

THE WAY TO SĀNTI

(A brief account of the spiritual and *sāttvik* path to peace of mind, according to *Viśiṣṭādvaita*).

BY

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Sri M. A. NARAYANA IYENGAR

A LIFE SKETCH AND A TRIBUTE

The late Sri M. A. Narayana Iyengar, my most respected father, was a unique person in several ways. He did not feel shy of the ordinary *pravritti-mārga* of involvement in worldly life. He lived the full life of a *grihasta* in the midst of his family surroundings, and at the same time strove hard to lead a divine life of spiritual *sādhana* in his own way after considerable study, contemplation and earnest practice of the path he chose for himself to attain the ultimate goal of spiritual life. He had his own failings, but these failings stimulated him to modify and change his life from time to time in order to gain greater perfection in his spiritual path. An earnest and sincere seeker after truth, from his early years, Sri Narayana Iyengar was an idealist of rare virtues of head and heart, and he has left a lasting impression on all those who came into close contact with him during his life in this world.

He was born of a respectable family of Mandayam Iyengars in Mysore in 1887. His father was both a lawyer and a Headmaster. His mother was a very kind and noble lady who was very much devoted to her family and her near relations, and served one and all with love and self-sacrifice. She could recite a good number of poems, songs and *ślokas* even in her ripe old age, with great devotion to God.

Sri Narayana Iyengar had his early education in Mysore State. After the death of his father, he proceeded to Madras for his college education. It was during this period that he came into close contact with the pre-Gandhian pioneers of the freedom movement who had "Gauthmashram" of Triplicane as the venue for their revolutionary meetings and activities. He also came into contact with poets like Jyotirmayya Bharati and philosopher saints like Swami Vivekananda.

For some time when he was in Pondicherry with his patriot cousins, he came into contact with the saint, Sri Aurobindo, and learnt some techniques of spiritual *sādhana* directly at his feet. These and other influences during the most formative period of his life resulted in a deep thirst for spiritual life. The works of Swami Vivekananda inspired him in this direction, and he was greatly influenced by the Swamiji through the late Sri Alasingaperumal of revered memory.

II

After his Master's degree in history and Bachelor's degree in law, Sri Narayana Iyengar returned to Mysore in 1914 and entered the Mysore University as a Lecturer. Here he had the benefit of contact with intellectual giants like Dr. C.R. Reddi, Sri Radhakrishnan and Prof. N. S. Subba Rao. He took part in many a discussion on philosophical problems with them in and outside the college and consolidated his views on life with a rational and cultural background peculiarly his own. Later, he opted out to the service of the Department of Public Instruction by his own choice. He served in various capacities commencing from service as an assistant master and rising up in the official ladder as Headmaster of some high schools, District Educational Officer of a few districts and finally as Deputy Director of Public Instruction in two divisions of the ex-Mysore State.

During this long period of service from 1922 to 1945 in the Department of Public Instruction in Mysore, Sri Narayana Iyengar earned the good will, regard, and love of all levels of educators, from the primary school teacher to the Directors of Public Instruction and Ministers in charge of Education. He was known for his love and sympathy to students and teachers, his high sense of duty and his unstinted devotion to the cause of education.

Recalling his services after his sad demise, Sri T. V. Thimme Gowda, the president of the Mysore State Education Federation, wrote to say: "He was the Nestor of our profession, and he had served richly the cause of education in our State." Sri K. S. Acharlu, Mantri, Sarva Seva Sangh Nai Talim Samithi, the well known Gandhian educator, observed that he had "the greatest regard for A.

idealism, love of truth and meticulous care for details. There was no one like him in the history of Mysore education." Sri A. C. Devegowda, a prominent educator of Mysore State, remarked that he had "the highest regard for his simplicity, integrity and ability to do hard and sustained work". These and other tributes from eminent Directors of Education in Mysore State like Sri McAlpine, Sri A. R. Wadia and Sri Sultan Mohiyuddin, indicate the excellent work he did for the cause of ideal education in Mysore State. Even today, he is gratefully and respectfully remembered by hundreds of educators who had come into contact with him during the days of his active service.

III

Sri Narayana Iyengar retired from active educational service in 1946, a year before the advent of freedom to our land. He devoted the next few years of his life to intensive study of philosophy eastern and western, and sacred books of all the religions of the world. Though he was not a Sanskrit scholar, he managed to go through the original texts with the help of English commentaries and with the help of Moulvis and Pundits to gain first hand knowledge of our ancient cultural heritage. He was highly rational in his outlook and believed in nothing which did not stand the test of his powers of reason and logic.

His ripe intellect led him to sincere and dedicated *sādhana* for achieving his spiritual ideals. He struggled hard in daily life to uphold his ideals, though many a time he recognised failures due to his own limitations and environmental conditions. He had a spiritual time-table, carefully planned for every day, allotting adequate time for *karma*, *jñāna*, *bhakti* and *prapatti*, so that his valuable time should not be wasted at any time. In the words of Dr. D.V. Gundappa, the great philosopher-poet of Karnataka: "He was a scholar, deeply learned in branches of literature which he had made his own. And his interests were large and humane. More than all was his goodness. I have not known a man more earnest about living a good life and devoting himself to the high and pure in human life".

While at Gauribidnur, he sponsored "Sri Nava Bharat Ashram Trust" through which he tried to propagate moral and spiritual

values in education on universal lines. During the years between 1951 and 1963, he struggled hard to give a definite shape to this programme with the help of Srimathi Gauramma of Gangasandra and the teachers and students of the Acharya Higher Secondary Multipurpose School, Gauribidnur. The programme of the Sri Nava Bharat Ashram for moral and spiritual instruction to students and rural adults, which developed under his guidance, later became an experimental project on moral and spiritual instruction and it gained the recognition of the Ministry of Education as an important co-curricular experimental project for secondary schools.

It was the earnest plea of Sri Narayana Iyengar that moral and spiritual instruction should find a prominent place in our national system of education and that every school should develop an *ashram* type of programme reminding us of the ancient *gurukula* heritage with a modern bias about rational, universal and humanitarian vision. Sri Narayana Iyengar wrote several articles in Kannada and English to propagate this ideal, published them in newspapers and journals and took out reprints for spreading these ideals, as a part of his *jñāna-yajña*. With a genuine *karma-yoga* attitude, he tried to propagate these ideals without caring for success or failure, name, fame or appreciation. It was his inner urge that prompted him to render this service, with sincere dedication and joy.

Apart from his own writings, he helped publication of other articles and books dealing with spiritual and religious topics, like *Īśāvāsyopaniṣad*, *Kenopaniṣad*, *Taittirīyopaniṣad*, *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Sānti Sādhana* and the like, written by others closely known to him. He took keen interest in the revival of the great journal, *Brahmavādin*, which had not been published for several years after Swami Vivekananda.

Sri Narayana Iyengar had mostly confined his field of social service to the small circle of his close relations and his Mandayam Srivaishnava community and he served the larger community to some extent through his educational activities. He was deeply interested in those that were near and dear to him and sacrificed his personal comforts and conveniences for their sake. He tried to be independent of their help and service as far as possible either financially or for physical comforts. He was deeply interested in the progress and

welfare of the Yathiraja Mutt and the Mandayam Śrivaishṇava Sabhā. The president of the Mandayam Śrivaishṇava Sabhā wrote to say: "He was one of the pillars of the Mandayam community and took keen interest in its activities". He pleaded for conferences of the members of the community from time to time to bring about changes suited to the new outlook and trends of the modern age.

IV

Sri Narayana Iyengar was a good example of the ancient Indian ideal of plain living and high thinking in the life of *samsāra* and active involvement in worldly life. His daily life was a rare combination of various kinds of *sādhana* with an earnest and sincere desire to achieve the noblest in life. Towards the end of his life he was overcome by a feeling of sad disappointment at his not being able to succeed considerably in attaining the goals which he had set for his life. He often complained that he was a *yoga-bhrashta*, and in order to find consolation he adopted the highest form of *prapatti* entitled *nyāsa-vidyā*, according to *Viśiṣṭādvaitic* tradition. He completely surrendered himself to divine will and prayed constantly for mercy and help from above.

The manner of his most unexpected death is an indication of his intense spiritual yearning. On 12th February, 1969, he had his usual round of activities according to his spiritual time-table. He completed his last book, *The Way to Śānti*, which is an excellent exposition of his ripe views and convictions on life and its ideals, in very plain and simple language, and gave it to his daughter for fair-copying. In the end he appealed to God in that book as follows: "I and mine hereafter do not belong to me, but belong to You eternally". In the evening he discussed various matters relating to his community service with his kith and kin. He had planned his spiritual time-table for the next day which he kept in his pocket and went to bed.

Early next morning during the sacred hours of the *Brahma-muhūrta*, when perhaps, as indicated in his time-table, he should have been meditating upon the Supreme, his noble soul departed from this world on its eternal journey, with the utmost peace and tranquillity,

without the slightest trace of worry, pain or conflict. Those that went with the fond hope of waking him up found him sleeping in eternal peace from which he did not wake up in this human form. As Sri K. S. Acharlu, his close friend and admirer, remarks: "The only consolation is that he passed away with a smile on his lips, without causing the least discomfort to any one. He is perhaps a rare example of a great soul leaving the world without notice."

V

His wife, Srimathi Singammal, was an equally sincere and affectionate lady who was a good example of a Hindu wife according to ancient Indian tradition. She was well versed in Sanskrit and Tamil lore, having been trained during her early days by her scholarly mother. She co-operated with Sri Narayana Iyengar in most of his activities with faith and devotion. She sat with him for prayer and meditation and encouraged him in his efforts to gain spiritual advantage. She mourned his passing away with deep anguish and could not withstand his separation for long. She passed away from this world on 23rd July, 1969, a few months after Sri Narayana Iyengar left this world.

May the souls of Sri M. A. Narayana Iyengar and his devoted wife rest in eternal peace and bliss! May their life inspire us into greater achievement and perfection!

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January 1970



SRIMATHI M. A. SINGAMMAL
(1897-1969)



SRI M. A. NARAYANA IYENGAR, M.A., B.L.
(1887-1969)

THE WAY TO SĀNTI

INTRODUCTION :

According to ancient Indian sociology, a wise man's life is divided into five stages, namely, boyhood, *brahmacharyāśrama*, *grihastāśrama*, *vānaprasthāśrama* and *sannyāsāśrama*. From the time of the birth of the child, till he becomes a boy of about twelve years, we have the stage of boyhood. In this period, he is educated directly by his parents at home and indirectly by practising the good customs of his family. In modern life, this corresponds to the period when he studies in the primary and middle schools. At the age of 7-12 the boy becomes a *brahmachārīn* after undergoing his *upanayana* ceremony. He then receives *brahmacharya* education under a *guru* (preceptor) in a *gurukula* to which he is admitted by his parents. This education continues till he is 25 years old. This corresponds in modern times to the period when the young man studies in his schools, colleges and professional institutions.

The young man then marries and lives with the members of his family in his *grihastāśrama* period and engages himself in a

about the partition of your property and may have something to depend upon for their protection in later life. Of course, you have to set apart a portion of your property for charity towards good causes and deserving persons. Having made arrangements for the distribution of your property, if any, you must prepare a budget of expenses for the rest of your life within your income. Having done this, you must drive away from your mind all thoughts about money and be mentally prepared to lead the life of poverty and bear even physical difficulties, when you get such a contingency owing to changes of circumstances.

As long as you have physical energy and mental fitness, do physical and mental services to members of your family, near relations, friends, and fellow citizens. You should carry them out only with a spirit of detachment about their results and also without the idea of agency in your actions. Perform all these services with the attitude that you are doing them to God Himself in this form. Pray God with the help of *sāstraic* prayers and *jāpas* morning and evening to promote their material and religious welfare. Having discharged these duties to them with the above-mentioned spiritual attitude, give up completely your attachment to your wife and children, near relations and friends, and piously entrust their material and spiritual welfare to the *Paramātmam* who is their *Antaryāmin* as well as your *Antaryātmīn*. Firmly believe that He will protect them, according to the effects of their *karma*, their religious practices, their love to God, their prayers to Him, your prayers to Him, and His mercy to them as well as to you.

Then be happy about their pleasures and prosperity as these happen to them ; but do not be elated in an extreme degree as they are only temporary in character. Again, you will have to bear calmly their troubles and difficulties when they happen to them unavoidably, according to the laws of Nature and their own past *karma*. Also, believe that these troubles and miseries which happen unavoidably to you and to them contribute in the long run to your and their religious welfare, both in this life and after death. Finally, completely surrender yourself to God and entrust them as well as yourself to His mercy and care, and be absolutely calm over the future events that may happen, be they good or bad from the worldly standpoint.

3. Bear unavoidable physical pains and mental miseries by *Ātma-manana* and prayer to God.

The physical body gradually deteriorates year after year in old age and also month after month later on. Hence you become physically weak, and the internal organs as well as the limbs do not work satisfactorily. The mind and the intellect lose their original vitality and do not function effectively. Your sons and daughters will have ~~hach~~ children, and so the number of persons to whom you become attached will increase year after year. Their fortunes may please you; but their diseases and difficulties will increase your mental miseries. On the whole, your physical pains and mental worries increase in your old age. It may be possible to reduce or cure some physical pains by swallowing or applying medicines prescribed by doctors. But many diseases such as weakness of the eye and ear, pain in the joints and muscles, the troubles in the head due to blood pressure etc. and the obstacles to physical movements cannot be cured. The mental miseries due to chronic disease or death of wife and children persist for a long time. One may have to suffer in old age by terrible diseases like paralysis, cancer, heart disease, dropsy etc.

How are we to bear these unavoidable physical pains and mental miseries? There are only two religious or spiritual methods, in addition to taking the help of doctors and spending time in the company of friends and relations, participating in recreations and witnessing entertainments as far as possible. The first method is to pray to and worship God according to religious methods prescribed in the *śāstras* constantly and to depend upon His mercy or *prasāda* with the hope that your physical pains and mental miseries will be reduced in the near future. The second and better method is to constantly repeat in your mind with firm conviction, "I am the *Ātman*; I am not the body; I have no pain in reality". Or, again, you may repeat in your mind constantly, "I am the *Brahman*; I have no physical pain or mental miseries. The world is *māyā*; pains or miseries are the effects of *māyā*, and they are not real at all; they have no value, like the pains and miseries of dreams!" Some advanced *yogins* try to witness their own physical pains and mental miseries as objective entities, even as we witness the physical pains and mental miseries of other persons objectively; and they do not feel the ~~g~~ *g* ~~o~~ *o* ~~v~~ *v* ~~e~~ *e* ~~r~~ *r* ~~y~~ *y* ~~e~~ *e* ~~s~~ *s* in their pains and miseries.

These religious and spiritual practices will enable you to reduce your physical pains and mental miseries, or atleast to bear them calmly and even cheerfully, attaining *śānti* or peace of mind !

4. Give up attachment to all material pleasures, and do not voluntarily enjoy them as far as possible. Whatever you enjoy, enjoy them as God's *prasāda*.

The more you are attached to pleasures and try to enjoy them, the more you become attached to life ; hence you eagerly desire to continue to live in this phenomenal universe. Then you will surely make earnest efforts to earn or accumulate wealth and use it for enjoying pleasures with the members of your family. Certainly then, you do not want to die or suffer physical pains and mental miseries as long as you live.

What will be the reaction in your mind on account of the attachment to pleasures and their enjoyment frequently? You will always be mentally worried with disappointments and fear that you may get at any time temporary or chronic diseases, mental miseries, physical pains and death at any moment. A man dies only once, but fear of death makes him die mentally a thousand times! When physical pains and mental miseries do actually occur, one suddenly develops courage to bear them calmly. But the fear that he may get physical pains, diseases, or mental miseries in the future or at any moment, will make his life extremely miserable at all times when his mind is vacant without engagement, especially in old age. So, with an iron will, you must give up all attachment to money, property and material possessions of all kinds—sensual, social, aesthetic, intellectual—and also to name, fame etc. Drive away all these thoughts from your mind when they come, by practising *ātma-manana* and *ātma-dhyāna* or *Paramātmā-manana* and *Paramātmā-dhyāna*.

Old age is the period in your life when the *vāsanās* of many years of your previous life get deeply rooted in you, on account of life-long attachments to pleasures and their enjoyments. So you must make strong efforts accompanied by prayers to God to give up attachment to your near relations (though you have to serve them

according to the principles of *karma-yoga*), and you must combat heroically against the deep-rooted *vāsanās* or cravings of your senses, desires, feelings and intellect, especially those relating to taste, sex, money, power, name etc. Root out the constant fear described above by the practice of mental detachment, *ātma-manana*, *Pāramāṭma-manana* and prayer to God.

But you have to live at the same time so long as the law of Nature permits, or so long as God allows you to do so, according to the law of *karma*. So you have to satisfy your primary and secondary wants directly, and you will enjoy indirectly luxuries and varieties forced upon you by the government and society of which you are a part. But, even then, do not enjoy them, being moved by attachment to them, but indulge in them with the sincere idea and feeling in your mind that they are *prasādas* of God to you.

5. Promote self-help for domestic needs ; decrease movements outside the house and spend your leisure time in *śravaṇa* (study or learning), *manana* (constant reflection), *stotra* (prayer) and *dhyāna* (steady meditation).

(i) There is a great change in your life when you attain advanced age. You spend your time throughout your life till your old age in physical movements in connection with your official work, professional work, social work and private work. During all these years, as you were busy otherwise, you depended also on the services of your wife, children, servants and others for satisfying your wants and for the enjoyment of your comforts. But now that you are advanced in age, suffering bodily weakness and infirmities, your wife and children who were obeying you till now begin to control you naturally on the ground that you are weak both in body and mind according to the law of Nature. Moreover, they know that in your old age you have to depend upon them even for your existence and the satisfaction of your primary and secondary wants of life, and therefore you cannot but carry out their wishes regarding your physical movements.

You, too, in your old age cannot move out freely in buses, carriages and taxis without the company of other persons. Hence, instead of unwillingly stopping your physical movements with

dissatisfaction on account of the compulsion of others, you must yourself voluntarily, willingly and cheerfully restrict your movements outside the house as far as possible. With a view to maintain your health as per medical advice, you may walk in the compound of your house or in the house itself if there is no compound.

(ii) Avoid the tendency to lead a *tāmasic* life in advanced age. When you begin to stop physical movements outside the house, you will get plenty of leisure and may find it difficult to spend your time in the house itself. Unless you spend your time now by attending to your own personal domestic needs and by even helping in the domestic work of all the members of the family as far as possible, you are forced and tempted to lead a *tāmasic* life either by simply sitting in on an easy chair idly or indulging in frivolous conversations with others.

If you have no work even in the house, you will sleep as much as possible, and when you are awake, you will be frequently eating, titillating the palate with tasteful preparations to relieve yourself from the monotony of your retired life. A better but somewhat costly way of spending time will be hearing radio programmes in the house, attending cinemas and dramas in the evenings, or playing cards in the clubs as well as reading newspapers and magazines, if you have developed interest in them. But it is desirable that you must develop your will power at this stage to do also useful work to satisfy your primary and secondary wants by yourself as much as possible within your physical and mental capacity according to your age.

(iii) Take up the *sāttvika* way of life in your advanced age. The best way of spending your leisure in the old age after retirement from service, profession and social work is to drive away your developing *tāmasic*, dull attitude, which is different from the *rājasic* attitude which you had in early years and develop a mental attitude which is different also from the *rājasic* attitude. Understand well that when you give up the *rājasic* attitude on account of the infirmities of old age, you are liable to fall into the pit or darkness of the *tāmasic* attitude if you do not voluntarily make efforts to raise your mind to the *sāttvika* level.

Therefore, spend your time in old age in *śravaṇa* or learning from holy books, lectures of *gurus* and spiritual conversations, and

manana or philosophical reflections on your convictions deduced from sacred passages of the *Upanishads*, the *Gītā*, the *darśanus* and the songs of *bhaktas* as well as the sacred books of all the great religions of the world. Along with the above *śravaṇa* and *manana* programmes, if you have intellectual capacity, you may teach these subjects to others, or deliver lectures on them, or even write and publish articles or books on them. The highest and best *sāttvika* way of spending time in old age is through *nididhyāsana* or the steady meditation of *tattva* or truth and *purushārthas* or ideals of life, *hita* or practising *yogic sādhanas* to achieve ideals, and *anushṭhāna* or the practice of *ātman*-virtues or spiritual and moral practices in daily life.

Practise every day prayers and *mananas* of sacred passages, *japa* of *mantras* and meditations on the *ātman*, the *Nirguṇa Brahman*, and the various manifestations and forms of the *Saguṇa Brahman* and His divine auspicious qualities and *divya-mangala-vigrahas*. It is of course desirable that you must try your best to obtain help from capable *gurus* while carrying out the above practices; but if you cannot secure such a *guru*, you may go on with the spiritual practices depending upon your own *Antaryāmi-Paramātmā* as your inner *guru*. As a result of your own *manana*, by God's grace, you may come to the conclusion or develop the conviction that you are in reality the *ātman*, separate from the body, that the Eternal Unchanging Reality or Truth is *Sat-chit-ānanda-ananta-Brahman*, that the infinite phenomenal universe proceeds from the Infinite *Saguṇa Brahman* who protects it also till it ultimately enters into Him alone. You may also develop *mumukshutva* and sincerely desire to attain *jīvan-mukti* or *videha-mukti*. Then these religious and spiritual practices of recitations of sacred passages of holy books, *stotras*, prayers and meditations on the *ātman*, the *Nirguṇa Brahman* and aspects of the *Saguṇa Brahman* will promote great joy in your heart and sometimes lead you to spiritual knowledge and realisation to such a high degree that there will be no physical pains and mental miseries to you in your old age! You will have perfect *sānti* or Divine Peace of Mind!

(iv) But do not become attached to *sāttvik* pleasures obtained as a result of the *sāttvik* way of life: beware that there is one danger in taking up these practices seriously and sincerely. Of course, these spiritual practices will give you in your heart *sāttvik* joy which is

entirely opposite to *tāmasic* dullness and completely different from *rājasic* material pleasures and pains. But in course of time you will develop attachment to these *sāttvik* joys themselves to such an extent that you want to enjoy them more and more in this phenomenal universe itself, just as you desired to satisfy your material sense-pleasures in it in early years. Therefore, you will once again become strongly attached to your human life in this phenomenal universe itself.

Now you do not want to get physical pains, diseases, mental miseries and death ; because they will put an end to the enjoyment of these *sāttvik* joys while going on with your spiritual practices. You become eager to go on with your spiritual practices sincerely, piously, cheerfully and enthusiastically, so that you may enjoy these *sāttvik* joys of the *ātman* and *Paramātman* meditations etc., in your present life itself as much as possible and as long as possible. Once again, therefore, you will be overpowered by attachment to relations, the constant fear of physical pains, diseases, mental miseries, and your own death, and you will become miserable.

Therefore, you must heroically conquer even this holy fear and attachment emanating from the enjoyment of *sāttvik* spiritual joys in your old age, and then go on sincerely and steadily with your *sāttvik* spiritual practices of *śravaṇa*, *manana* and *nididhyāsana*, not merely as items of your *sāttvik* joys, but as serious preparations for *śreyas* and *moksha* after death, or as preparations for eternal unchanging life as a *jīvan-mukta*, *videha-mukta* or *parampada-mukta*. The more and more your age advances, the more and more your time must be spent in these *sāttvik* religious practices when your brain is clear ; but at the same time you should not become attached to the *sāttvik* joys accompanying them.

6. Practise spiritual and moral virtues in your daily life as far as possible to change your personality from being under *tamo-guṇa* and *rajo-guṇa* to being under *sattva-guṇa*.

(i) The advantages of practising spiritual and moral virtues in life :

So long as you are influenced mostly by *rajo-guṇa* and *tamo-guṇa* only, it will not be possible for you to spend your time in holy

śravaṇa, *manana*, and *nididhyāsana* described above. When you force your mind to go on with these spiritual practices, various types of worldly and material thoughts occur in your mind even though you try to avoid them, and they prevent you from proceeding with these practices sincerely, seriously and cheerfully. Unless you develop *sattva-guṇa* in your whole personality, that is, in your body, sense, mind, intellect and ego, you cannot go on with these spiritual practices regularly, and even if you carry them out according to a time-table chalked out by you, you feel tired and disgusted often while carrying out your programme. If they are to be practised with enthusiasm and mental joy, you must give up as far as possible in your waking state *tamo-guṇa*, reduce *rajo-guṇa* to the minimum to maintain a healthy body and develop *sattva-guṇa* in your whole personality. The only method to achieve the above object is sincerely, cheerfully and enthusiastically to practise the spiritual and moral virtues in your daily life. If you practise them regularly, though it may be difficult to do so in the beginning, you will surely develop *sattva-guṇa* more and more in your personality, and you will become physically and mentally quite fit to practise all types of *yogic sādhanas* to attain *moksha*, *śānti* or spiritual peace of mind.

(ii) How to overcome the initial difficulties in practising spiritual and moral virtues in life :

What then are the spiritual and moral virtues that you have sincerely, seriously, and enthusiastically to practise in your daily life, however difficult it may be for you to practise them in the beginning? They are described by Patañjali as *yama* and *niyama*, by Śrī Rāmānuja as *sādhana-saptaka*, by Śrī Saṅkara as *sādhana-chatushtaya* and as the virtues of a *karma-yogin*, *rāja-yogin*, *jñāna-yogin*, *bhakti-yogin* and *prapatti-yogin* in different chapters of the *Bhagavadgītā*. You must understand what these virtues mean and make sincere and serious efforts to practise them in life as far as possible. But, as you have been already overpowered by *tamo-guṇa* and *rajo-guṇa* for a long time, you will not attain perfection in carrying out these virtues in your life, and you will often miserably fail in your attempts. But still you should heroically fight against the *vāsanās* of *rajo-guṇa* and *tamo-guṇa* and persist in observing these virtues sincerely and seriously till you achieve greater and greater success gradually.

Whenever you fail in practising these virtues, understand well that the failure is due to your strong *vāsanās* of *rajo-guṇa* and *tamo-guṇa* in your personality, and persist in rejecting them mentally and physically. Again, repent also whenever you commit mistakes or sins against these virtues and pray to God with devotion to develop your will-power to such an extent that you must be able to succeed in practising these virtues in life till they become your developed *sāttvik* habits. Then you will be moved by *sattva-guṇa* in your whole personality, and you will become quite fit to practise all *yogic sādhanas*.

(iii) The spiritual and moral virtues to be practised:

The spiritual and moral virtues are given here in Sanskrit, as stated in the original texts; but you must understand their significance and practise them regularly.

(a) Patañjali describes as follows the virtues of *yama* and *niyama*. *Yama* comprises *ahimsā*, *satya*, *astheya*, *brahmacharya* and *aparigraha*. *Niyama* includes *śauca*, *santosa*, *tapas*, *svādhyāya* and *Īśvara-praṇidhāna*.

(b) The virtues of *sādhana-saptaka* are described by Śrī Rāmānuja as consisting of *viveka*, *vimoka*, *abhyāsa*, *kriyā*, *kalyāṇa* (including *ārjavam*, *dayā*, *dāna*, *anabhidhyā*, *ahimsā* and *satya*), *anavasāda* and *anuddharsha*.

(c) The virtues of *sādhana-chatusṭaya* as described by Śrī Saṅkara are *nityānitya-viveka*, *vairāgya* (including *śama*, *dama*, *uparati*, *titikshā*, *saṁādhāna* and *śraddhā*), *iha-amutra phala-bhoga-virāga* and *mumukshutva*.

Regarding the spiritual and moral virtues described in the *Bhagavadgītā*, simple meanings are given below in English of the Sanskrit words from the original text describing them, and you must try to understand well their significance and then practise them in your daily life regularly.

(d) The virtues of one who is to become a *bhakta* are set out in the *Bhagavadgītā* (XII. 13-20):

अद्वेष्टा सर्वभूतानां मैत्रः करुण एव च ।

निर्ममो निरहंकारः समदुःखसुखः क्षमी ॥ १३ ॥

Stanza 13. 'Adveshṭā sarva-bhūtānām'—He has no hatred for any creature. 'Maitraḥ karuṇa eva cha'—He cherishes feelings of friendship and compassion towards all. 'Nirmamaḥ'—He is free from selfish possessiveness. 'Nir-ahankāraḥ'—He has no egoism. 'Sama-duḥkha-sukhaḥ'—He is the same in pleasure and pain. 'Kshami'—He is patient and enduring.

संतुष्टः सततं योगी यतात्मा इदमिच्छयः ।

मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिर्यो मद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः ॥ १४ ॥

Stanza 14. 'Santusṭaḥ'—Content with all things. 'Satatam yogi'—Always in meditation. 'Dṛiḍa-niśchayaḥ'—Firm in conviction. 'Mayyarpita-mano-buddhiḥ'—With his *manas* (mind) and *buddhi* (intellect) fixed on God.

यस्मान्नोद्विजते लोको लोकान्नोद्विजते च यः ।

हर्षमर्षमयोद्वेगैर्मुक्तो यः स च मे प्रियः ॥ १५ ॥

Stanza 15. 'Yasmāt lokaḥ na udvijate'—He from whom the world has nothing to fear. 'Lokāt yaḥ na udvijate'—Who has nothing to fear from the world. 'Harsha-amarsha-bhaya-udvegaiḥ vimuktaḥ'—Who is free from joy and anger towards others, and also free from fear and distress from anyone.

अनपेक्षः शुचिर्दक्ष उदासीनो गतव्यथः ।

सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी यो मद्भक्तः स मे प्रियः ॥ १६ ॥

Stanza 16. 'Anapekshaḥ'—Who wants nothing. 'Śuchiḥ'—Who is pure. 'Dakshaḥ'—Skilful. 'Udāsinaḥ'—Indifferent. 'Gata-vyathaḥ'—Untroubled. 'Sarva-ārambha-parityāgi'—Who renounces all undertakings against unrighteousness. 'Madbhaktaḥ'—Who is lovingly devoted to God.

यो न हृष्यति न द्वेष्टि न शोचति न काङ्क्षति ।

शुभाशुभपरित्यागी भक्तिमान्यः स मे प्रियः ॥ १७ ॥

Stanza 17. 'Yo na hrishyati na dveshti'—He who neither rejoices nor hates. 'Na śochati na kāṅkshati'—Who neither desires nor feels sorry for anything. 'Śubha-aśubha-parityāgī'—Who has entirely given up the doing of good deeds with attachment as well as of bad deeds.

समः शत्रौ च मित्रे च तथा मानापमानयोः ।

शीतोष्णसुखदुःखेषु समः सङ्गविवर्जितः ॥ १८ ॥

Stanza 18 'Śatrau cha mitre cha samaḥ'—He who is the same to friend and foe. 'Māna-apamānayoḥ samaḥ'—The same in honour and dishonour. 'Śita-ushṇa-sukha-duḥkheṣhu samaḥ'—The same in cold and heat, pleasure and pain. 'Saṅga-vivarjitaḥ'—Who is wholly rid of attachment.

तुल्यनिन्दास्तुतिर्मौनी संतुष्टो येन केनचित् ।

भनिकेतः स्थिरमतिर्भक्तिमान्मे प्रियो नरः ॥ १९ ॥

Stanza 19. 'Tulya-nindā-stutiḥ'—Who is alike in censure and praise. 'Maunī'—Silent. 'Yena-kenachit santuṣṭaḥ'—Content with anything whatsoever. 'Aniketaḥ'—Unattached to his home. 'Sthira-matiḥ'—Resolute in his convictions. 'Bhaktimān'—Full of devotion to God.

(e) The virtues of one who has to become a *jñānin*, as set out in the *Gītā* (XIII.7-11):

अमानित्वमदम्भित्वमहिंसा क्षान्तिरार्जवम् ।

आचार्योपासनं शौचं स्थैर्यमात्मविनिग्रहः ॥ ७ ॥

Stanza 7. 'Amānitvaṃ'—Freedom from pride. 'Adam-bhitvaṃ'—Unostentatiousness. 'Ahimsā'—Harmlessness. 'Kṣhāntiḥ'—Forbearance. 'Ārjavaṃ'—Straightforwardness. 'Āchārya-upāśanaṃ'—Service to the teacher. 'Śouchaṃ'—Purity. 'Sthairyaṃ'—Steadfastness. 'Ātma-vinigrahaḥ'—Self-control.

इन्द्रियार्थेषु वैराग्यमनहंकार एव च ।

जन्ममृत्युजराव्याधिदुःखदोषानुदर्शनम् ॥ ८ ॥

Stanza 8. 'Indriyārtheshu vairāgyam'—Non-attachment to the objects of the senses. 'Anahaṅkāraḥ'—Absence of egoism. 'Janma-mṛityu-jarā-vyādhī-duḥkha-dosha-anudarśanam'—Perception of the evils of birth, death, old age, disease and suffering.

असक्तिरनभिष्वङ्गः पुत्रदारगृहादिषु ।

नित्यं च समचित्तत्वमिष्टानिष्टोपपत्तिषु ॥ ९ ॥

Stanza 9. 'Asaktiḥ'—Not wanting things other than the self. 'Putra-dāra-grīhādishu anabhishvaṅgaḥ'—Absence of attachment to one's own children, wife, home and the like. 'Iṣṭa-anīṣṭa-upapattishu nityam sama-chittatvam'—Steady equanimity of mind at all times whether pleasant or unpleasant things occur.

मयि चानन्ययोगेन भक्तिरव्यभिचारिणी ।

विविक्तदेशसेवित्वमरतिर्जनसंसदि ॥ १० ॥

Stanza 10. 'Mayi ananya-yogena avyabhichāriṇī bhaktiḥ'—Unswerving love and exclusive devotion to God. 'Vivikta-deśa-sevitvam'—Resorting to sequestered spots. 'Aratiḥ jana-samsadi'—Distaste for the society of men.

अध्यात्मज्ञाननित्यत्वं तत्त्वज्ञानार्थदर्शनम् ।

Stanza 11. 'Adhyātma-jñāna-nityatvam'—Constant dwelling on the knowledge of the self. 'Tattva-jñāna-artha-darśanam'—Meditation on the knowledge of the truth.

(f) Virtues of a *triguṇātīta* or one who has transcended the three *guṇas*, as set out in the *Gītā* (XIV. 22-25) :

प्रकाशं च प्रवृत्तिं च मोहमेव च पाण्डव ।

न द्वेष्टि संप्रवृत्तानि न निवृत्तानि काङ्क्षति ॥ २२ ॥

Stanza 22. 'Prakāśam cha pravṛtṭiṁ cha mohameva cha sampravṛtṭāni na dveshṭi'—He is free from hate when illumination,

activity or folly prevails. 'Nivṛttāni na kāṅkṣati'—When these are absent, he desires them not.

उदासीनवदासीनो गुणैर्यो न विचाल्यते ।

Stanza 23. 'Udāsinavat āsinaḥ'—He remains as it were indifferent, that is, remains calm. 'Guṇaiḥ na vichālyate' He remains undisturbed by the *guṇas*.

समदुःखसुखः स्वस्थः समलोष्टाश्मकाञ्चनः ।

तुल्यप्रियाप्रियो धीरस्तुल्यनिन्दान्मसंस्तुतिः ॥ २४ ॥

Stanza 24. 'Sama-duḥkha-sukhaḥ'—He is equal in his joy and grief. 'Svasthaḥ'—He abides in his own self. 'Sama-loṣṭa-aśma-kāñcanaḥ'—He regards mud and gold alike. 'Tulya-priya-apriyaḥ'—He is the same in respect of likeable things as well as those which are not likeable. 'Dhīraḥ'—He is endowed with courage and determination. 'Tulya-nindā-ātma-samstutiḥ'—He is equally disposed to blame and praise.

मानापमानयोस्तुल्यस्तुल्यो मित्रारिपक्षयोः ।

सर्वारम्भपरित्यागी गुणातीतः स उच्यते ॥ २५ ॥

Stanza 25. 'Māna-apamānayoḥ tulyaḥ'—He is the same in honour and dishonour. 'Mitrāripakṣhayoḥ tulyaḥ'—He is the same towards friends and foes. 'Sarva-ārambha-parityāgi'—He gives up all undertakings to promote selfish pleasures.

(g) The virtues of a man of *daivī sampat* or divine nature, as given in the *Gītā* (XVI. 1-3):

अभयं सत्त्वसंशुद्धिर्ज्ञानयोगव्यवस्थितिः ।

दानं दमश्च यज्ञश्च स्वाध्यायस्तप आर्जवम् ॥ १ ॥

Stanza 1. 'Abhayaṁ'—Fearlessness. 'Sāttva-samśuddhiḥ'—Purity of mind. 'Jñāna-yoga-vyavasthitiḥ'—Firm devotion to the knowledge of the self. 'Dānaṁ'—Charity. 'Damaḥ'—Self-restraint. 'Yajñaḥ'—Performance of sacrifices. 'Svādhyāyaḥ'—Study of sacred books. 'Tapaḥ'—Austerity. 'Ārjayaṁ'—Uprightness.

अहिंसा सत्यमक्रोधस्त्यागः शान्तिरपैशुनम् ।

दया भूतेष्वलोलुप्त्वं मार्दवं ह्रीरचापलम् ॥ २ ॥

Stanza 2. 'Ahimsā'—Harmlessness. 'Satyaṁ'—Veracity. 'Akrodhaḥ'—Freedom from anger. 'Tyāgaḥ'—Renunciation. 'Sāntiḥ'—Mental peace. 'Apaisunam'—Abstinence from slandering. 'Bhūteshu dayā'—Compassion for beings. 'Aloluptvaṁ'—Absence of the desire for enjoyments. 'Mārdavaṁ'—Mildness. 'Hriḥ'—Modesty. 'Achāpalam'—Absence of fickleness.

तेजः क्षमा धृतिः शौचमद्रोहो नातिमानिता ।

Stanza 3. 'Tejaḥ'—Strength of character. 'Kṣamā'—Forgiveness. 'Dhṛitiḥ'—Fortitude. 'Saucaṁ'—Purity. 'Adrohaḥ'—Absence of malice. 'Na-atimānitā'—Freedom from pride.

(h) The *sāttvika* virtues to be practised by a *mumukshu*, as described in the *Gītā* (XVII):

A person's faith shows his character, his tendencies, his disposition etc., and so he should develop the *sāttvika* faith in the gods. He must eat *sāttvik* food: he must perform *yajnas* of that quality: he must give gifts with the *sāttvik* attitude, and he must take up *tapas* of that quality relating to the body, speech and mind.

आयुःसत्त्वबलारोग्यसुखप्रीतिविवर्धनाः ।

रस्याः स्निग्धाः स्थिरा हृद्या माहाराः सात्त्विकप्रियाः ॥ ८ ॥

The *sāttvik* food is that which increases vitality, mental vigour, strength, health, happiness and love.

So *sāttvika* foods have been described as 'Āyuh-sattva-bala-ārogya-sukha-priti-vivardhanāḥ'. They are 'rasyāḥ', full of juice; 'snigdhaḥ', rich; 'sthirāḥ', substantial; and 'hṛidyāḥ', tasteful.

कट्वम्ललवणात्युष्णतीक्ष्णरूक्षविदाहिनः ।

आहारा राजसस्येष्टा दुःखशोकामयप्रदाः ॥ ९ ॥

Foods that are bitter, 'kaṭu', sour, 'amla', saline, 'lavaṇa', very hot, 'ati-ushṇa', pungent, 'tikṣṇa', burning, 'rūksha' and

inflaming, 'vidāhin', are dear to *rājasic* men and are not desired by the *sāttvik* men.

यातयामं गतरसं पूति पर्युषितं च यत् ।

उच्छिष्टमपि चामेध्वं भोजनं तामसप्रियम् ॥ १० ॥

Avoid *tāmasic* food—that which is cold and over-kept, 'yāta-yāmaṃ', savourless, 'gata-rasaṃ', stinking, 'pūti', stale, 'paryuṣitaṃ', 'unholy' 'amedhayam', and the leavings of others, 'ucchhistaṃ.'

Let us now consider *sāttvika yajña*. A *sāttvik* man should discharge the duties of his profession sincerely and enthusiastically with a spirit of devotion, whether it is that of a Brahmin, a Kshatriya, a Vaiśya or a Sūdra. His knowledge, his actions and his attitude while performing them, must all be *sāttvika*.

That knowledge is *sāttvika* by which one perceives the one indestructible reality in every being, remaining indivisible among the divisible.

अफलाकाङ्क्षिर्मर्यज्ञो विधिदृष्टो य इज्यते ।

An act of worship is said to be *sāttvika* when it is prescribed by works of religious authority ('vidhi-dṛiṣṭaḥ'), is free from attachment and is performed by one who does not desire the fruit thereof.

That *kartṛi* or agent is said to be of the *sāttvika* quality who is free from attachment, devoid of egoism, endowed with fortitude and fervour and unaffected by success or failure. (See the *Gītā*, XVIII. 26).

Now, about gifts.

दातव्यमिति यद्दानं दीयतेऽनुपकारिणे ।

देशे काले च पात्रे च तद्दानं सात्त्विकं स्मृतम् ॥ २० ॥

That gift is *sāttvika* which is given with the idea that giving it is a duty in itself ('dātavyam iti yad-dānam diyate'); which is given to

one who is unable to make any return for it ('anupakāriṇe diyate'); and to a proper recipient at a fit time and place ('deśe pātre cha diyate').

The *tapas* of the body, speech and mind may now be taken up.

देवद्विजगुरुप्राज्ञपूजनं शौचमार्जवम् ।

ब्रह्मचर्यमहिंसा च शारीरं तप उच्यते ॥ १४ ॥

'Deva-dvija-guru-prājña-pūjana'—Worshipping gods, the twice-born, sages, teachers and the wise. 'Saucham'—Purity. 'Ārjavam'—Uprightness. 'Brahmacharyam'—Celibacy. 'Ahimsā'—Harmlessness. All these constitute the best kind of *tapas* for the body.

अनुद्वेगकरं वाक्यं सत्यं प्रियहितं च यत् ।

स्वाध्यायाभ्यासनं चैव वाङ्मयं तप उच्यते ॥ १५ ॥

'Anudvegakaram vakyam'—Speech which causes no pain to others. 'Satyam'—Is truthful. 'Priya-hitam'—Is sweet and beneficial. 'Svādhyāya-abhyasanam'—The constant practice of the recitation and the study of the scriptures. All these constitute the austerity of speech.

मनःप्रसादः सौम्यत्वं मौनमात्मविनिग्रहः ।

भावसंशुद्धिरित्येतत्तपो मानसमुच्यते ॥ १६ ॥

'Manah-prasādaḥ'—Calmness of mind. 'Saumyatvam'—Benevolence. 'Maunam'—Silent contemplation. 'Ātma-vin'grahaḥ'—Self-control. 'Bhāva-samsuddhiḥ'—Purity of thought. These constitute the discipline of the mind.

7. Practise *ātma-manana* every day before starting all *sādhana*s (as it is the foundation of all *yogic sādhana*s).

(i) You must firmly believe that in reality you are the *ātman* and not merely the compound of the *sthūla* and *sūkshma śarīras*, the gross and subtle bodies or the physical body and the mind only. That

is, you are pure consciousness, being the compound of "I-consciousness" and consciousness as its quality enabling the I-consciousness to know objects other than itself. The *ātman* in its real nature is different from the body, senses, mind, intellect and ego, and is the compound of *dharmi-bhūta-jñāna* and *dharma-bhūta-jñāna* in technical terms (or knowledge as the possessor of attributes and knowledge as attribute), inseparably connected with each other. You must develop the conviction that you as the *ātman* are a *sākshin* or witness, after a careful analysis of your *jāgradvasthā* or waking state, *svapnāvasthā* or dream-state, *sushuptyavasthā* or sleep state and *mūrchāvasthā* or swoon state, which are the common experiences of all human beings, as well as of the after-death experiences as described in our *śāstras* and of the *turiya* experiences as described by *yogins* who have declared that they have attained such consciousness. Your I-consciousness exists always as unity without change from the time of your birth during all your *avasthās* or states of sleep, dream, waking, swoon and *turiya* (or the 'fourth state' of self-realisation).

So you must conclude that the I-consciousness existed even before your so called birth and will continue to exist even after your so called death. But your body, senses, mind, intellect and social ego are separate from you as the *ātman*, as you feel that they belong to you, as you perceive them as objects other than you, as you are conscious of them only in the waking state and not in your dream, sleep and swoon states, and as your body and *antahkaraṇa* or mind are made up of different parts, internal organs and mental states such as ideas, thoughts, feelings, volitions and sensations. More than all, the *yogins* have stated that they have realised themselves as the *ātman*, separate from the compound of body and mind, and even the *śāstṛas* have declared this fact emphatically.

(ii) Believe firmly that you as the *ātman* are eternal and possess many divine qualities.

Assert in your mind constantly that you in reality as the *ātman* are immanent in the body, senses, mind, intellect and ego, that you realise yourself always without break as the I-consciousness, that you are ever blissful in your real nature, that you are finer than all manifestations of nature, that you exist always eternally, that you do not manifest yourself as objects, that you are not made up of parts,

that you cannot be thought of like objects, and that you are always inseparably connected with the attributive consciousness.

(iii) Believe that you as the *ātman* existed even before birth and will exist even after death.

You must also conclude that you are in reality, as the *ātman*, the ground of memory of past events, of imagination of future happenings and of recognition of the same man in different places and times. Children have instincts from their birth; there are differences in the characteristics of different children of the same parents; there are variations in the fortunes of different men; and there have been strange men who have recollections of previous lives. All these items of evidence go to show that you as the *ātman* existed even before your birth. All the experiences and *vāsanās* developed throughout your life cannot be wiped away as nothing after death, and you as the *ātman* will exist even after death. The abnormal behaviour of men and women possessed by the spirits of the dead, the physical experiments in which the invisible spirits communicate their thoughts through living mediums, and the realisations of the *yogin* also go to prove the survival of the personality after death. The law of *karma* is the best explanation for the continuity of the life of the *ātman* in a subtle body in a series of lives, one after another.

(iv) Realise well that you are now the *ātman* in the *samsāra-chakra*, according to the law of *karma* experiencing material pleasures and pains in various aspects.

You must firmly believe that, according to the law of *karma*, you as the *ātman* in reality are now in the bondage of the present waking consciousness, dream-consciousness, sleep-consciousness, swoon-consciousness and later on death-consciousness, one after another, and that this is called the *samsāra-chakra*.

(v) You must now become a *mumukshu*.

What is *mumukshutva*? You must always be eager and earnest to break this *samsāra-chakra* which has imprisoned you as the *ātman* and destroy it, so that you may attain your eternal freedom as the *ātman* with infinite *ānanda* or bliss! Therefore, you must become a *mumukshu* before starting *yogic sādhanas* in order to free yourself from the *samsāra chakra* and the law of *karma*.

8. Practise *karma-yoga* in your everyday life.

The two spiritual *sādhana*s advocated to achieve the holy object of attaining *mokṣha* are *karma-yoga* and *rāja-yoga*, the former being a negative practice and the latter being a positive one. According to *karma-yoga*, you must start seriously the practice of rejecting mentally the ideas which occur in your mind at all times to the effect that you are the body, the senses, the mind, the intellect, the social ego and the *sūkṣma śarīra* with *ahaṅkāra* and *mamakāra*, i.e., the social ego as "I and mine". Hence repeatedly practise giving up attachment to your body, mind, intellect and *sūkṣma-śarīra*, and this repeated practice will not only promote the all-round improvement of your physical and mental health, but also enable you to bear all the physical pains and mental miseries which happen in your life according to your *karma* and laws of Nature, as well as those which are due to old age, diseases, fear of death and the slow process of death.

What is *karma-yoga*? You have to discharge your duties in your life, that is, in the *samsāra-chakra*, for your personal welfare and the welfare of your family, village or town, State, country or nation, and of humanity as a whole, and even of animals and invisible *devatās* according to the Hindu conception. How can you do this without intensifying further the bondage of your *samsāra-chakra*? You can do so by discharging your duties according to *karma-yoga*, which is nothing but the application of the above negative mental practices while actually discharging your duties in life. According to *karma-yoga*, duties have to be discharged with the following mental spiritual attitude.

(i) Practise *ātma-manana*, while you discharge your duties. Firstly, while discharging your duties you must always be conscious that in reality you are the *ātman* and not the body etc. That is, you must practise *ātma-manana* at all times, when your mind is not engaged in work.

(ii) Realise that you as the *ātman* are not the doer of the work.

Secondly, even though you as an embodied man are discharging duties, you must realise that in reality you as the *ātman* are not doing the work at all. It is your subtle and gross bodies, consisting of your

body, senses, mind, intellect, and social ego that are the agents of work under the influence of the three *guṇas*, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*, which are inseparably connected with them at all times.

(iii) Realise that you as the *ātman* are not the sole cause for all the effects produced by the work.

Thirdly, you as a man should assert while discharging your duties that you as the *ātman* are not the cause for all the effects produced, and hence you are not the 'owner' of these effects of actions. Moreover, you must understand that many causes together produce the effect and man's work is only one of the causes. The effect will not be produced, unless all the causes operate along with man's work. Hence your work alone is not the sole cause of the effects.

(iv) Do not be attached to the fruits of your actions.

Fourthly, while discharging these duties, you should not be attached to the fruits of your actions resulting in pleasures or miseries as the case may be : you as the *ātman* are a mine of bliss, and these pleasures are no gain to you, and these miseries are no loss to you in the least, as they have no connection at all with you as the pure *ātman*. You as the *ātman* are suffering from the bondage of the *samsāra-chakra* now, because you are attached to the results of pleasure and pain which are foreign to your real nature.

(v) Have perfect equanimity or balance of mind while you discharge your duties.

Fifthly, you as the *ātman* are perfect bliss in your own nature, and so you should have perfect equanimity or balance of mind, whether there is pleasure or pain, success or failure, joy or misery, gain or loss. While discharging your duties, you must be the same to friend or foe, and you must also have the same reaction in your mind, whether you get honour or dishonour, name or fame.

(vi) Be unselfish.

Sixthly, you as the *ātman* should not be inspired by the feelings of "I" and "mine" in your actions. Give up *ahaṅkāra* and *mamakāra* while you discharge your duties.

(vii) You must discharge your duties well and you should never be lazy.

Seventhly, so long as you are in an embodied state, though you give up the feelings "I and mine", you must positively discharge well your duties without failure. You should not be lazy, giving up your duties altogether, while asserting in your mind that you are the *ātman*.

9. Practise *ātma-dhyāna* according to *rāja-yoga* at least twice a day.

In addition to the negative mental spiritual practices while discharging your duties in life for the welfare of others and society according to *karma-yoga*, you must take up frequently the practice of *ātma-dhyāna* according to *rāja-yoga* along with the *ātma-manana* which you have been practising already. It is enough if you follow the directions given in Chapter VI of the *Bhagavadgītā* for practising *ātma-dhyāna* every day for short periods.

The detailed directions given in Patañjali's *Yoga-sūtras* have to be followed only by experts, so that they may attain the *ātman*-realisation very early. However, you may practise the following eight steps of *rāja-yoga* at least during the time of your meditation upon the *ātman*. You have been already advised to practise the virtues of *yama* and *niyama* in daily life.

(i) *Yama* is the practice of *satya*, *ahimsā*, *asteya*, *brahmacharya* and *aparigraha*. *Ahimsā* means that you should not injure other living beings either for your selfish purpose or even for sport; it means also the positive cultivation of love to other living beings. *Asteya* requires that you should not desire or attempt to possess the articles, money and properties of other persons; it means also that you should control your wants as much as possible and give up the desire to acquire wealth or property by any means. *Brahmacharya* involves completely avoiding sexual emotion expressed in thought, speech and action regarding all women other than one's own wife; it means also complete sexual control in advanced age and the spiritualising of the sex energy. In practising *aparigraha* you should refuse gifts even for necessities of life as far as possible; it also means that you should not try to acquire wealth from wicked

persons even by lawful methods. *Satya* signifies that you must always speak the truth and not falsehood to achieve selfish purposes ; it also means that by speaking the truth you should not cause mental miseries and physical injuries to other persons or living beings.

(ii) *Niyama* is the practice of *śaucha*, *santosha*, *tapas*, *svādhyāya* and *Īśvara-praṇidhāna*.

Śaucha is purity of thought, word and deed, that is, the practice of sincerity in life ; it means also purity in body, dress, house, food and environment. *Santosha* is contentment in the satisfaction of primary and secondary wants ; it means also not being worried in the least about the pleasures of luxuries and varieties in life. *Tapas* is austerity, that is, practising *vratas* or vows in spite of physical and mental difficulties while performing religious observances or discharging duties in life. *Śvādhyāya* is the study of sacred books at fixed periods of the day. *Īśvara-praṇidhāna* is the practice of daily worship of God in a spirit of self-surrender.

The next five steps of *rāja-yoga* are important and have to be practised only during the short period of meditation of the *ātman*.

(iii) *Āsana* is the posture convenient for steady meditation. It is better if you can sit with an erect spine as far as possible ; old men may provide a support to their back-bones (with a back-rest) with a view to avoid pain. You should be steady, not moving ; you should not also cast your glances in all directions while meditating upon the *ātman*. You must eat sufficient quantity of food, but not too much. You must not be addicted to too much sleep and should not indulge in too much play while you are awake. You must be moderate and regulated in every one of your affairs, and should not have fear in your mind at the time of meditation at least.

(iv) *Prāṇāyāma* is breath control. It must be practised at the time of meditation, because breath control and mind control go together. The difficult practices of breath control should be avoided, as they injure both physical and mental health, if they are attempted without the guidance of a proper *guru*. Breathing in and breathing out in equal periods of time without physical difficulty, the time being neither too short nor too long and without intervals of

non-breathing times, is the best form of breath control for you during meditation periods in your old age.

The next four steps of *rāja-yoga*, namely, *pratyāhāra*, *dhāraṇa*, *dhyāna* and *samādhi*, deal with *yogic* introversion and are therefore more valuable than the first four I have been discussing so far.

(v) *Pratyāhāra* is the withdrawal of the mind at the time of meditation at least from all thoughts other than of yourself as the *ātman*. That is, you must drive away all worldly thoughts as well as thoughts of body, senses, mind, intellect and the social ego, which will enter your mind forcibly at the time of meditation.

(vi) *Dhāraṇa* is fixing your mind on the object of your devotion, that is, yourself as the *ātman*; but you may dwell in your mind on the characteristics of the *ātman* or go on even in your sitting posture with the *ātma-manana* which you have practised already according to *karma-yoga*, though you were not then always in the sitting posture.

(vii) *Dhyāna* is the ceaseless meditation on yourself as the *ātman* directly, repeating calmly, cheerfully and with joy, "Ahamātmā chidānanandarūpaḥ, ajadaḥ jñānāśrayaḥ" ('I am the *ātman*; I am knowledge and bliss itself. I know myself, I am the substratum of knowledge of all things'). First, start the *ātma-dhyāna* for a few minutes; gradually increase the time of meditation; but do not overfatigue yourself by prolonging the period of meditation of the *ātman* beyond limits.

(viii) *Samādhi* is the ultimate goal of *rāja-yoga*. You must arrive, after *śravaṇa* and *manana* (study and reflection), at your own conclusion regarding the nature of the eternal reality. This must be realised and experienced vividly in the state of *samādhi*. Questions and doubts regarding the external reality must be solved beforehand.

First, let us deal with some common-sense reasons against the existence of the *Saguṇa Brahman* or the *Nirguṇa Brahman*.

(a) Observe carefully that the phenomenal universe in which you are born, live, grow, decay and die and which you experience as an

object in your waking state, is infinite in all aspects but is changing and changing and changing wholly and in every aspect of it. All things in it, the biggest like the stars, the sun, and the planets, the smallest like the atoms with their electrons and protons, and all the other millions of objects and forces in the middle stage are all moving and moving and changing and changing eternally! Every object, living and non-living, is moved by many forces and has its origin, growth, decay and death.

But the first problem is to find out whether there is an unchanging eternal infinite reality which is the permanent ground or cause of this changing infinite phenomenal universe. The Buddhists may answer that we are not aware of an unchanging reality and that we need not bother about it. If you do not agree with the Buddhists and come to the conclusion that there exists an eternally unchanging infinite reality as the eternal cause of the phenomenal universe, a second problem arises. If there is such a permanent infinite eternal unchanging reality as the ground or the cause of the phenomenal universe, is it conscious or unconscious in its nature? The scientific atheist and the ancient Chārvāka may answer that the unchanging reality is unconscious in its nature. If you do not agree with the scientific atheist and the Chārvāka and come to the conclusion that it is conscious in its nature, the third problem is that in case the eternal unchanging reality is conscious in its nature, it may be the *Nirguṇa Brahman* from which the phenomenal universe is projected as *māyā* or magic, or the *Saguṇa Brahman*, a real cause of the real phenomenal universe which is the effect. *Advaita* answers that it is the *Nirguṇa Brahman* and *Viśiṣṭādvaita* that it is the *Saguṇa Brahman*.

There are difficulties in either case. We human beings will become bewildered, when we are told that the phenomenal universe which we love so much and in which we live, experiencing our pleasures and pains actually is *māyā* and does not exist at all really and ultimately; that we human beings individually and as members of concentric circles of social groups, do not exist really and ultimately; that the Eternal Infinite Reality or *Sat-chit-ānanda Brahman* is non-dual in character; and that It alone appears in *māyā* as the infinite varieties of objects and beings evolving in different spaces and in different periods of time though in reality It is non-dual in character!

Again, on the other side, the problem of the existence of the *Saguṇa Brahman* or *Īśvara* or Personal God with divine auspicious qualities and divine auspicious forms is a hotly debated one, and various views are expressed about it in the different philosophical systems of the East and the West. One of the strongest reasons for not believing in the existence of the *Saguṇa Brahman* is this. Why does the *Saguṇa Brahman* with many divine auspicious qualities, in spite of His infinite mercy, create and dissolve this infinite phenomenal universe in which millions and millions of individual embodied souls suffer innumerable miseries, though enjoying pleasures of different kinds to some extent? Again, if the *Saguṇa Brahman* exists eternally as a personality, why does He not manifest Himself to every being, so as to invoke devotion to Him and service to Him as per His directions?

The atheist argues against the existence of the *Nirguṇa Brahman*; the man who firmly believes in the existence of the phenomenal universe does not like to believe in the permanent existence of the Non-dual *Brahman* only without the existence of the phenomenal universe. The *nāstika darśanas* and some *āstika darśanas* argue against the existence of the *Saguṇa Brahman* or the Personal God.

(b) The evidence of *yogins* and *bhaktas* and from the *darśanas* on the question of the existence of the *Sat-chit-ānanda-ananta-Brahman* as the Eternal Reality, may be now considered.

The great *jñānins* who were *yogins* have testified that they have attained *samādhi* and have actually realised the *Nirguṇa Brahman* as the only permanent reality, the phenomenal universe disappearing altogether when they realised the truth! Again, great *bhaktas* who were also *yogins* have testified that they realised the *Saguṇa Brahman* with His *divya-maṅgala-vigrahas* and *divya-kalyāṇa-guṇas* or divine auspicious forms and divine auspicious qualities, in His various manifestations such as *para-svarūpa*, *pralaya-svarūpa*, *viśva-rūpa*, *vyūha-svarūpa*, *antaryāmi-svarūpa*, *vibhava-svarūpa* and *archā-svarūpa*. Moreover, all the great religions of the world such as Śrīvaiṣṇavism, Śaivism, Śāktism, Zoroastrianism, Christianity, Islam etc., believe in the *Saguṇa Brahman* or the Personal God, though there may be some difference.

regarding details in His characteristics, His relations to the phenomenal universe and His functions.

It is also true that the theistic *Vedāntic* systems, the *Nyāya-darśana* and theistic European philosophers have given a number of rationalistic arguments to prove the existence of the *Saguṇa Brahman* or *Īśvara* or Personal God, such as the causation theory, the design theory, the harmony theory, the prospective evolution theory etc. Again, the non-dualistic *Vedāntic* system has also given rationalistic arguments to prove the existence of the *Nirguṇa Brahman* and their *māyā* theory. But the atheists, Buddhists and Jains have on their part given rationalistic arguments to prove that there is no *Nirguṇa-sat-chit-ānanda-Brahman* or *Saguṇa Brahman* as the ground and cause of the universe! What then has the *mumukshu* to do in solving this fundamental question which is of vital practical interest to him for carrying out his spiritual and moral practices sincerely, enthusiastically and piously?

(c) All these conclusions are only ideas to you during your spiritual practices, and hence there should be toleration for the views of others.

Of course, you must study all these *darśanas*, philosophical systems and the great religions of this world and arrive at some definite conclusion on this vital question; because your answer to this question is very important for deciding the definite course of your spiritual *sādhana*s, unless indeed you have a capable *guru* in whom you have the greatest faith and whom you obey implicitly without reasoning about his conclusions. But you must understand that just as you will have your convictions on this important and vital question, other *mumukshus* are entitled to come to their own conclusions which may be different from yours. You must not only tolerate but also respect them for arriving at their own conclusions accompanied by their own spiritual practices. But you may differ from them in your conclusions and go on with your spiritual practices, till you achieve the highest goal of *ātma-sākshatkāra* or *Nirguṇa-Brahma-sākshatkāra* or *Paramātmā-sākshatkāra* as the *Antaryāmin* of your *ātman*, or *Īśvara*—(*Saguṇa-Brahma*) *sākshatkāra*.

All these conditions are merely subjective realities to you in the form of your own ideas in your mind and need not be objective realities as in the case of your knowledge of men, things and actions of the world. For example, when you are practising *manana* and *dhyānā* on the *ātman*, you are having only the *manana* and *dhyāna* your own idea of the *ātman*; similarly, in your practices, you can have only the *manana* and *dhyāna* of your own idea of the *Nirguṇa-Brahman*; when you are practising the *manana* and *dhyāna* of the *Paramātman* as the *Antaryāmin* of your self well as of other selves, you are practising only the *manana* and *dhyāna* of your idea of the *Paramātman*; again when you go on with the *bhakti-yoga* and *prapatti-yoga* practices in regard to *Īśvara* or the Personal God, you are in fact performing them only having regard to the idea of God in your mind or to the ideas of God of others, or to your ideas about images or objects imagined by you as God but are not God. But by constant and repeated practices with strong fervour, belief and enthusiasm, you will realise that your own ideas about God will become objective Reality to you and you will have the realisation of God, the Eternal Reality, according to your conclusions and obtain all the spiritual benefits consequent on them so far as you are concerned.

(e) Are there conclusions that harmonise all philosophical systems and religions? You will have the greatest scope to harmonise all theistic philosophical systems, theistic *darśanas* and all religions by adopting all spiritual and religious practices with the greatest active enthusiasm. You will achieve peace of mind, if you can (by the grace of the Personal God Himself) come to the vital conclusion that the immeasurable unknowable *Sat-chit-ānanda-Brahman* is the primary unchanging eternal Reality and that the *Nirguṇa Brahman*, the *Saguṇa Brahman* and the phenomenal universe consisting of matter or the *prakṛiti* are secondary eternal realities mysteriously connected with It, the nature of the connections being also unknowable.

The *Nirguṇa-Brahman* is a secondary eternal Reality mysteriously connected with the primary eternal Reality, the *Aprameya-Brahman* but not connected with the phenomenal universe. The *Saguṇa-Brahman* is a secondary eternal Reality mysteriously connected with the primary Eternal Reality, the *Aprameya*

Brahman but closely connected with the phenomenal universe. The phenomenal universe is a secondary eternal reality mysteriously connected with the primary eternal reality, the *Aprameya-Brahman*, but inseparably connected with the *Saguṇa Brahman* as His *śarīra* (that is, being supported by Him, controlled by Him and used by Him for His purpose), but not connected with the *Nirguṇa Brahman*!

If you should develop the above conclusion in your mind regarding the nature of the ultimate eternal Reality, you can conceive the eternal Reality as the *Aprameya Brahman*, the *Nirguṇa-Brahman*, the *Saguṇa Brahman*, the *Viśiṣṭa-Brahman*, the *Antaryāmi-paramātmā-Brahman* and the *Īśvara* with His manifestations as Its several aspects. Then, if you concentrate your spiritual practices of *manana* and *dhyāna* on the *aprameya* aspect of the eternal Reality, it will be *jñāna-yoga*. But if you concentrate your spiritual practices such as prayer, surrender, *manana* and *dhyāna* on the *saguṇa* aspect, or the *viśiṣṭa* or the *Īśvara* aspects of the *Brahman*, it will be *bhakti-yoga*.

(e) The characteristics of the four *yogas* may now be briefly considered.

The aim of the *mumukshu*, while performing *karma-yoga* and *rāja-yoga*, is to give up the false idea that he is a man made up only of the factors of body, sense, mind, intellect and social ego, and to realise himself as the *chidānanda-ātman* with the I-consciousness and attributive consciousness accompanied by the *ātman*-bliss. But the aim of the *mumukshu*, when he performs *jñāna-yoga* and *bhakti yoga*, is to realise the *Sat-chit-ānanda-Brahman*, the eternal unchanging Reality of the phenomenal universe, consisting of Himself as the *ātman* of the *ātman*s of all other living beings and of the unconscious *prakṛiti* and its manifestations, and to enjoy the divine bliss of identification or union with the Truth of the phenomenal universe or the *Sat-chit-ānanda-Brahman*. But the difference between *jñāna-yoga* and *bhakti-yoga* is this. The *mumukshu* practises in *jñāna-yoga* the *sādhana*s relating to the knowledge of the *Sat-chit-ānanda-Brahman* and His relations with himself and the phenomenal universe as a whole; he also practises the identification of himself in all aspects with the *Sat-chit-ānanda-Brahman*. The *mumukshu* who practises *bhakti-yoga* considers the *Sat-chit-ānanda-Brahman* as the Supreme Reality, as the Infinite Personality,

as the *Sarvajña*, the *Sarveśvara*, the *Sarva-antaryāmin* and the *Sarva-yoni*, or as all-knowing, all-powerful, all-pervasive and the final cause of universe. Therefore, he loves Him with great reverence and is wonder-struck at His infinite power, His immeasurable divine auspicious forms. He goes on with the spiritual practices to unite with the *Paramātmān* and enjoy the bliss of mental contact with Him in all respects and union with Him ultimately by always performing *kainkarya* or service to Him.

Jñāna-yoga is based firstly upon intellectual knowledge of the *Brahman*, secondly, on the mental assertion of that knowledge in *manana* and *dhyāna*, and thirdly, on the identification of himself with the *Brahman*. *Bhakti-yoga* is based firstly on love of the *Brahman*, secondly on the practices of showing Him the greatest reverence mentally and physically, and thirdly on the practice of self-surrender to Him so as to unite with Him, doing services to Him.

11. Practise *jñāna-yoga* with fervour as much as possible every day.

(i) There are different aspects to *jñāna-yoga*.

Sometimes it is said that *jñāna yoga* is the meditation of the individual upon himself as the *ātman* in his real nature, while *karma-yoga* is the constant *manana* on the *ātman* and its characteristics while discharging one's duties in society. But then *jñāna-yoga* will be the same as *rāja-yoga* which we have described in one of the previous sections. *Jñāna-yoga* is the *sādhana* to realise the *Sat-chit-ānanda-ananta-Brahman* in his *Nirguṇa* and *Saguṇa* aspects, if it is not possible to realise His *aprameya svarūpa* and to experience unlimited *Brahman* bliss as well at the same time. The *mumukshu* is now experiencing the phenomenal universe and Himself as man being the compound of body, senses, mind, intellect, social ego and *pratyagātman* or the individual *ātman*. Ultimately, he has to realise the phenomenal universe, all the beings and objects and himself as the *Sat-chit-ānanda-Brahman* in reality or essence as *Vāsudevassarvamiti* (*Vāsudeva* is all and every thing), "*Sarvaṁ Khalvidaṁ Brahma*" (Everything experienced by me is the *Brahman* in reality) and "*Ahaṁ Brahmāsmi*" (I am the *Brahman* in reality).

The *jñāna-yoga* practices to achieve this object are fivefold in character.

(a) Firstly, you may practise the *manana* and *dhyāna* of the various kinds of relations between yourself and the *Brahman* as well as between the phenomenal universe and the *Brahman* which are explained by various analogies mentioned in our sacred books and expressed by our saints and sages.

(b) Secondly, you may practise the *manana* and *dhyāna* of the *Brahman* as the *Antaryāmin* of the whole universe, of all beings and things and yourself individually.

(c) Thirdly, you may practise the *manana* and *dhyāna* of the whole universe, of all beings and things and yourself individually as *Viśiṣṭa Brahman* or the *Brahman* inseparably connected with His body of *chit* and *achit*.

(d) Fourthly, you may forget the aspect of the phenomenal universe completely and practise *manana* and *dhyāna* of everything in the phenomenal universe, its beings and things and yourself as nothing but the *Sat-chit-ānanda-Brahman* Himself in reality.

(e) Fifthly, you may practise the “*Neti. Neti*” method. That is, “It is not this, It is not this”. It is therefore *aprameya* or immeasurable. Here the *manana* and *dhyāna* has to be about the whole phenomenal universe, all beings and things and yourself as *aprameya* in reality. All the *mahā-vākyas* in the *Upanishads*, and the teachings of the *Gītā* as well as of other great religions of the world can be reflected upon (*manana*) and concentrated upon (*dhyāna*) in any one or more of all the above aspects in the spiritual practice of *jñāna-yoga*.

(ii) *Manana* and meditation of analogies given to explain the mysterious relations between the *Brahman* and the phenomenal universe is the preparatory stage of *jñāna-yoga*.

What is the relation between the *Sat-chit-ānanda-Brahman*, the eternal unchanging Reality and the phenomenal universe including yourself? Just as the *aprameya-nirguṇa-svarūpa* of the *Brahman* is unknowable, just as the real nature of the phenomenal universe, its beings and objects in reality is unknowable, and just as your nature in reality as the *ātman* is unknowable, the eternal

relation between the *Sat-chit-ānanda-Brahman* and the phenomenal universe including yourself is unknowable ! This eternal relation also is mysterious in character. Yet, in order that the *mumukshu* may go on with his *jñāna-yoga* practices of *manana* and *dhyāna* of the Reality in relation to the *jagat* in its various aspects, sacred books and sages have mentioned many analogies chosen from our experiences in the phenomenal universe itself.

We shall mention some of the important analogies below, so that you may go on with your *jñāna-yoga* practices of *dhyāna* upon them and attain ultimately the realisation of Truth.

(1) सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्मणो जायते । ब्रह्मणि लीयते ।

('Sarvaṁ khalvidaṁ Brahmaṇo jāyate. Brahmaṇi liyate ') Everything experienced by me (as well as myself as the *ātman*) is born from the *Brahman*, and ultimately it disappears entering into Him.

() सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्मविभूतिः । अहमात्मा ब्रह्मविभूतिः ॥

('Sarvaṁ khalvidaṁ Brahmavibhūti. Aham ātmā Brahmavibhūtiḥ ') Everything I experience and myself in reality are the glorious manifestations of the *Brahman*.

(3) सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्मरूपम् । अहमात्मा ब्रह्मरूपम् ।

('Sarvaṁ khalvidaṁ Brahma-rūpam. Aham ātmā Brahma-rūpam ') Everything I experience and myself in reality are the outward forms of the *Brahman*.

(4) सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्मान्तर्यामि । अहमात्मा ब्रह्मान्तर्यामी ॥

('Sarvaṁ khalvidaṁ Brahma-antaryāmi. Aham ātmā Brahma-antaryāmi ') Everything I experience and myself as the *ātman* in reality have the *Brahman* as the *Antaryāmin*. That is, He is the pervader and essence in reality.

(5) सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्मांशः । अहमात्मा ब्रह्मांशः ॥

('Sarvaṁ khalvidaṁ Brahma-aṁśaḥ. Aham ātmā Brahma-aṁśaḥ ') Everything I experience and myself in reality are parts of the *Brahman*.

(6) सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्मशक्तिः । अहमात्मा ब्रह्मशक्तिः ।

(‘Sarvaṁ khalvidaṁ Brahma-śaktiḥ. Ahamātmā Brahma-śaktiḥ’). Everything I experience and myself in reality are forces or powers proceeding from the *Brahman*.

(7) सर्वं खल्विदं विशिष्टब्रह्म । अहमात्मा विशिष्टब्रह्म ।

(‘Sarvaṁ khalvidaṁ viśiṣṭa-Brahma. Ahamātmā viśiṣṭa-Brahma’). Everything I experience and myself in reality are the *Brahman* in his *viśiṣṭa-svarūpa*.

(8) सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्मशरीरः । अहमात्मा ब्रह्मशरीरः ॥

(‘Sarvaṁ khalvidaṁ Brahma-śarīraḥ—Ahamātmā Brahma-śarīraḥ’). Everything I experience and myself in reality are the body of the *Brahman*.

(9) सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्मतनुः । अहमात्मा ब्रह्मतनुः ॥

(‘Sarvaṁ khalvidaṁ Brahma-tanuḥ. Ahamātmā Brahma-tanuḥ’). Everything I experience and myself in reality are organisms grown on the *Brahman*.

(10) सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्मवशम् । अहमात्मा ब्रह्मवशः ॥

(‘Sarvaṁ khalvidaṁ Brahma-vaśaṁ. Ahamātmā Brahma-vaśaḥ’). Everything I experience and myself in reality are within the jurisdiction of the *Brahman*.

(11) सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्मधार्यं । अहमात्मा ब्रह्मधार्यः ॥

(‘Sarvaṁ khalvidaṁ Brahma-dhāryam. Ahamātmā Brahma-dhāryaḥ’). Everything I experience and myself in reality are supported by or grounded on the *Brahman*.

(12) सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्मनियाम्यं । अहमात्मा ब्रह्मनियाम्यः ॥

(‘Sarvaṁ khalvidaṁ Brahma-niyāmyam. Ahamātmā Brahma-niyāmyaḥ’). Everything I experience and myself in reality are controlled by the *Brahman*.

(13) सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्मशेषं । अहमात्मा ब्रह्मशेषः ॥

('Sarvaṁ khalvidaṁ Brahma-śeṣaṁ. Ahamātmā Brahma-śeṣaḥ'). Everything I experience and myself in reality exist for the joy and use of the *Brahman* for His purpose.

(14) सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्मैश्वर्यं । अहमात्मा ब्रह्मैश्वर्यं ॥

('Sarvaṁ khalvidaṁ Brahma-aiśvaryaṁ. Ahamātmā Brahma-aiśvaryaṁ'). Everything I experience and myself in reality are the wealth of the *Brahman*.

(15) सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्म । अहमात्मा ब्रह्मास्मि ॥

('Sarvaṁ khalvidaṁ Brahma. Ahamātmā Brahmāsmi'). Everything I experience is the *Brahman* Itself in reality. I in reality am the *Brahman* Itself.

(16) सर्वमेतद्ब्रह्म । अहमात्मा ब्रह्म ॥

('Sarvametaḍ Brahma. Ahamātmā Brahma'). All these beings and objects which I experience are in reality the *Brahman*. I the *ātman* in reality am the *Brahman*.

(17) सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्ममाया । अहमात्मा ब्रह्ममाया ॥

('Sarvaṁ khalvidaṁ Brahma-māyā. Ahamātmā Brahma-māyā'). All these which I experience proceed from the *māyā* of the *Brahman*; so do I also proceed from the *māyā* of the *Brahman*.

(18) सर्वं खल्विदं अविद्यायुक्तब्रह्म ।

अहमात्मा अविद्यायुक्तब्रह्म ॥

('Sarvaṁ khalvidaṁ avidyā-yukta-Brahma. Ahamātmā avidyā-yukta-Brahma'). All these which I experience are nothing but the *Brahman* in *avidyā* or ignorance; so am I the *Brahman* in *avidyā* or ignorance.

(19) सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्माधिष्ठानम् । अहमात्मा ब्रह्माधिष्ठानः ॥

('Sarvaṁ khalvidaṁ Brahma-adhishṭhānam. Ahamātmā Brahma-adhishṭhānaḥ'). All these which I experience are grounded upon the *Brahman*. So have I the *Brahman* as my ground.

(20) सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्ममयम् । अहमात्मा ब्रह्ममयः ॥

('Sarvaṁ khalvidaṁ Brahma-mayaṁ. Ahamātmā Brahma-mayaḥ'). Everything I experience is nothing but the *Brahman* in substance ; so am I nothing but the *Brahman* in substance.

(21) पुरुषः योऽसौ सोऽहमस्मि ।

(Puruṣaḥ yo'sau so'hamasmi). Whatever that *Puruṣa* is, that I am. (That is, that *Puruṣa* or the *Brahman* who is the reality or the *Antaryāmin* in the whole phenomenal universe is also the reality and *Antaryāmin* in me as a man or as an *ātman*.)

(22) सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्मपरिणामः । अहमात्मा ब्रह्मपरिणामः ॥

('Sarvaṁ khalvidaṁ Brahma-pariṇāmaḥ. Ahamātmā Brahma-pariṇāmaḥ'). Everything I experience is a modification of the *Brahman*. So am I also a modification of the *Brahman*.

(23) सर्वं खल्विदं उपहितब्रह्म । अहमात्मा उपहितब्रह्मा ॥

('Sarvaṁ khalvidaṁ upahita-Brahma. Ahamātmā upahita-Brahma.'). All these things and beings which I experience are the *Brahman* under limitations ; so am I the *Brahman* under limitations.

(24) सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्मप्रभा । अहमात्मा ब्रह्मप्रभा ॥

('Sarvaṁ khalvidaṁ Brahma-prabhā. Ahamātmā Brahma-prabhā'). Everything I experience is the divine light proceeding from the *Brahman* ; I am also the divine light proceeding from the *Brahman*.

(25) सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्मप्रतिबिम्बः । अहमात्मा ब्रह्मप्रतिबिम्बः ॥

('Sarvaṁ khalvidaṁ Brahma-pratibimbah. Ahamātmā-Brahma-pratibimbah'). Everything I experience is the reflection of the *Brahman* ; I as the *ātman* am also the reflection of the *Brahman*.

(26) सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्मशब्दः । अहमात्मा ब्रह्मशब्दः ॥

('Sarvaṁ khalvidaṁ Brahma-śabdaḥ. Ahamātmā Brahma-śabdaḥ'). All these I experience are the sound proceeding from the

the *Brahman*. I as the *ātman* am also the sound proceeding from the *Brahman*.

(27) सर्वं खल्विदं शान्तम् शिवम् अद्वैतम् ।

अहमात्मा शान्तम् शिवम् अद्वैतम् ॥

(‘*Sarvaṁ khalvidaṁ śāntaṁ śivaṁ advaitaṁ. Ahamātmā śāntaṁ śivaṁ advaitaṁ*’). All these that I experience in reality is unity from which proceeds peace and good. I am also unity, peace and good.

(28) ओं इति एकाक्षरम् ब्रह्म भूतम् भवत् भविष्यदितियत् सर्वं

तदोकार एव । यदन्यत् त्रिकालातीतं तदपि ओंकार एव ॥

(‘*Om̐ iti ekākṣharam Brahma : bhūtam bhavat bhaviṣhyaditi yat sarvaṁ tad om̐kāra eva ; yadanyat trikālātitaṁ tadapi om̐kāra eva*’). Meditate upon the *Brahman* as the single letter *Om* ! Meditate upon all things and beings in the past, the present and the future as *Om* (*Brahman*). Meditate upon the *ātman* which is beyond the past, the present and the future also as *Om* (*Brahman*) !

There are many sacred passages of the *Upanishads*, the *Bhagavadgītā* and the hymns of the *āzhvārs* and *ācāryas* which describe analogies to the relations of the *Brahman* with the phenomenal universe, including yourself, graphically, both in poetical and prose forms, and it will be an easier *jñāna-yoga* practice to recite these passages understanding their meanings and thinking over their ideas in your mind, believing at the same time that they are true relations. The net result of the *manana* of these passages of sacred books and *dhyāna* of the above quotations is that you will become firmly convinced that you in reality are divine in nature and not an *aṁśa* or part of the *prakṛiti* in the form of your body, senses, mind, intellect and social ego, and that you are very closely connected with the *Sat-chit-ānanda-Brahman* in Existence, Knowledge and Bliss ! Surely, you will then identify yourself completely with the *Brahman* and discard gradually and then completely your identification with your *prākṛitic* body now in the *samsāra* state and the phenomenal universe itself on the whole.

(iii) The higher stage of *jñāna-yoga* practices :

After the elementary *jñāna-yoga* practices of *manana* and *dhyāna* of the divine relations between the *Brahman* and the phenomenal universe and between the *Brahman* and yourself, you must seriously carry out the higher *jñāna-yoga* practices, namely, (i) the *dhyāna* or meditation of the *Brahman* as the *Antaryāmin* of the whole universe, of all beings and things and yourself individually, (ii) the *dhyāna* or meditation of the whole universe of all beings and yourself individually as the *Viśiṣṭa-Brahman*, the inseparable complex unity of *Īśvara*, *chit* and *achit*; (iii) the *dhyāna* and *manana* of the whole universe of all beings and things and yourself as an individual as the *Nirguṇa Brahman*; and (iv) the *dhyāna* or meditation of the whole universe of all beings and things and you also as an individual as the *Aprameya Brahman*. These are successive higher and higher steps of the spiritual practices in *jñāna-yoga*. The highest *jñāna-yoga* practice is the meditation of the *Brahman* in all His aspects as *Om*, meditating on yourself in reality as the *ātman* as *Om*, and uniting yourself as the *ātman-om* with the *Brahman-Om*, till you attain *ātma-sākshātkāra*, closely united with *Brahma-sākshātkāra*.

(iv) It is very hard to practise *jñāna-yoga* in all its aspects without the preparatory moral practices of *sādhana-chatusṭaya*.

But it is very hard for the *mumukshu* to practise *jñāna-yoga*, as he has to ascend from his normal consciousness of the phenomenal universe to a state of supernormal consciousness in successive stages of *manana* of the relations between the *Brahman* and the phenomenal universe, and of *dhyāna* of the *Antaryāmi-Brahman* everywhere, of the *Viśiṣṭa-Brahman* everywhere, of the *Nirguṇa-Brahman* everywhere and the *Aprameya-Brahman* Himself everywhere. But, however difficult it is to attain *Brahma-sākshātkāra* by *jñāna-yoga*, the procedure of the mental training gives great joy to the *mumukshu*.

But you should not forget at the same time that you have to practise in your daily life the *sādhana-chatusṭaya*, namely, *nitya-anitya-viveka*, *vairāgya*, *iha-amutra-phala-bhoga-virāga* and *mumukshutva* described by Śrī Saṅkarāchārya.

(a) *Nityānitya-viveka* is the realisation that the phenomenal universe as a whole and everyone of its objects and beings made up of matter and force or energy are ever-changing, existing only for short periods of time; they have an origin, stages of development and an end. But the eternal unchanging Reality or the *Brahman* is infinite, and is inseparably connected with the *ātman* and the *mūlaprakṛiti* which are unchanging realities also.

(b) *Vairāgya* or renunciation consists of *sama* or the conquest of internal organs, mind, intellect and ego; *dama* or the conquest of the five organs of sense and the five organs of action; *uparati* or the conquest of all desires one after another, and finally of the desire to live also; *titiksha* or bearing calmly the physical pains and mental miseries that happen to you when you discharge your duties and when you get incurable chronic diseases in life; *samādhāna* or keeping the mind in a balanced stable state both when you are enjoying material pleasures and when sorrowful incidents happen to you; and *śraddhā* or forcing your mind to develop a firm conviction in the *tattva*, *hita* and *purushārtha* preached in the *Upanishads*, the *Gītā*, the *Brahma-sūtras* and the songs of *bhaktas* like the *azhvārs* of South India in such a way that you should not have any doubts on them afterwards.

(c) *Iha-amutra-phala-bhoga-virāga*: According to this practice, you should give up completely your desires to enjoy pleasures in this life, such as luxuries and varieties and also the celestial joys of *Svarga* after death.

(d) *Mumukshutva*: Finally, you should develop *mumukshutva* or the intense desire to attain *ātma-sākshātkāra*, *Paramātmā-sākshātkāra* and *Brahma-sākshātkāra*.

12. Practise *bhakti-yoga* with devotion as much as possible every day.

(i) The characteristics of *bhakti-yoga*: You have been told already that *bhakti-yoga* consists of spiritual practices of prayer, surrender, *manana* and *dhyāna* on the *Saguṇa* aspects, *viśiṣṭa* aspects and *Īśvara* aspects of the *Sat-chit-ānanda-Brahman*. It was further stated that the *mumukshu* who practises *bhakti-yoga*

considers the *Sat-chit-ānanda-Brahman*, the supreme Reality, as the infinite personality, being *Sarvajña*, *Sarveśvara*, *Sarvāntaryāmin* and *Sarvayoni*, or all-knowing, all-powerful, all-pervasive and the final cause from whom the universe proceeds in various stages of evolution and into whom it finally enters in various stages of involution, being at the same time protected by Him in the interim periods of its existence in the different stages of evolution and involution. Therefore, the *mumukshu* loves the *Sat-chit-ānanda Brahman* intensely, and he is not satisfied with merely knowing about Him or even identifying himself with Him, as he did in his *jñāna-yoga* practices.

He must develop in his heart the greatest admiration and reverence towards the *Saguṇa-sat-chit-ānanda-Brahman*, because he is wonderstruck with His infinite power, with the exhibition of His innumerable divine auspicious qualities and the manifestations of His many divine auspicious forms. He goes on with his religious practices to have the joy of the vision of the *Paramātmān* or the *Saguṇa-Brahman* and to enjoy the bliss of mental contact with Him in all respects and union with Him ultimately not by identification with Him as in *jñāna-yoga* but by being His constant companion performing *kaiṅkarya*. *Bhakti-yoga* is based firstly on the love of the *Brahman*, secondly on practices, showing Him the greatest reverence mentally, physically, intellectually and by recitation of holy passages or sacred *mantras*, and thirdly on practices of self-surrender to Him so as to unite his will with doing *kaiṅkarya* or services to Him.

(ii) Four fundamental doubts arise when one starts *bhakti-yoga* practices.

The *mumukshu* of *bhakti-yoga* at the outset is confronted with four fundamental difficulties when starting the practice of *bhakti-yoga* sincerely. (a) Firstly, he is often worried with the doubt whether the *Saguṇa-Brahman*, an eternal Person who creates, protects and dissolves the universe practically exists at all as He is invisible and is stated to be beyond the reach of thought, word and deed. (b) Secondly, even if He exists invisibly, how will it be possible to love and admire an invisible personality? (c) Thirdly, do the prayers of human beings reach Him at all when He has no body, mind and senses like us, human beings? (d) Fourthly, even

if we believe that He hears our prayers, how can we consider Him to be all-merciful when He has created a phenomenal universe of births and deaths, conflicts due to selfish competitions and physical pains as well as mental miseries ?

(iii) Answers to the four doubts of the *bhakti-yogin* :

(a) The answer to the first doubt is to start the *bhakti-yoga* practices only after you believe in the existence of the *Saguṇa Brahman*.

That is, the doubt is answered in this way. We have already stated that when you believe that the ultimate eternal Reality, the primal cause of the universe, is unconscious Nature, you do not take up these *yoga* practices at all, and you are not a *mumukshu*. How can you take up the religious practices of *bhakti-yoga* when you yourself are not a *mumukshu* at all ? *Bhakti-yoga* practices can be taken up only by one who, after *śravaṇa* or the study of sacred books, *darśanas*, and philosophical systems, and *manana* or serious reflection on the religious and spiritual experiences of saints and sages recorded by their followers, believes firmly in the existence of the *Aprameya Brahman* generally and specially in His *saguṇa* aspect. Having once started in the firm belief of the existence of the *Saguṇa Brahman*, you should not give room for any doubt about His existence when you are going on with the *bhakti-yoga* religious practices. You should throw away such a doubt from your mind and firmly believe that such an infinite eternal Personality exists everywhere. Force your mind again and again to assert your intellectual convictions to such a degree that you feel intensely that the *Saguṇa Brahman* exists everywhere in front of you and on all your sides, surrounding you always !

(b) Answer to the second doubt : It is possible for you to love the idea of God even though God is invisible.

It is true that we love in various degrees objective human beings, such as father and mother, wife and children, relations and friends and fellow citizens and countrymen as well as others belonging to the various countries of this earth. Sometimes we also love animals like the cow, horse, dog, cat, birds etc., and plants also which are objective things.

Love consists of two aspects : you are attached to them because you derive pleasure from their company and their services to you ; you also give the joy of love to them by giving the pleasure of your company to them and doing service to them in the forms of physical work, giving them money, imparting knowledge to them and even training them in religious or spiritual practices. You love your immovable and movable properties also which are objective physical things. You love the rivers, mountains, the sea, the sun, the moon, the stars, the air, the clouds etc., which are also grand objective realities.

But the problem now is how to love the *Saguṇa Brahman* or the *Paramātmān* who is an invisible personality. Does not a father and mother love their son who has left them for ever and is wandering in a far-away country ? Does not a young man who lives in America begin to love his child which is born in India, when he learns by a letter from India that his wife has given birth to a child after he left India ? Do not children love their parents even after their death, even though they have become invisible and there is no hope of their ever returning to their homes again ? Does not a patriot serve his motherland which he sees only in a map, and sacrifice his wealth and life for its prosperity ? Does not a student love to read novels, dramas, reflective prose passages and emotional poems, etc., for hours and hours in a day, not minding even his food and duties to be discharged, the ideas being only in his mind ?

In all these instances, you do not love objective things, but you love your own ideas in your mind representing them. Our experience is that those who love permanent ideas exhibit greater love to them for much longer periods than those who love external objective things which are merely temporary in character, compared to them.

So, the *mumukshu* should begin to love God as the idea of God in his mind. You must conceive the *Saguṇa Brahman* or the *Paramātmān* as the external unchanging Reality from whom proceeds the universe, in whom it lives and into whom it enters in the end ; you must conceive that He possesses innumerable divine auspicious qualities and that He manifests Himself in many divine auspicious forms ! If you are a real *mumukshu*, you must love this grand idea of Infinite God as a Reality and go on with different kinds of the religious and spiritual practices of *bhakti-yoga*. Love of this

idea is called *bhakti*, and the development of this *bhakti* to the highest degree by proper religious and spiritual practices will ultimately enable you, by God's grace, to enjoy a part, so to say, of God Himself manifesting to you as an objective Reality itself in various ways ! Therefore, if you are a *munukshu*, love the idea of the *Saguṇa Brahman* both negatively and positively in such a manner that your mental contact with this idea of God by thoughts, words and deeds should give you personally great joy and prompt you with great enthusiasm to do services to this idea of God in the form of services to the members of your family, your community, your village, your town, your State, and your country, humanity at large, animals and plants, grand natural objects, events and things which have attracted you and even invisible *devatās* or gods.

But there is one difference between your loving the ideas bearing on the objects and beings connected with the phenomenal universe and those connected with the *Saguṇa Brahman*. In the former case, you experience the objects or beings first and then love the ideas relating to them in their absence. In the latter case, there is no objective experience of God at all in the beginning, and yet you have to love the ideas about God which you have arrived at by your convictions after the *śravaṇa* of sacred books and *manana* or serious reflections about them. You expect such divine devotional love to realise Him in one of His manifestations as an objective Reality so far as you are concerned.

(c) The answer to the third doubt is that your prayer is known by God.

When you develop the conviction in your mind that the *Saguṇa Brahman* is the ultimate and eternal Reality, being Himself the *upādāna-kāraṇa* (material cause), *nimitta-kāraṇa* (instrumental cause) and *saṃkāra-kāraṇa* (auxiliary cause) of the phenomenal universe including yourself, and you decide that He is *Sarva-yoni* or the cause of all this, *Sarva-antaryāmi* or the great Being who pervades all this, *Sarveśvara* or He who rules all things and events (invisibly), and *Sarvajña* or He who knows all things and events directly without the aid of body, senses, mind, intellect and the social ego,—(When such a conviction is developed) you must always be sure in your mind that your sincere and devotional prayers will

reach Him, though He may not have physical ears like ours forming part of a physical body like ours.

If you pray to Him doubting His existence, or if you pray to Him with the idea that you will grant His existence only when your physical pains, social difficulties and mental miseries are removed by your prayers, He may not grant your prayers at all ! Either do not believe in the existence of the *Saguṇa Brahman* at all and solve your own difficulties by your own personal efforts and bear all unavoidable misfortunes calmly and heroically, or if you believe in the *Saguṇa Brahman* and indent on His help in removing difficulties, firmly attest in your mind again and again, whenever you are not sleeping, till the moment of your death, that He exists in the heart of your heart and nearer to you everywhere in the universe as the *Antaryāmin* with His infinite *dharmabhūta-jñāna* and that He hears all your sincere and devotional prayers and takes suitable action thereon.

The sacred books of all the great religions of the world and the great saints and sages all over the world have emphatically asserted that their prayers are heard by God and that their difficulties are removed gradually by His invisible methods, though one cannot be sure as to how long one waits and how long He tests His devotees who pray to Him either hypocritically and atheistically or sincerely and devotedly. So when you pray to the *Saguṇa Brahman*, pray to Him sincerely, devotedly, and with full faith in Him, firmly asserting in your mind that He knows the contents of all your prayers though you are not aware of any response from Him even for a long time or even probably till the end of your life. Probably miracles will happen.

Great doctors have testified that, whether God exists eternally or not, sincere prayers to the idea of God in the minds of the patients or even in those of their friends and relatives lead to the cure of serious chronic diseases which had been earlier declared as hopeless cases. Great saints have testified that miracles or wonderful events which cannot be explained by the ordinary laws of cause and effect of the physical, social and psychological sciences have happened when they have prayed, piously, devotedly, faithfully, and with great enthusiasm to their own ideas and forms of the

Saguṇa Brahman in their own mind, firmly asserting and believing that He knows their prayers and promotes their welfare, not according to their ideas but according to His free will and their *karma*.

Prayer is the only solace for a dying man who believes in the *Saguṇa Brahman*. You must also realise that there is the necessity for your sincere and devotional prayers to the *Saguṇa-Brahman* from another important aspect. When you have taken up these *yogic sādhanas* seriously, you must believe firmly that your personality survives after death and that you do not know what happens to you after your death in your life as a *preta* or soul with a subtle body and without the physical body.

Whenever you think of your impending death in your advanced age, you will suffer from mental worries on account of fear of what may happen to you in your *preta* life after death. Sincere and devotional prayers to God to bestow His mercy upon you so as to remove all the pains of *naraka* life and grant you joys of heaven after death will be the only means available to you to give you solace and courage during the years before your death. Hence, sincere prayer to God in the last stages of your life is a great solace to you and is also a great necessity, unless you become a hundred percent atheist with the firm conviction that your personality will not survive after your death and that your I-consciousness and attributive consciousness will be completely destroyed at the moment of your death.

Moreover, prayer in the last stages of your life will be a good tonic to enable you to forget all the mental miseries due to diseases of old age and unpleasant thoughts about death. The vast majority of men and women have committed many sins in their lives, and even the great men of society have committed a number of secret sins. It is not possible for them to remove the bad effects of their own past sins by their present or future virtuous actions alone. Hence the only way to remedy the bad effects of the many sins they have committed from their youth upto their present advanced age or at least to remove the secret fears in their hearts that they may have to suffer pains and miseries in their future life after death, is that they should pray as much as possible in their advanced age upto the

moment of their death sincerely, piously and devotedly to the *Saguṇa Brahman* to wash off their sins or to destroy the bad effects of their *prārabdha-karma*, *sañchita-karma* and *āgāmi-karma* and enable them to enjoy the eternal joy of His blessed company in *Paramapada* or the divine region.

(d) Some vague answers are possible to the fourth doubt, i.e., the problem why God created a universe full of miseries :

(A) The problem cannot be satisfactorily answered.

The *Saguṇa Brahman* or God who is said to be all-powerful and all-merciful is at the same time believed to have created or projected this phenomenal universe in which living beings experience more miseries than pleasures. Here is a difficult riddle, and the answers given by all the great religions of the world and philosophical systems are not quite satisfactory. Just as we cannot know the true nature of the Reality of the phenomenal universe and the relation between the Eternal Reality and the phenomenal universe, we human beings with our limited intellects cannot know the reason why All-powerful and All-merciful *Īśvara* or God created or projected out of Himself this phenomenal universe with many physical pains and mental worries.

(B) The different reasons given to solve this problem: Are you satisfied with the following reasons given to solve this mysterious and practical problem?

(1) God plays in sport by creating, preserving and destroying the phenomenal universe periodically, as it is His way of spending time or it is His whimsical pleasure. This is the first answer to the problem.

(2) Why He created the painful and miserable universe is only known to Him, the Infinite Being, and we human beings with limited intellects should not ask the question at all; this is the second answer.

(3) God has an inseparable body in this universe which is full of defects, and He is trying His best by the creations and dissolutions of the universe to remedy these defects as far as possible; this is the third answer.

(4) The *Brahman* is beyond space, time and causation, which are the foundations of the evolutions of the phenomenal universe. The question as to why God created this phenomenal universe is a question relating to the phenomenal universe only, and this question does not apply to the *Brahman* or God who is beyond causation. The question is illogical. This is the fourth answer.

(5) All these pleasures and pains of living beings of the phenomenal universe are not real at all, just as our pains and pleasures in our dreams are not real. The phenomenal universe is *māyā*, and all these pleasures and pains experienced by us are unreal. They do not exist at all, and so this question does not arise at all. This is the fifth answer.

(6) The nature of the *Saguṇa Brahman* is different from or even opposite to the nature of the phenomenal universe and its events. The causes for many pains in the physical universe must be discovered in the laws of the phenomenal universe itself, and so their final cause should not be attributed to the *Saguṇa Brahman* at all. That is the sixth answer.

(7) The *Saguṇa Brahman* has in His possession or is the ruler of two wonderful universes, one of them being pure, perfect, eternal and full of bliss, and the other the phenomenal one—impure, imperfect, changing and with many miseries and few pleasures. By this process of *śrishti*, *sthiti* and *pralaya* of the phenomenal universe, God is trying to purify all the living beings in it and transfer their *ātman*s into His pure eternal universe. He wants ultimately to transfer all beings of the phenomenal universe or *vilā-vibhūti* to His *nitya-vibhūti* or his *Paramapada* or perfect universe. This is the seventh answer.

(8) The unknowable *Aprameya-sat-cit-ānanda-Brahman* who was alone willed to become many, and so He projected out of Himself mysteriously a phenomenal universe, quite opposite to His own *svarūpa* or nature, and then has Himself entered infinitely into it as the *Antaryāmin* and is going on with His eternal work of purifying it completely, so that it may once again become one with Him as it was before the phenomenal universe was projected from Him. He wants to become once again non-dual which is His real nature. This is the eighth answer.

(c) The responsibility of evil and suffering in the phenomenal universe rests only on the *ātman* who has the freedom of will to choose God or the phenomenal universe.

How are you now to solve this problem to your satisfaction, so that you may develop loving devotion or *bhakti* to the *Saguṇa-Brahman*? It is true that the vast majority of human beings suffer more miseries than they enjoy pleasures in their lives in this phenomenal universe. Taking the whole human life into consideration, even the fortunate few also suffer to a great extent mental miseries on the whole, though they enjoy the physical and material pleasures much more than the majority of human beings. You have already come to the conviction that the *Saguṇa Brahman* is the cause of this phenomenal universe: He is the material cause, the operative cause and the instrumental cause at the same time. You have to grant both the above facts, and then try to find out the cause of all human miseries accompanied by few pleasures.

The phenomenal universe that proceeds from the *Saguṇa-Brahman* is an inseparable compound of *achit* or unconscious Nature and millions and millions of *chits* or *ātman*s or individual souls which are conscious in their nature. The living beings which always experience the I-consciousness and by their *dharmā-bhūtā-jñāna* or attributive consciousness know objects, do act in this phenomenal universe experiencing pleasures and pains. They have the freedom of will to choose the life which gives more pains than pleasures, or to choose the life which give more pleasures than pains. They can become completely non-attached to the pleasures and pains of this phenomenal universe and direct their attention sincerely to the *Saguṇa Brahman* who is the cause of this phenomenal universe and is its *Antaryāmin* at the same time. In the last alternative, they will neither enjoy the pleasures of the phenomenal universe, nor suffer the pains and miseries in it, but will enjoy divine joy due to *ātma-sākshātkāra* and *Īśvara-sākshātkāra*. So the phenomenal universe which has proceeded from the *Saguṇa Brahman* is also divine in character, but it is left to the *jivātman*, especially human beings, to enjoy divine bliss in it or suffer pleasures and pains in equal proportions or suffer more pains than pleasures.

So the *Saguṇa Brahman* has created this phenomenal universe as a training ground for bound souls which have existed eternally in the womb of unconscious *prakṛiti* to attain their divine nature and enjoy the divine bliss of the vision and company of the *Saguṇa Brahman*. But, instead of that, the bound souls forget their heritage of the eternal *Saguṇa Brahman* Himself and become attached to the wonderful changing transformations or manifestations of the phenomenal universe and act accordingly. They cannot but experience material pleasures and pains in various degrees and proportions. So the universe which has proceeded from the *Saguṇa Brahman* is neither good nor bad, neither merciful nor cruel, and neither pleasant nor unpleasant. It is the training ground for the living beings who choose ways of life that are *tāmasic*, *rājasic*, or *sāttvik* in varying degrees, having different proportions of these *guṇas*

The *Saguṇa Brahman* is really merciful enough to help them, if they seek His help at all for achieving the *purushārthas* of *artha*, *kāma*, *dharma* and *moksha* or their different combinations. If they go on to attain their *purushārthas*, whatever they may be, by their own self-effort, the *Saguṇa Brahman* will be indifferent and allow the law of *karma* to operate. But, on the other hand, if they pray to Him sincerely, devotedly and piously to help them in the achievement of any of these *purushārthas* or their combinations, He will really be merciful enough to help them in the satisfaction of their respective *purushārthas* or combinations of them. Do not have any fear regarding the *Saguṇa Brahman*, because He is always merciful and not at all cruel in His nature. He really possesses several *kalyāṇa-guṇas* or divine auspicious qualities to help all living creatures, especially human beings who love Him, admire Him, recognise His infinite nature and pray to Him sincerely, piously, devotedly and with enthusiasm

Having cleared all the above doubts in your mind which are the real obstacles for success in *bhakti-yoga*, you must plunge devotedly into its many religious and spiritual practices. What then are these *bhakti-yoga* practices which you have to choose one after another, or choose more of them or all of them at the same time?

(iv) The different kinds of *bhakti-yoga* religious practices :

(a) Give up attachment to the phenomenal universe.

The *Gītā* describes those practising *bhakti-yoga* in the following terms :

अनन्यभक्तिः, नान्यगामिना अभ्यासयुक्तः, अनन्यमनसः
भजन्ते, अनन्यचेताः मां स्मरन्ति

('Ananya-bhaktiḥ', 'Nānyagāminā abhyāsa-yuktaḥ', 'Ananya-manasaḥ bhajante', 'Ananya-chetāḥ mām smaranti').

So the first essential factor of *bhakti* is the negative practice of giving up your attention and attachment to the phenomenal universe, its objects and beings. That is, you must practise *vairāgya*.

(b) Completely direct your mind and intellect towards the *Saguṇa Brahman*. Again, it is stated in the *Gītā* of those practising *bh. kti-yoga* :

मयि आसक्तमनाः, योगयुक्तः भवति,
नित्ययुक्ताः भक्त्या भजन्ति

('Mayi āsakta-manāḥ', 'Yoga-yuktaḥ bhavati', 'Nitya-yuktāḥ bhajanti').

Therefore the second essential factor of *bhakti-yoga* is the positive practice of completely directing your mind and intellect towards the *Saguṇa Brahman* with great love to Him and concentration upon Him.

(c) Do perform varieties of religious practices.

The third essential factor is that you should actually go on with the varieties of religious practices such as the following :

(1) *Śravaṇa* and *manana* of sacred passages with their meanings describing the *Saguṇa Brahman*, *kīrtanas* of His wonderful deeds described in mythologies and narrated by saints and sages in their inspired poems and songs.

(2) *Stotra* with great love and admiration of His many *k. lyāṇa-guṇas* or divine auspicious qualities, His glories as the owner of this vast infinite universe and its infinite varieties of objects and beings.

(3) Worship of grand natural objects such as the stars, the sun, the moon, planets, mountains, rivers, sea, forests, sacred idols in temples, human beings in the form of *mahātmās*, *gurus* and even sacred beasts, birds and plants with the devoted feeling that you are worshipping the *Antaryāmi-Paramātmā* in each of them or that each of them is *Viśiṣṭa Brahman* Himself standing before you :

(4) Meditation upon the *Saguṇa Brahman*, concentrating upon His *divya-maṅgala-vigrahas* or divine auspicious forms such as *para-svarūpa*, *pralaya-svarūpa*, *viśvarūpa-svarūpa*, *vyūha-svarūpa*, *vibhava-svarūpa*, *antaryāmi-svarūpa* and *archā-svarūpa*, which are graphically described in the *Bhāgavata* and *Vishṇupurāṇa* or other *purāṇas*, *Pāñcharātra* and other *āgamas*, songs and poems of the *āzhvārs* and other great saints and *mahātmās* of the world.

(5) Self-surrender of oneself to the *Saguṇa Brahman* and trying to experience great joy by doing service to Him directly by mental services to His several divine forms and manifestations mentally conceived and indirectly by physical services, to *devatās* by *yajñas*, to human beings in various ways, even to birds and beasts imagining with love of God that they are all His visible symbols as He is their *Antaryāmin* as they are *Viśiṣṭa Brahman* and as they are divine in character having Him as either cause or origin ; and

(6) Deepest meditation uttering 'Om', in one's heart on the *Saguṇa Brahman* in His *aprameya-svarūpa* with the utterance of the sacred symbol 'Om', eagerly expecting His realisation and the infinite divine *ānanda* of union with Him as early as possible and forcing your mind to experience that *aprameya-svarūpa* negatively and the joy of union with Him positively at least during the period of meditation every day.

(d) You must practise the seven moral virtues of *sādhana-saptaka* if you are to succeed in *bhakti-yoga* practices.

Śrī Rāmānujāchārya has prescribed seven virtues as preparatory for starting *bhakti-yoga* religious practices, as they will enable the *mumukshu* who is a *bhakta* to give up his lower ideal of seeking material pleasures, his desire to enjoy the phenomenal universe and its objects, his attachment to wife, children, relations and friends and other beings and the actual enjoyment of sense pleasures as much

as possible. Hence the *bhakta* should seriously practise the virtues as much as possible in order that he may succeed in his *bhakti-yoga* religious practices. The seven virtues are: *viveka*, *vimoka*, *abhyāsa*, *kriyā*, *kalyāṇa*, *anavasāda* and *anuddharsha*.

(1) *Viveka* requires that you should give up completely *tāmasic* food, reduce *rājasic* food to the minimum and eat a fair quantity of *sāttvik* food for your nourishment. You must also avoid as far as possible *tāmasic* and *rājasic* impulses that arise in your mind, by your mental effort :

(2) *Vimoka* consists of driving away from your mind the feelings and impulses of *kāma* or desire, *krodha* or anger, *lobha* or greediness, *moha* or false attachment to parents, wife, children and relations, *māda* or pride in relation to those who are in inferior positions to you, *mātsarya* or jealousy towards those who are better than you in their wealth, property, knowledge, power, name and fame, *śoka* or feelings of sorrow for the loss of wealth, health and near relations and friends and *bhaya* or fear of death, loss of property, loss of health and of getting physical pain and mental miseries in the near future

(3) *Abhyāsa* is the third virtue to be practised. You must always assert in your mind with fervour and enthusiasm that you are in reality the *ātman* and not the body, senses, mind, intellect and ego. This practice should be carried out not only during leisure hours, but also while doing physical work, if the mind is not engaged at that time.

(4) *Kriyā* is the fourth practice. You must do your services sincerely, not with motives of profit, but in the *karma-yoga* attitude, towards invisible *devatās*, saints, sages, suffering human beings and even animals and plants as far as possible.

(5) *Kalyāṇa* involves the practice of six virtues, viz., *satya*, *ārjava*, *dayā*, *dāna*, *anabhidhyā* and *ahimsā*. *Satya* is speaking the truth promoting the welfare of others. *Ārjava* is being sincere in thought, word and deed, while dealing with others and being humble towards them. *Dayā* is helping others with feelings of pity when they are in difficulties as far as possible. *Dāna* is giving to others in charity money, services and knowledge. *Anabhidhyā* is being pleased even when others are in better circumstances than you. *Ahimsā* is not injuring others in thought, word and deed.

(6) *Anavasāda*, when practised, requires that you should not develop a humble, begging and demeaning attitude even when you have lost your health, suffering from chronic diseases, or suffering even your physical pains, when you have lost your wealth, power, and position and when you have lost your name and fame. Constantly assert that in reality you are the glorious *ātman* free from the bondage of *prakṛiti* and that your nature is eternal bliss and that you have nothing to lose on account of the loss of these worldly things.

(7) *Anuddharsha* is the seventh practice. You should not become overjoyed when you get wealth, power, knowledge, name, fame, good health, and enjoyment of a variety of sense pleasures, aesthetic joys and mental raptures, as these are temporary in character, are accompanied by pains and are not only foreign to the real nature of the *ātman*-bliss, but will also prevent the free manifestation of that bliss. So the mind should not become elated even under favourable circumstances and must be kept calm.

(e) Prepare a *dinachari* or time-table of *sāttvik bhakti-yoga* practices and carry it out as far as possible sincerely and piously. With a view to develop *śānti* or divine peace of mind in your advanced age, you must yourself chalk out a *sāttvik* programme of divine *bhakti-yoga* religious practices every day, allotting periods of time for *śravaṇa* of sacred books with the help of *gurus* if necessary, *manana* of sacred passages (understanding their meanings) of the *Upaniḥads*, the *Gītā*, the *Brahmasūtras* and the poems of saints and sages graphically describing their spiritual experiences, *kīrtanas* of the divine deeds of God in His work of creation, protection and dissolution of the universe, *stotras* or prayers which describe His *kalyāṇa-guṇas* or glories connected with the phenomenal universe, worship of and services to His manifestations in the phenomenal universe as His *viśva-rūpa*, meditation of the divine forms of His several manifestations as described in sacred books and identification with the existence and bliss of the *Brahman* in His *aprameya-sva-rūpa*. Go on with these religious practices every day according to your time-table with love, sincerity, devotion, enthusiasm, and even mental joy, driving from your mind all the doubts that will force themselves upon you while engaged in these religious practices as to whether God exists or not, whether He hears your prayers or not and whether He is merciful or not. If during your religious practices these doubts trouble your mind, and if you fail to carry out the moral virtues of

sādhana-saptaka in your daily life, surrender yourself completely to the *Saguṇa Brahman* Himself.

तमेव शरणं गच्छ

(‘*Tam-eva śaraṇaṁ gachchha*’) Seek His protection humbly and sincerely to help you in the achievement of success in spiritual practices and moral virtues.

योग युञ्जन् मदाश्रयः

(‘*Yogaṁ yuñjan madāśrayaḥ*’) While doing all these *bhakti-yoga* religious practices, do not forget till you attain direct God-vision that you are only learning about, reflecting upon, singing of, praying to, worshipping, meditating upon, identifying yourself with, surrendering yourself to and seeking the help of the ideal of the *Saguṇa Brahman* only, whom you feel to be your *Antaryāmin*. Have strong faith in your own idea of God and love that idea intensely and devotedly, and you will surely succeed in your religious practices and attain by God’s grace *ātma-sākshātkāra*, *Īśvara-sākshātkāra*, *ātman*-bliss and divine bliss.

(f) Love God. Do not be afraid of Him. The first important religious attitude which contributes to the success of the religious practices of *bhakti-yoga* is that the *mumukshu* should love God more intensely than the parents love their children, the husband loves his wife, the wife loves her husband, brothers and sisters love one another, the citizens love their ruler and the patriot loves his motherland.

The second important religious attitude is that the *bhakta* should have no fear of God. Even if he has committed sins, he should not fear God; but only repent for his past sins and beg God sincerely and respectfully to excuse all his sins.

13. You become highly disappointed in life when you become a *yoga-bhrashta*

(i) When are you a *yoga-bhrashta*?

You have become a *mumukshu* and you have been making attempts to practise moral virtues, *karma-yoga*, *rāja-yoga* for short periods every day, *jñāna-yoga* and *bhakti-yoga* practices in

different periods of the day; yet you have not attained *ātma-sākshātkāra* or *Saṅga-Brahma-sākshātkāra* in any one of His manifestations. You have not developed even the *sāttvik* heroism that you are the *ātman*, and are not free from the constant fear of death of yourself and your near relations as well as of getting chronic diseases and physical pains in the near future. You have not even felt the presence of God as your *antarātman* or inner voice or divine conscience commanding you to give up all sinful actions and to perform all righteous actions. So you have become a *yoga-bhrashta*.

(ii) The dark night of the soul: In this state of your life as *yoga-bhrashta*, you are highly disappointed and mentally worried with your life itself! You do not want to die, and you are disgusted with your old age, accompanied by physical pains, mental miseries and slavery to the *āśiśad-varga* that overpowers you, especially the fear of future evils and sorrow for past misfortunes! As a *mumukshu* you are voluntarily attempting to give up all physical pleasures and attachment to relations and friends, and so you have lost the attractions and the charms and the enthusiasm in the material happiness of the world which you had in your younger days, and now you have not been fortunate to enjoy *ātman-bliss* or divine bliss in the least degree. So you are a *yoga-bhrashta* now, though you are going on with your spiritual programme of *yoga* practices—because you have not the zest to enjoy physical, social, aesthetic and intellectual pleasures on the one side, nor do you have the optimism of experiencing *ātman-bliss* and divine bliss on the other side. What is the course of action you have to take in this, your highly disappointed *yoga-bhrashta* stage—the period of the dark night of your *ātman*?

(iii) What are the causes of your *yoga-bhrashta* stage? The causes are many, as you yourself may know by your own reflections in your inner conscience about your life.

(a) Firstly, you are not a perfect *mumukshu*, as you have strong *vāsanās* acting upon your mind regarding the enjoyment of physical pleasures, such as eating tasteful preparations, sexual feelings while attending cinemas, dramas, dances and musical entertainments, heated conversations and discussions with friends, attending social parties and intellectual pleasures in reading books,

hearing lectures, teaching classes, delivering lectures, etc., though the latter or intellectual pleasures are superior to physical pleasures.

(b) Secondly, you have not given up your *ahaṅkāra* and *mamakāra*, and so you are attached to your body, name and fame, wife, children and relations as well as wealth and power.

(c) Thirdly, though you are attempting to practise moral virtues, you are not advanced in the practices of *yama* and *niyama*, *sādhana-saptaka* and *sādhana-chatuṣṭaya* which are the preparatory disciplinary virtues required for all *yogic sādhana*.

(d) Fourthly, you are not completely successful in the practice of the many virtues of the *karma-yogin*, the *rāja-yogin*, the *jñāna-yogin* and the *bhakti-yogin* described in different chapters of the *Gītā*, as you are not earnest about them to a high degree.

(e) Fifthly, you are not successful in practising *karma-yoga*, though you attempt it; because you have not completely given up agency in actions, the fruits of your actions and the ownership of the results of your actions and developed the attitude of surrender of all your actions to the *Saguṇa Brahman*. You yet do actions propelled by *kāma*, *krodha*, *lobha*, *moha*, *mada*, *mātsarya*, *śokha*, *bhoga*, *ahaṅkāra* and *mamakāra*. You have not developed the feeling of *saṁatva* as described above which is the basis of *karma-yoga*.

(f) Sixthly, your practices of *rāja-yoga* are not successful, because the *yama* and *niyama*, *pratyāhāra* and *dhāraṇa* practices are not effective. Again, while you practise *dhyanā* or meditation on the *ātman*, scores of outside thoughts enter your mind and disturb your *dhyanā*. Moreover, there is no lonely spot in your house to practise *dhyanā*, as your mind is disturbed frequently by outside disturbances and your nearest relations and friends, who are very much interested in your material welfare and who love your bodily material life which alone they can experience in your social life with them, become your opponents in your *dhyanā* practices, as they do not hesitate to disturb you in all possible ways, since they do not believe in the efficacy of *dhyanā* and particularly of your sincerity in these *dhyanā* practices! You must be grateful that, at least, they tolerate your *dhyanā* practices in the house! Moreover, in these days of modern civilization, the house is full of the sound of the radio with

music, dramas, dialogues, lectures, news programmes, sports news, etc., and the streets are full of loud gramophone music and other noises. How is it possible for you to go on with your *rāja-yoga* practices, when your mind itself is not firm at the same time?

(g) Lastly, it is true that you are spending much time every day in the *śravaṇa*, *manana* and *dhyāna* practices of *jñāna-yoga* and in *kīrtana*, *stotra*, *upāsana*, *japa*, worship of idols, *manana* and meditation of the different manifestations of *para*, *pralaya*, *viśvarūpa*, *vyūha*, *antaryāmin*, *vibhava* and *archā svarūpas* of the *Saguṇa Brahman*. All these are religious practices of *bhakti-yoga*. But yet you have not succeeded in the realisation of the *Saguṇa Brahman* in any of His *sva-rūpas* or have not even felt His presence in your heart. The reason may be that you have not yet the firm conviction that the Truth of the universe, the *Aprameya Brahman*, manifests Himself really as the *Nirguṇa Brahman*, the *Saguṇa Brahman* and the phenomenal universe, and you do not love that *Saguṇa Brahman* as a living infinite personality who is the cause of the phenomenal universe and is its *Antaryāmin* as well as yours. So you do not believe that He really exists as you believe that your parents, wife, children, relations and friends exist: for He is invisible. Hence you do not love Him sincerely, admire Him with reverence, believe in His divine auspicious qualities and divine auspicious forms, and do not repent while doing sinful actions, being tempted by materialistic desires and *vāsanās*.

You go on with these *jñāna-yoga* and the *bhakti-yoga* practices mechanically, as in the case of customary religious practices with a view to while away your time or to make the best of a bad job in order to satisfy your superficial conscience as a *mumukshu*. You are not doing these spiritual practices with eagerness, fervour, devotion and enthusiasm. On the other hand, you feel mental disgust while doing these religious practices! Therefore, it may be stated that Divine Grace has not fallen upon you yet, and you have not attained any form of God-realisation.

14. The inferior path to overcome the disappointment of the *yoga-bhrashta* state is to take up the *ārta-prapatti-yoga*.

You are now highly disappointed in life as a *yoga-bhrashta*, as you have lost all the pleasures of material life on the one side and

on the other hand, you have not attained success in spiritual and religious practices, on account of your mental weakness and lack of conviction in the religious and spiritual truths declared in the *śāstras* and by the saints and sages all over the world! The only way left to you as a weak-minded man is to take up the *ārta-prapatti-yoga* sincerely and practise it with an attitude of humbleness, reverence, and fear towards the *Saguṇa Brahman* in His various *svarūpas*, though not with love and admiration to Him as in *bhakti-yoga*, pray to Him to promote your welfare in all respects and protect you in this life and in your life after death, as the beggar prays to his donor, as children pray to their parents, as the wife prays to her husband, as the tenant to his landlord, as the servant to his master and as the citizen to the king or the ruler of his State.

There are four kinds of *bhaktas* of the *Saguṇa Brahman*—the *ārta*, the *arthārthin*, the *jijñāsu* and the *jñānin*. The *ārta* is one who has lost his health and wealth. He prays to God for relief from the pains and miseries of poverty as well as from the death of near relations. The *arthārthin* is not satisfied with his present wealth, comforts, power and fame, and so he prays to God to grant him more of them and grant him as long a life as possible. The *jijñāsu* who is a disappointed *karma-yogin* and *rāja-yogin*, prays to God to enable him by His mercy and mighty power to realise the *ātman* and enjoy the *ātman*-bliss as early as possible. The *jñānin* who has aimed at the realisation of the *Saguṇa Brahman* only and the enjoyment of the divine bliss of union with Him and therefore practised *bhakti-yoga* and is now a *yoga-bhrashta*, prays to God to grant him the boon of God-realisation and God-bliss very early.

So, the *ārta-prapanna* sincerely and devotedly prays to God with feelings of fear and sincerity, and always through recognised prayers, forms of worship and *japas* according to the *śāstras*! When you have become a *yoga-bhrashta* and are highly disappointed, you must approach an orthodox *guru*, seek his help and practise *ārta-prapatti-yoga* according to his directions. There is no alternative. But you may go on also with your old practices of moral virtues, *karma-yoga*, *rāja-yoga*, *jñāna-yoga* and *bhakti-yoga*, as best as possible, waiting for the grace of God to become successful in your divine aim. So the *yoga-bhrashta* who starts *ārta-prapatti-yoga* will sincerely go on at all times with his prayers,

japas and forms of worship to God with a begging attitude towards Him to attain peace of mind as an *ārta*, *arthārthin*, *jijñāsu* or disappointed *jñānin*!

15. The superior path of success for you as a *yoga-bhrashta* is to choose the *nyāsa-vidyā*, or *siddhopāya*, or *dṛipta-prapatti-yoga*.

(i) The main principle of *siddhopāya* or *nyāsa-vidyā* is that you should give up *ahaṅkāra* completely and allow God to work for your welfare. You have failed because you have been moved by feelings of *ahaṅkāra* all these years and chosen the path of self-effort. All these years in your life, you have been influenced by *tāmasa ahaṅkāra*, *rājasa ahaṅkāra* and *sāttvika ahaṅkāra* one after another in taking up higher and higher ideals in your life, and making attempts by your self-effort to achieve your ideals as much as possible. You were moved by *tāmasa ahaṅkāra* when you considered yourself merely as the body, the senses and the nervous system, took up the *ārtha-purushārtha* and made serious attempts to achieve it as best as possible. You were moved by *rājasa ahaṅkāra* when you considered yourself as the gross mind, took up the *kāma-purushārtha* (including social, aesthetic and intellectual pleasures) and made serious attempts to achieve it as best as possible. You were moved by *sāttvika ahaṅkāra* when you considered yourself as the subtle mind or *sūkshma-sarīra* and took up the *dharma-purushārtha* for social welfare in this life and religious welfare after death, and made serious attempts to achieve it as much as possible. You were moved by spiritual *ahaṅkāra*, trying to go beyond the three *guṇas* of *tamas*, *rajas* and *sattva* altogether, when you considered yourself as the *pratyag-ātman* or the individual self, took up the *moksha-purushārtha* of attaining the *ātman*-bliss and God-vision or God-union-bliss and practised seriously moral virtues, *karma-yoga*, *raja-yoga*, *bhakti-yoga* and *ārta-prapatti-yoga* as described above.

It is natural when you are moved by all these *ahaṅkāras*. whether they are *tāmasic*, *rājasic*, *sāttvik* or beyond the *guṇas* in character, you will become highly disappointed in your life. For you make serious efforts to achieve these *purushārthas* eternally, but fail to do so, as the first three *purushārthas* are temporary in

character and are accompanied by various kinds of pains in different degrees, and it is very difficult for you to attain the *moksha-purushārtha* on account of mental weakness and the many difficulties in practising moral virtues as different *yogic* practices one after another. The *ārta-prapatti-yoga* is the only way left to a *yoga-bhrashta*, but no one can be sure whether God helps him or not, though there are many sacred passages that declare that God will help him. So the failure of all your efforts in attaining these *purushārthas* is not only due to the nature of the *purushārthas* and the weakness of your efforts, but also due to the fact that you are moved by *ahaṅkāra* of some kind or other and depend mainly upon your weak self-effort in achieving them.

(ii) Even, according to the scientific atheist, man is a creature of Nature like animals, though he is superior to them in some respects. One of the most important questions that the scientist who is an atheist has to consider is to examine how far a man can attain his desired objectives by his own self-effort without the co-operation of the laws of Nature, the ultimate Reality or primordial Nature being unconscious in its original permanent existence. Man, the latest manifestation in the evolution of Nature, possesses the highest degree of intelligence, feeling and volition to understand and think about the laws of Nature, to exercise his feelings and desires to choose his ideal in life and use the laws of Nature in his actions for the purpose of satisfying his ideals. But animals are said to be creatures of Nature, as they are merely moved to action and satisfaction of desires by their natural impulses and feelings, and not by their ideals which are to be chosen after careful reflection on these impulses, will, desires and emotions.

So man feels proud that he is the master of Nature, as he understands the secret laws of Nature by his examination with the aid of his senses only or with the help of scientific instruments also, and uses them for the production of things for the satisfaction of his desires, feelings and the achievement of his ideals. So he develops a kind of *ahaṅkāra*. Human civilization is stated to be the conquest of Nature both externally and subjectively and the use of Nature's laws for reducing human miseries and promoting human happiness among members of society. It is true that later generations have discovered a number of laws of Nature in course of time which were

not known to their predecessors and used them for reducing human miseries and increasing human happiness. So, we are tempted to conclude that man is the master of Nature and not its creature as in the case of animals.

But, after deep reflection, you will find that man is also as much a creature of Nature as animals, though Nature has bestowed upon him a greater number of faculties than on animals. The superiority of man over animals is not that he is the master of Nature while they are creatures of Nature, but that he possesses developed mental factors such as desires, feelings, intellect and social egoism which he can exercise for the discovery of the laws of Nature. Man is as much the product of Nature in its evolution as animals are; he is born at one time and disappears after death as animals do. He is subject to the laws of physical nature as animals are; he is subject also to the psychological laws of mind and does not have complete freedom of will, though he may exercise his will and intelligence to a greater degree than animals. So we have to conclude after reflection that man is an atom of Nature and is completely subjected to its laws or is even overpowered by it.

(iii) According to the *Vedāntic* theist, the phenomenal universe and its beings including man are completely dependent on God in all respects. Man is not independent.

Suppose that the ultimate Eternal Reality is not unconscious primordial Nature as the scientific atheist believes, but is the Eternal Unchanging *Sat-chit-ānanda-Brahman*, *Nirguṇa* or *Saguṇa*, or both, as you yourself as a *mumukshu* may have concluded. Then all of us, human beings and animals, are creatures of the *Saguṇa Brahman* and are not independent entities. We do not have perfect independence to exist and do things as we please, but we are completely dependent on the *Saguṇa Brahman*. *Viśiṣṭādvaita* declares that the whole phenomenal universe as well as all living beings including men proceed from the body of *Īśvara*, being supported by Him, controlled by Him, and used by Him for His purposes.

Hence you have to give up your *ahaṅkāra* that you are an independent being in this universe and can achieve any *puruṣhārtha* you like by your own self-effort without the support or co-operation

of the *Saguṇa Brahman* whose property you are in every respect. Till now you were moved by *tāmasic ahaṅkara*, *rājasic ahaṅkara*, *sāttvik ahaṅkāra* and beyond-the-guṇas *ahaṅkāra*; and so attempted by self-effort to achieve respectively the *purushārthas* of *artha*, *kāma*, *dharma* and *moksha*, and miserably failed in your attempt, as there was no co-operation from the *Saguṇa Brahman* who is your *Antaryāmin*. Hence, you are highly dissatisfied as a *yoga-bhrashta*. So, with a view to develop *śānti* or divine peace of mind, you must choose the right path—*dṛipta-prapatti-yoga*—shedding completely your *tāmasic*, *rājasic*, *sāttvik* and *guṇa-rahita ahaṅkāras*, and realising that you are the property of the *Saguṇa Brahman*, supported by Him, controlled by Him and used by Him for His purposes.

The mistake that you committed till now is that you considered yourself as an independent living being in the phenomenal universe, but yet subject to the laws of Nature in your embodied state. Now that you have become a *yoga-bhrashta*, in spite of your five types of yogic practices, namely, *karma-yoga*, *rāja-yoga*, *jñāna-yoga*, *bhakti-yoga* and even *ārta-prapatti-yoga*, you must try to develop this *jñāna* or attitude of the *dṛipta-prapatti-yoga* or *nyāsa-vidyā* or *siddhopāya* advocated by the Śrīvaishṇava *āchāryas* and hope to get *śānti* or divine peace of mind in this last stage of your human life at least!

(iv) Practise *nyāsa-vidyā* in the last stages of your life with firm faith in the saving grace of God.

(a) Characteristics of *nyāsa-vidyā* or *siddhopāya* in general: You must reflect deeply on the characteristics of *nyāsa-vidyā* or *siddhopāya* preached by many Tamil *āchāryas* and then decide on your own *nyāsa-vidyā* suited to your conviction. But you must first realise that, according to *nyāsa-vidyā*, you must become convinced of the following principles.

(1) Just as you are not independent from the three *guṇas* of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* of the *prakṛiti* in your embodied state of *saṁsāra-chakra* now, even so you are not also independent even in your pure state as the *ātman* possessing *vibhu-dharma-bhūta-jñāna* or infinite attributive consciousness. In your pure state as the *ātman*, you are independent of the bondage of *prakṛiti* and its

guṇas, but dependent upon the *Saguṇa Brahman* or *Īśvara* who is your *Antaryāmin* and whose body you are. You must realise well that you are the inseparable property of the *Paramātmān* as His *śarīra*, being supported by Him, controlled by Him and used by Him for His purposes.

(2) You must give up your *tāmasic ahaṅkāra*, *rājasic ahaṅkāra* and *sāttvik ahaṅkāra* and beyond-the-*guṇas ahaṅkāra*, and should not aim at and work for the *purushārthas* of *artha*, *kāma*, *dharma*, *ātma-sākshātkāra* and *Īśvara-sākshātkāra*; because in all these cases you have an independent attitude as against the free will of the *Paramātmān* relating to your welfare.

(3) You must give up the attitude of your self-effort to promote your own material, spiritual and religious happiness as against the *saṅkalpa* or free will of the *Paramātmān* regarding your welfare in all respects.

(4) You must believe with firm conviction that you exist for the sake of the *Paramātmān* who is your *svāmin*, for His companionship with you, and for your doing *kaiṅkaryas* or divine services according to His will and pleasure, and not to enjoy your pleasures according to your own choice and desires, independent of the *Paramātmān*, forgetting His existence or neglecting Him altogether, or even if you remember Him, using or begging Him to satisfy the *purushārtha* or *purushārthas* chosen by you.

(5) You must try to feel the presence of the *Saguṇa Brahman* in *Paramapada* on the one side and as your *Antaryāmin* on the other side and talk to Him and appeal to Him directly though He does not reply to you. He is your *svāmin* and so you must cry out to Him sincerely.

(6) It is true that the *Paramātmān* has given you free will, that you have the *datta-svātantrya* to choose as your aim any of the following four alternatives :—

Enjoying pleasures and suffering pains in the phenomenal universe, being attracted by its various manifestations according to His *divya-saṅkalpa* or the law of Nature or the law of *karma* :

Enjoying your own *ātman*-bliss or *kaivalya-moksha*, becoming completely free from the bondage or clutches of the *prakṛiti* and its manifestations, and not minding your relationship with the *Paramātmān* also at the same time :

Enjoying the divine bliss of mental *sākshātkāra* and mental vision of the *Saguṇa Brahman* Himself in His various manifestations of *para*, *pralaya*, *viśva-rūpa*, *vyūha*, *antaryāmin*, *vibhava* and *archā svarūpas* even in this life itself by your *bhakti* practices :

Realising that you are the property of the *Paramātmān*, being supported, controlled and used by Him for His purposes and that your highest joy consists in being subordinate to Him, though you are free from the bondage of *prakṛiti* in realising His greatness in all respects, in reflecting always on your relationship with Him, which comprehends much more than such relationships with Him as that of parents to children, of husband to wife and the king to His subjects, and in rendering divine services to Him according to His will in whatever state of life you may be, whether a *baddha* or *mukta*.

If you choose the first alternative above, the *Paramātmān*'s mercy operates upon you according to the law of *karma*. If you choose the second, the *Paramātmān*'s mercy operates upon you according to the laws of *karma-yoga* and *rāja-yoga*. If you choose the third course, the *Paramātmān*'s mercy operates upon you according to the laws of *jñāna-yoga* and *bhakti-yoga*. But, if you are fortunate to choose the fourth, the *Paramātmān* is not fettered by any limitation in the form of your free choice, and you become His property once again, and He will Himself lift you with great joy according to His free will and pure love, and you will attain perfection in *Paramapada*, enjoying His companionship and *jñāna*, *kaiṅkarya* and *ānanda* there. It may be that you may become, even in this life itself, like the *āzhvārs*, enjoying the same kind of relationship with Him physically and mentally as in *Paramapada* !

So you—a *yoga-bhrashta* having failed in the above first three choices—should eagerly, sincerely and enthusiastically take up the above fourth choice in this last stage of life itself before your death ! But, while taking up this fourth choice of *nyāsa-vidyā* or *siddhōpāya*, do not forget yourself to take help in the beginning.

Help should be taken from your living *āchārya*, if any, of *Srī Rāmānujāchārya* and other *āchāryas*, of the *āzhvārs* and of *Srī* or *Lakshmī*, the divine embodiment of the quality of mercy of the *Saguṇa Brahman*. So that you may be firm in your fourth choice of *nyāsa-vidyā* or *siddhōpāya* and do not choose the other three paths, once again being influenced by your *ahaṅkāra*, whether *tāmasic*, *rājasic*, *sāttvik*, or beyond the *guṇas*.

(b) The different varieties of the *dripta-prapatti-yoga*.

You must now understand the different varieties of the *dripta-prapatti-yoga* described by Tamil saints and sages in their *stotras* and *rahasyas* and finally decide for yourself the way of *nyāsa-vidyā* which appeals to you best. They have been described in the five *Jitante stotras*, the *Stotra-ratna* or Śrī Yāmuna, the *Gadyatraya* of Śrī Rāmānuja, the *Mukundamālā* of Kulaśekhara Āzhvār and the interpretation by Śrī Rāmānuja in the *Gītābhāṣya* and *Saraṅgati-gadya* on the *Gītā* (XVIII. 66):

सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज

(Sarva-dharmān parintyajya māmekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja).

Prapatti is also described in the *rahasyas* of Piḷḷai Lokāchārya, particularly in the *Tirumantra*, *Dvaya*, *Charamaśloka*, *Artha-pañchaka* and *Śrīvachanabhūṣaṇa*. In the *Nyāsadaśaka* of Vedānta Deśika, we have a *śaḍaṅga-prapatti*. We must also study the *nirhetuka-kṛipā* doctrine and *prapatti* in the *Tiruvāimozhi* of Nammāzhvār and in the hymns of other *āzhvārs*.

(c) The *prapatti-yoga* described by Tamil *āchāryas*:

(1) First, you must firmly believe that you are the vital conscious inseparable part of the *Saguṇa Brahman* as his *tanu*, body. You belong to Him alone, not to yourself, nor to anyone else. You must remind the *Paramātmān* who is your *Antaryāmin* that He has really kept you within Himself, that you do not exist for yourself and exist only as His property. You are strictly under His control in your real state.

(2) Secondly, as you are under the control of the *Paramātmān*, you must firmly believe that He is all-merciful and all-powerful and that He will therefore protect you, as you are His property, so long as you do not rebel against Him and forget Him altogether. Repeatedly remind Him that He is the embodiment of mercy and that therefore He has to protect you.*

(3) Thirdly, give up all ideas of the promotion of your welfare by your own self-effort and surrender yourself completely to His mercy, and surely He will look after you as you are His body in reality. Repeatedly tell Him, "O *Bhagavān*! I will surrender myself as the *ātmān* to You and transfer myself as Your property to be looked after by You".

*The following portion was written by the revered author on 12-2-1969, just the day previous to his death attaining eternal divine peace or *sānti*.

(4) Fourthly, assert again and again in your mind that, as you have surrendered yourself and transferred yourself to Him as His property, He will surely look after your spiritual and religious welfare. Tell your mind again and again when you tremble with fear, "I cannot protect myself; God will surely protect me. As God has undertaken my protection, I have no doubt or fear about my own spiritual and religious welfare hereafter and even after death. My *Paramātmān* has firmly resolved to protect me. So I have attained divine peace of mind!"

(5) Fifthly, you must repeatedly entrust in your mind to the *Paramātmān* the task of looking after your spiritual and religious welfare. Repeatedly represent to Him, "*Śrīman!* compared to you, I am of an inferior status, and so I completely entrust to You the task of my spiritual and religious welfare. I will not disobey Your command, and I will carry out all Your wishes and entrust to You the task of my spiritual and religious welfare. *Śrīman!* I do not seek the help of any one other than You; I appeal to You with great faith in You, and I repeatedly pray to You, so that You may promote my spiritual and religious welfare".

(6) Sixthly, since you have transferred yourself to the *Paramātmān* as His property and since you have entrusted to Him the task of promoting your welfare, you must firmly believe that He will destroy all your sins and will not allow you to commit sins in future. Pray to Him again and again, "*Svāmin!* Destroy the bad effects of my previous sins. Please see that I do not commit sins in future. I have done many actions which I should not have done and omitted many actions which I should have done. Please excuse me for all these irregularities and give me the power to control my senses. Hereafter, remove from my mind all the temptations for pleasures, whether material, physical, mental, social, aesthetic, or intellectual, and for name and fame. Let me not have all these undesirable desires as against my love and admiration to You."

(7) Seventhly, repeat again and again in your mind, "My highest aim is to have the companionship of God and to do divine service to Him eternally. O God, develop in my mind the strong desire to have Your divine vision in *Paramapada* and unite with You, so that I may be Your eternal companion in *Paramapada* always, doing religious and social services to You. O God! You Yourself should take me to *Paramapada* after my death".

(8) Eighthly, your real nature is not bondage to the *prakṛiti*, or independence and freedom from the control of anyone else ; but it is to be such as to be used and enjoyed by God as He likes. Repeat in your mind again and again, "I am the property of the *Paramātmān* to be used and enjoyed as He likes. O God ! grant me *moksha* for Your own benefit, so that I may be useful to You in the best manner. You have now given me body, senses, mind, intellect and social ego ; take them all and use them for Your divine service. Even take myself as the pure *ātman* as Your *dāsa*. It is the highest joy for me when I do divine service to You, enjoy Your company and participate with You in the bliss of our union with each other. I have suffered for a long time, because I forgot You and attempted to enjoy all kinds of pleasures independently and selfishly. Hereafter, help me to remove this selfish attitude from my heart and develop instead the feelings of love, reverence and *dāsyā-bhāva* to You, with the new wisdom dawning in my mind that I am completely Your property and that I have no spark of independence as against You ".

(9) Ninthly, repeatedly tell your mind that you must eternally enjoy the divine joy of always doing service to God—doing service to His *vibhūti*s, idols, and beings as His *viśiṣṭa* form as long as you live in this world and doing service to Him directly in *Paramapada* after your death ! Appeal to Him again and again, "Oh *Bhagavān* ! command me to do services to You ; Oh *Svāmin* ! take me as Your eternal servant. Oh *Varada* ! take my body, senses, mind, intellect, ego and myself as the *ātman* as instruments for Your divine service. Oh *Varada* ! take all my property and wealth for Your eternal divine service. Oh *Varada* ! take all my living relations such as parents, wife and children, brothers, sisters, relations and friends who are all dear to me and who were doing services to me till now for divine services to You, and there can be no joy greater to me than this because I and mine hereafter do not belong to me but belong to You eternally ".

Om namo Nārāyaṇāya

Srīmannārāyaṇacharaṇau śaranam prapadye

Śrimate Nārāyaṇāya namaḥ

Om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ
