mind, it does not necessarily mean that it has also been sanctioned by the self. Moreover, if the mind performs an action according to the guidelines of a noble philosophy, even then it does not necessarily mean that the psychic sanction is supported by the Self (Átman).

There are many philosophies which tend to crudify the human mind, and make people violent and inconsiderate. They make people believe that they are God’s favourite children, whereas the rest of humanity are cursed. Although these views have philosophical sanction, they do not enjoy the sanction of the Átman.

There is only one case when Parama Puruśa sanctions mental thought. What is that? It is when the human mind is dedicated to the welfare of the entire humanity without any discrimination, when the sole intention is to promote universal well-being. When the human mind, motivated by such sentiments, engages itself in action through the body, only that action can be treated as real yatamána. Other endeavours should not be defined as such.

Sometimes it also happens that the body acts without the prior approval of the mind: a person frightened by a robber, for example. People

do not always act voluntarily, but sometimes out of fear, just like the slaves in olden days. A slave would labour hard at the command of his or her master. Such actions are purely limited to the physical sphere. They are actions no doubt, but they do not enjoy the support of the mind, and naturally do not have the support of Átman or Parama Puruśa. Such deeds do not bring any welfare to the slave, and thus cannot be categorized as yatamána. So according to true spirituality, human beings should not be reduced to slavery. One may say that slavery has been totally abolished from today’s world. It may be true in theory, but a handful of people who deserve no better name than “intellectual satans” have been enslaving people by propagating defective philosophies. In a way, these exploited people are no better than slaves for they have lost their intellect. Even when one tries to enlighten them with logical arguments, they refuse to listen. Are they any better than slaves? Intellectually they are certainly slaves, and hence in the material world also they are slaves. Thus, any action on their part will not be included in the category of yatamána because it will never lead to well-being. The first stage of human progress yatamána is not promoted by their activities.

What should be done to bring about progress in the yatamána stage? One should learn the proper philosophy from a competent person. In order to judge what is a proper philosophy and what is a pseudo-philosophy, one should see how far the philosophy goes in treating the entire humanity as a singular entity and promoting its unity. Only that philosophy which inculcates universal sentiments is acceptable to human beings, for it alone reflects the spirit of yatamána. Other philosophies will spoil the human treasures resulting in humans, even though they are endowed with eyes, feet, hands, etc., degenerating to the level of animality, or even below that. Animals quarrel among themselves or with others to procure food, but these crude people, even though they do not need to procure food for their survival, misuse their authority to destroy or subjugate in-

nocent humans being.

The people of today must understand this basic fact and remain vigilant against the detrimental actions of the intellectual satans and blood-sucking exploiters. The people of today must move ahead while fighting against the two enemies – the bloodsuckers who exploit in the economic sphere, and the intellectual satans who not only exploit human beings but bring them down to the level of animality. I request the present human race to continue their endless fight on these two fronts. They should remember that on both these fronts they are fighting against enemies who, being guided by dogma, have no logic in their method of exploitation. Though they are exploiting people in the socio-economic, socio-intellectual and spiritual spheres, once their conscience is aroused against dogma, their exploitation will automatically cease. The gigantic demons of exploitation will vanish in a flash.

19 November 1980, Calcutta

While explaining yatamána [the first stage of sádhaná], I said that it is one of the four stages of human progress. I further explained that the different stages of human progress are concerned with the three strata of life: physical, psychic and spiritual. I also said that unless human intellect is liberated, human beings cannot attain substantial progress in the material sphere.

The physical bondages which keep people confined to gross physicality and deny the fullest expression of human genius are called ádhibhaotik. The endeavour to liberate oneself from these physical bondages becomes meaningless if freedom from psychic bondages [ádhidaevik] is not attained. There are three types of bondages – physical, psychic and spiritual. [The means of obtaining] permanent liberation from these three bondages is called paramártha; and [the means of obtaining] temporary liberation from them is called artha. Bondages such as hunger, thirst, the need for clothes, accommodation, medical treatment, etc. are related to this quinquemental world and are physical in nature. That which brings temporary relief from these bondages is called artha. Suppose a man is hungry – if he has money he can go and buy some food. In this case money is the medium whereby he attains temporary relief from the bondage of hunger. Hence money is called artha in Sanskrit because it brings temporary freedom from bondage. Human beings must continue their efforts to attain artha if they have not yet attained paramártha. Those who teach human beings that everything in this world is false obviously do not see themselves as unreal. They propagate such misleading teachings to exploit the masses to further their own selfish interests. Of course, I do not say that everyone is doing that, but I must point out that some religious and intellectual leaders have badly cheated their fellow human beings. I repeat again that what I say does not apply to all. I declare in unambiguous terms that people will have to continue their mundane efforts to attain artha, and will try in the future to do just that.

Yatamána should be applied in the attainment of paramártha, but at present it is being utilized for gaining artha. If you go one step below this you will find that it is not even being used for attaining artha because the intellect which lies at the root of yatamána cannot function independently. We sometimes say in colloquial Bengali, “He has even taken out a mortgage on his pigtail”. Thus, even the intellect is in bondage and one has lost the power and capacity to think independently. Such an intellect can be likened to a bird used to soaring high in the open sky but which is suddenly confined to a tiny cage. If one opens the door of the cage the bird will think, “I am quite comfortable here. Why should I risk flying in the vast blue sky? After all, I get all the water and bird seed I want inside my little cage”.

In the physical and psychic spheres people have been wrongly taught to avoid the attainment of paramártha. Even in the mundane sphere, they do not get sufficient opportunity to stand on their own legs. It is constantly drummed into their minds in such a negative way that they are unable to utilize any opportunity which comes their way.

In the social sphere (which comes under the scope of ádhibhaotik) the same thing is happening. For ages together simple innocent people have been taught that they belong to a low caste. If one asks them to sit on a chair they will reply, “No, I am fine here on the floor”. Even if the mind gets an opportunity to become independent, it cannot function freely. Just as that little bird kept confined to a cage develops rheumatism in its wings, the human mind, due to constant negative thoughts, gets paralysed. It is not the so-called upper castes only who are to blame – the so-called lower castes have passively accepted this sad plight like the caged bird, and have even sometimes encouraged it. This is a shame, a matter of immense regret.

*Bráhmaño'sya mukhamásiit váhurájanyo'bhavat
Madhya tadasya yadvaeshya padbhyám shúdra ajáyata.*

[Brahmans came out of the mouth, Kśatriyas were born out of the arms, Vaeshyas came out of the trunk of the body, and Shúdras were born out of the feet.]

Even the Supreme Entity, that formless omnipresent Parama Brahma who equally belongs to all, who is the light of all light, the dearest and nearest One, is also denied. It has been said in the above shloka that the Vipras [Brahmans, intellectuals] have been born out of the mouth of Brahmá [the Creator]; the valorous Kśatriyas [warriors] have emerged out of His hands; the Vaeshyas [capitalists] out of His thighs; and the Shúdras [labourers] out of His feet.

If this were true, I would say that the Shúdras are the greatest because everyone longs to touch the feet of Parama Puruśa. As the Shúdras are born out of His holy, divine feet, they must certainly be the most adorable. So if the caste system has to be accepted, then the Shúdras should be respected as the highest caste. And if you are reluctant to accept that, everyone should belong to the highest caste, then all will be equal. Due to the totally absurd dogma of the caste system, people have been paralysed mentally.

It should be understood that if people want temporary or permanent relief in the socio-economic sphere, and paramártha [permanent relief] in the psycho-economic sphere, they should first liberate the intellect. If one attains socio-economic freedom, one may or may not attain psycho-economic freedom. Socio-economic freedom means that all members of the society are equal in the social and economic spheres. It is as if one is providing a cow with a full belly of fodder on the one hand, and on the other hand one is extracting maximum labour from the cow. This analogy illustrates that the cow has been granted socio-economic liberty. Simply guaranteeing freedom in the socio-economic sphere does not necessarily mean that there will be liberty in the psycho-economic sphere. That is, one has not gained full freedom of thought. In a word, one is guaranteed ample supplies of food but denied intellectual liberty.

When psycho-economic freedom is granted, people enjoy material wealth as well as freedom of thought. But in order to attain true freedom in the psycho-economic sphere, one must attain the liberation of intellect, which is subtler than psycho-economic freedom. Without intellectual liberation, yatamána will become meaningless in the intellectual sphere, just as it will be ineffective in the physical sphere, and one will be unable to do the noble tasks which are usually performed with the help of intellect. The fundamental necessity of the intellectual world is intellectual freedom, which you are lacking.

Those who exploit human beings to serve their own self-interests do not want socio-economic freedom to be granted to people. That is why they continue their psycho-economic exploitation in such a way that people do not clamour for socio-economic freedom. They do not directly exploit the people in the social or economic sphere, but in the psycho-economic sphere, and they do it so intelligently that people are totally unaware of it, and hence are unable to develop their yatamána outlook properly. Moreover, the exploited masses are also unable to develop economically because the exploiters control the economy in a subtle way.

However, a day comes when some intelligent people emerge from the exploited masses having detected the exploiters' techniques to dupe the people, even though the media is controlled. At this stage the exploiters become active intellectually to prevent the germination of the seed of liberation. They take control of the education system, the printing presses and the propaganda agencies in a last and desperate attempt to raise high embankments to contain the surging tide of public discontent. But soon after comes the day of change when the vikśubdha shúdras [disgruntled masses] rise up in revolt and the high sand embankments get washed away by the floods of revolution. After this the masses make an independent appraisal of the type of socio-psycho-economic exploitation they were subjected to. Before the revolution they may have discussed social injustice in private amongst themselves, but if they had tried to propagate their discontent

publicly their tongues would have been cut.

To control the masses in the psychic sphere a fear complex was forcibly injected into their minds. Religious leaders openly preached: Binu bhay hoi ná piirit [“Devotion cannot be aroused without an element of fear”]. That is, if you want to love Parama Puruśa, you will have to fear Him also. This does not sound logical, of course. Logic says that you may fear Parama Puruśa and you may also love Him, but that does not mean that in order to love Parama Puruśa you must fear Him. Fear and love are two different things. One must fear Parama Puruśa and at the same time love Him as well. But it can never be said that there can be no love without fear. Parama Puruśa is a great administrator and so it is natural for one to fear Him. At the same time Parama Puruśa is your nearest and dearest One, so obviously you should have profound love for Him. The opportunists of the past injected this type of dogma into the human mind to perpetrate socio-economic and psycho-economic exploitation. Of course, it was an unsuccessful attempt on their part because human beings will definitely advance. No one can check their progress.

Hundreds of dogma were imposed on people: “Do not do this, it is prohibited. If you do it you will go to hell.” The effect of such a statement was to inject a fear complex into people’s minds. According to mythology, the so-called upper castes were born from the mouth of god. It was stated that the so-called low caste people were not entitled to wear shoes on their feet or carry umbrellas over their heads in upper caste neighbourhoods. The common people believed these things. They were further told that the kings are incarnations of Lord Viśnú so their every command should be obeyed. Thus the kings also mercilessly perpetrated harsh exploitation and brutal dictatorial rule. This is how things continued in the past. Women were subjected to countless impositions and restrictions, innumerable dos and don’ts. Men were free to eat and drink anything, but not women, for that would be considered an act of sin on their part. Strangely, women calmly accepted these injustices. Women were not allowed to be educated so that they could not protest

against these illogical impositions. Mr. Drinkwater Bethun’s attempts to spread education among the women of Bengal met with violent protests from a group of selfish people. They argued that if women were taught western education, they would degenerate and end up in hell. And if they went to hell, who would do the housekeeping? A zealous poet wrote:

*Ágekár sab meyegulo chila bhála dharmakarma karta sabe;
Eká Bethun esei sheś kareche ár ki táder teman pábe?
A-B-C shikhe bibi seje biliti bol kabei kabe.*

[Women of the past were good since they followed religious observances. But Mr. Bethun alone has harmed them immensely. Their ways are changed now: they have learnt the ABC, dressed themselves in European clothes, and started speaking English too!]

If someone speaks English, what is the harm? Moreover the effect of education on women has been good – 100% good – and yet the attempt to educate them was opposed. Why? The reason was that the intellectual exploitation of women was perpetrated without any opposition. Obviously, if women remained illiterate, they could easily be exploited in the socio- and psycho-economic spheres of life. In the absence of education, women would remain ineffective, immobile pieces of living baggage, exploited by their male counterparts according to their sweet will. A man was permitted to marry as many as two hundred wives but a woman, even after the death of her husband, was not even permitted to remarry. Rather, the notion was injected into their minds that remarriage was a sin for a woman! Women were told that to remain devoted to their husbands in their present and subsequent lives was the greatest virtue. Even if a wicked husband were to go to hell after death to graze as a cow-ghost in a field, his educated, devoted and virtuous wife would have to go with him and graze beside the cow-ghost of her wicked husband. All this had to be accepted as mandatory. These are all mischievous attempts to inject a fear complex, to spread dogma, not into the body, but into the mind to paralyse it – an attempt which is cent percent anti-human.

Even in petty matters they resorted to dogma. For example, Amuker sinni kheyē ye nákhay pani, Galáy galagańda hay cakśe páre cháni [“Those who do not drink water after eating the sweet of a certain deity will surely develop goitre in the throat and cataracts in the eyes”]. These exploiters created a good number of deities, and around each deity emerged a powerful priestocracy. Through fear they instilled devotion in people, thus providing ample scope to perpetrate their exploitation.

If you analyse human history in all its aspects in a new way, in a new light, you will find that attempts were made to exploit others by injecting a fear complex in their minds. Parama Puruśa the life of your life, and obviously you will love Him, you will do sádhaná to attain Him. Why should you be terribly afraid of Him? What a nasty psychology it was to inject the fear complex in people’s mind in the name of God! And here lies the difference between religion and dharma. You will find that everywhere in religion, the fear complex has been created in human minds. For women so many rigid rules and regulations were framed so that they would respect men and stand before them in awe with folded hands. But for men, there are no such rules and regulations. For example, women were forbidden to take the names of their husbands, and the husband’s elder brothers. For what reason? To make women exceedingly reverential towards their men-folk. How can it be justified that a virtuous lady, with the border of her sari wrapped around her neck, should have to lie in prostration before her immoral husband? This is absurd, meaningless!

Shvashur bhásuńer nám karle adhańpáte yáy
Mámá shvashurer nám karle álańib khase yáy
[[*Soyámiir nám karle dudhe bháte kháy.*]]

[A woman who takes the name of her father-in-law or her husband’s elder brother will degenerate. If she takes the name of her husband’s maternal uncle, she will lose her value. [[But if she takes the name of her husband, she will get to eat nice food.]]]

All these are examples of the injection of dog-

ma to paralyse women’s minds. Thus yatamána becomes meaningless not only in the physical sphere, but in the psychic sphere too, due to religious bondage. It is very difficult for a woman suffering from an inferiority complex, which is a psychic ailment, to approach Parama Puruśa. She is bound to think, “I am low-born. I am a woman. I have no rights. How can I go close to Parama Puruśa? At the most, I can stand in one corner of the verandah.” The opportunists announce that women are not entitled to salvation, and if they want to attain it, they will have to be reborn as men. A few years ago I declared publicly that this notion is unsocial, and totally ultravires to humanism; and that those who utter such statements, being exploiters of women, seek to check the collective growth of humanity. You are to be vocal against these exploiters.

Do not tolerate injustice. This will not only harm women or a neglected and downtrodden segment of humanity, but will cause a serious carbuncle to grow on the vast body of society. That carbuncle will be so poisonous and infectious that it will infect the entire society. Do not allow such a thing to happen under any circumstances. Now that your eyes are opened, keep following the practical path.

26 November 1980, Calcutta

In the physical, psychic and spiritual strata there is ample scope for yatamána. But remember, without freedom of intellect, physical and psychic progress are impossible. Of course one may attain a certain degree of progress, but that will be hard to maintain. The other day I said that the mind of a person who does not get sufficient food will always think about food. This is normal, for food is necessary to sustain the physical body.

The inner spirit of yatamána is to sincerely try to advance. The greatest obstacle on the path of progress is a lack of intellectual freedom, for it prevents one from planning independently how to advance in the physical and psychic spheres. When one is aware of this one thinks negative thoughts. It has been mentioned in the yoga shástra that yogis would go to countries ruled by powerful kings to be able to practice their spiritual sádhaná without harm or hindrance. If the king was strong the society he represented was also strong. It was only natural for those sádhakas to seek a well-knit and stable society to further their spiritual advancement. So for the full expression of yatamána society should be structured in such a way that the physical and psychic needs of the people can be met.

The second stage of psycho-spiritual progress is vyatireka, which concerns human psychology. The human mind can be compared to the ayogaváhá letters of the Indo-Aryan alphabet. These are letters which cannot be uttered independently without the support of other letters. In our alphabet there are three such letters: amúshvar (m̐), visharga (ah), and chandrabindu (nasal sound). Amúshvar has no independent pronunciation, but if written after the letter ka, for example, will be pronounced as kam̐. Similarly, when visharga comes after the letter ka it is pronounced as kah, and likewise, when chandrabindu is written above ka we pronounce it as kan.

The human mind can be compared to these ayogaváhá letters because it, too, cannot exist

alone but always remains attached to some object or other. Suppose you are walking along a road without looking at the houses, animals, traffic, etc. Does this mean that your mind is disassociated from all objects? Not at all. You may be thinking that if you don't hurry up the ration shop will be closed. So the ration shop is your mental object. You are unable to keep your mind in a state of objectlessness.

The human mind attaches itself to three types of objects: physical, psychic and spiritual. In the mundane sphere the mind jumps continuously from one object to another. For example, on seeing some rasogollás (delicious Indian sweets) you immediately feel a desire to eat them. But maybe you think, "No I shouldn't eat any. I shouldn't be so greedy. That would be very unbecoming of me." Perhaps the following couplet comes to mind:

*Lobhe páp pápe mrtyu shástrer vacane
Ata-eva kara sabe lobha samívarañ.*

[Greed leads to sin, sin leads to death,
This is the teaching of the scriptures.
Therefore, Oh human beings, control your greed]

So you tell yourself, "No, I won't eat any rasagollás." But the moment you withdraw your mind from the rasogollás you happen to smell the aroma of freshly made tea and think how nice it would be to have a cup. Your mind drops the object of rasagollá, but now embraces another object: tea. You tell the tea boy, "Two cups of tea please", even though you may feel a little ashamed that you have succumbed to the influence of yet another object of desire. While sipping your tea you decide to never again allow your mind to be swayed by the desire for any other object – never, never again. But, alas! the very next second you think, "Oooh, what a beautiful shirt that boy's wearing. I should get myself one like that." So now the mind is running after a shirt. It cannot stay attached to any one object for long but jumps uncontrollably from object to object.

Then, you think, "Oh dear, I'm going to be late in getting home today. I bet mum's complaining already, 'How long will I keep the food warm for him. What a nuisance. I won't wait any longer'. What shall I say when I get home? Let's see... yes, I'll say, 'Sorry I'm late today mum. I won't be late again in future.'" So now you are thinking about the conversation you'll be having with your mother. And the mind continues to jump from one object to another. Most of the objects in this example are physical – the rasagolla, the tea, the boy's shirt – but your planned conversation with your mother is psychic, for after picturing the image of your mother in your mind you use your mental ear to hear her words.

Thus it is clear that the mind requires an object. The initiative to act comes from the mind-only after thinking about an action do we actually do it. One should also remember that if the mind constantly thinks a thought for a long time, it will certainly be materialized sooner or later. If one's mind thinks about something for a short time and then jumps to another object, that thought may or may not be materialized. But if a person cherishes a desire for a long time to eat something he will certainly eat it one day, whatever the hurdles he has to cross. That is why the mind should not remain attached to a particular object for a long period.

The best psychological cure for addicts is to put them in an environment where they will be unable to think of their object of addiction for any length of time. To proclaim, "Don't do this, it's bad," is futile, for it is a negative approach. If you say, "Don't drink wine", you are still injecting the concept of wine into the alcoholic's mind, thus making it impossible for him to forget it and kick his bad habits. You are giving alcohol negative publicity, and it again becomes his mental object. Thus whenever he gets the opportunity he will certainly drink it again. And it may be that this negative approach encourages the alcoholic to become even more addicted. It is a defective approach.

These days the sign "No smoking please" is placed in many public places, but it will not re-

duce the amount of smoking. If society wants people to stop smoking, its approach should be to divert the smoker's mind to other objects. A chain smoker should be encouraged to get involved in various pursuits such as music, dance, songs, culture of fine arts, etc., for if the mind remains engaged in these things it will forget its object of addiction. But the person who thinks, "I'll stop drinking wine the day after tomorrow – no, let me see, why not tomorrow" can never kick the habit, for wine remains the mental object. The mind will try to materialize whatever it thinks about in the external world – this is its nature.

There is a good story. An alcoholic saw the sign "Drinking is bad" everywhere he went so he decided to stop drinking. After a moment's contemplation he decided to go and see an astrologer. "Can you please tell me when the next auspicious day is?" he asked. "Certainly" replied the astrologer, "it's durgásaptamii, in about four months time." The alcoholic thought that would be a wonderful day to give up drinking, so why trouble himself with abstinence before it arrived. Four months later, that auspicious day arrived. At six in the morning, after drinking a bottle of wine, he resolved, "That's it! No more wine for me from this moment." Soon after he was marching past the wine shop. "No problem," he thought, "I've decided to stop drinking from today." That evening when the clock struck six he congratulated his mind for being so strong. "Well done mind, even when I marched past the wine shop you didn't ask for wine, and even though it's already six in the evening you still aren't asking for a glass. Such self-discipline deserves a reward – let's open two bottles of wine." This is human psychology!

Not only does the mind remain attached to physical objects, psychic ones are equally dear to it. Great scholars probe deeply into highly intellectual subjects, and as a result of their continued study, gain success. Since ancient times human beings have aspired to fly in the sky. The lymphatic glands of the human group are developed, and thus the monkey, proto-ape, and ape groups can jump a lot, but they cannot fly. But today this human desire has been fulfilled with the help of

aeroplanes. Whenever people probe deeply into fields of thought in the psychic sphere it influences the subtler sphere, and comes to eventual fruition. Similar is the physical sphere, for whatever people think is materialized if their desire is intense.

The same thing also happens in the spiritual sphere. In the physical sphere the mind may run after rasagollá, a cup of tea, or a boy's shirt; and in the psychic sphere after mother's words. In the spiritual sphere, if the mind is withdrawn from all such objects and directed to Parama Puruśa, it will eventually become one with Him. But it will have to take a firm decision: "I will think only of Parama Puruśa, and not any of the thousands of other objects." So the mind must be withdrawn from all objects and directed towards Parama Puruśa. In this process, and after some time, it will become one with Parama Puruśa. At that stage it will cherish no further desire for rasogollas, tea, fashionable shirts, or the mother's words. Parama Puruśa alone will be the greatest object of happiness.

It is the characteristic of the mind to remain attached to one object at a time. It cannot remain attached to one object for a long period of time, nor can it remain objectless. As the mind has to select an object to maintain its existence, it would be wise to select the biggest, the best, the most lasting, and the most loving object. Parama Puruśa is the only such object.

What is vyatireka? The mind may strive to concentrate on one object for a long period, but it will have difficulty remaining attached to that object permanently. Perhaps you have had an experience like the following one. You have been ideating, on Parama Puruśa for a long time and feel immensely blissful. Then suddenly the idea flashes in your mind, "Oh, I've got to go to Burdwan right now – my train's about to leave" and you get up quickly. The mind now switches over to the thought of Burdwan. This is the science of vyatireka. The way it works will be discussed in the next discourse.

3 December 1980, Calcutta

Vyatireka – 2

The mind cannot exist without an object (viśaya). In the case of an object which is related to the physical sphere the Samśkrta terms viśaya and ádhára can be used, but for a mental object there is a special term.

Suppose there is a rasagollá – you can see or you can eat it – it is your mental object. But the mind sometimes remains attached to certain objects which cannot be eaten or touched. Even though such objects are not related to tanmátras the mind still remains preoccupied with them. Suppose your house is in Haldibari (a place in N. Bengal), and you have gone to Jaipur (a place in Rajasthan about 1500 kilometres from Haldibari). While visiting the important sites of Jaipur – the Hawámahal, the observatory and other places of historical importance – you suddenly think, “My paddy plants are ripening so I’d better get back soon and prepare for the harvest. And I’ve still got to sow the wheat seeds... I shouldn’t waste any more time here.” At that moment your mind is no longer seeing the sights of Jaipur but has returned to your paddy fields at Haldibari. Actually it is as if your mind has been split in two: one part is enjoying the tourist spots at Jaipur, while the other part is concerned about Haldibari. Such is the plight of the mind. Even though one of your mental objects has no inferences of its own – neither taste, smell, touch, form, etc. – yet the mind remains preoccupied with it. Such an object is called the pabulum of mind (ábhoga). Ábhoga is derived as prefix á – bhuj (root verb) + ghain@ (suffix). In such a case it is the mental body as opposed to the physical body which gets food. Thus the outer mind is working in one way while the inner mind is divided into two parts resulting in nothing being done properly: neither can you enjoy the sights of Jaipur, nor can you think deeply about your paddy fields at Haldibari. When the mind is split in two, not only is it rather disturbing, it hampers mental progress. That is why the mind should be withdrawn from all unnecessary objects and concentrated only on one object. During study if one is disturbed by so many things, one will lose concentration.

The other day I said that the mind cannot exist without an object, and keeps jumping from object to object. The person in the example I gave thought it would be good to have a rasagollá (the rasagollá became his mental pabulum) so he went to a sweet shop to eat some. But while in the shop he felt that he really shouldn’t have any at all – it was pure greed on his part. Then, suddenly, the smell of a fresh tea reached his nostrils (the mind made the smell tanmátra its pabulum) and he decided to have a cup. The very next moment a very fine shirt caught his attention and he thought he would like one just like it (the shirt then became his mental pabulum). Then he thought about the scolding his mother would give him for being late and prepared his reply.

These examples show how the mind is continuously switching over from one object to another. Without an object the mind itself becomes non-existent. In this context a fundamental question arises: When the mind jumps from one object to another – say, from rasagollá to tea – what happens to it during the intervening period? What is the mental pabulum at that time? It is an important question. A very interesting thing happens. When your mind starts to move from rasagollá to tea it still remains attached to rasagollá for a certain time. It has taken a decision to move, but nevertheless hesitates a while before moving towards tea, because it is not completely sure that it wants to leave rasagollá altogether. If the attraction for tea is stronger than the attraction for rasagollá it will be able to jump to tea. But if the attraction for rasagollá is extremely strong, according to one’s inherent samśkaras, it will take up more mental space than the attraction for tea, and the mind will be unwilling to take tea as its mental object. If, on the other hand, the attraction for tea is stronger, the mind will prefer to take it as its mental object.

In between those two extremes there is another state – a state of mental balance (of course it may not be perfectly balanced). At that stage the latent human samśkáras of mind becomes more ac-

tive, that is that type of samśkāras which one has been expressing for many years becomes more assertive. At this stage of one's mind becomes expanded, one's resolve becomes stronger, and one decides, "No, I shouldn't drink tea because it's a stimulant. Rasagollā is much more beneficial for health so I should be more partial to it." When this discriminating faculty asserts itself the person will shun the tea. In this balanced state of mind one's acquired samśkāras become more active.

Those who strive regularly to elevate the mind through the practice of sādhanā thus acquiring the state of balance, remain unaffected by samśkāras. They immerse themselves in a serene flow.

17 January 1980, Calcutta

Ekendriya – 1

Likśye-shrñomi-jighrámi svádayámi sprshámyaham.

Human beings wish to express themselves in so many ways through the different inferences of sound, touch, taste, form, and smell. And they wish to derive joy from the many inferences they receive from the external world. They exclaim in joy, “How tasty this dish is! How delightful its smell! How delicious the vegetables.”

It is a fact that human beings are connected with the material world through the inferences (tanmatras). But the human capacity of assimilating these tanmatras is rather very limited. For example a very loud or very soft sound cannot be perceived by the ear. Human beings can only perceive the medium range of tanmatric vibrations. Lord Buddha called it “majjhimá mágga”, the middle of the road. It is a fact. The poet Gíirish Ghosh said in this context,

*Ál gá táre bol ofhe ná
Tánle chenré komal tár.*

[If you don't tune the string tightly enough you won't get the required note, and if you tune it too tightly it will break.]

Those of you who play string instruments are well aware that if the strings are tuned too high they will break, and if they are too loose they can't produce the proper notes. Although the human mind can be compared to the strings of an instrument, it would be more precise to compare it with a cloud which fills up the sky, bringing all objects within its domain. How does the human mind expand? It can best be explained with the analogy of the cloud. Imagine there is a tiny patch of cloud in a corner of the sky. Gradually it expands its size until it covers the whole sky. This is ectoplasmic expansion. As the mind expands in all directions, it brings all objects within its periphery. It is essential for the mind to maintain a perfect adjustment between itself and its objects. The other day I told you that the mind always

seeks an object and jumps from object to object depending on the degree of attraction. Take the case of this bolster beside me. If I pick it up and move it from left to the right will the mind remain associated with it for the entire duration of its movement. Remember, before I said that the mind remains attached to the object for which its attraction is greater. In the case of the bolster the mind is more attached to having it on the right side than the left because that will be more comfortable, and thus its preoccupation is with putting the bolster on the right.

In the ekendriya stage, which is the third stage in pratyáhára one expands one's ectoplasmic sphere just like a cloud filling the sky – whenever the cloud passes over an object it brings it within its sphere of influence. But this is not so in the case of Parama Puruśa. Whenever His mental sphere increases, numerous entities emerge within His mind, remain in a state of flow for some time and subsequently dissolved back into Him. The microcosms which are created, maintained and dissolved within the Cosmic Mind are qualitatively almost the same manner as Parama Puruśa, but of course they differ quantitatively. The Cosmic Mind is extremely vast; the unit mind is tiny. The unit mind only expands in the ectoplasmic sphere, like the cloud filling the sky, and in the process of expansion brings other unit minds within its sphere of control. When it expands tremendously it can also assert some influence on the Cosmic Mind.

Suppose two people, Mr. A and Mr. B, have small minds. After the practice of deep meditation Mr. A succeeds in expanding the periphery of his unit mind and can influence the mind of Mr. B. Not only that, he can also influence the vast mind of Parama Puruśa. This endeavour for mental expansion is called Vidyá Tantra.

The scientific process of expansion of mind is called Tantra. Tantra is derived as tan + trae (root verb) + ċa, and literally means to attain liberation

through expansion. Suppose you are sitting immobile in one place having been bound by ropes. Now you can either free yourself by cutting the rope with a knife, or by taking such a deep breath to expand the chest that the rope snaps. On the path of Tantra one expands the mind to snap the bondages of vrttis, ripus, páshas, etc. This is the goal of Vidyá Tantra.

Suppose a person is trying to expand the mind, not to attain Parama Puruśa, but a crude goal such as name, fame or wealth. In that process the science is the same but the actual path is different. One who follows this path becomes mentally degenerated. This state is called Prakrtiliina avasthá in scripture. For such people become as crude as matter. A person whose mind is engrossed in money becomes money itself. Yes, a conscious human being gets converted into crude money. Human beings are aware that they are human, but a rupee doesn't know it's a rupee. There are other categories like this such as yakśa, gandharvá, kinara, vidyádharma, vidhehaliina and siddha which have been categorized according to the degree of ectoplasmic crudity or subtlety. You are the master of your ectoplasm – you can expand it across the vast sky, or you can confine it to the horizon of a solitary cloud. It depends on your will.

The seven categories mentioned above have sometimes been described in scripture as devayoni. They are not exactly gods, but are somewhat similar to them, so devayoni is the precise term. Similarly, the ghost-fearing people never use the word “bhuta” (ghost) at night lest they anger the ghost. Instead they refer to them as “upadevatá” (demi-god), to appease them. Likewise, on a dark night people never use the word “sap” (snake but “lata” (rope) instead! And in case of certain diseases they say that “such and such goddess has shown mercy.”! It can hardly be described as mercy; more precisely the goddess is inflicting pain. But people still call it, “the mercy of the goddess.” I won't mention the names of the diseases, but you all know what they are.

Let us resume our original discussion. Suppose a person who does spiritual practice constantly ideating on money (i.e., is following both shreya and

preya) even while he is meditating. If he were to die while ideating on rupees, the solid and liquid factors of the body would perish but the mind would continue to operate through the remaining three fundamental factors - luminous, aerial and ethereal. This body of three factors is not clearly visible to the eye, yet the mind born out of one's inherent samśkáras still functions through it. The “disembodied mind” expresses its mental longings through vibrations. If one could establish vibrational contact with those entities one would be able to communicate with them. Not having a solid body or a vocal cord (like a so-called ghost) they cannot speak audibly. So to give expression to their longings they have to use vibrations. The person whose goal in life is not Parama Puruśa but a pot of riches, will, after death, live near a source of money in its invisible body of three factors. You may call such phenomena “ghosts” as they are not visible to the eyes, but the proper term is “yakśa”. In colloquial Bengali people sometimes say “yakśer dhán” or “the wealth of a yakśa”. A yakśa often guards treasure lying hidden under the earth.

This notion of yakśa has been in vogue since the pre-Jaena period. At most sites of Jaena temples there are invariably effigies of yakśa and yakśinii. In the Jaena temple which has been excavated near Ánanda Nagar (the headquarters of Ánanda Marga) effigies of yakśa and yakśinii have been found. In olden days a class of people used to worship yakśa. Even now in Mithila there is a designated place either a banyan or peepul tree either inside or outside the village which is called Brahmastán Here Brahmastán means the place of worship of a yakśa.

The second type of devayoni is gandharva. Suppose a person is sincerely cultivating the science of music (a branch of aesthetics – nandana vijinána) Nandana means to give and derive pleasure. While one cultivates the science of music one derives pleasure and simultaneously gives pleasure to Parama Puruśa. But if one believes nandan vijinána is everything in life and neglects the Supreme One from whom it originates, one will remain absorbed in it even after death. Such entities are called gandharva. The science of mu-

sis is called gandharva vidya. In many places in northern India the music schools are called gandharva biddyaláya.

The third category of devayoni is called kinnara. People who have an extraordinary fascination for beauty become kinnaras after death. They have an immense weakness for fashionable clothes, expensive ornaments and so on for they believe that if they are well dressed they will be treated as gods. Some people used to ask, “Kim’ puruśa?” – “Is he a man?” In those days people believed that there was a group of people living in the northern part of the Himalayas who were always well dressed. Out of superstition they were treated as one of the devayonis. That area was known as Kinnara Desha. The name of one of the districts in Himachel Pradesh is also Kinnara. To the north of Kinnara district is Kim’puruśa, the Samśkrta name for Tibet. Kim’puruśa means “Are they humans?” In ancient India the general belief was that they were superior to humans, that they were devayoni. So Tibet was named Kimpuruśa Varśa. Some people have a different interpretation. They say that the clothes worn by men and women were the same so it was difficult to clearly identify the sex of a person. Thus the country was called Kimpuruśa (is he a man?). I will give you a better interpretation for the sake of history at a later date.

The fourth type of devayoni is vidyádharma. Suppose some people acquire vast knowledge through intense study. Such bookish knowledge is theoretical, not practical. Such scholars may be compared to the pages of an almanac. Its pages may predict heavy rainfall this year, but if you wring them out not a single raindrop will fall. These scholars maybe highly pedantic, but remain far away from Parama Puruśa. Without even knowing the procedure for worshipping the goddess Śashtii (goddess of children’s welfare) some priests would memorize the entire Siddánta kaomudii (the most authentic grammar book written by Panini). It was not unknown for some priests to recite vyakarána kaomudii (the grammar book written by Iishvar chandra Vidyasagar while worshipping the deity Satyanarayan! They knew that the simple

followers were not conversant with Samśkrta, and would believe that since they were reciting Samśkrta so beautifully, they must be well versed in the scriptures! The people who remain absorbed in such bookish knowledge throughout their lives and never use to attain Parama Puruśa are called vidyadhara after death.

The fifth type of devayoni is Prakrtiliina. If a person continually gloats over crude material things, his entire existence will be converted into crude matter. In mythology the story goes that Ahalyá was converted into a stone due to his constant crude ideation. So people who accept matter as their goal, totally denying the existence of Parama Puruśa, tread the path of degeneration and become prakrtiliina devayonis after death.

The sixth type of devayoni is videhaliina. Some people have such an insatiable thirst for material gain that their minds run continuously from object to object, leading them far far away from Parama Puruśa. Their minds are in perpetual motion, but they don’t get anywhere, rather like bullocks trudging endlessly around the oilman’s mill. After death such people become videhaliina. The last type of devayoni is the siddha Suppose a person practices spiritual science with deep sincerity – his only goal being to serve humanity and attain Brahma. But if he threads the spiritual path with a sense of vanity, feeling superior to common people, he too will become a devayoni after death. Had he controlled his vanity, Parama Puruśa would have helped him to exhaust his remaining samśkaras. But if he indulges in vanity Hari (when Parama Puruśa steals others samśkaras he is called Hari) will not steal it. His sins may be pardoned, but not his vanity. One of the names of Narayana is Darpahári or destroyer of vanity (and that destruction may be laborious and painful). Narayana takes away an individual’s unburned samśkaras, but if one basks in the glory of being a spiritual practitioner one will have to become a Siddha devayoni after death. According to the scriptures the siddhas play a rather strange role. Either by entering the mind or by some external means their duty is to help sadhakas realize their mistakes. Thus, they assist sádhakas in the process of sádhaná. Suppose

a sádha develops a strong feeling of ego – the siddha will create a strong feeling in his mind to realize his mistake. Or suppose a sádha is about to step onto the path of sin. The siddha will create an awareness in the sadhakas mind to inspire him to desist from following the negative path.

Let me tell you a story. Once two Ananda Marga tantra sádhas from Muzaffarpur were going by bus to a place on the other side of the river Buriigańdak, which flows by Muzaffarpur town, to do their sádha. Suddenly there was a flash flood so the bus was unable to cross the river. However they had to find some way across because that particular spot was the appointed place for their meditation. Then they saw a light flickering near the river bank and thought that if there's light there must be some people, and perhaps those people will be able to tell them how to get to the spot for meditation in such adverse conditions – being the new moon night it was pitch-dark. As they approached the light they noticed to their consternation that it was moving ahead of them. They decided to follow it. The light then started to float across the river, the sádhas who were following close behind were surprised to discover that at that point in the river the water was only knee deep. The Buriigańdak is a deep river but not very wide. The light guided them safely to a tree on the other side of the river and then disappeared. Those two ácáryas sat at some distance from the tree and performed their sádhaná. There was an understanding between them that afterwards they met under the tree, as planned, and were surprised by the reappearance of the light, which led them back across the river. Once they reached the other bank the light again disappeared. This was not the work of a ghost for ghosts do not exist – it was the work of a siddha devayoni.

19 April 1981, Calcutta

Ekendriya – 2

Last Sunday I started discussing ekendriya. I said that the human mind is like a cloud spreading slowly and gradually across the sky; bringing everything it encounters within its periphery. This subjectivization is called jinána (knowledge) in Samskṛta. The process of knowing has a few stages.

What is knowledge? It is psychic assimilation of external projections. Parama Puruśa has been creating countless projections in the external world – the sky, the wind, the hills, the mountains and numerous other entities. We may or may not be able to see them, but they do exist. There are innumerable subjects (the unit “I’s”) witnessing and innumerable objects being witnessed. These unit “I’s” are thinking, “I am the projection of Parama Puruśa and the objects I perceive are also the projection of Parama Puruśa.” This is the first stage of knowledge.

In the next stage human beings develop a desire to know more about those external objects. They question what they are, where, when and how they originated, and so on. Likewise they seek to discover more about themselves and pose the same fundamental questions. *Kasya tvam vá kuta áyatah.* “Who am I?” they ask. “Where have I come from? And why? Where shall I go from here?”

Juráite cái kotháy jurái
Kothá hate ese kothá bhese yái

[I want to get peace, but how?
Where have I come from and where do I drift?]

In their search for the answer human beings strive to realize that Supreme Entity. This is the second stage of knowledge.

On seeing an ant, you may ask many questions; Where do ants live? How many legs have they got? How do they see and hear? You study the ant in various ways. The ant becomes subjectivized and its image is created in your mind. You can easily

visualize its different parts, allowing you to form an idea about it. This is the process of acquiring knowledge, a process divided into three stages: *ava-átmasthiiksáraña*, *upa-átmasthiikaraña*, and *samyak-átmasthiikáraña*.

In the first stage (*ava-átmasthiikarañ*) you form a rough idea about an object in the external world, but do not try to enter its psychic sphere. This is the normal process regarding most objects. You may say, “This species of palmyra grows in abundance in northern India. It has such and such characteristics. But this species of palmyra is common to southern India. It looks quite different from its northern cousin.” So in the process of *ava-átmasthiikaraña* (superficial assimilation of projection) we study the external characteristics of an object. If someone asks you, you can easily give a description of different species of palmyra, but you will not be able to go any deeper because you have not entered its psychic sphere. From external observation you can determine the nature of a person, but without penetrating his psychic sphere you will be unable to tell whether he is truly good, or merely a wicked person in the guise of a good man.

Penetrating the psychic sphere can be done in two ways: through applied psychology and through Cosmic Grace. When you attain the quality of macrocosmic omniscience, by His grace, your mind can easily enter the minds of others.

Most people can reach the stage of superficial psychic assimilation. With this superficial knowledge the pandits debate amongst themselves, scholars write theses, and groups of intellectuals repudiate each others arguments. Strangely, many so called intellectuals have grossly inflated egos even though they have only attained this superficial knowledge. Actually they know so little.

Átmajinánam’ vidurjinánam’ jinánányanyáni yánitu;
Táni jinánávabhásáni sárasyanaeva bodhanát.

“Internal knowledge, that is self knowledge,

and not the knowledge of the intellect, is the real knowledge. Other knowledge is merely the shadow of knowledge. Through intellectual knowledge one cannot attain anything." No matter how learned people might be in this world, they are all throwing mud in the realm of superficial psychic assimilation. They remain ignorant of the reality behind each object. This sort of superficial psychic assimilation takes place due to study, intellection cultivation, direct perception, inference, testimony and authority.

Perception takes place when the sensory organs assimilate external objects. It's accuracy depends on the degree of assimilation. If our eyes are defective, for example, perception through them also becomes defective. If one glances hastily at tomato seeds, brinjal seeds and chilli seeds, one may mistake one for the other. So perception is not always a reliable source of information.

The second source of knowledge is inference, which is even more unreliable in conveying information from the external world. In winter smoke rises from many sources. Suppose water is suddenly converted into vapour, it appears as if smoke is rising. If you take that vapour to be smoke you are wrong. Thus inference is not a reliable source of knowledge. Suppose you see smoke coming out of a thatched hut. You may conclude that the hut is on fire, but on further investigation will realize that the family is lighting the oven. So through inference one cannot arrive at a safe conclusion.

The next source of knowledge is authority (ágama). People normally accept the words of a teacher or the printed words as being factually correct. When someone points out that some of the informations printed in a particular book are wrong common people will refuse to believe it, because for them the printed word is sacred. I read in one page of Namámi Krśńasundaram, Suniilakomalacchavim'. According to Samśkrta spelling it should "lakśabim", but has been wrongly printed as "lacchavim". Ordinary people will say that they have seen it spelled that way in a book so how can it be wrong? Thus authority is not a reliable source of knowledge. So su-

perficial psychic assimilation of external objects through direct perception, inference or authority is very unreliable.

In the upa-átmastiikarańá stage one enters the psychic stratum. Take the case of the palmyra tree. What group does it belong to? It belongs to the palm group. What are the physical characteristics of the trees of the palm group? What are their psychic wants? By posing such questions you will gain knowledge about the palmyra and its special psychology. You will realize that if the saliva of any animal touches the palmyra tree, its growth gets stunted. Suppose an animal eats the leaves of a palmyra sapling and drops a little of its saliva onto the plant. The speed of its growth will certainly be hampered. So according to its peculiar psychology, it reacts when the external saliva comes in contact with its internal psychic juice. Consequently its natural growth and fruit bearing capacity will be decreased. This is the general rule of all the trees of the palm group. Coconuts and betel-nut trees have the same characteristics. You will understand these facts through upa-átmastiikarańam because you become acquainted with it's basic psychology. When you sit beside a tree you will intuitively understand what the tree is thinking. Of course, the tree won't say anything loudly, but you will be able to communicate with it because your mind has established a link with its mind. Regarding the characteristics of trees in the palm group, [[Kśarańá]] said,

*Bára batsare phele tál,
Yadi ná láge gorur nál.*

[The [[palm]] tree bears fruit at twelve years of age provided it is not touched by the saliva of cows.]

[[The palm tree cannot tolerate cow saliva.]] So in the stage of upa-átmastiikarańa one comes in contact with the inner heart, the inner life and the inner mind of all objects, leading to one's knowledge becoming deeper and more confirmed. The mind derives much contentment from its contact with the inner mind of certain plants, animals and human beings, for through such contact one can render better to service to them. One will develop

a certain degree of self satisfaction for one's psychic assimilation will have been of some use. This is also a step in the acquisition of knowledge. But it does have a particular disadvantage. This contact with the inner mind of a tree, animal or human being depends on the freshness or strength of your mind. If for some reason your mental power is lost the capacity to acquire knowledge through superficial psychic assimilation and upa-átmsthikaraña will also be lost. Suppose you are a very experienced psychologist. If your mind ceases to function properly, you won't be able to utilize any of that knowledge you had acquired. People who have practised the sádhaná of avidyá tantra can develop the power to know the minds of others. But such acquired power is short-lived – it will desert them one day. If they misuse even a small amount of this acquired power, they will lose it immediately. Perhaps you have heard of certain instances when this has happened.

The last stage is samyaka átsthikaraña. When the sky filling cloud of the mind is directed towards Parama Puruśa it is called dharmamega in scripture. Human beings come in close proximity with Parama Puruśa through the science of dharmamega. That stage is called samyaka átsthikaraña. It is the stage in which sádhakas form a clear understanding of the physical, psychic, and spiritual realms of life. They thereby come to know of everything of this universe. Their knowledge is lasting, final and absolute. The scripture says, rtambhará tatra prajiná, i.e., their knowledge is filled with veracity.

Permanent knowledge is not possible through perception, inference, or authority, or by studying books or discourses. The knowledge which one attains by expanding one's mind in the psychic sphere through the practice of sádhaná, which I gave the name upa átsthikaraña is also not everlasting, although it does last for a certain period. Knowledge only becomes permanent when the human beings withdraw the entire intuitive element and focus it on their spiritual point of ideation. At that time the entire universe comes within the scope of their mind, and they become omniscient.

26 April 1981, Calcutta

Ekendriya – 3

In the previous discourse I discussed the process of acquiring knowledge. And in the discourse before that I explained the seven types of devayoni. They all come within the scope of ekendriya. To have a clear understanding of this stage of ekendriya, some discussion on the mind stuff is required.

While analysing the nature of the mind, I remember something which is not totally out of context. In Bengali the Samśkrta word mana (mind) is pronounced “mon” and not “man.” The letter “a” (ॐ) has three styles of pronunciation. samśvrta, vivrta and tiryak.

The Samśvrta style of pronunciation is [[ॐ-ॐ. The vivrta is ॐॐ, ॐ and the tiryak is ॐॐ-ॐॐ]]. Take the word “aman” for instance: “a” is pronounced in the Samśvrta style and “ma” in the tiryak style. Take another example: “kakhan”. Here the letter “ka” is pronounced in the samśvrta style while “kha” is pronounced in the tiryak style. In the languages of Bihar, Angika, Maithili and Magahi, “ma” is pronounced as [[“mo-a”]].

However mind is a particular ectoplasmic state. Here I do not often use ectoplasm or endoplasm. Mind is a flowing entity which wants to surround to engulf any object. What do you do with the object of a person whom we love so much? You want to control that object or that person according to your mental will. Each and every mother wants her son to be within her control. If her child goes out of control she complains, “Well, my son used to be obedient to me, but no more – nowadays he is under the control of his wife.” So everyone wants to control objects or human beings. This is the actual state of psychic affairs. Then what is ekendriya? When you develop a fascination for a particular object or person your mind encircles it. In this process of expansion your mind develops a special liking for the object or person it comes in contact with. This occurs when the internal samśkara of the person or the object is in perfect adjustment with your own samskaras. You notice that the rhythmic vibration of that entity and

your own psychic rhythm are parallel (there is no imposition from anywhere) and you develop a love for it. I have already explained to you the difference between “fascination” and “love”.

What is the actual import of ekendriya? At first the mind is drawn towards the entity in a particular way – it flows unhindered across the boundary of liking and enters the sphere of love. At that time the mind neither has the desire nor the scope for any distraction whatsoever. All it wants is to flow towards the object it loves. If it encounters a second entity on the way it will ignore it, so strong is its one pointed pursuit for its object of love.

*Ucātan man ná máne bárañ,
Shudhu tári páne chūte yáy.*

[The mind is extremely impatient – it listens to no one,
But rushes towards its object of love.]

So the mind moves towards that Supreme One. You may know some people whose minds always run after money. You might have asked them to sit down for a while and have a chat, and been surprised by their excusing themselves, saying they were so busy and had to rush off to the stock exchange. If their pursuit of money is hampered in any way, if it eludes their grasp, if they are totally severed from it, their minds will lose their base and they will die.

All crude objects on which people base their hopes and aspirations will certainly disappear one day, for the nature of this relative world is “Yah ágacchati sah gacchati” – “Whatever comes, goes.” When people are deserted by their crude objects of desire they are eaten away by frustration and disappointment, and die a miserable death.

I heard that once, when the currency was devalued, a wealthy jute merchant suddenly died because all the aspiration of his life were based on money. He could not face the prospect of having

to part with his cherished object of desire.

This is ekendriya. One should concentrate one's mind on the Supreme One to the exclusion of all mundane objects; for they can give no lasting support. To come and go is their intrinsic nature. If one focuses all the flows and moods of the mind on a certain object, idea or philosophy to fulfill one's hopes and aspirations, can that be called ekendriya? You know in the past in India there was a debate on the theory of pure non-dualism (vishuddha advaetaváda) which continued for a long time. Today this theory has been almost totally rejected. Those who accepted it as their cherished philosophy, investing all their accumulated mental energy on its different branches and ramifications, met a tragic end. They discovered that the trunk of the tree, in whose branches, twigs and foliage they had been taking shelter, had been felled! They joined the ranks of the living dead, their hopes and aspirations shattered forever. The life of a person obsessed with philosophical theory, who denies the existence of Parama Puruśa, is bound to become wrought with frustrations. That's why in the ekendriya stage it is unwise to accept any physical object or intellectual doctrine as one's object of ideation.

When an intellectual doctrine is proven invalid in the battle of logic, and ultimately shown to be dogmatic, what happens? The characteristic of dogma is to expand more and more. Do you know what expands when it is cut? The answer is a pencil, a pond and dogma. If someone tries to root out a dogma from people's mind they tend to use even more dogma to justify their present dogma. Even when they are defeated they refuse to accept defeat. There are some so-called scholars who meet with a crushing defeat, yet never admit to being defeated. They call it a "voluntary retreat". So, if you accept any mundane object or any dogmatic idea as the goal of your life, you will find yourself locked in the darkest dungeon. The real spirit of ekendriya is this: the mind, having discarded all physical objects, ideas and dogmas, embraces the Supreme One as its supreme and only goal.

3 May 1981, Calcutta

Ekendriya – 4

In my previous discussion I explain that the mind can accept something physical as its object. The difference between these two is minimal. An object which has less inter-atomic and inter-molecular space is what we call matter. In the physical sphere differences in thought occur due to the variations in ectoplasmic or introplasmic space.

No physical goals of human life can ever be permanent. No two entities of this world have a uniform velocity. Take the sense organs and physical objects. The velocity of these two is not equal – one moves forward while the other lags behind. They are just like two vehicles – one accelerating, the other slowing down. But after a while the one that was behind catches up with the other one and overtakes it. Thus there is a constant conflict between the physical entities you cherish as your objects of desire today, and the physical objects which will have the position of paramount importance in your life tomorrow, When you move ahead on your path, one advances, the other falls behind.

Once, in my childhood, I stayed in a village in Bhagalpur district which I grew to love immensely. Forty years after I returned to the village. I looked for my favourite river and ponds but was unable to trace them. Nor could I find the playground or the houses I remembered. And the house we lived in looked so different I hardly recognized it. The river where we bathed and played was unseen for it had changed its course and was flowing about two miles from the village. Naturally I did not feel the same for the village as I had before. Actually I felt bored and left the place soon after. Why did this happen? Because my life and the life of the village were not moving at the same speed. There was a gap between myself and the village. The “good old days” were dead and gone. In the material world human beings must carry out their duties without being bound by the binding fetters. The mind should not get helplessly attached to anything undesirable, otherwise it will have to undergo severe afflictions. The wise

person carries out his or her duties in the world without getting attached to anything. One must always remember,

*Thákbo ná bhái thákbo ná keu, thábená bhái kichu,
Ei ánande yáore chale káler pichu pichu.*

[In this world no one is immortal
Nothing is permanent.
Knowing this Supreme Truth, march on,
Happily following the footprints of time.]

[[
*Áj tomáder yeman jánchi temni jánte jánte,
Tvaráy yena sakal jáná yáy jivaner pránte;
Ei ye neshá láglo cokhe ei tukui ye choṭe,
Amni yena samay ámar váki ná ray moṭe;
Jináner cakśu! Svarge giye yáy yaḍi yák khuli,
Martte yena ná bheunge yáy mithye Máyáguli.*

]]
Always remember that you have to discharge your duties while remaining fully aware of your Supreme goal. As I already mentioned the philosophy which is accepted as infallible today will be rejected through logical argumentation tomorrow. The vast structure based on that irrational philosophy will crumble like a house of cards. No intellectual notion should be accepted as Supreme goal of life.

*Mana eva manuśyáńám káranamí bandhamokśayoh,
Bandhasya viśayásaungimuktoniroviśayamí tathá.*

“The mind is the cause of bondage or liberation of human beings. A person under bondage is attached to a mental or physical object, whereas the liberated one is free from all objects.” If the mind is confined to something physical or psychic it is bound to be assailed by either pleasure or pain – it is inevitable. However hard you may try you can not avoid it, because you are so inseparably bound to your objects.

It is also true that you will not remain associated with your object forever because the speed of movement of both cannot be equal forever.

The person with whom you live with all the warmth of your life will ultimately desert you – it is a cruel game. Confronted with this grim reality one should be very cautious about selecting one's goal. One thing is clear – the Supreme Entity alone should be accepted as one's goal. The question of difference in speed does not arise in the case of Parama Puruśa for He is beyond speed. This is extremely important. When there is the question of speed one either advances or falls behind. Speed differs between those entities which come within the domain of time, space and person. But Parama Puruśa is beyond the relative factors for He is the relative factors (they are embedded in Him) and thus the question of speed does not arise.

A pertinent question arises here – how do the fundamental relative factors emerge? Space emerge when the Supreme Entity is converted into five fundamental factors due to the binding influence of the sentient, mutative and static principles of Prakṛti. The state in which Parama Puruśa is not transformed into the five fundamental factors is beyond the scope of space.

Time is a mental measurement of the motivity of action. To a common person it appears as if the earth is fixed and the sun moves around the earth. He or she understands that the earth moves the sun, but from perception, it appears that the sun moves around the earth. The mind measures the movement of the rotating sun. It calculates the different position of the sun in the morning, at midday and in the evening. If the mind or the rotating entity were to perish, time would also cease to exist. So time will only cease to exist when Parama Puruśa is no longer transformed into the manifested universe in the flow of His cosmic cycle.

The third relative factor is person. In fact, only Parama Puruśa exists. But when He metamorphoses Himself into many in a sportive mood and plays with his created manifestation, the personal factor emerges. There was no personal factor before the creation, neither will there be after its dissolution. When Parama Puruśa remains in His original stance, He is the Supreme psycho-

spiritual pabulum of the human mind. But the problem is that this Impersonal Entity cannot be meditated upon. Only when He changes His original stance (nityánanda) into His playful stance (līlananda) can human beings make Him the Supreme goal of life and an object of meditation. When the Supreme Entity is metamorphosed into His playful stance the relative factors are bound to exist, otherwise how will He play with his creations?

You cannot see electricity directly (no one has ever seen it), but can see its effect in the revolving fan and illuminated bulb. When Parama Puruśa remains preoccupied with all His objects, animate and inanimate, in His playful stance, then you can easily meditate upon Him. Any material or psychic object that one adopts as one's object of adoration will certainly perish one day leaving one totally devastated. But the Supreme Entity who has been playing with His created microcosms since eternity will remain. He is the only object of adoration for human beings. Hence intelligent people will accept Parama Puruśa as their goal and nothing else.

There is another important factor for consideration.

*Ānanda brahmeti vyajanāt ānandādheva khalvīmāni bhūtāni jāyante
Ānandena jātani jīvanti ānandamī prayantyaḥhisamī vishantiiti.*

One should know Brahma, the embodiment of bliss (ānandam). All created entities have emanated from ānandam, are preserved in ānandam and will finally dissolve into ānandam. At the initial stage human beings try to attain this Supreme Entity through the medium of one indriya at a time, but at a final stage attain Him with their entire existence (that is, all thoughts, propensities and urges), which is not possible in the first stage. While sitting in meditation one closes the gateway of one particular indriya (the organ of sight, for example) and prays, "Oh Parama Puruśa please manifest yourself in me."

*Asado mā sadgamayo tamaso mā jyotirgamayo.
Mrtyormāmṛta gamayo āviraviramayaedhi.*

* * *

Rudra yatte dakṣiṇam mukham tena mām páhi nityam.

“Oh Parama Puruṣa please appear suddenly in the dark corners of my mind. Let me see you with my mental eyes”. This type of “seeing” with one’s mental eyes is called ekendriya. The eyes are as indriya. Similarly, the rṣi prays, “Oh Lord, come still closer to me so that I can serve you”. Here the devotee wants to attain the Lord through the indriya of touch. Or the rṣi may pray, “Oh Lord, play your sweet flute so I can hear your divine tune and be absorbed in you, forgetting myself. Please come to me in the form of a blissful melody.” This is an attempt to attain Him through a different indriya – the auditory organ. So these are examples of the initial attempts to come into the closest proximity of Parama Puruṣa. This is not the first but the third stage of sadhana.

10 May 1981, Calcutta

Ekendriya – 5

We were discussing ekendriya, the third stage of spiritual practice. Sádhakas reach this stage having advanced step by step along the spiritual path.

Let us discuss the nature of the indriyas. In Samáskṛta “indra” means “greatest”, and thus according to mythology Indra is the king of the Gods. Sal trees are called “indra brkśa” due to their huge size.

The human body is composed of eight main parts and is thus called aśtaunga. Prostration is called saśtaunga prańáma. Some teachers of ayurveda include the navel area and the back in the list of the body’s main constituent parts, but this is not totally appropriate. Of the five sensory organs (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and skin), one, the skin, can be omitted, and of the five motor organs (vocal cord, hands, legs, excretory and genital organ), one, the vocal cord can be omitted. This leaves the eight constituent parts. And the prostration made with these eight body-parts is called saśtaunga pranama. Now the question is why have these eight indriyas been selected and the chest, back and navel area omitted? The reason is that without the help of the indriyas one’s inherent characteristics cannot be manifested. They also play a dominant role in giving expression to one’s physical characteristics. For example, when you see or hear something you may become happy or angry. The changes in mood (one’s excitement or tranquillity) in the psychic sphere are due to the activity of the indriyas. The indriyas are the centres of activity, the main gateways of the physical world.

Now you may ask, what is mind? The mind is neither something physical nor something purely spiritual. That which is directly related to the quinquemental world and simultaneously related to the psychic world is called “indriya”. Take the indriya of sight. The gateway of this indriya is the eyes themselves, but it is the optical nerve which connects it with the psychic world. Judged in this light the indriyas are superior to the physical body since they are connected with the psychic world.

The mind does not have any physical or psychic

gateway. What we call the eye is not the real eye, but is merely the gateway of the eye organ. The optical nerve which is connected to the psychic world is the actual eye. So what is the mind? The mind is not perceived from outside since it has no physical or psychic gateway, but at the same time it is connected to the indriyas. That’s why after proper deliberation, the experienced philosophers of the past recognized mind as a special indriya, [the eleventh indriya. The difference between this eleventh indriya] and the other ten is that it has no external gateway as the eyes have. Because of this subtle difference the mind is recognized as a subtler indriya and Because of its subtler power it exercises a far greater influence on the human body than the ten indriyas. These ten indriyas always convey information to the mind. The mind on receiving the information creates reactions to it in the physical body, and in the process gets reacted to itself.

If you want to get good service from the mind, you must keep it in a state of tranquillity. For this you must send information through the ten indriyas and the eight limbs which will maintain the equipoise and equilibrium of the mind. Suppose someone is seated at dining table. If you were to break the news of a relative’s death at that time it would definitely destroy his composure, and he will leave the table, having lost all appetite. Even those of you who practice sádhaná say, “I’m feeling a little troubled today, I won’t eat anything.” If you feel disturbed mentally why shouldn’t you eat physically? After all, it is the body which eats. The reason is that the mind exerts a tremendous influence over the body.

Those who wish to elevate the mind, should knowingly bring the indriyas within the contact of someone whose inspiration will cause only positive information to be sent to the mind. The influence of positive inferences will have such a beneficial effect that the ectoplasmic stuff will be powdered down and converted into cognitive faculty.

31 May 1981, Calcutta

Ekendriya – 6

In the previous discourse I discussed indriyas. In the scriptures it is said,

Indriyánámí manonáthah manonáthastu márutah.

[The mind is the lord of the indriyas. The vital energy is the lord of the mind.]

I said that the mind is also an indriya, the eleventh indriya but one without a gateway. Thus we cannot say it internalizes a certain external vibration or externalizes any internal thought through a particular gateway. That job is done by the other ten organs. The eyes take the image of an external object to the mind. The ahamtattva portion of the mind “sees” the image and relays its reaction to the indriyas through the citta (mahattattva, ahamtattva and the citta are the three functional chambers of the mind). Thus the mind is surely the lord of the indriyas.

Who is the lord of the mind? The vital energy (práná). The mind – a very peculiar entity – moves within the domain of the abstract and material worlds. It’s location is within the brain, which is something material and it’s controller is the vital energy. When the human mind is calm, the respiration slows down. But conversely, when the mind is agitated, the breathing becomes rapid. When one runs the whole body is active and so the breathing is rapid, and when breathing is rapid, the mind is restless. While running quickly you cannot think deeply about anything due to the mind being in state of motion. During pránáyáma the vital energy controls the mind.

Pránán yamayatyeshah práná yámah

[That which controls the ten vayus (the flows of vital energy) is called pránáyáma]

Tasmin sati shvás-prashvásayorgatibicchedah pránáyámah

[The process to reduce the gap between inhala-

tion and exhalation is pránáyámah]

The flow of breath continues according to the shortening or lengthening of the period of one’s thought. By channelizing the natural system of respiration into a particular rhythm one controls one’s mind through pránáyáma.

The indriyas are the controller of the body, the mind the controller of the indriyas, and the vital energy the controller of the mind. That’s why on the path of spiritual practice, and particularly in the practice of astáunga yoga (the eight fold path consisting of yama, niyama, ásana, pránáyáma, pratyáhára, dhárañá, dhyána, and samádhi) pránáyáma plays a very significant role.

So when the respiratory system becomes restless, due to one’s individual reactive momenta, the mind also becomes restless. When the mind becomes restless a particular propensity or sense organ also becomes very restless, and another particular propensity or indriya also remains inactive. This is the general rule. But, if one’s respiratory system becomes rhythmic and calm through the process of pránáyáma then a particular propensity or sense organ becomes tranquil. This is something which is very important to remember. Through prolonged practice of pránáyáma one learns which propensity or indriya becomes more active due to the restlessness of the respiratory system and which propensity or sense organ becomes more tranquil due to the pause of the respiratory system. This regular practice is known as yoga.

If a person becomes agitated, causing his respiration to speed up, and his fists to close tightly the propensity (vrtti) of anger can easily get expressed. If this situation continues for long[[, what will happen? Among the propensities of lust, anger, greed, vanity, attachment and jealousy,]] anger will easily dominate the other propensities, and the hand indriya (in Samáskrta the palm is called páñi and its action is called shil-

pana) will become active resulting in him angrily slapping or punching another person. It often happens that a person will be able to control all the ripus (psychic enemies) except one, say the ripu of anger. This is also the same in the case of the indriyas – all the indriyas may be under one's control except one, say the hand. Or conversely, a particular ripu or indriya may be perfectly controlled while the others are not. There are some people whose only weakness is greed. They have an uncontrollable desire for food, for pickles or rasagolla. They don't even care what other people think about them. That is they have totally lost his control over the instinct of greed. Some people have trouble controlling the movement of their legs, and even move them while sitting down To have control or lose control over a particular vritti may be both temporary and permanent. Some people are totally free from greed, neither greed for money, nor greed for food, but cannot control their other vrittis. A person may have no problem observing a vow of silence for two years, but is unable to control his legs and often kicks people indiscriminately, or if he controls his legs, cannot control his hands.

That particular psychology, when a particular vritti or indriya is under control is called "ekendriya." That is in the process of psychic development sádhakas reach a stage where a particular sense organ or propensity either hinders their spiritual progress, or leads them towards extreme subtlety. This stage is called ekendriya.

Before arriving at the stage of perfect ekendriya one may attain it temporarily. For example, one may be able to observe a vow of silence for a few days will break it after a few days due to boredom. Often after a quarrel two people decide never to utter a word to each other again. However, after some time they find some excuse to make amends. Again, someone may angrily refuse to eat anything. The other family members try at length to persuade him to forget everything and eat his food, but to no avail. When they stop pleading with him, however, he feels neglected and writes on the wall, "If you ask me one more time I'll eat my food." Obviously he is not fully in control of his whole being and before his control

finally collapses wants to be requested publicly to eat one more time. He will then say that he had no other choice but to break his vow to fast because he was persistently requested to do so.

So one particular propensity or indriya may be under control, but not the others. This is termed negative ekendriya. One of my cousins was an avid supporter of Mohan Bagan football team. Whenever he went to the match and saw them score a goal he would shout "gooaaal" with the other spectators in a frenzy of excitement. One night he shouted "gooaaal" while dreaming and kicked my uncle who was sleeping beside him. This incident shows that although my cousin had control over the other parts of his body, he had no control over his legs. When a player wants to score a goal his leg mechanically kicks the ball. During sleep when his subconscious mind was functioning and not the conscious mind, the memory of the football match came alive on his mental plate. As the conscious mind was inactive, the subconscious mind could activate the nerve cells directly, so as soon as his vocal chord shouted "goal" his legs, in adjustment with rhythm of the nerve cells and fibre, kicked the ball into the goal. In life such things happen quite often. These are the expressions of ekendriya tattva during the dream stage. I am sure you have experienced such things yourself. Try to compare these experiences with the actual reality.

7 June 1981, Calcutta

So far we been explaining the different stages of psycho-spiritual practice. Last Sunday I discussed ekendriya and in that context I analysed the science of indriyas and discussed the circumstances in which people act and think.

By the way you should know that samádhi does not only occur as a result of a certain realization; other samádhis can occur on indriyas or the five fundamental factors. When the mind is focused on a particular object and becomes intensely concentrated it is called samádhi. According to spiritual science the samádhi attained when the entire mind is pin-pointed on Parama Puruśa is called prajiná samádhi.

When a sádha focuses his or her mind on the solid factor (solid is one of the five fundamental factors) and thinks “I am the earth” he or she attains kítibhaetik samádhi, losing all practical intelligence in the process. Those who constantly think about rupees or dollars attain a kind of samádhi, too, for they become completely identified with their crude object of attraction. If such people incur heavy losses due to the collapse of their business or bank, they will die an instant death, for the pillars on which their life was built crumbled beneath them. So, once they lost their wealth, they lost their lives too.

So samádhi can be attained if one focuses one’s mind on a particular thought, sense organ or inference (sound, form, touch, taste and smell). The samádhi on inferences is called tanmátrik samádhi. Sometime ago I gave a practical demonstration of tanmátrik samádhi. I demonstrated the type of physical and psychic changes which occur when the mind is withdrawn from a specific inference or tanmátra. [refer to Ananda Marga Philosophy in a Nutshell, Part IV]

Suppose there is a rose. If the entire mind is focused on the colour of the rose it will become totally identified with it and will ultimately think, “I am the rose.” Similarly, samádhis on the indri-

yas is also possible. One who attains samádhi on a particular indriya consciously bring it under one’s control and get one’s work done accordingly to one’s sweet will. This was widely practiced in avidyá tantra in the past. The indriyas can function within and beyond their immediate surroundings. For instance, from here you can physically see a part of Calcutta. But if you have been to Naiháti (a small town about thirty miles from Calcutta) you will certainly be able to visualize a part of Naiháti town while sitting here in the room. In this case there should be proper adjustment between the eyes and the previous perception. In this case it is the mental eye which actually visualizes part of Naiháti.

Avidya tantriks make use of this sort of process. With the help of their sense organs and ectoplasms they create positive hallucinations. In Samśkrta this science is called rakśasi vidyá. Rakśasa does not refer to any monstrous type of animal, but to a particular group of humans. With the help of your mental eyes and your psychic power you can create an image visible to the eyes of an ordinary person. You can actually suspend the power of vision of another person so that he sees the object you want him to see. This is called rakśasi máyá (a kind of hypnotic spell) Such negative practices are common in avidyá tantra. For example, a wicked person is sitting in a lonely place with bones scattered around him. Using his psychic power he can create “ectoplasmic hands” and command them to throw the bones into the house of that person he wishes to harm. The inhabitants of the house, ordinary people no doubt, will certainly be terrified by such occult phenomena. They will think it is the work of a ghost and will probably decide to move out of the house. Instead of bones, bricks and stones could also be hurled. To do this one does not require great power – rakśasi máya is an occult power of an inferior quality.

The Ramayana, the great Indian fictive epic, contains some stories which illustrate rákśasi máya.

The golden deer is one such a story. Of course, there was never a real golden deer could you ever think of such a thing? – it was the demon Máriic who made a golden deer out of his occult power. Another such story goes as follows. Prince Angad, the son of the King Bali, was about to present his credentials to King Ravana in the court. The nineteen ministers present wanted to humiliate him in some way, and decided to use their rákási máyá for the purpose. Present in the court at the time were Prince Angad, King Ravana and his son Indrajita, and the nineteen ministers. In order to baffle Angad, the ministers created a form tanmátra, a type of positive hallucination, through which they all assumed the form of King Ravana. So, his vision distorted, saw that there were a total of twenty Ravana beside Indrajita. Nineteen of them were the ministers, of course, but due to the hypnotic spell exercised on his unit mind (a kind of tanmátric samádhi) they all looked like Ravana. The best way to disturb someone's mental concentration is to make him or her angry by being provocative. Be it vidyá tantra or avidyá tantra, everything depends on the degree of psychic concentration. So Angada thought, "I have to disturb their mental balance by provoking them in some way. If I make them angry they will certainly lose their ectoplasmic support and simultaneously their tanmátric samádhi, and will revert to their original tanmátric form". Angad did just that. He said,

*Angada Kahila tave shuna indrajitá
Vishti rávan dekhi vishti ki tor pita?*

[Listen Indrajita. I can see twenty Ravana. Are they all your father?]

All of them become furious lost their mental balance and became their original selves permitting Angad to single out the real Ravana and submit his credentials.

Samádhi on the indriyas is much higher than tanmátric samádhi. Tanmátric samádhi is higher than the samádhi on the fundamental factors, even though the tanmátras are only five in number. The reason is that these five tanmátras have countless expressions. For instance, a single rose

plant may have twenty flowering roses, each with its own size and colour. Each and every object of this colourful universe has a certain speciality of its own. This speciality divides the tanmátras into numerous fragments – that is, in one form tanmátra there are countless forms; in one sound tanmátra there are countless sounds. In the musical world we hear of six rágas and thirty six ráginiis but actually their number is much more than that.

The samádhis on indriyas are concerned with the five motor organs. If the six indriyas (sensory organs) are controlled then people can easily elevate themselves to higher states of existence. That's why this samádhi is greater than other samádhis. While explaining the concept of ekendriya, I consider it important to explain something about the samádhi of the indriyas. In my next discourse I would like to discuss some interesting things about ekendriya which might have happened in your personal lives, but which your intellect could explain how and why it happened.

5 July 1981, Calcutta

Ekendriya – 8

The path of sádhaná is divided into a few stages. We are presently discussing ekendriya. In my previous discourse I was explaining how different samadhis take place and what happens when there is adjustment between various expressions of the indriyas and ectoplasm; and also what is called positive hallucination.

When the various expressions of indriyas and ectoplasmic maintain some sort of adjustment, different psycho-spiritual experiences take place. For this two factors are required. The control of mind over ectoplasm and the control of mind over indriyas. For example if the organ of hearing is properly controlled it can attract many things from the external world through the ectoplasm, and conversely can project many internal thoughts and make others listen. This phenomena comes within the scope of ráksasi vidyá of ancient Indian psychology. I have already told you that ráksasi vidyá is not the black magic of the so called demons, but a kind of occult science. Perhaps you know that Tantra is divided into two branches, and similarly, occult powers are expressed in two ways. Sádhakas who have reached iishvarakoti, (but not Brahmakotí, the highest stage of human realization) through intense spiritual practice attain both vidyá and avidyá shakti, both positive and negative occult power. Common people usually call it aeshvarya (divine) power but this is not completely true. The other day while discussing that phenomenon with a few people I said that some of these occult powers are related to space while others are beyond it. Iishvarakoti sádhakas, through special efforts, can master some negative and positive powers, and may apply them on certain human beings, places, or ideas. But a brahmakoti sádhaka can apply those powers on the entire universe at the same time, through his prota-yoga. Moreover, with the help of ota-yoga, he can also apply his power on an individual place or person if he so wishes. The same thing, when applied on a crude level, may take the form of magic. This explains the eternal side.

If people remain satisfied with the attainment of these occult powers and stop advancing along the supreme path, the fullest expression of their human potentialities will be checked. To bring about the greatest fulfillment of life, sádhakas will have to reach the pinnacle of the state of ekendriya. That is, instead of directing their mind-stuff towards crude objects, they must channelize their minds towards the Macrocosm, and embrace the Macrocosm fully as their goal.

*Prañavo dhanuh sharohyátmá Brahma
tallakśyamucyate
Apramattena vedhavyamí sharattanmayo bhavet.*

“A sádhaka who utilizes his spiritual practice as the bow his self as the arrow, and Parama Puruśa as the target and then tries to pierce the target with undivided attention, attains the Supreme Goal”.

Sádhakas who accept this sloka as the supreme and final guidance and move accordingly along the path of ekendriya sádhaná are capable of devoting the mind to the highest stage of spiritual realization. Their lives become so meaningful. It is not enough to only ideate on Brahma, one must also practice ekendriya sádhaná. Here ekendriya means that all the expressions of the sensory and motor nerves and all the energy and subtle power of the organs should be focused on one point. The consolidated power of the nerves, indriyas, and mind stuff should be directed towards the supreme goal. This unidirectional movement towards the goal is the stage of ekendriya. In this stage the sádhaka does not attach any importance to any particular indriya, idea or thought, but attaches paramount importance to the supreme goal. Such a sádhaka ultimately arises above both vidyá and avidyá Tantra.

Vidyá Tantra is a positive approach to the world, whereas avidyá Tantra is a negative approach. People who tread the path of negativity tend to become crude. And if they follow the positive

path they may attain name, fame, social prestige, etc. but will fail to attain Parama Puruśa. They even fail to attain higher lokas (realms of existence). The person who follows neither of these two paths and thinks only of Parama Puruśa will attain Him one day and will be elevated from the ekendriya stage to the vashiikára stage. This path, of transcending positive and negative ideas is called madhyammárga (middle path) in Tantra (Buddha called it majjihimá mágga). This is the only path, that leads to the highest fulfillment of human life. Nányah panthá vidyate ayanáya. There is no other path. At that stage the sensory world has no attraction for a sádhaka whatsoever. But those sádhakas who dabble with the positive and negative aspects of Tantra readily become engrossed in mundane affairs. The time and energy employed to master the positive and negative aspects is a waste for it diverts the mind and delays its movement towards the higher planes of existence. In my opinion it is better not to waste one's time on such inconsequential pursuits. Instead it would be wiser for people to utilize their time and energy for the attainment of Parama Puruśa. If I were to analyse the positive and negative paths you would be fascinated, but it would be if no use whatsoever in attaining Parama Puruśa. To attain Him you must reach the vashiikára stage.

12 July 1981, Calcutta

Vashiikára – 1

Movement is the essence of existence. Existence is pushed from behind, and moves forward towards the Supreme pole star of all movement. This guiding force is not linear but systaltic. The degrees of its systalsis in one stage is not the same as in the subsequent stage. The reason behind this non-uniformity is that the path of movement is divided into a few stages. Any systaltic or pulsative movement within the realm of the relative factors starts from one point and terminates in another point within the domain of space. The intervening space between the two points is measured by the time factor and substantiated and sustained by the personal factor.

When movement is in the psychic realm it usually starts from a crude mental idea, and from there proceeds towards subtlety. The crude mind of the first stage, becomes increasingly subtle in the subsequent stages, and eventually becomes so subtle that it becomes non-existent.

Human beings guided by the sweetness and charm of the inner heart pray to the Lord,

*Namah Shiváya shántáya káranátraya hetave
Nivedayámi chatmánam tvamí gatih parameshvara*

[Salutations to Shiva, the Supreme Controller and the Lord of the crude, subtle and causal worlds. I completely surrender myself unto you, Oh Lord. You are the Supreme destination of all microcosms]

Sádhakas first address the Lord of their life “Oh Parama Puruśa, You are the Supreme Entity, You are Shiva.” Here Shiva means the Supreme Cognitive Faculty who is watching, hearing, understanding and witnessing everything in the capacity of His individual and pervasive association. One cannot think of anything secretly, what do speak of doing anything without His knowledge. This pinnacled entity who remains as the silent witness of all phenomena is Shiva. He plays the role of the hero in all dramas, He is the unblemished, omniscient one, pervaded with the thought

of the welfare of all at all times. So His role is not only that of a witness. “Shiva” also means the embodiment of welfare. Had He not played the role of a Supreme Benevolent Father, microcosms would not have been able to live for even a single moment. Human beings survive because they feel His benevolent touch every moment. In Him all movements culminate, in Him the supreme faculty of benevolence lies embedded, and thus He is the most lovable object in this universe. And He is not only the Supreme Cognitive Faculty, the embodiment of absolute well-being – He is much greater, much deeper than that. For He lies in the subtlest thoughts of one’s mind and exists as the limitless sphere beyond the periphery of the limited human mind. Whatever human beings want or whatever they receive is His manifestation. Yet He is beyond the capacity of the human mind to comprehend. So, one should only prostrate before such an entity. The amount of bliss which human beings attain after surrendering their everything to Him is too deep to be measured by the small human mind.

In the above shloka Parama Puruśa has been described as Shánta. As long as the human mind is attracted towards the glamorous external objects, as long as mental progress is checked by the pursuit of gross physicality, the human heart remains restless, and utters mournfully “ I am hungry. I am hungry” This insatiable hunger cannot be satisfied by anything from the mundane world, and that is not possible either. So what is the solution? Only Shánta, the Supreme Tranquil Entity, in whom all the objects of this universe, whether animate or inanimate, positive or negative, take shelter and controls all His latent potentialities by dint of His unfathomable valour can satisfy the unlimited hunger of human beings. Only He can establish human beings in the world of supra-aesthetic joy, the abode of bliss, by applying the balm of inner peace. Another name of this Tranquil Entity is Shiva.

In the field of manifestation, there are crude, subtle and causal expressions. The entity which

appears as crude to me is necessarily so, for it too is saturated with the sweetness of Parama Puruśa. Whatever I consider subtle is the subtler sweetness of Parama Puruśa. He is at the root of everything of the universe. In the causal world His sweet smiling form is being transformed according to His wish and radiating divine effulgence throughout the universe. Parama Puruśa is the Supreme Entity who is the seed of the three worlds.

“I surrender myself unto you, Oh Lord because You are the Supreme Shelter. I offer my everything at Your feet”. There is no second entity in the universe to whom everything can be surrendered. If human beings surrender themselves to mundane or psychic objects they will ultimately be converted into crudity in their lives – misery will be their fate. No wants this. All human beings want to attain lasting happiness. But for this they will have to surrender themselves at the altar of Parama Puruśa. The culminating point of the path of movement where every manifestation culminates is also Parama Puruśa. He is the Supreme terminus of all movement.

Thus the psycho-spiritual path is divided into four stages: yatamána, vyatireka, ekendriya and vashiikára. When the mind hovers between the crude and the subtle it is the yatamana stage. When, after vacillating between petty gains and losses one wishes to want to snap the bondage of gains and losses for good and plunge into the world of psychic bliss, it is the second stage, vyatireka. When bliss comes like a flood of light on a moonlit night, it is ekendriya. And when one strives hard to establish oneself in the absolute word by suspending all the mundane longings through psycho-spiritual endeavour it is vashiikára.

6 December 1981, Calcutta

Vashiikára – 2

Last Sunday I was discussing vashiikára, the last stage on the path of psycho-spiritual movement. I said that the path of human movement is divided into four stages. This movement is only successful when Parama Puruśa is accepted as the ultimate goal. This can be illustrated with an analogy. Suppose an expert boat man is rowing a boat, but is totally undecided as to where he will land, and moves aimlessly here and there. Without a fixed destination, and in spite of his skilled rowing hand, all his labour will be in vain.

Tantra, as you know, is divided into two branches – vidyá and avidyá. Shiva formulated all the tantras and thus all tantriks regard Shiva as their supreme and final shelter. In all schools of Tantra there are certain rules, and these are compulsory for practitioners of both vidyá and avidyá tantra. The difference between these two is that avidyá tantra invariably leads one towards crudification, and ultimate annihilation, whereas vidyá tantra leads one from crude to subtle, and invigorates the human life, mind and soul – in fact the whole existence – with exuberant joy. In the initial stage of progress in spiritual sadhana the human mind becomes more subtle, enabling one to achieve a certain degree of control over the physical world as well as the mind. This realm of existence, where psychic control is exercised to some extent, is called kámamaya kośa (crude mental world). Through such psychic control one can gain material wealth, or earn a certain degree of name, fame, etc. Now, where do these things come from? They come from the cruder manifestation of the Cosmic Mind. (This perceptible world is in itself a cruder manifestation of the Cosmic Mind). Thus in this stage sádhakas may attain and establish supremacy over certain things in the crude world.

One may also strive to make the mind more subtle while endeavouring to exercise greater control over the mundane world. This is the path of avidyá tantra. In this endeavour the practitioners remain totally preoccupied with the attainment of name, fame, prosperity and material enjoy-

ments – these are their goals. The purpose of their spiritual practice is to make the mind increasingly subtle to be able to exercise further control over not only the physical world, but the crude minds of the other microcosms. Their goal is not noble, and will result in them being ultimately converted into inert matter. So the final resultant of avidyá tantra is extreme crudity. I have attempted to explain things in some of my ghost stories. Try to find time to read them.

The second stage is artha. What is artha? Suppose a person has been struck with afflictions (there are three types – crude, subtle and causal) and seeks to destroy them. The permanent cessation of these triple affliction is named paramartha and their temporary cessation artha. In this second stage of sádhaná human beings also try to make their minds more subtle through spiritual elevation, but not to attain Parama Puruśa. Their goal is to develop the capacity to dominate the minds of others. Paradoxically they are trying to make the mind subtle while attempting to establish supremacy over others. This stage is neither vidyá nor avidyá – it's an intermediate stage. Sádhakas who tread this path cannot attain the supreme fulfilment of existence for they try to master the psychic occult powers of Parama Puruśa, and ignore Parama Puruśa Himself. Their fate is to move in the crude arena of the psychic sphere of Parama Puruśa. Until the day comes when they lose their psychic power and degenerate. Maharśi Jaemini, formulated his philosophy, the Miiimámsá Darshana, on the basis of this type of psychology. But in this world, such philosophy does not stand the test of pragmatism or spirituality.

In the third stage of sádhaná sádhakas accepts the cognitive faculty as their goal. They wish to advance along the spiritual path while simultaneously serving the subtler expressions of Parama Puruśa. This is the true dharma of human beings. The sadávrata (mass feeding) which you organize comes within the scope of this practice. While performing sádhaná in this stage the human mind attains a greater proximity to Parama

Puruśa and sees the entire universe as a divine expression of Parama Puruśa. Through this realization one enjoys pure unblemished bliss. When people served good food during sadavrata smile happily you feel inner joy.

The fourth stage is when Parama Puruśa alone is your goal and you attain oneness with Him. Its spirit is, "with the bliss I enjoy after attaining oneness with Parama Puruśa, or with the bliss I am giving to Parama Puruśa, or with whatever emanates from that blissful entity, I shall make my existence meaningful."

I have introduced páincajanya to help you derive bliss from this stage. At the time of doing páincajanya the mind becomes filled with spontaneous joy. And no external object is required – just one's inner self. This self sufficiency which every human being can realize through páincajanya, brings success and a new spirit of fulfillment to human life. One's life will shine with the divine effulgence of Parama Puruśa.

Let your advent in this world be successful in all ways. I want your existence to shine, to be resplendent with the joy of being alive. This is the reason why I introduced páincajanya and sadávrata – to bring supreme fulfillment to your lives. Let your advent on this earth be successful, individually and collectively.

13 December 1981, Calcutta

New Aspects of Ashtanga Yoga by Acarya Gunamuktananda Avt.

There's a story that when the cockroach sees another insect trying to attack it, it becomes so mortified with fright that the image of that insect freezes in its mind. Due to the intense ideation of the form of its enemy, the enemy actually sees the cockroach as one of its own kind. In other words, the vibration emanating from the cockroach's mind influences its enemy's mind into thinking that it is a member of its own species. Thus the cockroach is saved from death, since the insect will not attack one of its own kind. You may well ask, "How has this got anything remotely to do with yoga?"

The fundamental meaning of the word "yoga" is to unify. Hence the English word "yoke." To mix sugar and sand means to unite the two. But it's more than that. True unification is like mixing sugar and water: the two become one. Yoga is the unification of the individual existence with the cosmic existence; the individual sense of awareness with the cosmic sense of awareness; the individual experience of limited pleasures and pains with the cosmic experience of the unlimited: infinite happiness; perfect peace and contentment – bliss. That's what we are all inextricably attracted to; it's the reason for all the things we do. We can never be satisfied with limited things. They may give us pleasure for a while, but never long-lasting satisfaction. So consciously or unconsciously, we all want bliss and we are all trying to achieve it. But how are we supposed to achieve it? The only way is to think about it, and that means to think about the Infinite; to expand one's awareness to infinity; to transcend the mind and enter the realm of the cosmic: endless and eternal. Enter our friend the cockroach. "As one thinks, so one becomes." This powerful psychological principle is not only the lifesaver of our little friend; it is also the mainstay of yogic practice. By ideating regularly on the thought of infinite happiness, one's mind will gradually expand; and if that ideation becomes constant enough, that expansion will continue until eventually the merger of one's limited sense of individual existence into the cosmic existence will transform one's experience of

pleasure and pain into the constant experience of cosmic bliss, just as a river attains total freedom when it merges with the sea.

We all want to expand; to become something greater than what we already are; to achieve something more than what we already have. "There is in the living being a thirst for limitlessness."* It is the fundamental spirit of humanity. Since the beginning of human civilization people have been aspiring towards that, and it is this human yearning for supreme expansion that eventually led people to discover the techniques of yoga.

These were originally systematized by Shiva 7000 years ago. Although Shiva has now become a "god" of Hinduism, he did actually live as a great guru at that time. And he taught many things that we have since come to take for granted: the system of marriage, medicine, music and science, not to mention the subtle science of yoga and spiritual fulfillment.

Over time, the original systematization of yoga was distorted, and some aspects were misunderstood or lost. An attempt was made by Patanjali about 2100 years ago to reclassify the techniques – into what he called Ashtanga ("eight-limbed") Yoga. Swami Vivekananda more recently called it Raja Yoga ("the yoga of kings"), raja meaning "royal", implying that the yogi never feels subjugated by anyone.

There is, however, a more extensive and comprehensive form of Ashtanga Yoga called Rajadhiraja Yoga ("the yoga of the king of kings"). It was first named as such by Ashtavakra, a great saint who wrote the Ashtavakra Samhita over 2000 years ago. The present-day form uses Patanjali's eight-limbed structure as its basis, but includes techniques of the original system which were lost or overlooked – clarifying and correcting misinterpretations – and with recent additions brings the whole practice into relevancy for modern-day life and human psychology.

This Rajadhiraja form is now the most complete; an all-round systematic and scientific process for the development of the body, of the mind, and of the soul; leading to the total experience of the Infinite – what in yoga is called “self-realization.” It is a synthesis of processes for the evolution of mind towards the supreme spiritual flow, the essence being the practical and continual expansion of mind. Its goal is the all-round elevation of human beings, both individually and collectively. It is a total response to human longing and aspiration.

The eight limbs:

1. Yama and 2. Niyama (principles of morality)
3. Asana (yoga postures)
4. Pranayama (breath control)
5. Pratyahara (withdrawal of mind)
6. Dharana (concentration)
7. Dhyana (meditation)
8. Samadhi (suspension of mind in the goal)

1. Yama and 2. Niyama

The principles of morality are the basis of a proper life system. But they are not the goal. They are instrumental in creating the frame of mind to perform the higher practices of concentration and meditation. Just as a young tender plant must be protected as it grows, so too must the tender and sincere attempts of the new practitioner be protected by moral guidelines. In ancient times, gurus used to demand that disciples first prove themselves in morality and altruism before teaching them further practices. There is a story that one particular disciple only managed to convince his guru to teach him when he was found almost drowned while attempting to block a hole in a local dam with his whole body, preventing it from bursting and flooding a nearby village. In fact, the principles of Yama and Niyama perfectly illustrate how one should deal with the surrounding world. To treat everything and everybody in the proper manner requires a certain amount of control over the propensities of the mind, and this is

achieved by Yama – controlled conduct with others – and Niyama – regulation of one’s personal habits. In other words, Yama is control of oneself in relation to the external environment, and Niyama is the regulation of one’s internal environment. Yama is social morality; Niyama individual morality.

Yama has five parts:

1. Ahimsa: Non-harm in thought, word and action. This means maintaining the least harm in any given situation. It does not, however, exclude the possibility of using physical force to defend oneself or others if necessary. This is the first important area in which Rajadhiraja Yoga differs from the more traditional understanding of Raja Yoga. When Mahatma Gandhi was once asked if there was any circumstance in which he would kill a cobra, he replied that there was not. A more practical interpretation of Ahimsa would suggest that under certain circumstances it may be necessary to use force in order to protect others or oneself from harm. It’s the intention that’s important. While walking down the street you may inadvertently squash a bug, but it was never your intention to harm it.

2. Satya: Benevolent truthfulness. This is the use of mind and words in the spirit of welfare. The emphasis is on “helpful” truthfulness. Buddha once said the first priority for words is that they should be helpful to others. The second priority is that they should be true. And the third priority is that they should be sweet-sounding. So again, the spirit of this principle is to promote the greatest welfare possible, this time through one’s thoughts and words.

3. Asteya: Non-stealing. Not to take what belongs to others without their permission. It also means not to deprive others of what you owe them. For example, to pay an employee less than what you think she or he deserves, or to get on the train without buying a ticket, is against the spirit of asteya.

4. Brahmacharya: Universal thinking. To consider everything as an expression of the Cosmic Con-

sciousness. This cultivates love for others, regardless of race, nationality or ethnicity, by promoting the feeling that we are all part of the same cosmic family. The benefit to society can readily be appreciated. There's an amusing story to illustrate this principle: A man used to always say that everything is God. Whatever happened, he said it was God. His friends were accustomed to hearing this all the time, and used to joke about it amongst themselves. One day they saw him being chased by a bull, and shouted out to him, "If everything is God, then the bull is also God, so why are you running away from it?" As he was running for his life, he shouted back in mid-stride, "My running away is also God!" This feeling is important to cultivate. In Raja Yoga it is done without the aid of a scientific technique, but in Rajadhiraja Yoga there is a special mantra which increases the effectiveness of achieving it in everyday life. Cosmic ideation while performing any action assures the success of that action, as well as preparing the mind for meditation.

5. Aparigraha: Simple living. Not to accumulate more than you need for a reasonable standard of living. This has personal as well as social consequences. We can never be satisfied with what we have while we accumulate possessions unnecessarily, because the mind will always be distracted by the possessions and by the process of accumulating them. On the social side, the physical wealth of this world is limited, so by accumulating excessive physical wealth one would be depriving others of their necessities.

Niyama also has five parts:

1. Shaoca: Purity of mind and cleanliness of body. To keep the body clean not only means externally. Internal cleanliness depends on what we eat, and other things we ingest.

2. Santosa: Mental ease and contentment. Only when the mind is at ease is it possible to be satisfied with one's life, and to infuse others with one's cheerfulness and enthusiasm. This depends to a large extent on Aparigraha above.

3. Tapah: Social service. Working for the welfare

of others. This means to help others in need without expecting anything in return. There is a flow of love within us all that we can only express when we give willingly and selflessly to others. Note that it means to others in need. Giving money to a rich person is not service!

4. Svadhyaya: Inspirational reading. To read uplifting books, understanding their underlying meaning. This is best done after meditation, when the mind is most receptive to deep ideas and higher thinking. Of course, in our modern-day society "books" can also mean other media of education, such as the Internet, CDs, tapes, etc, but the important point is that, whatever the source, it is uplifting and elevating for the mind.

5. Ishvara Pranidhana: To meditate on the Cosmic Consciousness. This gives the realization that you are one with that Infinite Consciousness, and it is this realization that gives the greatest fulfillment in human life. In Rajadhiraja Yoga, there is a specific mantra and point of concentration for each person – depending on one's individual mental vibration – that is instrumental to achieving this ideation.

3. Asana

In the West we have come to equate the term "yoga" with yoga postures, but in fact they form only a small – albeit important – part of the whole system. In Sanskrit, yoga postures are called asanas. Asana means a "posture giving physical comfort and mental composure." Asanas affect the glands, nerves, muscles and all the organs of the body. There are many physical benefits: flexibility, improved respiration and circulation, the prevention and cure of diseases, etc, but the main effect is on the mind, through pressure on the endocrine glands and the subsequent balancing of the hormones secreted from those glands. The relation between the physical body and the mind is very close, and it's the endocrine hormones that determine one's emotions. If the hormones are balanced, the emotions will also be balanced, facilitating concentration and meditation. But without that balance there will be tendencies of mind

that distract us from deeper ideation, and despite having a sincere desire to live a constructive and fulfilling life, it may be that we are unable to because of those extroversial tendencies. We may understand that we should meditate, but if we cannot concentrate the mind it will be very difficult. So it is important to rectify the defects of the glands. Asanas help in this to a very large extent.

There are more than 50,000 asanas, but only a few of those are necessary. Many asanas are named after animals, because certain animals have specialized propensities of one sought or another. For example, by doing the Peacock (Mayurasana) one develops fearlessness and a strong digestion – both characteristics of the peacock. The tortoise can easily retract its extremities, and if one practices the Tortoise Posture (Kurmakasana) the mind can more easily be withdrawn from the external world. The Hare (Shashaungasana) puts pressure on the crown of the head and stimulates the pineal gland to produce melatonin, the hormone which gives the feeling of well-being and bliss. This is especially important in meditation. The Shoulderstand is called Sarvaungasana in Sanskrit, meaning “whole body,” indicating its effect on the thyroid gland, which controls the whole body’s metabolism. Other asanas such as the Mountain (Parvatasana) and the Wheel (Cakrasana) are named after the physical structures they resemble. There is even a relatively recent one (Matsyendrasana) named after the king who invented it. Asanas such as the Lotus (Padmasana), Perfect Pose (Siddhasana) and Brave Pose (Viirasana) directly place the mind in a state beneficial for meditation, so it is these meditation postures (Dhyanasanas) that we use in concentration and meditation. Mudras are similar to asanas, but usually incorporate some kind of ideation. Their effect is on the nerves and muscles rather than the glands.

Before asanas the body should be cool and calm, and this is achieved quickly and conveniently in Rajadhiraja Yoga by what is called the Half-bath. Asanas should be done on an empty – or at least not full – stomach. The room should be clean and warm, with no draught or smoke. Except for the meditation postures, asanas should not

be practiced during menstruation or pregnancy. There are more guidelines to ensure that asanas are practiced without damage to the health, and they require a deeper commitment. For example, strictly speaking – with the exception of the meditation postures and a few other simple asanas such as the Cobra – vegetarianism is important, as is breathing through the left nostril, as opposed to the right, while practicing asanas. These are little-known finer points which Rajadhiraja Yoga brings to light, the reason for them being the protection of the physical and mental constitution. In general, asanas and mudras should only be practiced on the advice of a proper teacher.

Also incorporated in the system of Rajadhiraja Yoga are two specific exercises that most yoga teachers, let alone students, are not yet acquainted with. One of these – Tandava – was formulated by Shiva 7000 years ago. It is a vigorous exercise (resembling to some extent the Russian Cossack dance) that is extremely beneficial for developing courage and spiritedness, as well as improving the memory. Because of its effect on the glands, it is only for men. The second is a recent and innovative addition to Rajadhiraja Yoga that is particularly beneficial for women. It is called Kaoshikii. It instills in the mind the feeling of self-confidence and awareness, encouraging self-expression and creativity. It increases longevity, prevents and cures disease (including many types of liver diseases) and eases the discomforts of menstruation and childbirth. It is, in fact, a medicine in itself.

After practicing asanas, a skin massage should be done before lying in deep relaxation (Shavasana) for at least two minutes. The skin massage helps in the absorption of sebaceous oils that are naturally secreted onto the skin surface. This increases the suppleness and glamour of the skin, as well as relaxing the nerves, increasing the blood and lymph circulation, and harmonizing the energy (pranah) of the body. Deep relaxation gives the body a chance to assimilate the positive energy gained from the asanas. It also relieves stress, lowers the blood pressure, and decreases the need for sleep.

4. Pranayama

Pranayama is the scientific technique used to control the respiration and hence the mind. This is important for meditation. There is a very close and direct relationship between the breath and the mind. Mental flow depends on the flow of breath. If the respiration is fast, concentration will be next to impossible. It can be very difficult even to read the time on your watch if you're out of breath. On the other hand, concentration is easy if the respiration is calm and relaxed. It's an automatic process. While watching a suspenseful movie, you sit on the edge of your seat with bated breath. Why? Because the scene has you totally captivated. You're concentrating fully, so your breathing automatically slows down, and may even stop completely until the suspense is broken. This also happens naturally during deep meditation if the concentration is intense enough. Here there is no danger because the ideation is always positive. But in pranayama the breath is forcibly controlled regardless of the object of ideation. This can be dangerous. It can be very good or it can be very bad, depending on the ideation at the time. The thinking must be positive for it to have a positive effect. Conversely, if the thinking is negative it will have a negative effect. That's why pranayama should only be practiced when some control over concentration of mind has already been attained. The pranayama itself will further increase the degree of concentration, but there should already be some degree of control before starting it. So it is even more important than for asanas to learn pranayama at the correct time and from a proper teacher.

In Rajadhiraja Yoga, pranayama is practiced at a specific chakra (psychic energy center) with an appropriate mantra and cosmic ideation. So the ideational component is fully taken into account. Indeed, pranayama without cosmic ideation may lead to the control of the breath, or even the complete suspension of the breath, but that's of little use without higher ideation. Death is also the suspension of the breath, and it doesn't help us much!

Pranayama controls the pranah (vital energy). It

allows the body to conserve more heat. It affects the glands, subglands, nerves and all the liquids of the body. Special pranayama practices can also be prescribed for specific diseases.

5. Pratyahara

Pratyahara literally means "to take back what has been given out." The mind projects outwards to the different objects of the world, so it means to withdraw the unsteady mind from those objects so that it may be directed internally for meditation. In Rajadhiraja Yoga there is a very scientific system to do this. It involves three phases, known as shuddhis: first the withdrawal of mind from objective physicality (the external world); then from subjective physicality (the physical body); and finally the withdrawal of mind from its own internal thoughts.

Good company and environment are also important. Withdrawal and concentration are made easier if the senses are receptive to subtle sensations, and the motor organs directed towards subtle expressions.

There is a further technique in which the "colors" of the mind – that is, all the different tendencies and propensities – are offered to the Cosmic Mind. This frees one from the attachment to those propensities, because it promotes the realization that one's individual mind is also a part of the Cosmic Mind. With this realization comes the development of intuition and creative insight, as one gradually gains more access to the vast storehouse of cosmic knowledge – past, present and future.

6. Dharana

Dharana means "to uphold the mind at a particular point." That means concentration – to concentrate on one thing. It gives the ability to direct one's mind wherever wanted. The undisciplined mind is like a wild horse: if you let it out in an open field it will run all over the place. But dharana tames the wild horse of the mind so it can be

ridden anywhere. This is essential for meditation.

Rajadhiraja Yoga incorporates two types of dharana. The first is Tattva Dharana – concentration on the chakras with the help of the root (bija) mantras of those chakras. This gives control of the physical factors of the body, because it is the chakras themselves that control the factors that make up the body. For example, dharana done at the Muladhara Chakra (base of the spine) gives control over the solid factor and makes the body light. When dharana is done at the Svadhisthana Chakra (base of the genitals), one will feel fresh and clean as if just having taken a bath, because this is the controlling point of the liquid factor. It also gives the ability to bear thirst. Dharana done at the Manipura Chakra (navel) gives control over the luminous factor, so one can withstand extreme heat or cold. In fact, dharana gives the strength of mind to withstand all types of pain.

The chakras are like knots that bind the flow of energy up the spine. By stabilizing the mind at particular chakras, these knots are loosened and the energy channels flow more easily. Tattva Dharana also diverts the flow of energy towards the subtle. When the breath flows predominantly through the right nostril, the energy channel for crude expression is open. This is best for physical activity, digestion of food and crude thought. When air flows through the left nostril, the mind tends to focus more on subtle thought and less on physical activity. Air flowing through both nostrils concurrently is best for psycho-spiritual practices such as meditation.

Tattva Dharana allows the mind to detach from things of transitory and limited character, leading to the development of conscience and true wisdom. It is done in Viirāsana because this posture gives short and intense concentration, as well as preventing hair loss if it is done properly.

The second type of dharana in Rajadhiraja Yoga is a recent innovation called Chakra Shodhana, literally meaning “purification of the chakras.” By purifying the chakras – and all the nerves, glands and energy channels connected to them – meditation is made a lot easier. It infuses all the cells

of the body with the most positive ideation. So while Tattva Dharana gives strength to the mind, Chakra Shodhana gives joy to it, instilling optimism and positivity. This type of dharana can be done in any asana, including the relaxation pose, or Shavasana. The only stipulation is that – as with all other lessons of meditation – the spine is kept straight.

7. Dhyana

Dhyana means meditation in the real sense of the term. Concentration is merely the initial stage – or jumping-off point – of meditation. While dharana is the stabilization of mind at one point, dhyana is a flow of mind: an uninterrupted flow towards the one object of ideation – just as oil flows continuously in one unbroken flow.

So dhyana literally means “to direct the mind in an unbroken flow towards the supreme goal.” When the practice of meditation was introduced into China from India, the Sanskrit word “dhyana” was distorted into “chan.” From China to Korea it changed to “chen.” Then finally from Korea to Japan it became “zen.” Hence the tradition of Zen!

In Rajadhiraja Yoga there are two types of dhyana. The first is the practical aspect of Iishvara Pranidhana mentioned previously in Niyama. It employs the use of a chakra and mantra specific for each person – according to the individual’s personal vibration – to direct the flow of mind towards the goal. The second uses the highest and most subtle of ideations to direct the mind towards the Supreme. It is called Anudhyana, meaning “to follow” the supreme flow. This constant ideational flow leads one to the realization of the unity of all existence; leads the mind from form to formless, to the complete transcendence of itself into pure, limitless Consciousness.

“The one formless, beginningless and infinite Parama Brahma (Supreme Entity) is the only entity to be attained by living beings.”*

Iishvara Pranidhana is practiced in Padmasana

(Lotus Posture). If not accustomed to Lotus, Ardha Padmasana (Half-Lotus) or the simple cross-legged position (Bhojanasana), can be used. Anudhyana is practiced in Padmasana for women and Siddhasana for men. Dhyana generally makes the skin smoother, and enhances its glow and effulgence.

8. Samadhi

Samadhi is not a practice in itself; rather it is the result of all the previous practices. Samadhi literally means "sameness (absorption, or oneness) with the goal." There are many possible goals; physical, psychic or spiritual, but Rajadhiraja Yoga recognizes only the spiritual goal, and hence only spiritual samadhi; that is merger in the Cosmic Entity.

Although there are different types and styles of spiritual samadhi, they can all be classified into two general categories: savikalpa and nirvikalpa.

Savikalpa means "with vikalpa," or "with mental thought or feeling." So Savikalpa Samadhi is the state of absorption in the Cosmic Mind. Because the essence of mind (even the Cosmic Mind) is the "I am" feeling – the existential "I-feeling" – there remains, therefore, in this samadhi the feeling of existence, or "I am." It is the result of Iishvara Pranidhana.

Anudhyana takes the whole process to its conclusion – to the highest state of existence: Nirvikalpa Samadhi. This is the state of non-qualified absorption, where the tendencies of mind are completely suspended. Nirvikalpa means "without vikalpa," or "without mental thought or feeling." It is the state of absolute bliss – complete absorption in Cosmic Consciousness. This state of absorption is known in Rajadhiraja Yoga as Kaevalya (the only One) or Turiya (the absolute state of non-duality).

It is not possible to come even close to describing this state, let alone thinking about it, because it is beyond the mind. The mind can analyze anything cruder than itself – i.e. anything physical

– but it cannot think of anything subtler than itself, i.e. Consciousness. One's mind exists in and of Consciousness, so it is not possible to even think about it, simply because it is not possible to think of anything beyond the boundary of one's own mind. True spiritual practice, therefore, is the process of transcending the mind to the Consciousness within which it exists: the Cosmic Consciousness. It is this transcendence of the "I-feeling" that results in the supreme experience of the Absolute: "Where 'I' is, 'He' is not; where 'He' is, 'I' is not."* (Consciousness here is arbitrarily assigned the male gender.) So rather than saying, "I think therefore I am," closer to the truth in the deeper sense would be to say, "When I stop thinking then I really am!"

Shri Ramakrishna, the guru of Swami Vivekananda, used to frequently slip in and out of Nirvikalpa Samadhi. Afterwards his disciples would ask him what it was like, but he could never reply because the answer was beyond the capability of his speech; beyond even his memory. Thought, let alone words, cannot grasp that state of existence. The only way of even recognizing that one has been in that supreme state is the experience of waves of bliss in the mind that follow it.

Doubtless the cockroach does not feel those waves of bliss when it becomes frozen with fear at the sight of its enemy. But its absorption is of a different nature. It is the absorption of mind in a physical object; another physical body. And its cause is fear. Spiritual samadhi, on the other hand, is not caused by fear; it is the result of love: the love for the Supreme Entity cultivated by the practice of all the aforementioned stages. This love in yoga is called devotion, or bhakti in Sanskrit. Devotion is love for the Infinite. It is said that when devotion is attained, everything is attained, because it is through this highest love that the supreme state of existence is attained. It is a lot easier to think of someone when you love them. "One must not be God-fearing; one must be God-loving."* Just as the cockroach merges its psychic existence with that of its enemy through fear, so it is possible for us to merge our individual existence with the blissful cosmic existence through love, leading to the ultimate fulfillment in life.

“He is infinite. He has no beginning and no end. He is the unbroken flow of pure and serene bliss, stretching from beginninglessness to endlessness.”

Shrii Shrii Anandamurti

The Sa'dhana' of Love by Acarya Vimalashananda Avadhuta

Sádhaná means spiritual effort. It is normally referred to as meditation. While meditation is for sure a spiritual effort, it is reductive to consider that sádhaná is just meditation. So in order to capture the essence of sádhaná, we start our research from the most available external source of information. If we search on the dictionary we find the following definition:

(Hinduism) "One of a number of spiritual practices or disciplines which lead to perfection, these being contemplation, asceticism, worship of a god, and correct living".

Word Origin from Sanskrit: effective
Collins English Dictionary - Complete & Unabridged 2012 Digital Edition

In this definition the key for a deeper understanding is in the determination of a spiritual goal, which is given in a rather broad way as "perfection". The list of spiritual practices or disciplines could be extended almost infinitely to include all types of martial arts and their forms, as well as all types of fine art. So, in fact sádhaná includes basically all types of refined expression that are cultivated with an earnest desire of fulfillment until their mastery leads to perfection. For example I would include not only the tea ceremony or the mandala production, which are classical in the Buddhist Zen and Tibetan traditions, but also traditional craft making arts, like pottery or calligraphy. I would even dare to include a marriage in a society where it is becoming increasingly complex to preserve the unity of a family.

It is rather possible that sádhaná has different meanings or definitions. If we look into the extensive work of Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, founder of Ananda Marga, we will find several references to sádhaná with different imports and relevance:

"So now yoga and tantra have come close to each other in meaning. Yoga means the unification of jivátmá and Paramátmá. And how can this unification take place? It is possible through

gradual expansion, that is, by dint of the constant practice of Tantra. This practical cult or spiritual sádhaná exists only in Tantra and nowhere else. Prárthanárcaná mátraeva bhramamúlam. That is, "Prayer and eulogy only mislead one. Only by dint of spiritual cult can one attain success. Thus sádhaná is Tantra and Tantra is sádhaná."

Yoga and Tantra
26 October 1979 DMC, Gaddopur

In this paragraph we are presented with a conception of sádhaná, which is associated with Yoga and Tantra. Sádhaná is presented as a practical cult and not as a theoretical concept. The unification concept that is proper of Yoga becomes Tantra in its practical application. The range of the different processes leading to unification, can be all categorized as sádhaná. Hence the closing remark: "Sádhaná is Tantra and Tantra is sádhaná."

As a Tantric Master Shrii Shrii Anandamurti dwells in the sádhaná field like a farmer in his plot of land:

"People's life becomes mechanical if they are overwhelmed with the sentiment that they must do such acts, must perform such yajin@a (sacrifice), must rise in this manner and sit in this manner and get up in this manner and so on. Such a person is not happy and this type of ritualism cannot be called real Karma. To serve others at one's sacrifice is called penance. In the absence of love any service or penance is for show and is therefore fruitless. All ritualistic devotion, sham penance, counting beads etc. are meant only for public show and true love and the Supreme goal are lost from sight. Brahma cannot be attained through actions, since the sweetness of joy is lacking in such ritualism. On the other hand the divine bliss is easily attainable to those who base their Sádhaná on love."

Yajina and Karmaphala
Mághii Púrñimá 1955 DMC

Rituals are by definition repetitive. Al-

though it is popularly said that “repetition leads to perfection” such types of spiritual sádhaná, in order to be successful, require an essential ingredient which is love. And love makes each repetition different from one another. This is the beauty and charming attraction of true sádhaná. It is never the same although it can be as simple as preparing a cup of tea or shooting an arrow with a bow. Meditation as chief sádhaná practice respects the general rule: there are not two meditations that are alike. Rather each time it is a new learning experience.

Sádhaná can be associated with the development of a human being in its full potential value and attributions, as is hinted in the following definition:

“Now, it may be said that the microcosms are very small – how will they become vast? Páshabaddho bhavetjiváh páshasamuktah bhavecchivah. (Those who are in bondage are called jivas, and those who have been freed are Shiva.) But how to get rid of the bondages? By doing sádhaná and kiirtana one will have to move forward: one must not be caught in the snares of bondage. Human beings come onto this earth for a very short period, and they must make the fullest utilization of the short span of their lives. They should always remember that they may be tiny, seemingly insignificant portions of this universe, but after all they exist within Him and remain with Him. Usually they do not realize this, because they are bound by the snares of Máyá. They do not realize that however insignificant they may seem, they are with Him; and as there cannot be anything outside of Parama Puruśa they also exist within Him, and thus He has become their personal property. Those who are wise from the worldly point of view are less devotional; they say, “As Parama Puruśa belongs to all, thus He belongs to me also.” The karmiis (people of action) say, “As Parama Puruśa is mine, He belongs to everyone else as well”. But the devotees say, “As Parama Puruśa is my personal property, He belongs to me and to me alone. I am ready to give up everything else, but not Him.”

What Are the Noble Truths?
20 March 1979 DMC, Kanpur

Sádhaná implies expansion towards the infinite. During this process of expansion, the psychological outlook of the person doing sádhaná changes, giving to the personality rather majestic traits of increased confidence and responsibility. As the person gets more confidence he or she is able to assume greater responsibilities. By fulfilling those responsibilities, their value and benefit for society grow. Sádhaná becomes an essential tool for the transformation and elevation of the entire human society.

Once love or devotion have been accepted as the core, sádhaná is bound to reflect in the external world in the most beneficial and effective way:

“You are following the path of sádhaná. Always remember that you must establish yourself in pure devotion and not formal devotion. And to become established in pure devotion you must perform virtuous deeds, practice spiritual sádhaná regularly, render selfless service to the world, and wage a relentless fight against wrongs and injustice. There is no room for cowardice. May you be victorious.”

Vaedhii Bhakti and Shuddhá Bhakti
26 November 1966 DMC, Midnapur

Sádhaná is a path of courage and victory, not a path of formality and external show. It is a path where, if you dirty your hands, you just wash them. If you commit a mistake, you rectify it and forget about it. On the path of sádhaná perfection is achieved by the determination to go ahead and not by overburdening with formality. Consider the concluding sentence of the previous second quote: “On the other hand the divine bliss is easily attainable to those who base their Sádhaná on love.”

Divine bliss is a natural outcome when we are free from bondages. Fear for example, is one of the most pervasive bondages. Love and fear compete with each other. The more space is given to love, the less power remains for fear. When sádhaná is based on love, it is rather impossible to maintain the extreme critical eye of a cynic. Fault finding and love are rather at odd terms. Those

who measure each and every step and calculate each and every consequence of their actions, have a rather hard time to walk on the path of love and kindness. So my view on sádhaná is that not only is it based on love, it is love itself and its goal is also love. Love is the beginning and love is the end of sádhaná. There is no more a mistake on the path of the lover. And naturally, with the conditions of full trust and surrender, the spiritual effort becomes effortless.

The essence of sádhaná is service. It means that love cannot be separated from service nor from sádhaná. Service is part of sádhaná. This is clear in Ananda Marga philosophy where, for example, in the 16 points the sádhaná point specifically includes service and not only meditation. Even Hatha Yoga or asanas are included in the sádhaná point. The nature of sádhaná is inclusive and not exclusive. It is for each and every human being and not for few elected ones. Sádhaná is for all, Yoga is for all and service is universal in nature and practical in application. In Ananda Marga there is a department called Ananda Marga Universal Relief Teams or AMURT, which is responsible for providing help in all emergencies or calamities. It is obvious that during emergencies there is no room for high talk or philosophy. The effort to save human lives, blinds off any discrimination based for example on nationality or religious belief.

There is more to say about the relationship between sádhaná and service. On the path of spiritual elevation, which is sometimes compared to the climbing of a mountain, we will find that the stage of selfless service is the latest stage of spiritual development.

“Kuru puńyam ahorátram.”(Do good day and night) Ahorátram means the twenty four hour period from sunrise to sunrise. It is advised that one should acquire virtue (punyam) around the clock. Doing good to others is virtue. We come to a central aspect of service, as a way to use properly all our time, 24 hours a day.

Saints of all religions like Mirabai, Saint Francis of Assisi, Saint Theresa d’Avila, Kabir

and more recently Mother Theresa of Calcutta, have practiced service day and night in different forms. Meditation, when it is based on love, is also service. The only difference is that is done with the mind and does not imply physical action or counterpart. Yet, the attitude is just the same.

The Four Stages of Spiritual Development are described in the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali. They are described as stages of detachment for achieving perfect discrimination. In the works of Shrii Shrii Anandamurti we find that each stage has specific peculiarities regarding the type of obstacles encountered in the inner and external world. It can be noticed that in the last stage, called ‘vashikara,’ or the stage of full control, the person is free from all attachments. It means that the mind is in the position to guide action unbiased by external pressure or conditioning. It is a very pleasurable state where service flows undisturbed and apparently without effort.

What is the relationship between sádhaná and the Four Stages of Spiritual Development? Sádhaná takes different forms, according to the stage associated. In the first stage of Yatamana there is stress on the physical plane, due to oppositions that come from environment and inner propensities. Sádhaná is the sádhaná of Yama and Niyama, the principles that regulate human conduct. It is the effort of practicing morality in the middle of storming passions and conflicting views. Should I continue to be vegetarian against the advice of my doctor or family? Should I stop smoking for good or try to relinquish the desire of smoking little by little? Yatamana is considered the most difficult stage, in the sense that the present inertia is very strong and tries to pull a person back at every step. It is beginning of the ascent to the spiritual mountain. The mountain looks so big that is almost overwhelming. But as the sadhaka moves forward, the sight gets on the path and step by step all obstacles become useful friends or even companions on the journey towards the final destination.

In the second stage as there is a higher degree of control over the propensities. Meditation becomes the best and most pleasurable tool

for spiritual advancement. There is an awareness that meditation is like a compass directing one's life. It is the sadhana of sitting for long periods of time, without breaking the spiritual ideation given by the "mantra". It is the pleasure of enduring the effort like a baker crafting the bread through the night. It is the middle of the mountain climb, where the measurement of the time wanes and the ups and downs seemingly never end. One keeps going with a positive attitude, crossing forest after forest, hill after hill, turn after turn, until the final clearing, which shows the sight of the pick.

In the third stage, all propensities are under control, except for one which may become overwhelmingly powerful destroying all fruits of sádhaná already conquered. It is just like a tank full of water where only one hole is left. The water will shoot out with enormous force until that final defect has been mended. It is the stage where sádhaná takes the form of surrender and what best way to surrender exists, than singing the praise of the Lord, which is Kiirtan? You clanged on the steep wall of the mountain towards the top and it has become rather dangerous to look down or even think to go back. What else remains than to make the last effort and proceed up to the end?

In the fourth stage when all propensities are under control, sádhaná takes the form of service. A lesson practiced over and over becomes a lesson assimilated at the core and practiced, without the involvement of the process of thinking. There is no possibility to get dirty or impure, as the mind does not accept negative internal or external stimuli. It sees, but does not see. It hears, but does not hear. It touches but it does not touch. It is the stage of Avadhuta where the whole universe becomes the object of service. There is no more duality, as in true service no distinction exists even between humans and animals, animate and inanimate. Everything is an expression of love. Good and bad become phenomena that appear and disappear, but only never ending love remains.

Although the stages of psycho-spiritual development are meant to be successive one after

another, there are glimpses of the last stage in the life of every human being whether they are on a spiritual path or not. Such glimpses are the manifestation of the grace of God, which is bestowed on everybody and blesses the humble ones, who really don't know if they are spiritual or not, elevated or not, learned or not learned. They may or may not do meditation or spiritual practice, but in their hearts there is an only one eternal song: "Thank You, Thank You, Thank You".

Human beings are spiritual beings in essence and they are bound to become spiritual beings in practice. Service is an inherent characteristic of all human beings. It is part of their Dharma. So, sádhaná becomes an effort to purify the mind and to remember something that is coded in our human genes, love.

The sádhaná of love is the very sweet effort to always carry within us the gratitude for being graced with a human form and human mind, able to connect with the subtlest expressions of feelings and emotions that manifest in our relationships and within ourselves. What then can be the best use of our time?