

Vairagyam I

The seminal role that Vairagyam, dispassion, plays in Spiritual sadhana needs to be reiterated often as it is this that adds strength to whatever mode of sadhana we follow. It is a member in the four-fold qualification that a spiritual seeker is required to be equipped with so that the enquiry on Brahman will be fruitful. Without this, Adi Shankara says in the Vivekachoodamani that all other virtues are but a mirage. That is, the other virtues will remain just a seeming ornament and would not come of any real use. With a view to remind ourselves of the need to strengthen this King of virtues, dispassion, I propose to post now and then messages from a variety of scriptures, books of recent times, sayings of the Elders, the Wise, etc. Here is a verse (just the meaning) from Bhartrihari's Vairagya Shatakam:

The objects of enjoyment, even after staying with us for a long time, are sure to leave us sometime; then what difference does their privation in this way make to men, that they do not of their own accord discard them? If the enjoyments leave us on their own initiative, i.e. if they tear themselves from us, they produce great affliction of the mind; but if men voluntarily renounce them, they conduce to the eternal bliss of self-possession. (verse 12)

Pranams,  
subbu

Namaste Advaitins,

When i thought of posting messages on Vairagya, i had in mind that a focussed consideration of this one Element itself will percolate to the others in the Sadhana-chatushtaya. My idea was to elicit a good variety of vairagyam-based teachings, observations, anecdotes and what not, so that the reading of these during this period will itself be a samskara. It will no doubt spill over to topics of Bhakti and Shraddha and Karma Yoga too. A person devoid of adquate Bhakti and Vairagya cannot be a Karma Yogi of a high order. So, we see that all the sadhanas, of the Chatushtaya, Quartet, are interconnected.

To start with, there is the Brihadaranyaka teaching of the sequence: Avidya, kama and karma. When one is ignorant of his native Purnatva, there is the thinking, 'I need to acquire something

outside of me in order to become 'adequate''. There starts 'raga', desire, for something outside of me. As the starting point itself is 'i am finite', there is a longing for something that is again finite. And then starts karma to acquire it. But since the finite thing acquired does not give infinite satisfaction, there is a search for something else. So goes the samsarik chakra.

When the scriptures teach vi-raga, the opposite of raga, there is the viveka element and the tyaga element. Let me detail these in a subsequent post, but the tyaga word brings to my mind a humorous observation by Sri Maha Periyaval of Kanchi:

It seems when the Paramacharya was visiting some place, He was shown a person who was ailing and in bed and had taken 'Aapat-sannyasam'. ('Aapat-Sannyasam' is a scripturally permitted arrangement meant for a person who is on the death-bed and desirous of renouncing his worldly ties. After this not-very-elaborate ritual, he is deemed to be a Sannyasi and upon death is given a samadhi, etc. However, if he survives, the rule is that he has to undergo the elaborate ritual of regular Sannyasa).

Coming to the incident, the Paramacharya saw that man and noticing the variety of eatables stacked in several bottles by his bedside, remarked: 'Idu sannyaasattukke periya aapattaacche' 'This spells great danger to Sannyasa itself'. (Aapat = emergency, danger)

Warm regards,  
subbu

Namaste Sadhakas,

On this Holy SriRamanavami day, a message on Vairagyam coming from the unparalleled Ramabhakta, Sri Hanuman, is presented:

Hanuman was carrying out his Master's command, engaged in the search for Mother Sita in Lanka. It was much before day-break and Hanuman was inside Ravana's harem, the quarters for the female members of the royalty. He had not seen Sita before, yet he hoped he could identify Her for he believed She is definitely different from the Rakshasa clan. On his search in every part of that vast premises, he beheld many sleeping belles. Now, Hanuman is a Naishthika Brahmachari, on the vow of celibacy for life. It is improper for such celibates to behold women in sleeping posture. He became conscious of this dharma for a Brahmachari and suddenly entertained a doubt if he was not incurring sin by beholding sleeping belles. He

quickly got a reply from the deep recesses of his own mind:

Mano hi hetuH sarveshaam indriyaanaam pravartane |  
Shubha-ashubhaasvavasthaasu taccha me suvyavasthitam ||

The mind indeed is the cause of the functioning of the senses in  
righteous and unrighteous states and that mind of mine is well  
grounded.

Jai Hanuman, Jai Sitaram.

Pranams to all,  
subbu

## Vairagyam II

### Doshadarshanam, Perception of faults

As we saw in the Panchadasi exposition, the doshadrishti or perception of faults in the sense objects forms the foundation for developing vairagyam. The method involves considering objectively the undesirable effects that result from resorting to the sense objects concerned and form a conviction as to their worthlessness. It is the intention of the Shastram that the objective of this exercise is cultivation of dispassion and not hatred to the objects or persons or relationships. This would be another problem by itself requiring a separate treatment. Hence, care should be taken in the doshadarshana abhyasa. Ideally it culminates in developing indifference, audaasInyam, udasina bhaava, towards sense objects.

Here is a famous verse of Bhartrihari that is really frightening:

Bhoge rogabhayam, kule chyutibhayam, vitte nrupaalaad-bhayam  
Maane dainyabhayam, bale ripubhayam, roope jaraayaa bhayam |  
Shaastre vaadibhayam, gune khalabhayam, kaaye krtaantaad-bhayam  
Sarvam vastu bhayaanvitam bhuvu nrnaam Vairaagyameva abhayam || 31 ||

The meaning: In enjoyment, there is the fear of disease; in social position, the fear of falling-off; in wealth, the fear of (hostile) Government (A rule could confiscate excess wealth, or impose very high taxation); in honour, the fear of humiliation; in power, the fear of foemen; in beauty, the fear of old age; in scriptural erudition, the fear of opponents; in virtue, the fear of traducers; in body, the fear of death. All things of this world pertaining to man are attended with fear; renunciation alone stands for fearlessness!!

A deep contemplation of the above makes us accord concurrence with the teaching of the verse. Let me relate just one real-life story in substantiation of the first named 'fear'. I had a friend from a very respectable Mudaliar family. He was one among three brothers and two sisters. They were quite well-to-do. This boy had good talents in sports and had accumulated innumerable prizes and citations, medals, cups and what not in several athletic events. By virtue of all this, even without much higher education, he got a clerical job in a bank. After about two years into the job, he got married to his cousin, his maternal uncle's daughter. Thereafter started his downfall. With somewhat good looks, he ventured in vain in film acting. He fell into evil company. All sorts of vices he fell into. His banking career took a beating. He borrowed money to fund his vices and the creditors were after him. Unable to bear the fallout of his vices, his wife committed suicide leaving behind two small boys. The vices took a toll on his robust body and one day I got information that he was in the ICU of a hospital. What I saw through the glass door is a sight that I can never forget. The handsome man of less than 35 that he was, had shrunk to a skeleton of about three feet. The next day he passed away. In those days nobody talked about AIDS. In retrospect I feel he was afflicted by this. 'Bhoge roga bhayam' !

Nachiketas, in the Kathopanishad gives a very telling account of dosha-darshanam:

Yamadharma, the Acharya, offered a wide variety of attractions very rare to be obtained in the human world and also of the heaven. In order to enjoy these, Yama offered to bestow Nachiketas with a very long, healthy life as well. Although tempted thus, Nachiketas who, like a vast lake, was not to be perturbed said: O Death, the enjoyable things enumerated by you are ephemeral – whose existence invariably is subject to the doubt as to whether they will exist or not tomorrow; moreover, all those enjoyable things such as nymphs etc. waste away the vigour of all the organs of a human being; so these enjoyable things are an evil since they wear away 1. virtue = dharma, 2. strength = virya 3. intelligence = medha, 4 energy = bala, 5. fame = yashas etc. As for long life which you wish to offer, about that too listen: all life – even that of Brahmaa is short indeed; what need be said of the longevity of those like us? Therefore, let the vehicles etc. and so also the dances and songs remain yours alone. About wealth that was also offered, Nachiketas says: Besides, Man is not to be satisfied with wealth in abundance; for the acquisition of wealth is not seen in this world to satisfy anyone.

The Bhajagovindam has a strong word of caution :

Maa kuru dhana, jana, youvana garvam . Harati nimeshaat kaalaH sarvam.

Maayaamayamidam akhila hitvaa....

Never pride on your wealth, kinsmen and youth. Mighty Time, Death, will take them away within the wink of the eyelid. Determine that these are all illusory and take to the enquiry into Brahman.

The 'defects' that the sense enjoyments are endowed with is said to be three-fold:

1. DuHkha-mishritatvam: There is an admixture of pain in them. The acquisition stage is filled with pain. The preparation and enjoyment is painful. When the joy comes to an end there is pain. I think it is the Panchadasi which says: Arthaanaam aarjane kleshaH, tathaiva paripaalane, naashe duHkham, vyaye duHkham. DigarthaH kleshakaarine ! There is pain in earning, pain in preservation, pain when it is destroyed (by theft, etc), pain when it depletes. Fie upon wealth that is pain all-over!!
2. Atriptikaratvam: There is seldom the feeling of 'enough'. The Gita called it: Mahaashano mahaapaapmaa in the third chapter. Like a glutton it demands more and more.
3. Bandhakatvam: It enslaves the one who courts it. The man who gets addicted to sense enjoyments is a picture of misery. All virtues abandon him. He perishes ultimately. This is brought out in the Second chapter Gita: Dhyaayato vishayaan ....series. The Lord proceeds to point out the source of all evil: (Pl. skip the Sanskrit words for ease in reading.)

2.62 In the case of a person who dwells on objects, there arises attachment for them. From attachment grows hankering, from hankering springs anger.

2.63 From anger follows delusion; from delusion, failure of memory; from failure of memory, the loss of understanding; from the loss of understanding, he perishes.

Pumsah, in the case of a person; dhyayatah, who dwells on, thinks of; visayan, the objects, the specialities [Specialities: The charms imagined in them.] of the objects such as sound etc.; upajayate, there arises; sangah, attachment, fondness, love; tesu, for them, for those objects. Sangat, from attachment, from love; sanjayate, grows; kamah, hankering, thirst. When that is obstructed from any quarter, kamat, from hankering; abhijayate, springs; krodhah, anger. Krodhat, from anger; bhavati, follows; sammohah, delusion, absence of discrimination with regard to what should or should not be done. For, an angry man, becoming deluded, abuses even a teacher.

Sammohat, from delusion; (comes) smrti-vibhramah, failure of memory originating from the impressions acquired from the instructions of the scriptures and teachers. When there is an occasion for memory to rise, it does not occur. Smrti-bhramasat, from that failure of memory; (results) buddhi-nasah, loss of understanding. The unfitness of the mind to discriminate between what should or should not be done is called loss of understanding. Buddhi-nasat, from the loss of understanding; pranasyati, he perishes. Indeed, a man continues to be himself so long as his mind remains fit to distinguish between what he ought to and ought not to do. When it becomes unfit, a man is verily ruined. Therefore, when his internal organ, his understanding, is destroyed, a man is ruined, i.e. he becomes unfit for the human Goal.

Thinking of objects has been said to be the root of all evils. After that, this which is the cause of Liberation is being now stated: [If even the memory of objects be a source of evil, then their enjoyment is more so. Hence, a sannyasin seeking Liberation cannot avoid this evil, since he has to move about for food which is necessary for the maintenance of his body. The present verse is an answer to this apprehension.]

2.64 But by perceiving objects with the organs that are free from attraction and repulsion, and are under his own control, the self-controlled man attains serenity.

Certainly the functions of the organs are naturally preceded by attraction and repulsion. This being so, caran, by perceiving; visayan, objects, which are unavoidable; indriyaih, with the organs such as ears etc.; raga-dvesa-viyuktaih, that are free from those attraction and repulsion; and are atma-vasyaih, under his own control; vidheya-atma, [A.G. takes atma-vasyaih in the sense of '(with the organs) under the control of the mind'. He then argues that if the mind be not under control, there can be no real control over the organs. Hence the text uses the second expression, 'vidheyatma, whose mind can be subdued at will'. Here atma is used in the sense of the mind, according to the Commentator himself.] the self-controlled man, whose mind can be subdued at will, a seeker after Liberation; adhigacchati, attains; prasadam, serenity, self-poise.

What happens when there is serenity? This is being answered:

2.65 When there is serenity, there follows eradication of all his sorrows, because the wisdom of one who has a serene mind soon becomes firmly established.

Prasade, when there is serenity; upajayate, there follows; haanih, eradication; asya sarva-duhkhanam, of all his, the sannyasin's, sorrow on the physical and other planes. Moreover, (this is so) hi, because; buddhih, the wisdom; prasanna-cetasah, of one who has a serene mind, of one whose mind is poised in the Self; asu, soon; pari-avatisthate, becomes firmly established; remains steady (avatisthate) totally (pari), like the sky, i.e. it becomes unmoving in its very nature as the Self.

The meaning of the sentence is this: Since a person with such a poised mind and well-established wisdom attains fulfillment, therefore a man of concentration [A man who is free whom slavery to objects of the senses.] ought to deal with the indispensable and scripturally non-forbidden objects through his senses that are free from love and hatred.

To be continued.

Regards to all,

subbu

### Vairagyam III

The contemplation of the state where desires have been fully curbed, gives a strong impetus to the practice of vairagya. A man free from the clutches of desires is a picture of supreme serenity. No force in the world can cause even a ripple in his mind. The Yogavasishtha says, 'He who has won over the tongue (taste) and the passion for sex has virtually the whole world at his feet.' Here is a verse from a Smriti:

Yaccha kaamasukham loke, yaccha divyam mahat-sukham |  
Trshnaa-kshaya-sukhasyaite naarhataH shodashiim kalaam ||

Neither the sensual pleasure in this world nor the great pleasure of heaven is equal to a sixteenth part of the pleasure of the extinction of desire.

In his bhashya to the Taittiriya Upanishad, Anandavalli – 8, Acharya Sayana says:

In that Supreme Bliss beyond the Hiranyagarbha all our separated blisses attain unity; there all desire for higher and higher degrees of bliss and all knowledge of duality are absent, in virtue of true Knowledge; and there freedom from desire in all its ascending degrees reaches its culminating point. Having thus arrived at the knowledge of the Supreme Bliss, we should then understand through the scriptures that 'I am this Supreme Bliss'.

In contrast, let us see what the Sreyomarga says:

'Alas! because the small pleasures of the embodied beings are hard to procure and subject to decay, and conduce only to misery, therefore, there are only miseries upon miseries in this world.'

Advaita is Bliss:

In the waking and dream states involving duality, we experience only pain, for the most part. If there is pleasure at all now and then, even that is a mere pain, as involving many imperfections, namely, the trouble of procuring it, its inferiority as compared with higher pleasures, and its perishability. In the deep sleep state and in Samadhi, the two states of non-duality, there is Bliss as there are no sense objects and interaction with them.

What causes misery?

A man given to desires knows no peace. One after another the desires keep demanding his attention to fulfil them. He constantly expends his energy to work to procure the objects that his desires bid him and enjoying them. The Panchadasi puts it in a metaphorical way:

Kurvate karma bhogaaya, karma kartum cha bhunjate |  
Nadyaam kita iva aavartaad-aavartaantaram aashu te |  
Vrajanto janmano janma labhante naiva nirvrtim || (I.30)



The deluded engage in hard labour with a view to enjoy later. And they enjoy the fruits of their labour only to engage in further labour. Like a worm that is caught in an eddy of a river, is thrown from one eddy to another, these deluded men go from one birth to another, never experiencing true respite.

Here is an account of a real-life instruction on vairagyam; it is included in some detail as several aspects of vairagyam are brought out:

**( an excerpt from the book Yoga Enlightenment and Perfection)**

Finally, Paramacharyal asked, “Now, tell Me. Is it better to become a householder or a sanyasin?” Bereft of any hesitation, Sri Srinivasa Sastry averred that taking up Sannyasa was, indeed, superior.

One day, He posed some queries to Vaidyanatha Sastry. These were:

- (i) I have heard that the eldest son in the family must compulsorily get married. Is it so?
- (ii) Our Guru embraced monasticism after becoming highly erudite. Is it obligatory that one acquire a deep knowledge of the scriptures prior to renouncing the world?
- (iii) I have heard that when one is born, immediately a set of debts accrue to one. Some of these are repaid by serving one’s parents, some by worshipping the deva-s and yet others by begetting progeny. Is this indeed the state of affairs?
- (iv) Is one permitted to enter another ashrama only after dwelling for long as a brahmacharin in the hermitage of the Guru?
- (v) Can a young boy like Me take up Sannyasa if he desires to? Parents may not grant permission. Can Sannyasa be taken up without their approval?

Vaidyanatha Sastry was not in a position to reply satisfactorily to Him. Subsequently, Paramacharyal went on His usual evening walk to the Kalabhairava temple with both of them. On the way, He recited the following verse (II.35) of the Prabodha-Sudhākara:

*(The Veda says that “loka” is not there for one bereft of a son. What is that loka? Is it liberation or transmigration or another world? It cannot be the first one.)*

Paramacharyal then asked Vaidyanatha Sastry to recite the next two sloka-s of the Prabodha-Sudhākara and give the meaning.

Sastry gave the overall meaning on the following lines:

It cannot be said that begetting a son confers liberation. This is because not all people who have sons have attained the exalted state. Further, if mere procreation were to yield emancipation, then the cycle of transmigratory existence itself would cease since numerous people do have children. A son cannot necessarily be the cause of happiness in this world and the next. The reason is that to attain a higher world, the Veda prescribes the performance of special rites, such as the jyotisthoma. It does not explicitly declare begetting of progeny as constituting the means. The Veda clearly proclaims that wealth, progeny and the like cannot serve to confer liberation. Only the realisation of the Ātman, by hearing the Truth, cogitating upon It and focusing one's mind on It, yields immortality.

Utterances of the Sruti to the effect that a son is essential should be understood as merely eulogising the performance of sacrifices, such as the putresti. The putresti-yàga serves to obtain a son. To induce people who have a desire for children to perform it, its importance is stressed. The Veda, which is like a mother, certainly does not intend to compel one without desires to perform such sacrifices.

After this, Paramacharyal proceeded to give a detailed exposition. He said that marriage is compulsory only for a person who wants to enjoy sensual pleasures. It is not obligatory on one who has strong dispassion to lead a house-holder's life. Further, there is no Vedic injunction that a dispassionate one should get married. The Veda-s indicate remedies for the removal of desires and never exhort the gratification of longings or procreation. Just as fond parents would only try to save their child from falling into fire and would not induce it to tumble into it, so too do the Veda-s indicate the means for people to abstain from bad ways and to proceed in the holy path. In fact, the moment one becomes extremely dispassionate, one can renounce and become an ascetic. Thus, a man can become an ascetic regardless of whether he is a celibate or a house-holder or a forest-dweller.

Paramacharyal went on to explain the futility of begetting a child. He strengthened His explanations by various citations and firmly drove home His points. For instance, He said that only rarely one happens to get a son who is endowed with all good qualities. Even on such a son being born, if the lad were to be short-lived or diseased or were to later have no children, the parents would have to put up with mental suffering. If a young child were to suffer on account of diseases or planetary influences, the grief of the parents would know no end. If the child were to grow up a little but were to be stupid then too the parents would be far from happy. Further, if after upanayana, the boy were not to become learned or, if learned, he were to refuse to get married, then also the parents would suffer agony.

Paramacharyal explained that shraaddha (a rite performed for the deceased parents) is an obligatory duty that purifies the performer. He emphasised that the manes do not sustain themselves exclusively on the pinda (ball of cooked rice) that is offered during the shràddha ceremony. He went on to add that the stories found in texts like the Mahàbhàrata about the necessity of offspring are not meant for advanced spiritual aspirants who have strong dispassion. All the queries raised earlier by Sri Srinivasa Sastry were thus categorically answered by the Paramacharyal; neither He nor Vaidyanatha Sastry had mentioned them to Paramacharyal.

At times, nature seemed to aid Paramacharyal's imparting of instructions about detachment. For instance, on one occasion, when Paramacharyal was proceeding to the Kàlabhairava temple together with His students, a funeral procession was seen. On beholding the scene, Paramacharyal spontaneously identified the deceased one as a wealthy gentleman and gave out his name. He went on to say that that man was young and had been living in comfort. However, the Lord of Death, Yama, had not chosen to spare him.

At this juncture, Vaidyanatha Sastry cited the following verse that Paramacharyal had composed when in a state of seclusion.

Dhanam vaa dhaanyam vaa bhavatu bahusho bhogyamapi vaa  
Viraame ko bruute nanu chiram aham nirvrta iti |  
Prakopa-prodbhinna-prakata-yama-damshttraam tu purataH  
Prapashyat-kim kuruaat-prasabham avasaane prabhurapi ||

*(Though having much wealth, grains or objects of enjoyment, who says at the end of his life that he has been contented for long. On seeing in front of him the teeth of Yama bared in wrath, what can even a king do?)*

On hearing this, Paramacharyal said, “There is a verse of Bhagavatpàda in the Prabodha-Sudhàkara that is appropriate to this occasion and worthy of being cited.” All but Sri Srinivasa Sastry remained silent. He chanted:

Yo dehaH supto'abhoot supushpa-shayyopa-shobhite talpe |

Samprati sa rajju-kaashthair-niyantritaH kshipyate vahnau || (I.25)

*(The body that slept on a bed adorned with flowers is now taken, tied by ropes to logs, and consigned to fire.)*

Paramacharyal explained the significance of the verse. He pointed out that the dead man had, even on the previous night, been in the midst of all comforts. His heart had suddenly collapsed while he was asleep and so he now lay tied by ropes to bamboos. He was about to be consigned to fire. This would be the fate of all and none was an exception.

Nityam sannihito mrutyuH kartavyo dharmasamucchayaH

*(Death is ever at hand. Hence, one should accumulate dharma.)*

Grihiita iva kesheshu mrutyunaa dharmamaacharet

*(One should practise dharma (without delay) as if one's tuft were in the grip of death.)*

We should perform our dharma and purify the mind so that we can obtain the realisation of the Àtman and become liberated from all misery. Only then will the goal of our lives have been reached. As He spoke, Paramacharyal's gaze was constantly on Sri Srinivasa Sastry's face. At that juncture, a woman's wail was heard. Seeing the pitiful face of the dead rich man, his mother had given the cry of anguish. “Even the son that I gained after the observance of many a fast and vow has not lasted. Even if he had not been born, I would not have had to suffer my present deep anguish. Having got married, he has now left his young wife a destitute. Is this the only benefit of begetting progeny?” wailed the disconsolate mother. Sri Srinivasa Sastry noted all this. “Is this the worth of ephemeral existence? I do not want this at all,” He muttered. These words were heard by Vaidyanatha Sastry. From His facial expression, Paramacharyal could readily comprehend His disciple's state of mind. He felt glad that His teachings were having the desired effect.

On several occasions, Paramacharyal spoke to Sri Srinivasa Sastry in private about detachment and Brahmacharya. What follows is a brief account of the advice given in some of the private sessions. *[They were narrated to me in detail by Acharyal, partly in 1977 and partly in 1984.]*

(i) No amount of learning, wealth or enjoyment can confer total freedom from sorrow and everlasting bliss. Only the realisation of the Truth can do so. Kingship, divine weapons, heavenly damsels and the power to even create a new universe did not, for instance, free Visvàmitra from all unhappiness. In the Chândogya Upaniòad, it is narrated that though versed in the Veda-s and various shàstra-s, Nàrada continued to experience sorrow; he transcended all sorrows only when he received enlightenment from Sanatkumàra.

Labhdaa vidyaa raajamaanyaa tataH kim

Praaptaa sampat praabhavaadhyaa tataH kim |

Bhuktaa naari sundaraangi tataH kim

Yena svaatma naiva saakshaat-krto'abhut || (Anàtmasrivigarhanam 1)

*(So what if learning respected by the sovereign himself has been acquired? So what if unsurpassed affluence has been obtained? So what if a belle has been enjoyed? What is there for him who has not realised his own Ātman?)*

Enlightenment dawns only in a very pure mind. Desires are impurities that sully the mind. To render the mind pure and fit for enlightenment, they must be assiduously eradicated.

(ii) Sense objects are not the source of happiness. It is a mistake to think that they are. Were an object intrinsically a source of joy to a person, he ought not to ever find it to be a pain. However, it is well known that objects are sometimes liked and sometimes disliked. For instance, to a person who develops severe nausea during a meal, the very dishes he found delectable appear to be unappealing and a burden to consume. How can an object intrinsically be a source of happiness to a person when, though remaining just the same, it is at times a bane to the very same person?

When a desire for an object arises in the mind, the mind loses peace and the period of longing is not one of joy. When the desired object is obtained, the desire that agitated the mind becomes temporarily quieted. With the calming of the mind, there is joy. Thus, calmness gives happiness and not desire or a sensory object. In deep sleep, when no sensory object whatsoever is apprehended and the mind is in a state of latency, there is very great happiness. The sage whose mind is very calm and focused on the Supreme has unsurpassed happiness.

Stable mental calmness can never be had by the gratification of longings. Though briefly quieting a desire, gratification only leads to the growth of the desire; the desire manifests again later, with increased strength. Desiring and striving for sense objects constitute, therefore, the wrong approach to obtain happiness, which is what all want. By discerning that sense objects are never the cause of happiness, one should develop detachment towards them. The dispassionate one is calm and happy.

(iii) There is great benefit in observing perfect Brahmacharya. For this, complete control over the mind is important. To achieve such mastery, one should avoid thinking of sense objects. The reason is that as one thinks of sense objects, one gradually develops a degree of attachment to them. When attachment is allowed to grow, it becomes an intense desire. When a powerful longing is permitted to manifest, it becomes difficult to check and uproot. When a man strongly desires some object or honour and a person or situation thwarts the consummation of his longing, he becomes irritated.

When a man gives way to anger, he loses his power of proper discrimination between right and wrong. It is well known that an irritated man may be disrespectful even to his Guru. From delusion, the recollection of what one has been taught regarding righteous conduct is lost. This destruction of memory disrupts the functioning of the buddhi and the man in this state is as good as destroyed. The seed of all this evil is thus thinking about sensory objects. So, if You wish to control Your mind, You must not allow Your mind to cogitate upon the objects of the organs.

(iv) Married life is a big source of bondage. A householder has to cater not only to his own requirements but also to those of his family. Hence, he cannot devote himself entirely to meditation and such spiritual practices. Many are the people who get married and think that that course of life is good for them. Actually, for a discriminating person, family life is so full of misery that it is better to stand on burning coal rather than to get married.

The body is made up of skin, blood, flesh, bones and so on. It contains within it urine and faeces. The body of even the female whom the indiscriminating consider to be extremely beautiful is only of this kind. Bhagavatpàda has taught:

Nari-stana-bhara-naabhii-desham drshtvaa maa gaa moha-aavesham |  
Etan-maamsa-vasaadi-vikaaram manasi vichintarya vaaram vaaram ||

*(Seeing the breasts and the navel region of a woman, do not fall a prey to delusion. The female form is but a modification of flesh, fat, etc. Reflect well thus in your mind, again and again.)*

Such recourse to discrimination enables one to combat lust and be established in Brahmacharya.

{Acharyal has told me, “My Guru was so kind that even when I was too young (He was hardly 14) to be afflicted by passion, He emphasised the worthlessness of sensory pleasures and stressed the importance of dispassion and thereby precluded any scope for even the seed of passion finding a place in My mind. He rendered Me fit for Sannyasa.”}

**End of excerpt from the book Yoga Enlightenment and Perfection**

Pranams to all,  
subbu

## Vairagyam IV

Namaste Advaitins,

The deep attachment to the feeling of 'I' and 'mine' forms the core of samsara. The one aim of all spiritual disciplines is to gradually erase this feeling and finally be totally free from it. Since it is not that easy to accomplish this, the scriptures teach a wide variety of methods to practise discrimination. Here is a verse that points to the mean nature of the feeling of 'mine':

Daaraa ime me tanayaa ime me gRhaa ime me pashavashcha me me |  
Ittham nara mesha-samaana-dharmaa me-me-karaH kaala-vRkeNa nItaH ||

(These wives are mine (mey), these children are mine (mey), these houses are mine (mey) and these cattle are mine (mey). The man who thus says 'mey, mey' and has the same disposition as sheep (which bleat 'mey, mey') is taken away by the wolf, time.)

(Here is an instance of the same sound giving rise to more than one sense. In Sanskrit the syllable 'mey' means 'mine'. The syllable also represents the sound made by sheep.)

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Here is a story depicting the strong hold of longing for material gain that man often becomes a victim of:

A group of boys wanted to write a story for a competition. After much discussion, they completed it and one of them narrated it in its final form to the others. As he was doing so, three people who were passing that way paused to hear the story. They did not mistake it to be a factual account but liked what they heard. As they moved on, they discussed the story among themselves. A teenager happened to overhear them when they talked about a pot of gold hidden under a banyan tree in a forest situated about 500 kilometres away.

The lad immediately developed a strong desire to somehow possess that gold. Without telling anybody, he proceeded to the concerned forest. There, he saw a man place a fruit in a small-mouthed vessel and then tie the vessel to a tree by means of a long rope.

Moved by curiosity, he initiated a conversation with that man:

Teenager: What are you doing?

Man: I am setting a trap for a monkey. I intend to train a simian to perform tricks.

Teenager: How will your contraption serve your purpose?

Man: This place is infested with monkeys. One of them will certainly notice this vessel and the fruit in it. So, it will put its hand into the vessel and grab the fruit. The vessel's mouth is too small for the monkey to take out its hand while gripping the fruit. The vessel has been tied to the tree and so the monkey cannot carry it away. The animal will thus be forced to remain here and I shall catch it.

.....

Teenager: Are you joking? The monkey will release the fruit, extricate its hand and escape.

Man: No, it will not. It will simply refuse to discard the fruit.

Teenager: I cannot imagine a simian behaving so foolishly because of its desire for fruit.

Man: Remain by my side and watch.

Both hid themselves a short distance away. Soon, a monkey came and behaved exactly the way the man had predicted. The lad said, "How stupid and crazy this monkey is!" and went his way.

After some time he beheld a frog shooting out its tongue and catching a fly with it. Amused, he turned his attention to another frog that was nearby. As it was about to trap a fly, a snake stealthily came up to it and swiftly caught it in its mouth. The frog's tongue shot out and the fly stuck to it. Meanwhile, the snake proceeded to swallow the frog. The lad thought to himself, "What a strange sight! Even at its moment of death, this silly frog was busy catching a fly!"

He walked on and encountered a forester. The latter said, "Do not go much further in this direction. There is a wild tusker there and it may attack you." However, so intense was the lad's desire for the gold he hoped to find that he disregarded the advice. In about half an hour, he was deep within the forest. He was looking around for the banyan tree that he had heard was located somewhere there when he heard the trumpeting of an elephant.

In a few moments, he saw a ruttish tusker barging at him. He immediately took to his heels, with the elephant in hot pursuit. Though he ran as fast as he could, the pachyderm steadily gained on him. To his chagrin, he slipped and fell into a pit that he had not noticed. Flailing his arms, he providentially managed to catch a creeper and arrest his fall. The elephant reached the top of the pit and gazed at him.

The lad looked down and saw that the pit was deep. Further, he espied a cobra with upraised hood at the bottom. He realized that he was in very deep trouble, without the option of climbing up or down the creeper. As if his problems were not adequate, the creeper began to give way; some insects were busy at work on it.

Unexpectedly, a drop of honey from a beehive on the tree overhead, fell on his nose and began to slowly flow down towards his lips. The boy stretched out his tongue and licked it. The honey seemed like ambrosia to him. He then heard the roar of a distant lion. The tusker felt terrified and swiftly left the place. The boy began to climb up the creeper. As he neared the top of the pit, the creeper gave away. But, somehow, he managed to hold on the pit's edge.

In moments, he felt his hands slipping. However, to his surprise, he found himself being lifted up by the woodman who had advised him not to venture into this region. "When I heard the trumpeting of the elephant, I knew that you were likely to be in danger. I am far more familiar with this forest than people like you are. So, I rushed in the direction you had proceeded, to help you. I see that I have arrived just in time."

.....

The lad thanked him profusely. Still possessed by the longing for gold, he explained the reason for his coming there and sought the forester's help to locate the banyan tree in that region. His saviour told him that he was not going to find any gold and tried to persuade him to return before the tusker chose to come back. However, finding the boy adamant, he led him to the banyan tree. They searched there for the gold but did not succeed in finding any.

Finally, the boy returned to his native place. He described his misadventure in detail to an elder. The elder laughed and informed him that what he had overheard was only a portion of the tale authored by a group of boys for a competition. He then proceeded to tell the lad, "You felt that the monkey and the frog had behaved thoroughly foolishly because of their longing. Your behaviour was far worse. The poor monkey refused to let go of the fruit that was in its hand. You, on the other hand, were led on by intense longing for gold that was actually non-existent. The frog stretched out its tongue at the moment of its death but possibly did so purely by instinct. You, on the other hand, are a human being endowed with discrimination. Yet, when you were about to perish, you savoured the drop of honey that fell on your nose. See the power of longing." The boy realised the devastating force of longing and hung his head in shame.

(Story excerpted from the book: 'Edifying Parables').

Pranams to all,  
subbu





## VAIRAGYA AS FOUND IN PATANJALA SUTRAS

The ultimate object of Ashtanga Yoga of Patanjali is cessation of mental modes –  
*Yogaschitta vritti nirodha (Yoga Sutra 1-2)*

When this is accomplished Jeevatma will be established in his intrinsic nature.  
*Tada Drashtuhu Swarupe avasthanam (Yoga Sutra 1-3)*

This Nirodha is accomplished by Abhyasa and Vairagya –  
*Abhyasa Vairagyabhyam Tannirodhaha (1-12)*

We may recall sloka 6-35 of Bhagavad Geetha. Abhyasa is defined as the practice of the means like Yama, etc. to obtain Chittavritti Nirodha –  
*Tatra Stithou Yathno Abhyasa (1-13)*

When this Abhyasa is carried out for a long time without interruption it becomes stable –  
*Sa tu Deerghakala Nairantarya Satkara Sevitha Drudha Bhoomi (1-14)*

Vairagya is defined as dispassion towards things seen like various objects of pleasure and unseen like things learnt from Shastras like heaven etc.  
*Drishtanushravika Vishaya Vitruishnaya Vashikara Sangya Vairagyam (1-15)*

Vairagya is said to be of two types: -

1. Dispassion in seen and unseen objects, by recognizing the defects in them
2. When the seeker by diligent practice is able to comprehend the SELF, will be completely contented, then he gets dispassion even in the qualities of seen and unseen things. Then the Vairagya is said to be Supreme. Thus this Vairagya is said to be the Acme of Knowledge.

*Tatparam Purushakhatherguna Vaithrushnyam (1-16)*

The second chapter called Sadhana pada gives various means of attaining Yoga Siddhi. The first Anga of Ashtanga Yoga is Yama –

*Yama Niyama Asana Pranayama Prathyahara Dharana Dhyana Samadhayoshtavangani (2-29)*

Yama consists of five elements in each of which Vairagya plays an important part –  
*Ahimsa Satya Asteya Brahmacharya Aparigraha Yamaha (2-30)*

When these practices are not limited by Jathi, Desha, Kala and Samaya, they are called the Supreme Vrata; for example when a fisherman does not kill any other animal except fish, it is limited by Jathi; if a person does not kill in a place of pilgrimage it is

limited by Desha. If the killing is not done on a particular day it is limited by Kala; if a Kshatriya says that he will kill only in war, then it is limited by Samaya –

*Jathi Desha Kala Samayanachinna Sarvabhouta Mahavratam (2-31)*

*Vitarka Badhane Pratipaksha Bhavanam (2-33)*

When the practice is obstructed by undesirable intentions, the opposites should be contemplated –

*Vitarka himsadayaha krita karitha, Anu moditha, Lobha krodha Moha poorvaka Mridu Madhyadhimitra, Dukha Ajnana Anantaphala iti Pratipaksha Bhavam (2-34)*

Opposites of Ahimsa etc. like himsa are classified as follows: -

- 1) Done by oneself
- 2) Got done by others
- 3) Approved after committed by another

In each of these categories, it could be due to 1) Lobha, 2) Krodha, 3) Moha  
These are again threefold: 1) Mild, 2) Moderate, 3) Intense

All these result in sorrow and ignorance is the Pratipaksha Bhavana.

With constant practice of Yama etc. the seeker gets Ishwarya indicative of Siddhis. For example in the presence of a seeker established in Ahimsa there will be no enmity among beings.

*Ahimsa Pratishthayam Tat Sannidhou Vairathyagaha (2-35)*

For a seeker established in truth, whatever he speaks comes true.

*Sathya Pratishthayam Kriya Phala Ashrayatvam (2-36)*

For a seeker established in Asteya, all wealth will be his

*Asteya Pratishthayam Sarva Rathnopasthanam (2-37)*

Established in Aparigraha, the seeker will get the knowledge of his past and future lives

*Aparigraha Sthyrye Janmakathantha Sambodhihi (2-39)*

Vairagyam V  
Namaste Advaitins,

The Yoga sutras of Maharishi Patanjali offer a good deal of teaching on Vairagya.

Vairagya is defined as dispassion towards things seen, like various objects of pleasure and unseen, like things learnt from Shastras like heaven etc.

Drishta-anushravika-vishaya-vitrushnasya Vashikaara Sanjnaa Vairagyam (1-15)

Dispassion in seen and unseen objects, by recognizing the defects in them

Tatparam Purushakhyatherguna-vaithrushnyam (1-16)

When the seeker by diligent practice is able to comprehend the SELF, will be completely contented, then he gets dispassion even in the qualities of seen and unseen things. Then the Vairagya is said to be Supreme. Thus this Vairagya is said to be the Acme of Knowledge.

The first limb, anga, of the Ashta-anga Yoga Sutras is Yama, restraint. This consists of Ahimsa = Non-injury, Satyam = Truthfulness, Asteyam = Abstinence from theft, Brahmacharyam = Continence, and Aparigraha = Non-acceptance of possessions. It will be pertinent to note that the role of Vairagya is a sine qua non for the successful practice of each of the above.

It would be worthwhile to learn from real-life incidents the great importance true practitioners of Yoga accorded to Vairagya:

(Below are two extracts from the book 'Exalting Elucidations' of Sri Abhinava Vidyateertha Swamigal, Sri Sharada Peetham, Sringeri)

When Acharyal was touring in North India for the first time, a highly influential and scholarly monk decided to test His sense-control. So, he arranged for a belle to try to tempt Acharyal. She entered the room where Acharyal was giving darsana just as the last of the devotees were leaving and remained till she alone was left. However, when she observed Acharyal, she was so overwhelmed by His patent purity that she became disconcerted. Acharyal compassionately asked her, "Mother, what is it?" At this, the girl simply broke down. She was about to confess and seek Acharyal's pardon when the monk who had sent her himself entered. He told Acharyal, "I knew that You are a scholar *par excellence*. However, I wanted to ascertain whether You are also a master of the organ of taste and are free from fondness for valuables. So, some time back, I sent you tasty dishes and jewels through people. However, You turned down the offers. I finally wished to examine Your brahmacharya and, hence, sent this beauty to try to tempt You. I now realize that You are so pure and self-controlled that You are beyond temptation. I truly acknowledge Your greatness and pay obeisance to You."

[Sri A. Ramaswamy]

Acharyal told me the following in 1987:

When I was about twenty years of age, two Bairàgi-s, who lived on the banks of the Narmada in Madhya Pradesh, came to Sringeri. They wanted to have Paramacharyal's darsana and seek some clarifications from Him. As He was in antarmukha, seclusion, at

that time, they were unable to approach Him. They met Me. One of them looked weak and somewhat effeminate, while the other had powerful muscles and resembled a wrestler.

In the course of his conversation with Me, the first one hesitatingly said, "I have been leading a life of renunciation but am not free from sexual desire. While I never misbehaved with any woman, bad thoughts troubled me off and on. This was the situation till a few months ago, when I met a Baba and posed my problem to him. He gave me a large packet of medicinal powder and said that if I consumed a little of it every day, I would obtain relief. I have been sincerely following his advice. My desires have largely vanished. I think that I have gained a great spiritual benefit. However, my muscular strength has come down and my chest has become a little like that of a female. My companion is in need of help to deal with lust. He is hesitant to take the Baba's medicine because he fears that his muscles will become weak. He wanted to ask Guruji whether in the interest of spiritual growth, he should overcome his hesitation and resort to the medicine. I wanted to ask Guruji if I should continue with this medicine or whether Guruji would give me some other medicine without the side effects. We have, however, not had the good fortune of being able to talk to Him. Would You like to keep and use some of the medicine that I have? I can replenish my stock from the Baba who gave it to Me." I declined his offer.

The second person asked Me, "You are young. Are You not troubled by sexual thoughts?" I answered that I was not. At this, both of them asked, almost in unison, "Will You please help us and tell us what we should do?" I answered, "Do not use the medicine. You cannot gain any spiritual benefit by checking the sexual instinct through it. Kings employed eunuchs in their harems because they were confident that the eunuchs would not be tempted and misbehave with the women. However, none regards those eunuchs as great celibates. None deems that they became spiritually great on account of castration. On the other hand, all of us regard sage Shuka as established in continence and as spiritually great. His body was intact but he was so free from desire that even damsels in the nude did not care to cover themselves when he passed them. A dumb person does not lie but he is not looked up to as one who never lies. A person who is unconscious is not revered as a Yogin just because he is free from all thoughts of the world. Incapacity does not confer spiritual benefit. The medicine with you temporarily and partially reduces you to the state of a eunuch. It is, as far as gaining spiritual benefit is concerned, no better than castration. I shall provide you a medicine that will enable you to be rid of lust and to gain spiritual benefit."

Then, I asked them to go to Sharadamba's temple, spend half an hour gazing at Her with devotion and to pray to Her with faith to rid them of lust. They returned after half an hour. I told them, "In the Durga-saptashati it is said that all women are the Divine Mother's forms. Whenever you are tempted by the sight of a woman or think of a female with desire, immediately think of the gracious Divine Mother. Feel that it is She who is in the form of all women. Also implore Her now and then from the bottom of your heart to free you from lust." "Need not contempt for women to be cultivated to combat lust?" asked the muscular Bairagi. I replied: "No. Just as desire is bad for your mind, so is

hatred. Both likes and dislikes are impurities that agitate the mind. The scriptures speak of seeing the defects in an object just to neutralize a pre-existing attachment born of the notion that the object is pleasurable. The aim is definitely not to generate hatred. Shuka certainly did not hate or look down upon any woman. He looked upon everything as the Supreme Brahman” The Bairagi-s left Sringeri shortly thereafter.

They returned after about a year. This time, both the Bairagi-s looked healthy and muscular. On seeing Me, they joyfully said, “Swamiji, Your medicine is very effective and has no side effects.” I clarified that it was not My medicine and that what were working were Sharadambâ’s grace and their dedicated efforts. During this trip, they had the great good fortune of getting Paramacharyal’s darshana and blessings.

[Sri R.M. Umesh]

Pranams to all,  
subbu

Vairagyam VI  
Namaste Sadhakas,

The Bhagavadgita, 13<sup>th</sup> chapter teaches the Atma-gunas, that is, the qualifications necessary to enter the enquiry of Brahman. This is done in the verses 7 to 11. Herein in the verse 8 vairagyam is mentioned and the means to secure it:

Absence of attachment for objects of the senses....perception of evil in birth, death and old age, in sickness and pain.

Evil in birth: The evil here lies in having to dwell in the womb and to issue forth through the uterus. Maybe, people might say there are modern methods of conception and pregnancy and the need to lie in the womb and issue out of the uterus could be avoided. Nevertheless, there is immense suffering connected with birth. A friend's baby overstayed in pregnancy and it seems the baby started consuming orally the dirty liquid inside for want of food. Upon being delivered by caesarean, the baby was found to be very underweight and had to be placed under the specialised care of another hospital over ten kilometres from the place where it was delivered. My friend, the father, had to make several trips to the two places every day and twice the baby was treated for jaundice and went close to death. The ordeal of the parents was extreme. The friend's mother spoke to me one day and wept: My son pleaded with us to leave him alone. It was we who forced him into wedlock. Now when we see this ordeal of our boy, we feel we made a mistake.'

Even otherwise, to think of 'us' in the form of some food grain consumed by the father and being converted into semen and being deposited into the womb of the mother through the ugly tube in the penis and start growing, first in the form of some lump of foam and then a lump of flesh and slowly sprouting out hands and legs and fingers and forming the slits for the eyes, nose, ears, etc. and being inside a congested place and finally issuing out through the uterus along with dirty liquids – is it not disgusting? Vedanta teaches we are the unbroken Pure Consciousness, all pervading like space, ever free. Oh ! what a contrast ! Would anyone who gives a deep thought to this contrast ever like to go through the ordeal of birth again ? ...Punarapi janani jathare shayanam...

Death: The pain of death is described elaborately in some smritis. It would be worthwhile contemplating on the pain related to death. Again, we have instances to relate from our own lives. A boy of 26, was sent to Canada for a three month project by his employers, Infosys. At the end of the term, he arranged with his friends in Bangalore, to visit Shivasamudram, a tourist spot a little away. Soon after arrival, as planned, the party left for the picnic spot. Spotting a rock in the middle of a huge lake, the boys decided to be there and take photographs. This boy, while posing for a photo, suddenly slipped and fell into the waters. The body could be recovered only after three days with a large diving team deployed at enormous cost. His mother told me that they had to carry the highly decomposed body virtually in a huge bucket. He was their only son. And fortunately, not married.

Old age and Disease: The evil of old age consists in the decay of intelligence, power and strength, and in being treated with contempt. The problems related with disease have

various ramifications. In a family known to me, both the parents, in their eighties, remained in bed for more than seventeen years put together. In this they were both simultaneously in bed for over seven years. Both had suffered paralytic strokes. The ordeal that family went through is unimaginable. They had to do the nursing job themselves as they could not afford a professional. Several relatives and friends helped them by contributing whatever they could. Even old clothes like dhotis and saris were donated to that family as the patients defecated and urinated in bed. Even with the best sanitation, bedsores were another problem to manage.

I came across a case of a mother and her two teenaged daughters, all the three of them afflicted with cancer. The man of the family, the sole earner, could not afford the heavy medication bills and chemotherapy charges. He literally begged from known and unknown people.

The Bhagavadgita verse asks us to undertake a deep contemplation on these miseries attached to embodied life. The Acharya says: From this perception of the evil of pain in birth, etc, there arises indifference to the pleasures of the body and of the senses; and then the senses turn towards the innermost Self to obtain a glimpse of the Self. Because the perception of the evil of pain in birth, etc., conduces to knowledge, it is itself spoken of as knowledge.

Bhartrihari says in his Vairagya shatakam 38:

Old age looms ahead frightening men like a tigress; different diseases afflict the human body like enemies; life is flowing away like water running out of a leaky vessel; still, how wonderful, that man goes on doing wicked deeds!

And in verse 36 he says:

Life is changing like a big wave, beauty of youth abides for a few days; earthly possessions are as transient as thought; the whole series of our enjoyments are like occasional flashes of autumnal lightning; the embrace round the neck given by our beloved ones lingers only for a while. To cross the ocean (of the fear) of the world, attach your mind to Brahman.

Again he says in verse 37:

In the womb man lies within impure matter in discomfort with limbs cramped; in youth enjoyment is tainted with the intense suffering of mental distraction arising from separation from our beloved; even old age is undesirable, being the object of contemptible laughter from women. Oh men, say if there is a particle of happiness in the world.

Pranams to all,  
subbu





## Variragyam VII

The Prahlada charitram shines as a resplendent jewel in the Srimad Bhagavatam. Prahlada, a devotee par excellence, displays the most laudable qualities of a bhakta, a karma yogi, a Jnani, all rolled into one.

Here is a selection of those verses from the Canto 7, Chapter 9, 10 and 15 of the Srimad Bhagavatam. that convey a message on various aspects of vairagyam. These have been copied from the material available at the following link:

<http://sanskrit.gde.to/> . My thanks to Sri Sundar ji for providing this link to me long ago.

Bhakta Prahlada addresses Lord Narasimha:

9.43 Sure I am from being absorbed in the broadcasting of Your sweet ocean of glories not worried, o Supreme One, about the hard to cross Vaitaranî that is this world; I rather lament, despite of them being fools, for the ones missing the liberation who, for the good of their senses, plan for illusory forms of happiness and duty [see also [6.17:28](#)].

O best of the great personalities, I am not at all afraid of material existence, for wherever I stay I am fully absorbed in thoughts of Your glories and activities. My concern is only for the fools and rascals who are making elaborate plans for material happiness and maintaining their families, societies and countries. I am simply concerned with love for them.

[\(45\)](#) The concern of sex indeed is trivial like the itch relieved by rubbing one's hands; the ones falling short with this find, suffering all kinds of misery, the different feelings of sorrow never satisfied in it, but if one learns from that, recognizing it to be a figment, is one a sober person that is able to bear the itch [see also [B.G. 7.14](#)].

Sex life is compared to the rubbing of two hands to relieve an itch. Grihamedhis, so-called grihasthas who have no spiritual knowledge, think that this itching is the greatest platform of happiness, although actually it is a source of distress. The kripanas, the fools who are just the opposite of brâhmanas, are not satisfied by repeated sensuous enjoyment. Those who are dhira, however, who are sober and who tolerate this itching, are not subjected to the sufferings of fools and rascals.

[\(46\)](#) Silence, vows, vedic knowledge, austerity, study, dutifulness, explaining the scripture, living alone, prayer and absorption, belong to the path of liberation, but often are they with them who do not control their senses the only way of living, o my Lord, and so one must say that in this connection it is nothing but false pride [see also [6.1.16](#)].

O Supreme Personality of Godhead, there are ten prescribed methods on the path to liberation--to remain silent, not to speak to anyone, to observe vows, to amass all kinds of Vedic knowledge, to undergo austerities, to study the Vedas and other Vedic literatures, to execute the duties of varnâs'rama-dharma, to explain the s'âstras, to stay in a solitary place, to chant mantras silently, and to be absorbed in trance. These different methods for liberation are generally only a professional practice and means of livelihood for those who have not conquered their senses. Because such persons are falsely proud, these procedures may not be successful.

■ **Text 5:**

**10.5 A person for himself desiring material benefits from his spiritual master is not really a servant nor is the master really of service who for his own prestige desires to bestow material profits upon his servant [see also [10.88.8-10](#)].**

A servant who desires material profits from his master is certainly not a qualified servant or pure devotee. Similarly, a master who bestows benedictions upon his servant because of a desire to maintain a prestigious position as master is also not a pure master.



**Text 7:**

**If You want to give me anything to my desire for a blessing, then I pray for the benediction from You, o Lord of All Blessings, that no desire for any material happiness will grow in my heart [see also: [Siksâstaka verse four](#)].**

O my Lord, best of the givers of benediction, if You at all want to bestow a desirable benediction upon me, then I pray from Your Lordship that within the core of my heart there be no material desires.



**Text 8:**

**From one's very birth on are the senses, the mind, the life-air, the body, the religion, ones patience, intelligence, shyness, opulence, strength, memory and truthfulness overrun by lusty desires.**

O my Lord, because of lusty desires from the very beginning of one's birth, the functions of one's senses, mind, life, body, religion, patience, intelligence, shyness, opulence, strength, memory and truthfulness are vanquished.

■ **Text 9:**

**Only indeed when one gives up all the desires that one of human association finds in one's mind is one fit for an opulence equal to that of You, o Lotus-eyed Lord.**

O my Lord, when a human being is able to give up all the material desires in his mind, he becomes eligible to possess wealth and opulence like Yours.

Sage Narada to Yudhishtira (while relating the Prahlada charitram to him at the Rajasuya Yaga):

■ **Text 18:**

**Or, o King, why should a person of peace not live happily on even a bit of water, when from the genitals and tongue one in one's struggling becomes a man as good as a household dog?**

My dear King, a self-satisfied person can be happy even with only drinking water. However, one who is driven by the senses, especially by the tongue and genitals, must accept the position of a household dog to satisfy his senses.

 **Text 19:**

**For sure will of a discontented man of learning, because of his greed, gradually dwindle the strength of his senses, his education, austerity and fame and will his spiritual knowledge vanish.**

Because of greed for the sake of the senses, the spiritual strength, education, austerity and reputation of a devotee or brahmana who is not self-satisfied dwindle, and his knowledge gradually vanishes.

 **Text 20:**

**For someone who is hungry and thirsty do the lusts come to an end indeed, of anger vented there is a relief, but a person will not get over his greed enjoying to conquer all the directions of the globe [see also [B.G. 16: 21](#)].**

The strong bodily desires and needs of a person disturbed by hunger and thirst are certainly satisfied when he eats. Similarly, if one becomes very angry, that anger is satisfied by chastisement and its reaction. But as for greed, even if a greedy person has conquered all the directions of the world or has enjoyed everything in the world, still he will not be satisfied.

 **Text 21:**

**O King, many scholars, persons of varied experience, many an expert in legal advice, or many a candidate for the office even, has fallen down in hell simply from that single lack of contentment.**

O King Yudhishtira, many persons with varied experience, many legal advisers, many learned scholars and many persons eligible to become presidents of learned assemblies fall down into hellish life because of not being satisfied with their positions.

 **Text 22:**

**With determination lust should be overcome, anger by means of forsaking the object of desire, to greed one must consider the accumulation of wealth that gives the trouble, and fear is overcome by contemplation of the truth.**

By making plans with determination, one should give up lusty desires for sense gratification. Similarly, by giving up envy one should conquer anger, by discussing the disadvantages of accumulating wealth one should give up greed, and by discussing the truth one should give up fear.

**Text 25:**

**By the mode of goodness can a person, in devotional service unto the spiritual master, easily conquer all this passion, ignorance and the goodness itself that one also should leave behind. (The gunas, sattva, rajas and tamas are spoken of here).**

One must conquer the modes of passion and ignorance by developing the mode of goodness, and then one must become detached from the mode of goodness by promoting oneself to the platform of s'uddha-sattva. All this can be automatically done if one engages in the service of the spiritual master with faith and devotion. In this way one can conquer the influence of the modes of nature.

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Sannyasa an Vairagya go hand-in-hand. Vairagya is the essence of spirituality. Acharyal, Sri Abhinava Vidyateertha Swamigal, never failed to stress the need to cultivate vairagya. He Himself led a life of supreme contentment and dispassion. His life is a great lesson on the practice of vairagya.

Late one night, Acharyal woke up from sleep, ate a small, shrivelled plantain that was kept on the windowsill, drank some water and went back to bed. I, who was watching the scene, felt very bad that He ate the banana, which was fit to be thrown away. When I had the opportunity to talk to Him next morning, I gave vent to my feelings and said, 'Why did Acharyal choose to eat the fruit that was in such a bad state?' 'Why not?', asked Acharyal. 'There are boxes full of luscious grapes from Australia that were submitted to Acharyal. Why did Acharyal have to eat 'that' banana?' I queried. Acharyal said, "It is advised that one has to eat something when he feels pain due to peptic ulcers. The banana served the purpose adequately. Just because better quality fruits are available today, do I have to eat that? Do you know what 'virakti' is? It is not the dispassion that you have towards an object in its absence. Even when the object of desire is in front of you and is also rightfully yours, you should not enjoy it. Even the thought 'I want it' should not be there in your mind. That alone is true 'virakti' ". Acharyal continued, 'Even though I may not attempt to procure the object, if I were to entertain a desire for it, the very longing will remain in My mind as a residual samskara. On a different occasion, such a samskara may impel Me to act even without My being conscious of it. For instance, let us suppose someone comes and places a delicious fruit in front of Me and I too am in need of it. Let us also suppose that I had earlier entertained a desire for it. In such a situation, I may at once consume the fruit without a second thought. So, 'true mind control' is that state of mind, where you do not even entertain the thought that you need something."

(As told by Sri Rajagopala Sarma and excerpted from the book 'Exalting Elucidations')

Om Tat Sat  
subbu





## Vairagyam VIII

Namaste Sadhakas,

The Scriptures teach us that the most effective way of overcoming inimical vasanas, mental impressions, born of past practice, is to cultivate the opposite current of vasanas, known as 'pratipaksha-bhaavanam'. The Yoga sastra teaches this in the sutra: 'vitarka-baadhane pratipaksha bhaavanam' (II.33). The path to realisation of the Supreme is not a smooth one. The obstacles take the form of thoughts that distract one from sadhana. These are listed by the scriptures as the 'six-fold enemies', 'ari-shad-varga'. This hexad constitutes raga=desire, dvesha=anger, lobha=greed, moha=infatuation or delusion, mada=pride or arrogance, and maatsarya=envy. One or the other of these or a combination of these could cause obstacles to yoga. It is not that we are conscious of their raising their heads and attacking us; their presence is known only after they have presented themselves to our intellect and often only after the damage is done. The best way to tackle them is to consciously cultivate, during calmer moments of our lives, the set of sad-vasanas, favourable or noble vasanas, so that when we are faced with a situation that is conducive to the manifestation of the dur-vasanas, inimical ones, the set of sad-vasanas, if they have been cultivated with enough strength, manifest themselves and save us from any damage. This invariably depends upon the sincerity, vigour, ardour, consistency, etc., involved in the practice of the sad-vasanas. There is ample scope for the creativity of the aspirant in nurturing these sad-vasanas.

The Laghu-yoga-vasishtha (28. 48-51) gives a succinct definition of vasana:

'Latent impression may be described as that hankering after things, which gains such mastery over the mind, as to preclude even inquiring into their antecedents and consequents. He at once becomes that which he identifies himself with, by force of strong and deep attachment and loses, O strong armed one! memory of every other thing in the act. The man thus subdued by vasana, fixing his eye on anything whatever, is deluded into believing it as the real thing; owing to loss of control due to the powerful influence of vsana, the object (thus perceived) gives up its real form. Thus one with beclouded eye perceives everything quite in this deluded fashion, like one under the influence of a strong intoxicant.'

Sri Sadashiva Brahmendra, the Great Yogi of Nerur, in his Yoga-sutra-vritti specifies a method of 'pratipaksha-bhaavanam': When an aspirant is troubled by defiling thoughts, one should contemplate thus: 'With a view to get over the scorching heat of samsara, I have resorted to the path of yoga. If I yield to these defiling thoughts, how different am I from a dog that repeatedly resorts to consuming excreta?'. Care should be taken to cultivate the opposite thought currents at calmer, saner, sober moments as the actual moments of crisis would not be conducive to the application of discrimination, viveka, and generally emotion is seen to have the upper hand. The Yoga Sutra II.34 teaches the method thus: 'Everything we do, say, or think, or even indirectly cause or passively sanction, will inevitably produce consequences – good, bad, or composite – and these

consequences will react in some measure upon ourselves. Our most secret ill-wishes toward others, our remotest permission of evil done to others, can only end by hurting us by increasing our own ignorance and pain. This is an absolute law of nature. If we could remember it always, we should learn to control our tongues and our thoughts.'

When a counter-thought current is suitably set up, the following will ideally be the result: Supposing an aspirant has dvesha-buddhi towards a particular person. The very sight or even a thought of that person will bring up unsavoury feelings of hatred and enmity in the aspirant. Now, when the aspirant tries to set up a current of opposite thoughts in this particular case, the effort will be characterised by developing prema vasana instead of the dvesha vasana that normally comes up. When this is done adequately, when the aspirant encounters that man next, the most likely thing to happen is, both the dvesha and the prema vasanas will come up; the prema vasana if practiced adequately strongly, will take precedence and the dvesha vasana will become subdued. When the effort is maintained, in time, the dvesha vasana will altogether vanish and get replaced by the prema vasana as though it is a natural one with respect to that particular person. This is something that can be verified by anyone by applying the course of action in one's own case with respect to any of the negative tendencies.

Here lies the great role of personal effort purusha prayatna. Even though 'fate' (which is only personal effort exercised in the past) appears to overpower us, the scriptures point out the invaluable nature of personal effort in overcoming the harmful effects of fate. It is said that desire for enjoyment has to be 'kept at a distance' (Laghu Yoga-vaasishta 4.114) This is because once the smallest desire for enjoyment is admitted, there will be nothing to prevent it from exceeding the limit, as borne out by the adage, 'This will continually increase like fire constantly fed with fuel' (Manu II.94).

The Bhagavadgita teaches the Daivi and Aasuri sampat in the 16<sup>th</sup> chapter. The Aasuri is the propensity to live the life of the lower-self and the Daivi is the one that is conducive to the life of the higher-self. The former is shown in order to enable their identification in ourselves and the latter, with a view to overcome them by personal effort. Thus is the 'pratipaksha bhavanam' accomplished through the teaching of the Gita.

As no sadhana will proceed smooth in the absence of inner purity which in essence is a disturbed mind, the Yoga shastra (Sutra I.33) specifies this method to bring about the same: Undisturbed calmness of mind is attained by (1) cultivating friendliness towards the happy ones, (2) compassion towards those who suffer, (3) joy at the sight of virtuous ones and (4) indifference towards the vile.

1. Normally when one sees a happy person, envy may raise its head and sully the mind. To counteract this and the allied defiling thoughts, one is advised to feel, 'All these happy ones are my own'. Just as a father can rejoice on seeing his son's comforts and power, so too can the aspirant acquire the happiness of joyous ones. The feeling brought about by 'vasudhaiva kutumbakam' = 'The entire world is my family' is conducive to this practice.

2. When tendencies like cruelty and sadism manifest, one feels elated at the agony of another. To counteract defilement of mind by such proclivities, the Yoga Sastra advocates the feeling, 'Just as I do not wish to suffer, so too let there be no suffering for another.' The prayer 'maa kashchit duHkha-bhaag bhavet' = 'Let none be an experiencer of suffering' is invaluable in developing the tendency spoken of here.
3. The third class of persons, apart from joyous and sorrowful ones, are those who are virtuous. If one were to cultivate joy with regard to such people, then one develops the tendency to engage in virtuous deeds without being lax. Being associated with virtuous persons and institutions that espouse the cause of virtuous living will generate the feeling of joy in aspirants.
4. The fourth type of persons is that of the vile ones. Association with such people corrupts one's mind, for the mind is influenced by the company one keeps. The other extreme is to hate sinners for the harm they produce in one. Both these attitudes do not make the mind calm and so must be regarded as defiling it. Hence the Yoga Sastra prescribes indifference. The invaluable moral: 'Keep good company and avoid association with the vile' is a golden rule that helps develop calmness of the mind.

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A lesson in vairagya:

The Maharaja of Mysore had submitted a high quality, imported mattress for Acharyal's use. At Secunderabad, Raja Limbekar too had offered imported blankets for the use of His Holiness. It was the attendant's duty to make the bed for Acharyal every night before Acharyal and myself entered the room. Thereafter, the door would be locked. Acharyal would then remove His upper cloth and roll it up. This, He would use as His pillow. A deerskin served as His bed and, His lower cloth was the blanket! He would chant 'Shambho Mahadeva' thrice and go to sleep. In the morning, as soon as He got up, He would slightly rumple the blankets to make it look as if it had been used by Him as His bedding. This was going on for a few days. One day, I asked His Holiness: 'Why is Acharyal doing like this?' Acharyal clarified: 'I am a sannyasin and I don't require such comforts. However, those who donate such articles to Me, expect Me to use them. If they come to know that I am not utilising them, they may come to the conclusion that the items offered were not of good quality and feel bad about it. As a result, they may trouble themselves further and get Me even more valuable objects. Why give room for all these? That is why I give an impression even to My attendants that I make use of the blankets presented to Me!

(As told by Sri Rajagopala Sarma)

My father once posed this question to His Holiness: 'At the Mutt Acharyal could afford to have all the comforts. Why not Acharyal enjoy all comforts? Why should You strain Yourself by getting up early in the morning and working so hard all through the day and go to bed as late as eleven o'clock? What do You get out of this?' Acharyal smiled at him and said, 'Suppose you are offered jaggery and badam halwa both of which are



sweet, which one of these would you prefer?' My father said, 'Where is the doubt here? I will choose the badam halwa'. 'Well said', remarked His Holiness. 'Those who have tasted the bliss of the Supreme will not pine for these mundane things', added Acharyal. (As told by Sri S.Shivaswamy, son of Justice Somanatha Iyer)

Warm Regards,  
subbu

## Vairagyam IX

Namaste Sadhakas,

The 'pratipaksha-bhaavanam', cultivating vasanas in order to counteract the vasanas inimical to sadhana, is an exercise the scriptures prescribe with great concern. While vairagyam for the sense objects is stressed, the attachment for status in society, power, etc. too hinders sadhana by strengthening the propensity for the life of the lower self: pride, arrogance, etc. Vairagyam is essential to overcome these negative tendencies and give room for the blossoming of humility, devotion to the scriptural teaching, reverence to the Guru, etc. Several devices are presented to the sadhakas by the scriptures to accomplish this end. The firm attachment to the opinion of others is pointed out to be a great hindrance in the path of sadhana. This is called loka-vasana. As one, harassed by children, friends, wife and the like, feels much disgust for them all and betakes oneself to renunciation, so should one, afflicted with the impure vasanas, such as arrogance begotten of learning, opulence, pedigree and the like, cultivate 'discrimination' to counteract them. Discrimination has been pointed out by Janaka:

'Those who, today, are at the head of the great, sink, in course of time, to the lowest depths. Alas, O mind! Wherefore do you place such implicit faith in greatness? Whither has gone the fabulous wealth of emperors? Where are the innumerable worlds created by Brahma? The old order of things has found its way to oblivion. Why then this foolish faith of thine? Millions of Brahma-s have come and gone. Myriads of heavens have vanished one after another. Potentates have been turned into dust. What hold have I then on this life? Persons, by the closing or opening of whose eyelids, worlds were created or destroyed, have passed out of memory. Why then should the existence of persons of my type be noticed at all?'

Says Pattinattar of the ephemeral nature of the worldly riches: This is the Tamil verse:

MuDi-saarnda mannarum matrum ullorum muDivil  
PiDi-saambalaai vendu maNNaavadu kanDum ip-  
Padi-saarnda vaazhvai ninaippaduve allaamal Ponnambalar  
ADi-saarndu vaazhaveNDumendru arivaar illaye !!

Meaning: Even the Monarch and all others meet their ends and become just a handful of ash and merge with earth. Noticing this day in and day out, ignorant men do not get disgusted with worldly life. Alas! None is there to take refuge in the Resplendent Shiva and live a life that leads to Liberation.

Says a smriti:

'If a man of the world, who is bent on picking holes in the character of others, should, in the same manner, expend his skill in analysing his own, whosoever would not be liberated from the bonds of ignorance?'

'If they slander the Self (in me), they slander only themselves, of themselves; if they slander my body, they would be looked upon by me as my friends. How can the intellect of that sharp yogin, whom slander and insult verily serve to embellish, be overpowered at all, by the babble of idle prattlers?'

The Naishkarmyasiddhi 2.16,17 speaks of the kind of discrimination a man on the path of salvation must practice:

'What does it matter to him, who has cast off excreta, as some unclean thing, not worthy of being retained in the body, if some one should descant on its unclean nature? In the same manner, when the gross and the subtle bodies have both been given up by one, through discrimination, if one should find fault with them, what recks the knower for such slander? Grief, joy, fear, anger, ambition, illusion, desire, birth, death and the like, belong to egoism, not to the Self.'

The JnAnankusha describes how insult is an ornament:

If people derive pleasure by insulting me, is this not a favor I have generated without effort? For, desiring the highest goal, people even donate all the wealth they have acquired with great difficulty to please others.

In the human world where happiness is absent and suffering is always abundant, if someone derives joy by criticizing me, let him criticize me at will to my face or behind my back. For in a world of much suffering, it is hard to find joy.

Anger is twofold: one's anger directed at another, and another's anger directed at oneself. Of these, this passage addresses anger situated in oneself:

If you have anger at one who does you harm, why do you not have anger at anger which violently hinders Dharma, Artha, Kaama, and Moksha? [YU p. 317]

If it destroys the Dharma, fame, and wealth of one seeking results, if it is useless, burns up one's body, if it does not benefit you, in this world or the next, why does anger occupy the minds of the righteous?

This passage addresses anger directed at oneself:

One must never think "I have done not wrong, so why are people angry with me for no reason?" He should consider his inability to remove the bondage with samsara to be his greatest fault.

Let homage go to the god of anger, who is violently burning his own dwelling, who is bestowing detachment on me, a man prone to anger, and who

is causing me to perceive flaws (in others). [YU p. 317]

In the same way as anger and craving for wealth, craving for women and children is also to be removed through discernment. Of these, Vasishtha describes the discernment toward women:

What beauty is there in women who are puppets of flesh stuffed with tendons, bones, and joints, in a cage of limbs moved by a mechanism? [LYV 1.2.90; YU pp. 314–315]

Look closely if there is something pleasing in her eyes, after separating the membrane, flesh, blood, and watery tears. Why are you vainly infatuated? [LYV 1.2.91; YU p. 315]

Shining with the glitter of a string of pearls on her breast comparable to the rapid waters of the Ganges glittering on the slopes of Mount Meru, [LYV 1.2.92; YU p. 315]

This very breast of a woman is, at death, devoured by dogs like a small morsel of food at a remote cremation ground. [LYV 1.2.93; YU p. 315]

Wearing tresses of hair and collyrium, charming to look at but unpleasant to touch, women, who are the flame of fire of sins, burn a man like grass. [LYV 1.2.94; YU p. 315]

Even from afar they burn; appearing as full of love,<sup>68</sup> they are without love. For women are the fuel of hell-fire, beautiful yet terrifying. [LYV 1.2.95; YU p. 315]

Women are snares set by the hunter named Desire, binding the limbs of birds that are men with foolish minds. [LYV 1.2.96; YU p. 316]

A woman is the bait on a hook tied to the line of evil latent tendencies of men, who are fish in the pond of rebirth, wallowing in the mud of their minds. [LYV 1.2.97; YU p. 316]

May I be through with woman forever—of the beautiful casket of all the jewels of evil wrapped with the chain of suffering. [LYV 1.2.98; YU p. 316]

Flesh here, blood here, bones there—so woman, O Brahman, becomes a beauty that is poison in just a few (days). [LYV 1.2.99; YU 316]

One who has a woman has desire for pleasure. Where is there room for pleasure in one who is without a woman? Abandoning woman, you have abandoned the world; abandoning the world, you would become happy. [LYV 1.2.100; YU p. 316]

Therefore, the mind is bound when it has vasanas, latent tendencies, and is free without them. O Rama, secure the state without latent tendencies through discernment at once. [LYV 4.3.45]

Through the true complete insight, latent tendencies are dissolved. On the dissolution of latent tendencies, the mind becomes still like a lamp. [LYV 4.3.46]

The above account covers a wide range of vasanas and the means to get over them by applying discernment.

(Portions of the above were copied from Robert Alan Goodding's Translation of the  
Jivanmuktiviveka – Vasana-kshaya prakaraNam)

Pranams  
subbu

Vairagyam (X)

Namaste Sadhakas,

When the Shastram teaches us to develop vairagyam, there are two elements involved in it. 1. The viveka, discrimination. and 2. The Tyaga, giving up. The first is the application of reason and understanding why attachment to the sense objects is not conducive to spiritual growth and the second ensures the sustained practice of vairagyam. Both are important. The discrimination, dosha-drishti, is required to find out the faults, the dosha, in the objects. This forms the core of vairagya, for that vairagya alone that is born out of such a-priori analysis of the faults pertaining to the sense objects survives the onslaughts of this unpredictable life. The simultaneous giving up, otherwise called abstinence, is equally important for however much intellectual understanding is gained about the faults, when the objects present themselves to us in actual life, the chances of yielding to them being high, a deliberate 'turning away' from them is essential. That is the reason 'dama' is prescribed. Dama is the restraint of sense organs. In a case that I know of, a young sadhaka, had become addicted to watching programs on the Television. As soon as entering the house on return from work, he would sink into the sofa and remain glued to the TV to the disregard of every other thing. His sandhya anushthanam became the first casualty and all other sadhanas took a severe beating. To him, his Guru suggested, apart from intellectual counselling, this exercise: As soon as you enter home walk past the living room where the TV is placed and enter your private room. Then close the door behind you and tell yourself: 'Now I am saved from it.' The advice was put into practice and over time the problem passed off. I mentioned this just to show that in actual practice, similar instructions in physical abstinence are given to aspirants. When they have sufficiently grown, there may not be the need for very strict enforcement of abstinence. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa says: For a small plant, initially a strong fencing is required to protect it from goats, cows, etc. But when the plant has grown into a tree, taking deep roots, no fencing is required. Even if an elephant is chained to that tree there would be no harm to it.

There is this verse of Kalidasa in the Kumarasambhavam:

vikaarahetau sati vikriyante yeshaam na chetaamsi ta eva dhiraah

(They are the truly heroic who are able to stay unperturbed even in the presence of provocation.)

In the absence of provocation it is easy to say ' I am not affected by sense objects'. Lord Shiva was engaged in Tapas. Uma, daughter of Himavan, had dedicated Herself to the Lord and was permitted to go and serve Lord Shiva during His Tapas. Kalidasa raises a question: What kind of Tapas could it be when there is a beautiful damsel around? He himself provides the answer by paying rich tributes to the Lord in the above verse.

The Panchadasi Chapter VI, Chitradipa prakaranam verse 278 adopts the method of enquiring into the hetu =cause, svarupam=characteristic and karyam = effect of vairagyam thus:

Dosha-drishtiH jihaasaa cha punar-bhogeshvadiinataa |  
Asaadhaarana-hetvaadyaaH vairagyasya trayo'pyamii ||

1.The extraordinary cause that espouses vairagyam, dispassion, is the perception of faults in the sense objects in particular and samsara as a whole.

2. What is the characteristic of vairagya? The experiencing of a strong dislike, despicability, towards the sense objects marks the presence of dispassion.

3. What is the fruit of vairagya? The freedom from the strong clutches, hold, of the sense objects is the result available for experience.

The Vivekachoodamani 425 specifies the upper limit of the fruit of vairagya thus:

Vaasana-anudayo bhogye vairagyasya tadaa-avadhiH. = The absence of even the latent mental impression pertaining to desire for objects of enjoyment is specified as the ultimate limit of the practice and perfection of vairagya.

Here are some verses aimed at generating vairagyam:

Detachment to worldly and heavenly pleasures is vital for securing enlightenment and liberation. The Mahànàràyana Upanishad (I.10.21) teaches:

Na karmanaa na prajayaa dhanena, Tyagenaike Amrutatvam AanashuH.

(Not by work (rites), progeny or wealth did they attain immortality. It is by renunciation that some have attained immortality.)

The Lord has said (Bhagavad-Gätà V.22):

Ye hi samsparshajaa bhogaaH duHkha-yonaya eva te |  
AadyatavantaH Kaunteya na teshu ramate budhaH ||

(Since enjoyments that result from contact between the organs and their objects are decidedly sources of sorrow and have a beginning and an end, O son of Kunti, the wise one does not delight in them.)

Shaknoti ihaiva yaH soDhum praak sharira-vimokshanaat |  
Kaama-krodhodbhavam vegam sa yuktaH sa sukhi naraH || (ibid. V.23)

(One who can withstand here itself - prior to departing from the body - the impulse arising from desire and anger, that man is a Yogin; he is happy.)

Asamshayam Mahaabaho mano durnigraham chalam |  
Abhyasena tu Kaunteya vairagyena cha gruhyate || (ibid.VI.35)

(O mighty-armed one, undoubtedly, the mind is intractable and restless. But, O son of Kunti, it can be brought under control through practice and detachment.)

Paramacharyal (Sri Chandrasekhara Bharati Swamigal) emphasised detachment to Sri Srinivasa Sastry (Later, Jagadguru Sri Abhinava Vidyatirtha Swamigal) .

One evening, Paramacharyal was proceeding to the Kàlabhairava temple taking the students and Vaidyanatha Sastry with Him. V.Sastry submitted to Paramacharyal that he had noted down some verses uttered by Him when He had been in an inward-turned state. Paramacharyal directed him to recite one of them. In response, V.Sastry said:

Nahi nahi manutaam svatvam martyaH sviiya dehe'pi |  
Pitrbhoomi-shrgaala-ganaaH svatvam parichintayanti tatkaale ||

(A mortal should never have the sense of "mine" with regard to even the body. The packs of jackals in the crematorium deem it to belong to them when the body lies there.)

Then, Paramacharyal proceeded to explain the worthlessness of attachment to the body. He finally chanted:

Simhaasanopavishtam drshtvaa yam mudam avaapa loko'yam |  
Tam Kaala-akrshta-tanum vilokya netre nimilayanti || (Prabodha-Sudhàkara I.26)

(People shut their eyes on seeing him, whom they had felt joy on seeing seated on the royal throne, when he is taken away by Death.)



The following day, Paramacharyal directed Vaidyanatha Sastry to come to Him with just Sri Srinivasa Sastry. When His directive was complied with, He said, "Today, we shall discuss the comparative merits of being a householder and a sannyàsin. You first explain the advantages of family life." In obedience to the command of Paramacharyal, Sri Srinivasa Sastry and Vaidyanatha Sastry spoke of the plus points of one being a householder. Paramacharyal then detailed the disadvantages of that stage of life. He gave many examples and chanted:

Ko hi jaanaati kasya adya mrtyukaalo bhavishyati |  
Yuvaiva dharma-sheelaH syaad anityam khalu jivanam ||

Baalye nashta-viveko vishaya-sukha-aasvaada-lampatas tarunaH |  
Parato jaata-viveko vrddho'shaktaH kimaapnuyaat siddhim ||

(Who indeed knows which day shall be his last? Even when young, one should practise righteousness; life is decidedly transient. During childhood, one is bereft of discriminative insight. While a youth, one is engrossed in the experience of sensual pleasures. Later, what success can an infirm old man achieve after the dawn of discrimination?)

(The verses are also given in transliterated form so that the very reciting of these beautiful verses is enjoyable.)

Pranams,  
subbu