

A Dictionary of ADVAITA VEDĀ NTA

PREFACE (to the first edition)

Among the six systems of Indian philosophy, Vedā nta the last, is the most well-known and widely studied. Based on the writings of Ś aṅ kara, Rā mā nuja and Madhva, it has branched off into three major traditions which are very much alive even today.

Literature on the Advaita Vedā nta is legion, thanks to the numerous descendants and defendants of the tradition. Among the simpler and more elementary treatises of Advaita, commonly called 'prakaraṇ a-grantha,' the *Vedā ntasā ra* of Sadā nanda is very popular. Being a later work, it has the advantage of systematizing all the important doctrines of the earlier works and presenting them in a comprehensive but compact way.

This dictionary has been prepared, drawing heavily from the *Vedā ntasā ra*. But, to understand the terms given here, some background is needed. This has been provided in the two essays given in part one. The first essay, *The Advaita Vedā nta Darś ana*, gives a brief history of the school and presents its essential teachings, including the later ramifications, in a nutshell. The second essay, *Sadā nanda's Vedā ntasā ra*, summarises the salient features of this work. The dictionary itself is given in part two.

Part three contains ten charts which give in a condensed form all the essential information of Advaita Vedā nta as depicted in the *Vedā ntasā ra*. This can serve as a revision lesson to the students of Advaita.

We earnestly hope that this brief work will serve as a useful introduction to the students of Advaita Vedā nta. If it prompts some scholars to venture on a much bigger work, we will feel blessed.

Swami Harshananda

PREFACE (to the second edition)

The first edition brought out in December 1990 has been well-received by the students of Vedānta. Since it had been based entirely on the *Vedāntasāra* of Sadānanda, many important terms and words commonly used in the Advaita Vedānta literature, but not found in that book, had been omitted from its purview. Considering this as a lacuna and with a view to expanding its scope so that it proves to be more useful to the serious students of Vedānta, the work has now been expanded by adding a little more than seventy new items. The arrangement of the subject matter has also been altered to bring it in consonance with the title of the work.

We trust that this enlarged edition will be welcomed even more.

Swami Harshananda

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CHARTS

Key to Transliteration and Pronunciation – sounds like

अ, a-o in son,	ठ ṭ h-th in ant-hill
आ , ā -a in master,	ड ḍ -d in den
इ i-i in if,	ढ ḍ h-dh in godhood
ई ī -ee in feel,	ण ṇ -n in under
उ u-u in full,	त t-t in French
ऊ ū -oo in boot, थ	थ th-th in thumb
ऋ ṛ -somewhat between r and ri, द d-th in then	
	ध dh-the in breathe
ए e-ay in May,	न n-n in not
ऐ ai-y in my,	प p-p in pen
ओ o-o in oh,	फ ph-ph in loop-hole
औ au-ow in now,	ब b-b in bag
क k-k in keen,	भ bh-bh in abhor
ख kh-ckh in blockhead,	म m-m in mother
ग g-g (hard) in go,	य y-y in yard
घ gh-gh in log-hut,	र r-r in run
ङ ṅ -ng in singer,	ल l-l in luck
च c-ch in chain,	व v-v in avert
छ ch-chh in catch him,	श ś -sh in reich (German)
ज j-j in judge,	ष ṣ -sh in show
झ jh-dgeh in hedgehog,	स s-in sun
ञ ñ-n (somewhat) as in French,, ह h-in hot	
ट ṭ -t in ten,	
◦ ṁ -m in sum,	:ḥ -h in half

INTRODUCTION

ADVAITA VEDĀ NTA DARŚ ANA

PREAMBLE

Man is often described as a rational animal. Once the animal in him is reasonably satisfied by the provision of basic biological and some psychological needs, the rational part gets an opportunity to evolve to higher levels. Philosophy, including metaphysics, is one of the highest aspects of this evolution.

DARŚ ANAS

The Indian philosophical systems have developed not only as a result of intellectual speculation but also of mystical intuition. Hence the name 'darś ana' (lit., 'seeing'), usually applied to them. The topics most commonly discussed by these darś anas are generally four: (a) nature of the physical world, its origin and evolution; (b) nature of man and other living beings; (c) existence of God, his nature and attributes; (d) the goal of human life and the way of attaining it.

Different standpoints and differing views of these topics of discussion have naturally led to a variety of schools. These schools are broadly divided into two classes: the ā stika and the nā stika. The former accept the authority of the Vedas whereas the latter do not.

VEDĀ NTA DARŚ ANA

The Vedā nta Darś ana is the last of the former schools but has gained the most important place among them. A judicious combination of reasoning and acceptance of the authority of the Vedas, as also a long unbroken tradition, are responsible for its gaining the prominent place.

Though the 'prasthā natraya' ('the three great paths') viz., the Upaniṣ ads, the *Brahmasū tras* and the *Bhagavadgītā*, are the basis of the Vedā nta Darś ana, it is the *Brahmasū tras* (also called *Vedā ntasū tras* and *Ś ā rī rakasū tras*) of Bā darā yaṇ a Vyā sa that occupies the key position. The sū tras (aphorisms) being quite terse and often ambiguous, have naturally led to widely differing interpretations,

resulting in the three well-known systems of Vedānta viz., Advaita, Viśiṣṭādvaita and Dvaita.

The word 'Vedānta' itself means the 'end or the essence of the Vedas.' It is the Upaniṣads that mainly comprise the Vedānta since they normally form the last part of the Vedic literature and contain the quintessence of their teaching.

ADVAITA VEDĀNTA

The Advaita Vedānta Darśana owes its systematisation as a formidable doctrine, to Gauḍapāda (7th-8th cent. A.D.) who wrote his famous *Kārikās* on the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*, and Śaṅkara (A.D. 788-820). Śaṅkara's commentaries on the Prasthāntara as also a few independent treatises form the bedrock on which the later Advaitins built their edifices.

Brahman, the only Reality

'Advaita' means 'non-dual,' 'one without a second'. The system derives this nomenclature from the fact that it recognises Brahman (the Absolute) as the only reality and denies permanent reality to the world as also to the individual souls.

The entire edifice of Advaita metaphysics is built upon the foundation that Brahman is the only reality, 'brahma satyam.' This premise is based firmly on the famous Upaniṣadic statement 'sadeva somya idamagra āsīt, ekamevādvītyam,' 'Dear (Śvetaketu), in the beginning (before creation) Reality (or Brahman) alone existed, the one without a second' (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.2.1).

Anirvacanīyākhyāti

However, the world of multiplicity is a matter of our day-to-day experience. Hence it becomes necessary to offer an explanation as to how Brahman, the one without a second, appears as this world of multiple names and forms. The explanation offered by Advaita is *anirvacanīyākhyāti*, its theory of erroneous cognition, which defies logic. Perceiving silver in nacre in moonlight or a snake in a rope in insufficient light are the stock examples given by the Advaitins. In both cases there is an erroneous perception brought about by the impression of silver and snake from an earlier idea of the same, now superimposed upon nacre and rope under conditions favourable to the error. This

superimposition called `adhyā sa' or `adhyā ropa,' is responsible for the mithyā jñā na (false knowledge) that the object perceived is silver or snake.

The silver or the snake perceived is neither `sat' (real) nor `asat' (unreal). It is not `asat' or unreal like `the son of a barren woman' since it is actually perceived. Neither is it `sat' or real since it disappears as soon as the substratum (the nacre or the rope) is perceived as it is. To explain such a peculiar phenomenon Ś an kara creates, out of logical necessity, a third type of perceived objects which is `sad-asad-vilakṣ aṇ a' (different from both the real and the unreal). The `khyā ti' or the cognition itself is described as `anirvacanī ya,' incapable of any precise definition or description.

Ajñā na or Avidyā

The basic cause of this erroneous perception is termed as ajñā na or avidyā (ignorance) which is said to be bhā varū pa (existent) and is endowed with two ś aktis or powers viz., `ā varaṇ aś akti' (veiling power) and `vikṣ epaś akti' (transforming power). It veils the true nature of nacre and rope, and shows up silver and snake in their place by apparently transforming them. Such an apparently transformed object is called a `vivarta' of the original and the theory that propounds this is known as *Vivartavā da*. Since this avidyā does not make the nacre and the rope completely disappear from view, but only makes them appear as something else, it is described as `bhā varū pa' or existent.

Mā yā

An attempt may now be made to explain how this world of duality has evolved out of the nondual Reality called Brahman in the Upaniṣ ads. The world of duality can be broadly divided into `dṛ k' (the seer) and `dṛ ś ya' (the seen). Both these, again, are divided into the innumerable living beings (jī vas) and countless objects of creation. How does Brahman the Absolute, the one without a second, the indivisible Reality, appear divided into innumerable beings on the one side and countless objects on the other? It is avidyā that causes the one Ā tman (the Self) incidentally, the Upaniṣ ads use both words, Ā man and Brahman, to indicate the same Reality-appear as many jī vas and it is mā yā that causes the world of phenomena. Mā yā is avidyā at the

cosmic level.

Three Degrees of Reality

Ś an̄ kara accepts three degrees of reality. The first, known as `prā tibhā sika-satya' (apparent truth, illusory appearance) is illustrated in the wrong perception of silver in nacre or a snake in a rope. The second, called `vyā vahā rika-satya' is illustrated by this world of our day-to-day experience. This world appearance has a much higher degree of reality and lasts till one gets ā tmajñā na or brahmajñā na, realization of Truth. It is satya or true for all purposes of vyavahā ra i.e., day-to-day existence or practical life. The third, designated as `pā ramā rthika-satya,' is the highest Truth and the only truth that really exists. It is Brahman or Ā tman, which is nirguṇ a (without attributes) and nirā kā ra (without forms), hence incapable of being described except in a negative way (`neti, neti'á`not this, not this').

Creation

Brahman associated with mā yā is Saguṇ a Brahman (Brahman with attributes) or Ī ś vara (Lord of creation, God). It is this aspect of Brahman that is responsible for creation, preservation and destruction of the world. As for the actual order of evolution of the created world, the descriptions given in the Upaniṣ ads are accepted.

For Ś an̄ kara who holds that the world process is only a vivarta (illusory appearance) due to adhyā sa (superimposition on Brahman), the very attempt to describe the various steps of evolution is a futile exercise. However, since the ś ruti (revealed scripture, the Upaniṣ ads) has done so, a place of honour must somehow be accorded to it. So he characterises such descriptions as giving `taṭ asthalakṣ aṇ a' (accidental or casual characteristics) of Brahman helping us to be directed towards it, even as the branch of a tree helps us to locate the crescent in the sky. On the other hand, Brahman as it is, can be comprehended only through its `svarū palakṣ aṇ a' (integral or essential characteristics), which is `sat-cit-ā nanda.' `Sat' (eternal reality), `cit' (pure consciousness), and `ā nanda' (unalloyed bliss) are not really its characteristics but its very essence.

Jī va

This Brahman or Ā tman which is sat-cit-ā nanda, has inexplicably got itself involved in the body-mind complex, the involvement being due to avidyā . Since the origin of this involvement can never be logically or satisfactorily explained, avidyā is stated to be anā di or beginningless. The involved Ā tman is designated as `jī va.'

This jī va, the Ā tman in bondage, has five koś as or sheaths, three ś arī ras or bodies, performs actions motivated by desires, experiences pleasure and pain due to karma and undergoes transmigration until liberation. Ś aṅ kara declares that this jī va, when shorn of its upā dhis or limiting adjuncts like the body and the mind, is identical with Brahman, since its essential nature also is sat-cit-ā nanda.

Sā dhanas and Mukti

The main trouble with the Ā tman become jī va is the tā dā tmya or false identification with the mind and the body, brought about by adhyā ropa or adhyā sa (superimposition). Hence the only way of remedying it is by apavā da or desuperimposition, by denying this identification. For this, one has first to prepare oneself by the preliminary fourfold discipline or sā dhanacatuṣ ṭ aya viz., viveka (discrimination between the eternal and the non-eternal), vairā gya (dispassion), ś amā diṣ aṭ ka (cultivation of the six virtues like self-control) and mumukṣ utva (desire for liberation). Then one has to approach a competent guru (spiritual preceptor) and learn the truth from him by ś ravaṇ a (hearing), manana (reflection) and nididhyā sana (contemplation). The most important part of the guru's teaching will be in the form of `mahā vā kyā s' (great sentences) like `*tat tvam asi*' (That thou art') or `*aham brahmā smi*' ('I am Brahman'). Ś ravaṇ a and manana produce the deeprooted conviction that one is the spirit. Hence in nididhyā sana, desuperimposition in the form of 'I am not the body, nor the sense-organs, nor the mind, nor even the ego' and so on, can be practised leading ultimately to the realization that one is the Ā tman. This realization resulting in mukti or liberation can be had even while one is living in this body. It is known as `jī vanmukti.' He will attain `videhamukti' (liberation from future bodies) after the body falls off, the continuance of the body between the two states being due to prā rbdha-karma (actions that have caused this body).

Mukti or liberation from transmigration is not the gaining of a new state but recognising the already existing original state.

Jī vanmukti and Videhamukti

Two kinds of mukti-jī vanmukti and videhamukti-are envisaged in the advaitic works. The Vivaraṇa school* upholds the theory that mukti is simultaneous with jñāna. Hence Jī vanmukti is not only possible, but the only mukti that can be recognised. Continuance of the body for some more time, due to prārabdhakarma, has no effect upon jñāna. On the other hand, the Bhāmatī school* holds that even after jñāna, if the body continues due to prārabdhakarma, this imposes a limitation, thereby implying the existence of a trace of avidyā. The death of the body puts an end even to this trace of avidyā and real mukti is obtained then. Since this comes after the death of the body, it is called 'Videhamukti'.

Locus of Avidyā

A favourite topic of discussion that frequently crops up in Advaita metaphysical works is the locus of avidyā. Since Brahman is the only reality that exists, it alone is the āśraya (locus) as also the viṣaya (object) of avidyā. This is one school. Sureśvara and Padmapāda are the main protagonists of this school. According to them, avidyā is one only.

Since Brahman is pure consciousness, avidyā can never exist in It nor act on It. This is the opposing school propagated by Vācaspati Miśra. For him, the jīvas are the loci of avidyā and there is one avidyā for every jīva.

POST - ŚAÑKARA ADVAITA

Though Śaṅkara wrote profusely, clearly enunciating the main doctrines of his school, there are certain places in his writings wherein the important aspects of certain doctrines are either vague or are capable of more than one interpretation. This has naturally, resulted in the growth of quite a voluminous post-Śaṅkara Advaita literature leading to different prasthānas or schools of thought. 'Vārttika-prasthāna' of Sureśvara (9th cent. A.D.) comes first in the series. This school gets its designation from the exposition contained in the 'vārttikās' or commentaries in verse, of

Sureś varaṇ on Śāṅkara's bhāṣyas on *Bṛhadāraṇyaka* and *Taittirīya* Upaniṣads. According to this school, Brahman is the material cause of this world, and not māyā. The locus of avidyā is Brahman and not the jīvas. Avidyā is one only and not many. The mahāvākyas or the great Vedic dictums are capable of producing immediate cognition of the self as Brahman. Hence dhyānābhyaśa or practice of meditation on the meaning of those dictums is not necessary. The jīvas are but ābhāśas or appearances of Brahman in the individual minds. (This has earned the theory, the designation of 'ābhāśavāda' as opposed to 'pratibimbavāda' and 'avacchedavāda' of other schools.)

The 'Vivaraṇaprasthāna' of Padmapāda (9th cent. A.D.) and Prakāśātman (A.D. 1200) comes next. The name is derived from the work *Pañcapādīkāvivaraṇa* of the latter, it being a voluminous commentary on the *Pañcapādīkā* of Padmapāda. Though this name suggests that it covers five pādas or sections of the *Brahmasūtras*, only the commentary on the first four sūtras is now available. The chief doctrines of this school are: Avidyā is a jaḍatmikāśakti (a force of material nature) and is the material cause of this world. It is bhāvarūpa, a positive entity, but not real. Māyā, prakṛti, avyakta, avyākṛta, tamas, śakti etc., are all its synonyms. It is called avidyā when āvaraṇa power is predominant and māyā when vikṣepa power becomes dominant. Alternatively, it is māyā at the cosmic level and avidyā at the individual level. Avidyā rests on Brahman but acts on the jīvas. The jīvas are pratibimbās or reflections of Brahman in the antaḥkāraṇa (mind). The reflected images have no reality other than that of the original (bimba) Brahman. This theory is called 'pratibimba-vāda' as contrasted with 'ābhāśavāda.'

The 'Bhāmatīprasthāna' of Vācaspati Miśra (A.D. 840) is the third and the last of these major schools. *Bhāmatī* is his celebrated commentary on the Śāṅkara's bhāṣya of *Brahmasūtras*. This school is built round the *Bhāmatī* along with its subsidiary commentaries the *Kalpataru* of Amalānanda (13th cent. A.D.) and the *Parimalā* of Appayya Dīkṣita (16th cent. A.D.). The views of this school can be briefly summarised as follows: Brahman is the material cause of the world, not as the locus of avidyā but as the object of avidyā supported by the jīvas. Māyā is only an accessory cause. Avidyā cannot abide in Brahman. It abides in the jīvas and is

plural since the *jī vas* are plural. *Vā caspati* advocates two varieties of *avidyā* : the *mū lā vidyā* or *kā raṇ ā vidyā* (primal nescience); the *tū lā vidyā* or *kā ryā vidyā* (derivative nescience). It is the latter that is responsible for *bhramasam skā ras* or error impressions. Also, *Vā caspati* appears more inclined towards the 'avacchedavā da' or the theory of limitation with regard to the appearance of the *jī vas*. Just as a pot limits the infinite sky in itself, *avidyā* of the individual limits Brahman and makes it appear like a *jī va*. Another point of importance in this school is that the *mahā vā kyas* do not produce *anubhava* (immediate cognition). It is the mind seasoned by meditation that gives such experience.

Mention may also be made here of '*dr̥ ṣ ṭ isṛ ṣ ṭ ivā da*' which advocates that the world is created simultaneously with its perception, and, '*ekajī vavā da*,' which propounds that there is only one *jī va* which is in bondage and when it gets liberation, everything else disappears. *Prakā ś ā nanda* (15th-16th cent. A.D.) is the chief exponent of these schools.

Advaita was subjected to continuous criticism by other *Vedā ntic* schools as also the Buddhists and hence the growth of polemical literature became inevitable. Mention must be made of two most important works of this type: the *Khaṇ ḍ ana-khaṇ ḍ a-khā dya* of *Ś rī harṣ a* (12th cent. A.D.) and the *Advaitasiddhi* of *Madhusū dana Sarasvatī* (16th cent. A.D.).

CONCLUSION

It should be said to the credit of *Advaita Vedā nta* that even now it is attracting the respectful attention from scholars of the highest calibre, both Eastern and Western.

A DICTIONARY OF ADVAITA VEDĀ NTA

A ā bhā savā da ('the theory that [the jī va is] appearance [of Brahman]'):

The Advaita Vedā nta which posits Brahman, the Absolute, as the only Reality, the one without a second (= advaita) raises two interesting questions:

- (a) The locus of avidyā or nescience;
- (b) The real nature of the jī va or the individual soul.

According to Sureś vara (9th cent. A.D.) whose school of thought is called 'Vā rttika-prasthā na', the jī vas or individual souls are 'ā bhā sas' or appearances of Brahman in the individual minds. This theory is hence called 'ā bhā savā da'.

As for the locus of avidyā , it is Brahman, but it acts on the jī vas.

Abhyā sa ('repetition'):

It is repetition of either the words or the idea in order to get it fixed in the mind. This is one of the six characteristic signs (ṣ aḍ vidhaliṅ ga) by which the purport of Vedā ntic texts is to be determined.

Adhikaraṇ a ('substratum'):

The word is generally used in two senses: ā dhā ra or substratum, like a lotus, in which qualities like redness or sweet smell inhere. It can also mean a topic of discussion, as for instance, in terms such as *Viyadadhikaraṇ a* (3.1.1-7) or *Ā kā ś ā dhikaraṇ a* (1.1.22) appearing in the *Brahmasū tras*. It should normally consist of five items: viṣ aya (topic), saṁś aya (doubt), pū rvapakṣ a (*prima facie* view), uttara (reply) and siddhā nta (final conclusion). Works like the *Brahmasū tras* consist of several adhikaraṇ as.

Adhikā rin ('competent student'):

The word denotes any person who is competent and hence eligible to study an art or a science. The adhikā rin of Vedā nta should have purified his mind through the performance of his ordained duties and adopted the sā dhana-catuṣ ṭ aya or the four sā dhanā s or means to illumination.

adhiṣ ṭ hā na ('the supporting basis'):

The ground or a basic object upon which something else is wrongly superimposed is called 'adhiṣ ṭ hana'. For instance, when silver or a snake is superimposed on nacre or a rope in insufficient light, the nacre and the rope are termed

as `adhiṣ ṭ hā na,' the ground which forms the basis for the superimposition.

adhyā ropa, adhyā sa See **anirvacanī yakhyā ti**.

Advaita ('the one without a second'):

`Advaita' means `non-dual,' `one without a second'. The system of Vedā nta as propounded by Ś aṅ kara (A.D. 788-820) derives this nomenclature from the fact that it recognizes Brahman, the Absolute, as the only reality and denies permanent existence to the world as also to the individual souls.

ā gā mī -karma ('karma that is done in future'):

See **karma**.

Agni ('fire'):

It is the element of fire, third in the series of evolution from Brahman-Ā tman associated with ajñā na and commencing with ā kā ś a. In the primordial state it is called `tejas' with the quality of `rū pa' or form and is one of the five tanmā tras or primordial elements. In the gross state, as one of the pañcamahā bhū tas or five basic, but compounded, elements, it comprises the other four elements also, due to pañcī karaṇ a or quintuplication. Its sattva element gives rise to the organ of sight or the eyes and the rajas element to the organs of locomotion or the feet.

ahaṅ kā ra ('egoism'):

It is one of the four aspects of the antaḥ karaṇ a or the internal organ. Normally translated as `egoism,' it is that aspect of the mind which gives the sense of individuality. It is a product of the sattva-part of the five tanmā tras or primordial elements.

ahim sā ('non-injury'):

Non-injury or non-violence to life is one of the five cardinal moral principles listed under yama (restraint), the first of the eight steps of Yoga leading to samā dhi or complete absorption.

ajahad-lakṣ aṅ ā ('non-giving-up-implication'):

Also spelt as `ajahallakṣ aṅ ā ,' it is the second of a series of three lakṣ aṅ ā s or meaning by implication. Here, the direct meaning of a statement is not wholly given up but hints at something else, as in the sentence `Red colour is running' which actually means `Red horse is running.'

See also **artha** and **lakṣaṇā** .

Ajñāna ('nescience or ignorance'):

In Vedānta, ajñāna does not mean just ignorance or absence of knowledge but a 'positive something' responsible for conscious activities pertaining to all fields except that of the knowledge of the unity of jīva, the individual soul, with Brahman. It is the equivalent of pradhāna or prakṛti of Sāṅkhya philosophy and hence comprises the three guṇas, sattva, rajas and tamas, the permutation and combination of which give rise to this creation. However, it is destroyed by jñāna, knowledge of the ultimate unity of the individual soul with Brahman.

Ākāśa (ether):

Ākāśa is the tanmātra or the primordial element of ether, the first evolute of Brahman-Ātman, associated with ajñāna or nescience. Its basic quality is śabda or sound because it is the basis for the production of all sounds or vibrations. In the process of evolution of the universe, its sattva-aspect produces the organ of hearing or śrotra (the ear) and rajas-aspect gives rise to the organ of speech or vāk. The sky or space is its gross manifestation and is the product of pañcīkaraṇa or quintuplication. It is also called as one of the pañcamahābhūtas (five basic, compounded, elements).

Ānanda ('bliss'):

As long as the jīva or the individual soul is enmeshed in the body-mind complex, it is subject to pleasure and pain and can never get unalloyed bliss. When it is able to get rid of its ajñāna or ignorance of its real nature through jñāna or knowledge by practising preliminary disciplines like the sādhanacatuṣṭaya and approaching a qualified guru or preceptor for the final instructions, it attains unalloyed bliss called 'ānanda'. Sometimes ānanda is defined as the total and permanent absence of sorrow and misery.

Ānandamayakośa ('the bliss-sheath'):

One of the five sheaths, the pañcakośas, it gets its name due to the experience of joy in suṣupti or deep sleep. In content, it is identical with ajñāna or nescience. Since it makes the jīva, the individual soul, forget his nature as pure 'caitanya' or consciousness, by covering it as it were, like a kośa or sheath, it is termed as a 'kośa.' It clings to the soul till the state of liberation.

See also **pañcakoś as**.

aṇ ḍ aja ('born of the egg'):

It is one of the four types of bodies of living beings produced during the evolution of the universe. Birds and reptiles belong to this group.

Anirvacanī ya ('indescribable'):

Ajñā na or nescience is said to be anirvacanī ya or indescribable since it cannot be described in any way. The reason is that it cannot fit into any of the known patterns in this creation which have been successfully described, such as 'sat' or existing and 'asat' or non-existing.

Anirvacanī yakhyā ti ('cognition that defies explanation'):

Khyā ti or cognition is one of the important topics discussed by the darś anas or Indian philosophical systems. Out of the several khyā tis or theories of cognition, the 'anirvacanī yakhyā ti' is one that has been propagated by the Advaita Vedā nta. Perceiving silver in nacre or a snake in a rope are the stock examples given. In both cases there is an erroneous cognition brought about by the impressions of silver and snake from an earlier idea of the same, now superimposed upon nacre and rope under conditions favourable to the error. This superimposition called 'adhyā sa' or 'adhyā ropa' is responsible for the 'mithyā jñā na' or erroneous cognition.

Annamayakoś a ('the food-sheath'):

It is the physical body born out of anna or food and nourished by food. Like a koś a or sheath, it covers the self and prevents the experience of its true nature. It is the first of the five such koś as (pañcakoś as). It is destroyed at death. It is also called sthū la-ś arī ra or the gross body, the first of a series of three ś arī ras.

See also **pañcakoś as**.

antaḥ karaṇ a ('the internal organ'):

It is the internal organ or instrument by which we experience thinking, feeling and willing and are able to remember things. Though sometimes loosely called as mind (manas) or intellect (buddhi), it is more basic, of which these two are only aspects. Citta (mind-stuff) and ahañ kā ra (egoism) are two more aspects, making four in all. It is the product of the combined sattva aspect of the five tanmā tras or primordial elements.

Antaryā min ('the inner controller'):

The word denotes one of the aspects of Ī ś vara or God, as the all-pervading principle and hence the controller from within.

See also Ī ś vara.

anubandha-catuṣ ṭ aya

('four preliminaries'):

In the traditional Sanskrit treatises on any art or science (especially Vedā nta), four preliminaries are stated in the very beginning: adhikā rin or competent student, viṣ aya or subject-matter, sambandha or connection and prayojana or utility. See under each title for details.

Anumā na ('inference'):

Anumā na or inference is one of the three basic means of attaining knowledge, the other two being pratyakṣ a (direct perception) and ā gama (scriptural testimony). Since fire and smoke are invariably associated with each other, we can infer the existence of fire at a distance-say on a hill-by just seeing smoke arising out there. This is an oft-quoted example for anumā na.

Anupalabdhi ('non-perception'):

The Mī mā ṛ n s ā system of philosophy generally accepts six sources of knowledge of which anupalabdhi or non-perception is the last. When we do not perceive a jar on the table in front of us we come to *know* that it *does not exist* there. Thus it is a negative means of knowledge.

Apā na ('breathing out'):

It is one of the five prā ṇ as (pañcaprā ṇ as) or vital airs responsible for the functioning of the organs of excretion, and rooted in the same, as well as the organs of generation. The five prā ṇ as are produced out of the rajas-aspect of the tanmā tras or primordial elements.

See also **pañcaprā ṇ as**.

Aparigraha ('non-acceptance'):

Aparigraha or non-acceptance of gifts from others is one of the five basic moral disciplines under yama, which itself is the first of the eight steps of Yoga given by Patañjali in his *Yoga-sutras*, a treatise on Rā jayoga. Vedā nta has accepted these

steps as aids to samā dhi or total absorption in the spiritual ideal.

Ā pas ('water'):

It is the fourth of the five tanmā tras or primordial elements, characterised by rasa or taste and hence known as `rasatanmā tra' also. In its gross state as one of the five bhū tas (pañcamahā bhū tā s) it contains traces of the other four elements also due to undergoing the process of pañcī karaṇ a or quintuplication. In the process of creation its sattva-aspect produces the organ of taste, rasanendriya or jihvā , the tongue. Its rajas-aspect generates the organs of excretion.

Apavā da ('desuperimposition'):

The words `adhyā ropa' (superimposition) and `apavā da' (desuperimposition) invariably go together in the Advaita Vedā nta. In semi-darkness, there is the `adhyā ropa' of the snake on the rope. Through right perception under the right circumstances (for eg., bright light) there is `apavā da' or desuperimposition of the snake which is now sublated and its substratum, the rope, is seen as it is. Thus `apavā da' is removing the erroneous perception through right knowledge.

Apū rvatā ('the quality of not being known before'):

This is the third of a series of six characteristic signs (ṣ aḍ vidha-liṅ gas) by which the purport of a Vedā ntic text is ascertained. The text should reveal something which has not been known before (apū rva) for the first time; for instance, the revelation of Brahman by the Vedas. The word apū rvatā is sometimes translated as `originality' also.

Artha ('meaning'):

In the study of Vedā ntic texts, getting at the `artha' or correct meaning and interpretation, is very essential. Three ways of determining the meaning are normally accepted: vā cyā rtha or direct meaning, vyañ gyā rtha or suggested meaning and lakṣ yā rtha or implied meaning. See for details under the respective heads.

Arthā patti ('postulation'):

`Arthā patti' is one of the six methods of obtaining knowledge according to the Mī mā ṛ sā philosophy, accepted by the Advaita Vedā nta also. It is described as the necessary supposition of an unperceived fact which *alone* can explain a phenomenon that demands an explanation. If a person is fasting during the day and yet is growing fat,

we are forced to conclude that he is eating at night. This postulation is 'arthā patti'.

Arthavā da ('eulogy'):

It is the fifth among the ṣ aḍ vidha-liṅ gas or the six characteristic signs which aid in determining the correct purport of Vedic sentences. Eulogy usually recommends an injunction by stating the good arising from its observance or the evil accruing by its violation. The Mī mā ṛ sā texts list several varieties of the same.

Asana ('posture'):

Third in the series of the eight limbs prescribed in the books on Yoga, ā sana is the correct posture for practising meditation, the posture which can be maintained comfortably for a pretty length of time. Vedā nta accepts it as a part of nididhyā sana, meditation on the Ā tman or Brahman.

Asat ('the unreal'):

The word is used in several senses:

- (a) Something that does not exist, like the horns of a hare;
- (b) Something which is constantly changing as a result of deś a (place), kā la (time) and nimitta (causation), an impermanent object;
- (c) The unmanifested, causal, state of a manifested object. For instance this world existed as 'asat' before manifesting itself through names and forms.

Asteya ('non-stealing'):

Asteya or non-stealing means not taking anything that does not lawfully belong to one. It is a cardinal moral principal listed as the third in a series of five under yama, the first step of **Yoga**.

Ā stika ('one [who believes] in the authority of [the Vedas]'):

Generally the words 'ā stika' and 'nā stika' are applied to persons who believe in the existence of God and life after death, and, those who do not. However, in the darś anas or philosophical systems, they are applied to those schools that accept or do not accept the authority of the Ś rutis or the Vedas. Hence, the ṣ aḍ -darś anas or the six systems come under the first category whereas the Cā rvā ka, the Jaina and the Bauddha systems come under the second.

Atman ('the Self'):

The Upaniṣ ads affirm that Brahman the Absolute, the One without a second, is the only Reality which appears to be divided into innumerable beings on the one side and countless objects on the other. Though the word Ā tman is often used as a synonym of Brahman, it is more commonly used to indicate the individual self, the essential nature of the jī vā tman. Ultimately it is also sat-cit-ā nanda, or existence-knowledge-bliss absolute

Avacchedavā da ('the theory [that the jī va is an apparent] limitation [of Brahman]'):

The nature of the jī va or the individual soul and its relationship with Brahman is one of the oft-discussed topics in post-Ś aṅ kara advaita. 'Avacchedavā da' is the theory of limitation with regard to the appearance of the jī vas. Just as a pot apparently limits the infinite sky in itself, avidyā or nescience of the individual limits Brahman and makes it appear like a jī va. This theory is propounded by Vā caspati Miś ra (A.D. 840) and is called Bhā matī -prasthā na.

ā varaṇ a (covering):

Ajñā na or nescience, also called ignorance, has two powers, that of ā varaṇ a or covering the true nature of a thing and vikṣ epa or projecting something else in its place.

Avasthā ('state'):

In a general way, it indicates the state of consciousness, experienced by the jī va or individual soul.

See **avasthā traya**.

avasthā -traya ('three states'):

It refers to the three states of consciousness with which the jī va or the individual soul is associated, in its earthly existence, viz., jā grat (waking state), svapna (dream state) and suṣ upti (deep sleep state).

avidyā ('non-knowledge'):

It is another name for ajñā na or ignorance. Sometimes it is used to signify aparā -vidyā or lower knowledge comprising all arts and sciences except that of Brahman.

avyā kṛ ta ('undifferentiated'):

Same as avyakta. See **avyakta**.

Avyakta ('the unmanifest'):

Avyakta is one of the names used for Ī ś vara or God in the *Vedā ntasā ra* of Sadā nanda though it is a common term for pradhā na or prakṛ ti in the Sā ñ khyan metaphysics. It is the state of Brahman associated with mā yā , before the manifestation of creation.

B

bhā ga-lakṣ aṇ ā ('part implication'):

See **jahad-ajahad-lakṣ aṇ ā** .

Bhā matī -prasthā na ('the Bhā matī School'):

Though Ś aṅ kara (A.D. 788-820) wrote profusely, clearly enunciating the main doctrines of his school, quite a few important points of the system were left either vague or were capable of more than one interpretation. This naturally resulted in quite a voluminous Advaita literature in the post-Ś aṅ kara period leading to different 'prasthā nas' or schools of thought. Among these, the Vā rttika-prasthā na of Sureś vara (9th cent. A.D.), the Vivaraṇ a-prasthā na of Padmapā da (9th cent. A.D.) and Prakā ś ā tman (A.D. 1200), and the Bhā matī -prasthā na of Vā caspati Miś ra (A.D. 840) are the most celebrated schools.

According to the Vā rttika-prasthā na, Brahman is the material cause of this world, and not mā yā . The locus of avidyā is Brahman and not the jī vas. Avidyā is one only and not many. The jī vas are but ā bhā sas or appearances of Brahman in the individual minds.

In the Vivaraṇ a-prasthā na, avidyā is considered as the material cause of the world. Though it is positive, it is not real. Mā yā , prakṛ ti, avyakta, avyā kṛ ta etc., are all its synonyms. It is mā yā at the cosmic level and avidyā at the individual level. Avidyā rests on Brahman but acts on the jī vas. The jī vas are pratibimbas or reflections of Brahman in the minds. (This view is called 'pratibimbavā da'.)

As per the Bhā matī -prasthā na, Brahman is the material cause of the world, not as the locus of avidyā but as the object of the avidyā s supported by the jivā s.

Avidyā abides in the jivā s and is plural. It is of two types: mū lā vidyā (primal nescience) and tū lā vidyā (derivative nescience). If the former is responsible for creation, it is the latter that produces error impressions. Vā caspati also subscribes to the avacchedavā da.

Bhā varū pa ('positive'):

Ajñā na or ignorance is not considered in Advaita Vedā nta as a negative or unreal entity. Since it is felt or experienced, as when we say, 'I do not know anything,' 'I am an ignorant person,' it is considered as 'bhā varū pā ' or positive (as opposed to 'abhā varupā ,' negative or unreal). However its reality is not given the status of 'sat' (that which exists), since it can be destroyed by knowledge.

Bimba ('the original object'):

In the Vivaraṇ a school of advaita as propounded by Padmapā da (9th cent. A.D.) and Prakā ś ā tman (A.D. 1200), the jī va is considered as a pratibimba or reflection of Brahman, called the bimba which is the original. This school is thus called 'pratibimbavā da'.

See also **Vivaraṇ a-prasthā na**.

bodhya-bodhaka ('propounded-propounder'):

The sambandha or connection that subsists between the Vedā ntic texts like the Upaniṣ ads and what they purport to teach, viz., the ultimate unity of the jī va and Brahman, is described as 'bodhya-bodhaka.' The Vedā ntic texts are 'bodhaka' or 'propounders' of that unity. The unity itself is 'bodhya,' what is propounded.

Brahmacarya ('continence'):

This is one of the five moral disciplines listed under yama, the first of the eight steps of Yoga. It signifies control of all bodily instincts, especially sex.

Brahmaloka ('the world of Brahmā ' or the 'world eternal'):

Brahmaloka or Satyaloka is the world of Brahmā , the creator, to where liberated souls go and live permanently. It is the world of highest joy from where there is no return.

Brahman ('the Big or the Infinite'):

It is the basic Reality behind the whole creation, its origin, ground of sustenance and place of dissolution. It is described as 'sat' (pure existence), 'cit' (pure

consciousness) and `ā nanda' (pure bliss). Ajñā na, avidyā or mā yā is considered as its inscrutable power. In Advaita Vedānta the Ātman, the self at the back of the individuals, is identified with Brahman.

Brahmāṇḍa ('the cosmic egg'):

The created universe is called `Brahmāṇḍa' or the cosmic egg. The fourteen worlds with all the beings and things contained in them comprise this.

Brahma Sūtras ('aphorisms on Brahman'):

It is the famous basic treatise of Vedānta composed by Bādarāyaṇa-Vyāsa. It is considered as one of the six systems of Indian philosophy. It systematizes the philosophical tenets of the Upaniṣads which are scattered all over, and often appear to be self-contradictory. *Vedānta Sūtras*, *Śāriraka Sūtras* and *Uttara Mīmāṃsā Sūtras* are the other nomenclatures for this work.

Buddhi ('intellect'):

Buddhi is one of the four aspects of antaḥkāraṇa or internal organ. Discrimination, deliberation on the pros and cons, is its chief characteristic. Jīva or the individual soul is actually the reflection of Ātman (the pure consciousness) in the buddhi. In this case, buddhi signifies the whole of the antaḥkāraṇa.

C

Caitanya ('consciousness'):

Caitanya, consciousness or knowledge, is the very essence of the Brahman-Ātman entity. It is sometimes called `turīya,' the fourth also, since it is the `fourth' compared to the three states of consciousness (avasthātraya) or the three manifestations of Brahman, viz., Īśvara, Hiraṇyagarbha and Virāṭ.

cakṣus ('the eye'):

It is one of the five jñānendriyas or organs of knowledge or perception. Apprehending rūpa or forms of objects is its characteristic. It is the product of agni, also called `rūpa-tanmātra,' out of its sattva-aspect. It is the most important organ involved in pratyakṣa or direct perception.

cāndrāyaṇa ('related to the moon'):

Kṛcchra and cāndrāyaṇa are the two most common forms of expiation

prescribed to counter the effects of sins and purify the mind. The adhikārin or competent student of Vedānta is said to have completed the performance of such prāyaścitta karmas to obviate the effects of the past sins. Cāndrāyaṇa consists in gradually decreasing the quantity of food from the full-moon day to total fasting on the new-moon day and again reversing the process. The name itself is derived from the fact that the expiatory discipline is related to the phases of the moon.

caturdaśa-bhuvanas ('fourteen worlds'):

Described in the Hindu mythological literature, these worlds, starting with Pātāla and ending with Satyaloka, come into being at the time of creation. Bhū or the earth is in the centre of this group of worlds.

Caturmukha-Brahmā ('four-faced Brahmā'):

The four-faced Brahmā of the mythological lore is the Hiraṇyagarbha aspect of Brahman, the Absolute.

See **Hiraṇyagarbha**.

caturvidha-śarīra ('fourfold bodies'):

The bodies of living beings have been classified into four groups depending upon their origin: jarāyuja (born of the womb), aṇḍaja (born of the egg), svedaja (born out of moisture) and udbhija (born out of the soil).

Cit ('consciousness'):

Pure consciousness, the essential nature of Brahman or ātman, is called 'cit.'

Citta ('mind stuff'):

Citta is one of the four aspects of antaḥkāraṇa or the internal organ, responsible for memory. The word is also used in a more general way to indicate the mind.

Cittaśuddhi ('purity of mind'):

According to Vedānta, an aspirant acquires competence to practise it only after getting cittaśuddhi or purity of mind, by performing prāyaścitta-karmas or expiations and discharging the nitya-naimittika-karmas or daily and occasional obligatory duties.

D

Dama ('restraint'):

The student of Vedānta, called 'adhikārin,' becomes competent to practise Vedāntic spiritual disciplines only when he has purified his mind and has acquired the sādhanacatuṣṭaya or the four-fold spiritual discipline. 'Dama' is the second sub-discipline listed under 'śamādiṣṭka,' which itself is the third of the four sādhanas. It signifies restraint of the five organs of knowledge (jñānendriyas) and the five organs of action (karmendriyas) from all activities except those conducive to the main Vedāntic sādhanas of śravaṇa (hearing), manana (reflection) and nididhyāna (meditation).

Darśana ('seeing'):

The word 'darśana' is widely used more as a technical term to indicate any philosophical system such as Cārvāka-darśana. The originators of these systems are supposed to have had a vision (darśana = seeing or vision) of the Truth through intuition. Hence the appropriateness of the term.

Devadatta ('given by God'):

It is one of the five 'upaprāṇas' or subsidiary vital airs, responsible for the act of yawning. It is an aspect of apāna, one of the five main vital airs.

Dhanañjaya ('the winner of wealth'):

This also is one of the five 'upaprāṇas' or subsidiary vital airs, responsible for general maintenance of the body. It is considered as an aspect of samāna, one of the five main prāṇas or vital airs.

dhāraṇā ('fixing'):

Listed as the sixth of the eight limbs of Yoga, 'dhāraṇā' is fixing the mind on the object of contemplation. It is the first step of serious meditation, leading to the next step, dhyāna.

Dharma ('basic nature', 'righteousness'):

One of the most widely used terms, the word 'dharma' generally denotes righteousness as also actions prescribed by the scriptures for the people in various stages of life or following different vocations. It is the basic virtue in life to be practised by all. Its nature or characteristics can be known only by the scriptures or from virtuous

men of spiritual eminence.

Dhyā na ('meditation'):

It is the penultimate step in the practice of aṣ ṭ ā ṅ ga-yoga or the eight-limbed Yoga. In this state, the mind flows freely and continuously, like the oil poured from one vessel into another, towards the object of contemplation. In it, the succeeding mental waves are absolutely identical with the preceding ones.

dṛ k and dṛ ś ya ('the seer and the seen'):

One of the standard modes of sā dhanā in Advaita Vedā nta to realize the ā tman or the self is, to separate the dṛ k or the seer from the dṛ ś ya or the seen. The eye is the dṛ k with regard to an external object like a jar. But the mind is the dṛ k for the eye itself which now becomes a dṛ ś ya since it can analyze the nature of the eye. Arguing backwards it is ultimately realized that the Ā tman (or the Self) is the dṛ k of all that is seen or known, it itself having no other dṛ k behind it.

dṛ ṣ ṭ i-sṛ ṣ ṭ i-vā da ('the doctrine that the world is created simultaneously with its perception'):

There is no real creation as such. It comes into existence as soon as we 'perceive' it. This peculiar school was advocated by Prakā ś ā nanda (15th-16th cent. A.D.).

E

Ekajī vavā da ('the doctrine that only one individual self exists'):

This theory attributed to Prakā ś ā nanda pro-pounds that there is only one jī va that is in bondage (the jī va who thinks he is in bondage and is striving for liberation) and when he gets liberation, everything else disappears, since the multiplicity in the universe, has been erroneously imagined by this jī va.

G

Gandha ('smell'):

The word has been used in Vedā ntic texts to indicate smell as well as the tanmā tra or primordial element, possessing the exclusive characteristic of smell. Hence the appellation 'gandhatanmā tra.' In the gross state it represents pṛ thvī or

the earth, with the quality of gandha. Its sattva-aspect evolves into the organ of smell, ghrā ṇ endriya or the nose.

ghrā ṇ a ('the organ of smell'):

It is one of the five jñā nendriyas or organs of knowledge, the last in the series, responsible for apprehending smell. It is the product of the sattva-aspect of gandha-tanmā tra, the primordial element characterised by smell.

Gītā ('song [celestial] '):

Vedā ntadarś ana is based on the three basic scriptures called *Prasthā natraya*. They are: the Upaniṣ ads, the *Brahmasū tras* and the *Bhagavadgī tā* , also called the *Gītā* .

guṇ as ('qualities'):

Though the word 'guṇ a' in the ordinary usage means a quality like the redness of a flower or the sweetness of honey, in the Sā ṇ khya and Vedā nta systems, it is particularly employed to indicate sattva, rajas and tamas, the three fundamental elemental materials that comprise prakṛ ti, the mother Nature or matrix of the created universe.

Guru ('the preceptor'):

In any field of life, acquisition of knowledge and competence of a science invariably needs the help of a proper teacher or guide. He is called the guru, the word itself meaning 'one who dispels the darkness of our ignorance'. However, the word is more commonly applied to the spiritual preceptor. The Hindu scriptures eulogise the guru as God Himself and declare that spiritual wisdom is impossible of attainment without his grace.

Gurū pasadana ('approaching the guru'):

Once the spiritual aspirant (called 'adhikā rin') has acquired all the preliminary qualifications needed for the practice of Vedā ntic disciplines (see **adhikā rin**) he should approach a competent guru (a knower of ś ā stras or scriptures and devoted to Brahman), following the usual customs prevalent in the society.

H

Hiraṇ yagarbha ('of golden womb'):

He is the second aspect of Brahman, the pure consciousness, associated with ajñā na or nescience, after Ī ś vara. He is associated with the totality of the subtle bodies in creation, permeating them like the thread through the beads. Hence, the name 'Sū trā tman.' He is also called 'Prā ṇ a,' being the subtle principle of life. The unmanifested, seed-state of creation is compared to a golden egg. Since He keeps it in his womb as it were, before manifesting it, He is called 'Hiraṇ yagarbha.' He is endowed with the three powers of will, knowledge and action known as icchā ś akti, jñā naś akti and kriyā ś akti.

I

icchā ś akti ('powers of will'):

It is one of the three powers of Hiraṇ yagarbha, the other two being jñā naś akti and kriyā ś akti. It is the power by which he controls the animate and inanimate aspects of creation.

Ī ś vara ('the Lord'):

When Brahman, the pure consciousness, the Absolute, becomes associated with ajñā na or mā yā , It is called Ī ś vara. In the common parlance He is 'God'. 'Avyakta' or unmanifested, 'Jagatkā raṇ a' or the cause of the world and 'Antaryā min' or inner controller, are the other names by which he is known. He is sarvajña (all-knowing), sarveś vara (all-powerful) and sarvaniyanṭṛ (all-controller). He is the starting point of creation.

Ī ś varapraṇ idhā na ('devotion to Ī ś vara'):

It is the last of the disciplines listed under niyama, the second step of aṣ ṭ ā ṅ gayoga or eight-limbed Yoga. This devotion to Ī ś vara includes offering the fruits of all actions.

J

jagatkā raṇ a ('origin or cause of the universe'):

It is one of the appellations of Ī ś vara, since the evolution of the universe starts

from him. Of course, it is sustained by him and will dissolve back in him.

Jā grat ('waking'):

It is the first of the three states of consciousness known as 'avasthā traya,' associated with the jī va or individual soul. The jī va himself, in this state of consciousness, is designated as 'viś va.'

jahad-ajahad-lakṣ aṇ ā ('giving up - not giving up- implication'):

This is the third of a series of three lakṣ aṇ ā s or meanings by implication wherein the direct meaning is partly given up and partly accepted. For instance, in the sentence 'This is that Devadatta,' the Devadatta who was seen in the market the previous day is recognized when he comes to our house today. In doing so, the place and time are 'given up' and only the person is 'accepted.' This is the standard method adopted in interpreting the mahā vā kya. For example, in the mahā vā kya, *tat tvam asi*, (Thou art That) 'That' refers to Ī ś vara and 'thou' refers to the jī va; and the two can never be identical. Hence the samaṣ ṭ i-ajñā na (totality of ajñā nas) of Ī ś vara and its effects, viz., the power of creation, rulership etc., as also the vyaṣ ṭ i-ajñā na (individual ajñā na) of the 'jī va' and its effects, viz., the three bodies, the five koś as, limitations of knowledge and power etc., should be set aside and only the 'caitanya' (pure consciousness) aspect which is common should be considered. Then only equality can be proved or comprehended. In proving this, a part of the direct meaning is accepted and another part is given up. This lakṣ aṇ ā is also known as 'bhā galakṣ aṇ ā .'

jahad-lakṣ aṇ ā ('giving-up-implication'):

The first of the series of three lakṣ aṇ ā s or meanings by implication, it totally gives up the direct meaning and accepts only the implied one. For instance, in the sentence, 'The village of cowherds is inside the river Gaṇ gā ,' since a village cannot exist inside a river, the direct meaning is given up in favour of the implied meaning viz., 'The village of cowherds is on the bank of the river Gaṇ gā .'

Jarā yuja ('born of the womb'):

The first of a series of four types of bodies of living beings, it represents the bodies of mammals born out of the womb.

jā teṣ ṭ i ('sacrifice on birth'):

It is one of the sixteen religious sacraments to be performed in the life a Hindu. It is done by the father immediately after the birth of his child. It is classed under naimittika-karma or obligatory duty to be performed on special occasions.

See also **naimittika-karma**.

jihvā ('the tongue'):

The organ of taste, also called 'rasanam' or 'rasanendriya,' it is the fourth of the pañca-jñā nendriyas or five organs of perception. It is formed out of the sattva-aspect of the rasatanmā tra or ā pas or the primordial water.

Jī va ('the living being'):

All the living beings in the state of bondage and undergoing transmigration are called 'jī vas.' According to the Vedā nta, the jī va is a reflection of the caitanya or pure consciousness in the antaḥ karaṇ a or internal organ, or buddhi, the intellect. The jī va has three types of bodies ('trividhaś arī ra'), five sheaths (pañcakoś as) and three states of consciousness ('avasthā -traya'). His bondage is caused by ajñā na or ignorance, and he can get liberation through jñā na or spiritual knowledge.

Jī vanmukti ('liberation while living'):

It is the state of spiritual freedom ('mukti') even while living in the body ('jī van'). It is attained simultaneously with the rise of jñā na or spiritual knowledge. Since the body may continue for some more time till the prā rabdhakarma or the karma that started the body is exhausted, the jī vanmukta apparently lives on like others but is never affected by problems and worries of any kind. He continuously enjoys the bliss of the Ā tman or the Self.

Jñā na ('knowledge'):

Being derived from the root 'jñā ' ('to know') the word jñā na means knowledge. However, in Vedā ntic literature it is used more in the sense of intuitive experience.

jñā naś akti

('power of knowledge'):

It is one of the three powers of Hiraṇ yagarbha, the other two being icchā ś akti and kriyā ś akti. By this power he knows everything.

Jñā navirodhi ('anti-knowledge'):

Ajñā na, nescience or ignorance, is one of the fundamental concepts of

Vedā nta. It is not just the absence of knowledge but something opposed to knowledge. Hence it is called 'virodhi' or opponent of jñā na or knowledge. However, it is destroyed on the rise of knowledge.

Jñā nendriyas ('organs of knowledge or perception'):

We gain empirical knowledge through the five sense-organs, viz., eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin. Hence they are termed as indriyas or sense-organs, giving jñā na or knowledge, or jñā nedriyas. They are the evolutes of the sattva-part of the five primordial elements or tanmā tras as follows: ā kā ś a or ether-ś rotra, organ of hearing or ear; vā yu or air-sparś a, organ of touch or skin; agni or fire-rū pa, organ of seeing forms, or the eyes; ā pas or water-rasa, organ of taste, or tongue; pṛ thvī or earthágandha, organ of smell, or nose.

jyotiṣ ṭ oma ('sacrifice to light'):

A sacrifice belonging to the group of Somayā gas, it is especially performed by those desiring to attain heaven. It is a typical kā mya-karma or desire-motivated action.

K

kā mya-karma ('desire-motivated action'):

Those who have unfulfilled desires, desires which cannot be fulfilled through normal human endeavours, are advised to perform certain religious rites and rituals, prescribed by the scriptures for their fulfillment through divine intervention. Such actions are called 'kā myakarmas.' Jā teṣ ṭ i and Jyotiṣ ṭ oma belong to this category.

kā raṇ aś arī ra ('causal body'):

The jī va, the individual soul in bondage, is said to have three types of ś arī ras or bodies: sthū la, sū kṣ ma and kā raṇ a. Kā raṇ a ś arī ra or causal body is nothing but ajñā na or ignorance. Since it is the root-cause for embodiment, it is designated as such.

Karma ('action'):

Though the word 'karma' generally means any action-whether of the body or of speech or of the mind-it is generally restricted to rites and rituals prescribed by the scriptures. These actions are usually included under the omnibus term 'Varṇ ā ś rama-dharma,' duties prescribed for one's caste and station in life.

In a more technical sense, karma stands for the results of actions-good or bad-done by a human being. Such karma is of three types: sañcita (the accumulated), prā rābha or ā rābha (that which has begun to give its fruits) and anā rābha or ā gā mī (that which may be done in future).

The various schools of Indian philosophy except the Cā rvā ka system (materialism) generally accept that spiritual enlightenment destroys the first and makes the last impotent. The prā rābha, however, can be exhausted only by experiencing its fruits.

Karmendriyas (`organs of action'):

The five organs of vā k (speech), pā ṇ i (hands), pā da (feet), pā yu (excretory organ), and upastha (organ of reproduction) are called `karmendriyas,' `indriyas' or sense organs responsible for `karma' or action. They are the products of the rajas aspect of the five tanmā tras or primordial elements, as follows: ā kā ś a gives rise to vā k, vā yu to pā ṇ i, agni to pā da, ā pas to pā yu and pṛ thvī to upastha.

kaṣ ā ya (`attachment'):

When an aspirant is practising Vedā ntic disciplines to attain the state of samā dhi or complete absorption on the Ā tman, he is bedevilled by four kinds of obstacles of which kaṣ ā ya forms the third. It is the failure to rest on the Ā tman due to attachment to sense-objects enjoyed previously.

kevala-lakṣ aṇ ā (`simple implication'):

Lakṣ aṇ ā or implication is of two kinds: kevala-lakṣ aṇ ā and lakṣ ita-lakṣ aṇ ā . In the sentence, `The cowherd village is in the Gaṇ gā river,' by simple implication-since accepting the direct meaning is ruled out-we understand that the village is on the bank of the river, so near as if it is inside the river itself. The example for lakṣ ita-lakṣ aṇ ā (implied implication) is that the word `dvirepha' means a bee. How? Literally, it represents a word with two `rephas' or the letter `ra.' The word `bhramara' has two `ra's in it and means a bee. Hence the word `dvirepha' by `lakṣ ita-lakṣ aṇ ā ' means a bee.

Koś a (`sheath'):

Just as a sheath covers a sword and hides it, the physical body, mind, etc., cover the Ā tman. Hence, they are called `koś a' or sheath. There are five such koś as.

See **pañcakōś as** for details.

krama-mukti ('gradual liberation'):

The Vedāntic works accept two types of mukti or liberation: sadyomukti and kramamukti. When, by following the path of meditation on the Ātman or the Self as described in the Upaniṣads it results in the direct experience of that Self here and now, it is called 'sadyomukti' or immediate liberation. The other mukti, also described in the Upaniṣads, is 'kramamukti' or gradual liberation. Those who have practised austerities in the forest and meditation on the Vedic deities take to the path of light (arcirādimārga) or of gods (also called devayāna) after death which leads to Brahmaloaka or Satyaloka from which there is no return to mundane existence.

kṛcchra ('that which is difficult'):

'Kṛcchra' is the general name for a certain class of expiatory rites (prāyaścitta-karmas) prescribed to ward off the effects of evil deeds committed knowingly. Several varieties of the same are described in the dharmasāstras.

Kriyāśakti ('power of action'):

The third power of Hiraṇyagarbha which enables him to create the world and also to act unhindered is kriyāśakti. The other two powers are: icchāśakti and jñānaśakti.

kṛkālā ('pertaining to the throat'):

It is one of the five upaprāṇas or minor vital airs responsible for sneezing and is said to be an aspect of samāna, the last of the pañcaprāṇas or five vital airs.

Kūṛma ('the tortoise'):

One of the five subsidiary vital airs (upaprāṇas) responsible for the opening and the closing of the eyelids. It is included in vyāna, one of the five major prāṇas.

L

lakṣaṇā ('implication'):

When the direct meaning of a sentence does not make sense, its implied meaning has to be accepted. This is called 'lakṣaṇā'. For instance, in the sentence *śoṇaḥ dhāvatī*, 'Red colour is running' it is to be surmised that a red horse is running.

For details see **ajahad-lakṣaṇā**, **jahad-ajahad-lakṣaṇā** and **jahad-lakṣaṇā**.

lakṣ ita-lakṣ aṅ ā ('implied implication'):

See **kevala-lakṣ aṅ ā** .

lakṣ yā rtha ('implied meaning'):

'Lakṣ yā rtha' is one of the three ways of arriving at the 'artha' or meaning of a sentence, the other two being *vā cyā rtha* (direct meaning) and *vyañ gyā rtha* (suggested meaning). It is the meaning that is implied when the direct meaning is obviously unacceptable. For instance, in the sentence 'The Kaliṅ ga is adventurous,' it is the denizen of the country of Kaliṅ ga that is meant, though the word 'Kaliṅ ga' refers only to the country.

Laya ('dissolution'):

Though normally the word means dissolution of the created world at the end of the cycle, in the context of *Vedā ntic sā dhanā* , it signifies the state of torpidity or sleep into which the mind lapses when it is unable to rest on the Absolute. It is the first of a series of four vighnas or obstacles, to *samā dhi* or absorption in Brahman.

liṅ gaś arī ra ('the subtle body'):

See **sū kṣ maś arī ra**.

M

Mahā bhū tas ('the great elements'):

They are the five gross elements, viz., *pr̥ thvī* , *ā pas*, *tejas* or *agni*, *vā yu* and *ā kā ś a* (earth, water, fire, air and ether respectively), born out of the five *tanmā tras* (primordial elements) by the process of *pañcī karaṇ a* or quintuplication. Hence each of the elements has a part of the other four.

Mahā vā kyas ('great sentences'):

The post-Ś aṅ kara writers on Advaita Vedā nta have mentioned four sentences, taken from four Upaniṣ ads and belonging to the four Vedas, which teach the unity of the Ā tman and Brahman, as four 'mahā vā kyas' or great sentences. They are: *prajñā nam brahma* ('Consciousness is Brahman') from the *Aitareya Upaniṣ ad* (5.3) of the *R̥ gveda*; *aham brahmā smi* ('I am Brahman') from the *Bṛ hadā raṇ yaka Upaniṣ ad* of the *Yajurveda* (1.4.10); *tat tvam asi* ('You are That') from the *Chā ndogya Upaniṣ ad* (6. 8. 7.) of the *Sā maveda* and *ayamā tmā brahma* ('This Ā tman is

Brahman') from the *Mā ṇ ḍ ū kya Upaniṣ ad* (2) of the *Atharvaveda*.

Manana ('reflection'):

This is the second of the three direct disciplines prescribed for getting the knowledge of the Ā tman and its oneness with Brahman. It is defined as constant thinking of Brahman, already heard from the spiritual preceptor, strengthening it by logic which is in consonance with the purport of Vedā nta.

Manas ('mind'):

It is an aspect of the antaḥ karaṇ a or internal organ, responsible for sañ kalpa or general thinking, including willing and vikalpa or doubting. It is an evolute of the combined sattva-aspect of all the five tanmā tras or primordial elements.

Manomayakoś a ('the mind-sheath'):

The manas or mind, along with the pañcājñā nendriyas or the five organs of knowledge, form the 'manomayakoś a' or the sheath of mind. Like a sheath, it covers and hides the real nature of the Ā tman or the Self. It is a part of the sū kṣ ma-ś arī ra (also called liṅ ga-ś arī ra), the subtle body, the other two parts being prā ṇ amayakoś a (sheath of vital airs) and vijñā namayakoś a (sheath of intellect).

mā yā ('illusory power'):

Also called as ajñā na or avidyā (ignorance or nescience), it is the power of Brahman responsible for the illusory projection of this world. Ā varaṇ a (covering or hiding) and vikṣ epa (projection) are the two aspects of this power.

mokṣ a ('liberation'):

See **mukti**.

Mukti ('liberation'):

The state of freedom or liberation from all bonds created by ajñā na (ignorance) or mā yā (illusory power), it is characterized by bliss and cessation of rebirth. 'Mokṣ a,' 'kaivalya' and 'nirvā ṇ a' are some of the other names normally used to describe this state.

mumukṣ u ('one desirous of liberation'):

According to the ṣ aḍ darś anas or the six systems of Indian philosophy the real bondage for a soul is its being encased in a body, whether human or nonhuman. Hence mokṣ a or mukti is permanent liberation from rebirth, and, regaining the original state.

The desire for such mokṣa is 'mumukṣ utva' or 'mumukṣ ā ' and one who possesses such a desire is a 'mumukṣ u'.

mumukṣ utva ('desire for liberation'):

This is the last of the four sādhanās or spiritual practices called 'sādhana-catuṣṭaya' and the most important qualification needed by the student of Vedānta.

See also **mumukṣ u**.

N

Nāga ('that which does not move'):

It is one of the five upaprāṇas or minor vital airs responsible for bringing about eructation and vomiting. It is classed as an aspect of udāna, one of the five main vital airs.

naimittika-karma ('occasional duties'):

Obligatory duties to be performed on special occasions like birth and death in a family are called 'naimittika-karmas.' Jāteṣṭi and śrāddha are two examples. Their performance will not produce any special merit, but their non-performance will entail sin.

nāstika:

See **nāstika**.

Nididhyāna ('meditation'):

This is the term specially used in Vedānta to signify meditation. It has been defined as the stream of ideas of the same kind as Brahman to the exclusion of all other ideas like those of the body. Ultimately it leads to samādhi or total absorption in Brahman.

Nirākāra ('without form'):

Whether Brahman, the Absolute, has any particular form or not, is a question that is often discussed by the schools of Vedānta. Arguing that an ākāra or a form puts limitations on Brahman, the non-dualistic schools declare that it is 'nirākāra' or without any particular form. The dualistic or theistic schools attribute divine and permanent forms like those of Nārāyaṇa or Śiva or Devī. Then Brahman is accepted as 'sākāra' ('with form').

nirguṇ a (`without attributes'):

Whether Brahman, the Absolute, has guṇ as (qualities or attributes) is another point discussed by the Vedā ntic schools. Whereas the non-dualistic schools deny it (on the same basis as for ā kā ra or form) and declare it as `nirguṇ a' the dualistic and theistic schools accept it as `saguṇ a' or full of divine attributes.

Nirvikalpaka (`without distinctions'):

Samā dhi or total absorption in Brahman is of two kinds: savikalpaka and nirvikalpaka. Vikalpa means distinctions, the consciousness of the many, like `me' and `Brahman' and the world. In the savikalpaka samā dhi the consciousness of one's own personality as distinct from Brahman, persists, however attenuated it may be. In the nirvikalpaka state, however, all awareness of multiplicity including that of oneself as distinct from Brahman, is completely dissolved.

niṣ iddha-karma (`prohibited actions'):

Sinful deeds, since they make the mind impure and hence unfit for spiritual enlightenment, have been prohibited by the scriptures. Hence, the name (niṣ iddha = prohibited). For example, telling lies, stealing, killing and so on, are niṣ iddha-karma.

nitya-karma (`daily duties'):

Certain duties like daily worship (sandhyā) have been ordained in the scriptures as compulsory and to be performed daily (nitya = daily). They are called `nitya-karmas.'

Niyama (`restraint'):

Second step of the eightfold Yoga, niyama comprises ś auca (cleanliness), santoṣ a (contentment), tapas (austerity), svā dhyā ya (self-study of scriptures) and ī ś varapraṇ idhā na (devotion to God). They help to restrain the mind from evil deeds and engage it in spiritually good pursuits.

Pā da (`the foot'):

It is one of the five karmendriyas or organs of action formed by the rajas-aspect of all the five tanmā tras or primordial elements.

Pañcakoś as (`the five sheaths'):

Those factors of our personality which cover or hide-like a sheath covering a sword-the Ā tman, are called `koś as.' They are five in number: annamayakoś a (sheath of food, the physical body), prā ṇ amayakoś a (sheath of vital airs),

manomayakoś a (sheath of mind), vijñā namayakoś a (sheath of intellect) and ā nandamayakoś a (sheath of bliss). (See under the individual koś as for details.) Koś as 2 to 4 form the sū kṣ maś arī ra or the subtle body, responsible for transmigration.

Pañcamahā bhū tas ('the five great elements'):

See **mahā bhū tas**.

pañcaprā ṇ as ('the five vital airs'):

The five vital airs are: prā ṇ a, apā na, vyā na, udā na and samā na. (See under each for details.)

pañcī karaṇ a ('process of quintuplication'):

The process by which each of the pañcamahā -bhū tas (five great elements) is formed out of the pañcatanmā tras (five primordial elements) is called 'pañcī karaṇ a.' Each former element-because of this-contains half of the corresponding tanmā tra and one-eighth of each of the other four. For instance, one unit of the mahā bhū ta pṛ thvī = 1/2 pṛ thvī tanmā tra + 1/8 of ap tanmā tra + 1/8 of agni tanmā tra+ 1/8 of vā yu tanmā tra + 1/8 of ā kā ś a tanmā tra. Because of this pañcī karaṇ a, each of the mahā bhū tas contains a part of the other four bhū tas and hence their characteristics.

pā ṇ i ('the hand'):

One of the five karmendriyas or organs of action, pā ṇ i (the hands) is formed out of the rajas-aspect of the tanmā tras or primordial elements.

pā ramā rthika

('relating to the highest truth'):

Truth ('sattā ') according to Advaita metaphysics is of three types: prā tibhā sika (apparent), vyā vahā rika (practical) and pā ramā rthika (the highest).

When we wrongly perceive the upright ears of a hare as its horns, it is 'prā tibhā sika' sattā . This world of senses is 'vyā vahā rika' sattā since it is real for all practical purposes. Brahman or God which is the highest and unchanging truth is 'pā ramā thika' sattā .

Paramā tman ('the Supreme Self'):

In the Advaita system of Vedā nta, Brahman, the Absolute, is also called 'Paramā tman,' the highest or the Supreme Self as opposed to the jī vā tmas or the

individual selves which are, in the ultimate analysis, unreal. (See Bhā matī prasthā na for the details.) However, the theistic schools of Rā mā nuja (A.D. 1017-1137) and Madhva (A.D. 1197-1276) posit the two as eternally distinct and separate. The former controls the latter who are for ever subservient to him.

pariṇ ā ma ('change'):

Pariṇ ā ma is a general term indicating change. It can be change of form as clay taking the shape of a pot or change of state like milk becoming curds. The question that is often discussed by the schools of Vedā nta is whether Brahman, the Absolute, undergoes pariṇ ā ma to become this world or not. Whereas Advaita Vedā nta denies any pariṇ ā ma to Brahman, some of the other schools like those of Rā mā nuja (A.D. 1017-1137) accept it.

Pā yu ('organ of excretion'):

The excretory organs called 'pā yu' are one of the five karmendriyas or organs of action and are evolved out of the rajas-aspect of the five tanmā tras or primordial elements.

Phala ('the fruit'):

It is a technical term indicating one of the ṣ aḍ vidha-liṅ gas (six characteristic signs) by which the real purport of Vedā ntic texts can be determined. It signifies the fruit or utility of the subject matter (viṣ aya) of a section. In Vedā nta it is Brahmajñā na or knowledge of Brahman, giving liberation.

Pradhā na ('the primary [substance]'):

This word is a typical technical term used by the Sā ñ khya philosophy to indicate the basic and fundamental material substance out of which the world evolves. It is called 'prakṛ ti' or 'mā yā ' in Advaita Vedā nta, though it is not conceded to be real or permanent.

Prajā pati ('Lord of beings'):

This is one of the epithets of Hiraṇ yagarbha, since he is the lord of beings in creation.

Prā jña ('one who is unaware'):

It is the name of the jī va or individual soul in the state of deep-sleep. In this state the jī va remains temporarily in union with Brahman.

prakaraṇ a ('topic', 'treatise'):

In the Vedā ntic literature, the word is used in more senses than one. It may be a topic under discussion. In this sense it is also one of the six ways of determining the correct meaning of a Vedic or Vedā ntic text.

Elementary treatises on a particular science or subject are also called 'prakaraṇ as' or 'prakaraṇ agranthatas'. For instance the works *Vivekacū ḍ ā maṇ i* or *Vedā ntasā ra* are prakaraṇ as of Advaita Vedā nta.

Pralaya ('dissolution'):

According to the Vedā nta systems this world or creation has no beginning or no end (anā di and ananta) and the cycle of sṛ ṣ ṭ i (creation), sthiti (preservation) and pralaya (dissolution) goes on eternally.

Pralaya, according to the paurā ṇ ic literature is of several types though the pralaya at the end of a kalpa (a day of Brahmā , the creator), called as 'naimittika-pralaya' or 'Brā hma-pralaya', is the one that is commonly referred to.

pramā ṇ as ('means of knowledge'):

Pramā ṇ as or means of getting knowledge are an important topic discussed in detail by the Indian philosophical systems. They generally range from three to six, the latter including the former. They are: pratyakṣ a (direct perception), anumā na (inference), ā ptavā kya (verbal testimony) or ā gama or ś abda (scriptural testimony), upamā na (comparison), arthā patti (postulation) and anupalabdhi (nonperception).

For details see the respective titles.

Prā ṇ a ('the life'):

Hiraṇ yagarbha, the second aspect of Brahman associated with ajñā na (ignorance) is also known as Prā ṇ a because he is the very life of the universe.

prā ṇ a ('vital air'):

It is one of the five vital airs centred in the nose and responsible for respiration. It is a product of the rajas-aspect of the five tanmā tras or primordial elements.

prā ṇ amayakoś a ('the life-sheath'):

It is the pañcaprā ṇ as or the five vital airs, along with the karmendriyas or organs of action, that constitute the prā ṇ amayakoś a. They cover the soul like a sheath, hiding its real nature, which is caitanya or consciousness.

prā ṇ ā yā ma ('regulation of breath'):

The fourth of the eight steps of Yoga, it is concerned with the control of the prā ṇ ic energy and hence the mind, by regulating breathing. Recaka (exhalation), pū raka (inhalation) and kumbhaka (retention) are its three steps.

prā rabdha-karma ('karma which has begun to give its results'):

See **karma**.

pratibimbavā da:

See **Bhā matī prasthā na**.

Pratyā hā ra ('withdrawal'):

Withdrawal of the mind which is going out through the sense organs, in order to fix it on the object of meditation, is pratyā hā ra. It is the fifth step of the eight-limbed Yoga.

Prasthā natraya ('the three basic scriptures'):

The Vedā ntic systems recognize the following three works as basic to their philosophy: the Upaniṣ ads, the *Brahmasū tras* and the *Bhagavadgī tā* . Almost all of them have created annotative literature on these three.

pratyakṣ a ('direct perception'):

It is one of the three or the six pramā ṇ as (methods of getting knowledge) accepted by the six systems of Indian philosophy. It is the knowledge gained by the direct perception of an object by the respective sense-organ.

For instance, the knowledge of a black earthen pot seen by the eyes or the sweet sound of a flute heard by the ear-are got by pratyakṣ a.

See also **pramā ṇ as**.

prā yaś citta-karma ('expiatory action'):

'Prā yas' is austerity and 'citta' is determination. Hence, it signifies the determination to destroy sins through austerity. Many such expiatory rites like kṛ cchra, cā ndrā yaṇ a, govraṭa etc., have been prescribed in the secondary scriptures called dharmas ā stras.

Prayojana ('utility'):

Listed as the fourth of the anubandha-catuṣ ṭ āya, the four preliminaries to the study of Vedā nta, prayojana tells us about the utility of this study. It ultimately leads to

the attainment of bliss through the realization of the unity of the individual Self with Brahman. This is the prayojana we reap.

pṛ thvī ('the earth'):

The element pṛ thvī or earth, one of the five mahā bhū tas or compounded elements, is the gross aspect of the gandhatanmā tra or pṛ thvī tanmā tra, formed after pañcī karaṇ a (quintuplication). It is evolved out of the tamas-aspect of the tanmā tras or primordial elements.

R

Rajas ('the active one'):

The second of the three guṇ as that comprise ajñā na (avidyā , mā yā) or nescience, it is the active component that is responsible for movement, passion and unrest.

Rasa ('taste'):

Though the word means taste in the ordinary parlance, it is a technical term standing for the 'rasatanmā tra' or 'ap-tanmā tra,' the primordial element of water. In the gross state it is the mahā bhū ta (compounded element) water, formed out of pañcī karaṇ a (quintuplication). Its sattva-aspect gives rise to rasana, the organ of taste, viz., the tongue and the palate.

Rasana ('the organ of taste'):

See **rasa** . It is one of the five jñā nendriyas or organs of knowledge.

Rasā svā da ('enjoying the taste'):

The last of a series of four vighnas or obstacles to samā dhi (total absorption), it is defined as enjoying the taste of bliss that one gets in savikalpaka-samā dhi. It is an obstacle in so much as it prevents the aspirant from rising to the next and last step of nirvikalpaka-samā dhi.

See **samā dhi** .

Rū pa ('form'):

It represents the subtle agni or tejas, a tanmā tra or primordial element, with the characteristic of comprehending rū pa or form. The mahā bhū ta (compounded element) agni (fire) or tejas (light) is its gross evolute formed after pañcī karaṇ a or

quintuplication. Its sattva-aspect gives rise to the organ of sight, the eyes.

S

Ś abda ('sound'):

The tanmā tra of ś abda or sound is none other than ā kā ś a, the primordial element ether, one of the five such tanmā tras. The gross ā kā ś a is its product after undergoing the process of pañcī karaṇ a or quintuplication. The organ of hearing, the ś rotra or the ears, is its evolute out of its sattva-aspect.

Sā dhanā ('means of spiritual enlightenment'):

These sā dhanā s are four.

See **sā dhana-catuṣ ṭ aya**.

sā dhana-catuṣ ṭ aya ('the four means of spiritual enlightenment'):

The aspirant for the study and practice of Vedā nta is expected to acquire these four sā dhanā s, viz., viveka or discrimination, vairā gya or renunciation, ś amā di-ṣ aṭ ka or the group of six spiritual attributes beginning with ś ama or peace and ending with samā dhā na or concentration, and mumukṣ utva or desire for liberation. For details, see under each title.

ṣ aḍ vidha-liṅ gas ('six characteristic signs'):

Once the student of Vedā nta acquires the necessary competence to practise the Vedā ntic disciplines, he is to approach a teacher well-versed in the Vedā s and established in Brahman. From him he should first hear (ś ravaṇ a) about the truth. This hearing involves determining the correct import of the scriptures by applying the ṣ aḍ vidha-liṅ gas or six characteristic signs. They are: upakrama-upasaṁhā ra (beginning and conclusion), apū rvatā (originality), phala (fruit or result), arthavā da (eulogy), abhyā sa (repetition) and upapatti (reasoning, demonstration). See under each for details.

Saguṇ a-Brahman ('Brahman with attributes'):

See **nirguṇ a**.

Ś ama ('tranquillity'):

It is one of the six disciplines listed under ś amā di-ṣ aṭ ka, which itself is the third sā dhana under sā dhana-catuṣ ṭ aya. It is keeping the mind away from pursuing

the worldly pleasures which are inimical to *sā dhana*, like *ś ravaṇ a* (hearing the Vedā ntic scriptures).

Samā dhā na ('concentration'):

Listed as the fifth of the *ś amā di-ṣ aṭ ka*, it means concentrating the mind on *ś ravaṇ a* (hearing) of the scriptural passages and other subjects conducive to the same.

Samā dhi ('the total absorption'):

Nididhyā sana or meditation ultimately leads to *samā dhi*, perfect concentration and total absorption in the object of concentration. In *Vedā nta* the object is the unity of *ītman* with *Brahman*. *Samā dhi* is of two kinds: *savikalpaka* and *nirvikalpaka*.

See **nirvikalpaka** for details.

ś amā di-ṣ aṭ ka ('the group of six beginning with ś ama'):

It consists of *ś ama* (tranquillity), *dama* (self-control), *uparati* (cessation of external organs from the pursuit of sense-objects), *titikṣ ā* (endurance), *samā dhā na* (concentration), and *ś raddhā* (faith). It forms the third limb of the *sā dhana-catuṣ ṭ aya*, the four *sā dhanas*.

Samā na ('the equal or uniform'):

The last of the *pañcaprā ṇ as* or five vital airs, *samā na* situated in the central region of the body, is responsible for digestion and assimilation of food. Like the other *prā ṇ as*, it is also an evolute of the *tanmā tras* or primordial elements out of their *rajas-* aspect.

sā mā nā dhikaraṇ ya ('having the same locus'):

This is one of the three relationships that can exist between two words. In the sentence 'This is that Devadatta,' the word 'that' signifying the person Devadatta associated with the past and the word 'this' signifying Devadatta associated with the present, both refer to one and the same person called Devadatta. 'Adhikaraṇ a' means the 'substratum or the basis' and 'samā na' means the 'same'. Hence 'sā mā nā dhikaraṇ ya' signifies 'having the same substratum'. It is this method that is applied in interpreting the famous Vedic dictum *tat tvam asi*, 'Thou art That!'

samaṣ ṭ i ('the totality'):

Vyaṣ ṭ i (the individual) and *samaṣ ṭ i* (the total) are two words often used in

Vedānta in connection with ajñāna (ignorance). The caitanya (pure consciousness) associated with samaṣṭi ajñāna gets the name Īśvara and so on, depending upon the stage of evolution. Similarly when it is associated with vyaṣṭi ajñāna, it is called prājña and so on.

Sambandha ('the connection' or 'relation'):

The third of the four anubandhas or preliminaries, sambandha indicates the relationship between the ĩtman-Brahman identity that is to be realized and the treatises like the Upaniṣads which purport to teach about it. It is bodhya-bodhaka (propounded and propounder) sambandha that subsists between them.

See also **bodhya-bodhaka**.

saṁnyāsa ('the act of renouncing'):

Vedānta considers the performance of karma or scripture-ordained actions as only a preliminary exercise aimed at purifying the mind making it fit for contemplation on the ĩtman. Once this state of mind is attained, one has to do saṁnyāsa or renounce the world and accept the monastic way of life. Some systems of Vedānta go to the extent of declaring that mokṣa or liberation is possible only through saṁnyāsa.

saṁsāra ('transmigration'):

Hinduism believes that the soul (jīvātman) though eternal and free in its essential nature as ĩtman, transmigrates from one body after its death to another through rebirth according to its karma. This cycle of births and deaths or transmigration is technically called 'saṁsāra', the word itself being derived from the root 'sṛ', 'to move'.

saṁskāra ('latent impression'):

Any thought, word or deed, whether good or bad, leaves an impression on the mind provoking a similar action in future. Such an impression that remains latent is termed as 'saṁskāra'. Conquest of the evil saṁskāras by creating good ones and then transcending them too is an important aspect of spiritual practice.

saṁyama ('control' or 'master'):

Though it means 'self-control' in general, as a technical word used in the *Yoga-sūtras* of Patañjali, it signifies dhāraṇā, dhyāna and samādhi together, when the object of concentration is the same for all the three stages of yoga. By practising

sañ yama on different objects, various psychic powers can be obtained.

sañcitakarma:

See **karma**.

sañ kalpa ('resolve'):

One of the general aspects of the functioning of manas or the mind is 'sañ kalpa,' a resolve of the type, 'I will do this,' 'I shall have it' and so on.

The word is also used in a more technical sense in religious rites where it purports to give the purpose and mode of performing the ritual.

Ś ā stra ('scripture'):

A religious work that ordains a person to do or not to do certain things (ś ā s = to ordain) and protects him in the spiritual sense (tra = to protect) if he does so, is called 'ś ā stra'. The Vedas and allied scriptures that follow them are accepted as 'ś ā stra' by the Vedā nta systems.

Satyaloka:

See **Brahmaloka**.

smṛ ti ('that which is to be remembered'):

If the Vedas are called 'ś ruti' ('that which is heard') and accepted as the primary authority in religio-spiritual matters, the works of Manu, Parā ś ara and Yā jñavalkya as also a host of similar books which are dependent works that remind us about the basic teachings of the Vedas (smṛ = to remember) and build further upon them, are known as 'smṛ tis'. However, whenever there seems to be a conflict between the ś ruti and smṛ tis in any aspect of teaching, the latter is discarded in favour of the former.

sat-cit-ā nanda ('existence-consciousness-bliss'):

Ītman-Brahman, the Absolute, the basis of all that exists and by knowing which everything else is known is described as sat (eternal existence), cit (eternal consciousness) and ā nanda (eternal bliss). These three are not its qualities or characteristics but its essential nature; and they are, in the ultimate analysis, not different from one another.

See **svarū palakṣ aṇ a**.

Ś ruti ('what is heard')

The Vedas are called 'ś ruti' since they are considered by the traditionalists as

`ś ruta' or 'heard' by the ṛ ṣ is or sages in the depths of their mystical experience. Also, the Vedas have always been taught by word of mouth, the disciples learning them after *hearing* them uttered by their teacher.

svarū palakṣ aṇ a ('essential characteristic'):

According to the Advaita Vedā nta the integral or essential characteristic (svarū palakṣ aṇ a) of Brahman is `sat-cit-ā nanda' (existence-consciousness-bliss) whereas the `taṭ asthalakṣ aṇ a' (accidental characteristics) are that it is responsible for creation, preservation and dissolution of this world. An example can make these ideas more clear.

While indicating the house of Devadatta, one can point out the direction of its location through the extended branch of a mango tree nearby. The house itself may then be described as built of bricks with a tiled roofing and green in colour. The former (the mango tree and its branch) stands for the taṭ asthalakṣ aṇ a and the latter for the svarū palakṣ aṇ a.

It should be noted that the taṭ asthalakṣ aṇ a has nothing to do with the object described though it certainly helps in locating or recognizing it.

T

Tamas ('the dark one')

It is the last of the three guṇ as comprising ajñā na or ignorance. Its main characteristics are sleep, indolence, darkness and inclination towards evil.

Tanmā tras ('that only'):

The five primordial elements that manifest from the ítman associated with ajñā na or ignorance are called `tan-mā tras' since each of them contains one quality and is only *that* quality. For instance, the primordial element ā kā ś a has only ś abda (sound or vibration) as its characteristic and hence called `ś abda-tanmā tra.' The other elements are: sparś a-tanmā tra or vā yu (air), rū pa-tanmā tra or agni (fire), rasa-tanmā tra or ā pas (water), and gandha-tanmā tra or pṛ thvī (earth). These tanmā tras are also called `sū kṣ mabhū tas' (subtle elements) or `apañcī kṛ ta-bhū tas' (uncompounded elements). Further creation takes place out of them, associated, of course, with the ítman.

Tapas ('that which burns'):

Tapas or austerity is the third of the five disciplines listed under yama which itself is the second limb of the aṣṭāṅgayoga of Patañjali. The austerity pertains to body, speech and mind.

taṭastha-lakṣaṇa:

See **svarūpalakṣaṇa** for details.

titikṣā ('forbearance'):

Titikṣā or forbearance of all pairs of opposites, of all sufferings, without reaction or murmur, is the fourth discipline listed under śamādiṣṭka.

triguṇātmaka ('comprising the three guṇas'):

Ajñāna or ignorance or nescience is said to be 'triguṇātmaka' since it consists of the three guṇas sattva, rajas, and tamas.

Trividhaśarīra ('three kinds of bodies'):

It refers to the sthūla, sūkṣma and kāraṇaśarīras or the gross, subtle and causal bodies that cover and bind the jīva, the individual soul.

tuṛīya

('the fourth'):

Since the itman/Brahman, the pure caitanya or consciousness, is beyond the three states of consciousness experienced by the jīva, the bound individual soul, it is called the 'tuṛīya' or the fourth.

tvak

('the skin'):

It is the organ of touch, the skin, one of the five jñānendriyas or organs of knowledge, born of the sattva-aspect of vāyutanmātra.

U

Udāna ('breathing upwards'):

It is the fourth of a series of five prāṇas (the five vital airs). It is situated in the throat with its movement poised upwards. It is this vital air that helps the jīva leave the body at the time of death.

Udbhijja ('shooting forth'):

The last of the four kinds of bodies produced in creation, it represents the plant kingdom since the seeds while germinating 'shoot up' breaking the earth above them.

upa-prā ṇ as ('subsidiary prā ṇ as'):

The five subsidiary prā ṇ as or vital airs are: nā ga, kū rma, kṛ kala, devadatta and dhanañjaya. See under each for details.

Upā dhi ('limiting adjunct'):

Any adventitious object which apparently influences something else to appear differently from what it really is, is 'upā dhi'. For instance, a red flower near a colourless crystal makes it appear as red. The red flower is called an 'upā dhi' for the crystal. Similarly the body-mind complex is an upā dhi for the ítman (the individual soul) making it appear as the jī va (the limited transmigrating self) and the world is an upā dhi for Brahman, the Absolute, who has nothing to do with creation.

upakrama-upasaṁ hā ra ('introduction and conclusion'):

It is the first of the ṣ aḍ vidha-liṅ gas or six characteristic signs by which the true import of the scriptures is determined. It means presentation of the subject matter of a section at its beginning and its end.

Upamā na ('comparison'):

It is one of the six sources of knowledge accepted by the Mī mā ṁ sā and the Advaita Vedā nta systems. It is the knowledge of an object seen now, gained by comparing it with a previously seen or known object. If a person has learnt that an animal called 'gavaya' lives generally in forests, that it looks almost like a cow but with certain different features and sees one in a forest he visits, he can immediately recognize it as a 'gavaya' by remembering the cow he has seen earlier and comparing its features with this new animal. This knowledge is thus got by upamā na or comparison.

Upaniṣ ad ('sacred wisdom'):

Spiritual wisdom learnt by a disciple sitting at the feet of the guru or the preceptor, as described in the Vedas is 'Upaniṣ ad'. Literally, it signifies brahmavidyā or ā tmavidyā (knowledge of Brahman or the ítman) that loosens the bonds of saṁ sā ra, destroys ajñā na or ignorance and leads to Brahman/ ítman.

There are several Upaniṣ ads which form the end portions of the Vedas and hence called `Vedā nta'. Upaniṣ ads are the basis of the Vedā nta-systems.

Upapatti (`reasoning'):

Last of the ṣ aḍ vidha-liṅ gas or six characteristic signs by which the correct import of the scriptures is determined, upapatti is logic and reasoning in support of the subject matter.

Uparati (`cessation'):

It is the cessation of the external organs (eye etc.,) restrained earlier, from the pursuit of objects inimical to ś ravaṇ a (hearing) etc.

Upā sanā (`sitting near' or `meditation'):

(1) It is defined as meditation on Saguṇ a Brahman, Brahman with attributes, as prescribed in the scriptures. It is one of the means of purifying one's mind.

(2) Though the word literally means `sitting near' (upa = near, ā sana = being seated), it in effect means `sitting near God' or `feeling the presence of God or a deity'. It is commonly used to indicate meditation on a deity or on a rite in a symbolical way. According to Advaita Vedā nta such upā sanā s may lead to higher worlds but not to mokṣ a or liberation.

Upastha (`that which is near' or `the organ of generation'):

Organs of reproduction are called `upastha' and are one of the five karmendriyas or organs of action. They are products of the rajas-aspect of the pṛ thivī -tanmā tra or the primordial element, earth.

V

Vā cyā rtha (`direct meaning'):

It is the direct meaning of a sentence, the first of a series of three meanings possible. For example, `Bring the cow.' In this sentence there is only a simple direct meaning and no suggestions or implications are involved.

Vairā gya (`detachment'):

Vairā gya or renunciation or the spirit of detachment is the second of the four sā dhanā s listed under sā dhana-catuṣ ṭ aya. It is a natural consequence of viveka or discrimination. It pertains to all objects of pleasure whether of this world or of the next.

Vaiś vā nara ('the Universal in human beings'):

The pure caitanya when associated with the totality of gross bodies of creation (samaṣ ṭ isthū laś aī ra) is called 'Vaiś vā nara' or 'Virā ṭ '.

Vā k ('the speech'):

The organ of speech or vā gindriya is one of the five karmendriyas or organs of action. It is the product of the rajas-aspect of the tanmā tra ā kā ś a or ether.

Vā rtikaprasthā na:

See **Bhā matī prasthā na**.

Vā yu ('the wind or air'):

At the subtle level, it is the sparś a-tanmā tra. At the gross level, it is the mahā bhū ta vā yu or air, produced by pañcī karaṇ a or quintuplication. As tanmā tra, it gives rise to the organ of touch, the skin.

Vedā ṅ gas ('parts of Veda'):

To understand the real meaning of the Vedas, six subsidiary branches of knowledge need to be studied. They are: Ś ikṣ ā (phonetics), Chandas (metre), Vyā karaṇ a (grammar), Nirukta (etymology), Jyotiṣ a (astronomy) and Kalpa (ritualistic practices). These are called the 'Vedā ṅ gas' or subsidiary sciences connected with the Vedas.

Vedā nta ('the end or essence of Veda'):

The Upaniṣ ads (and allied literature) are called Vedā nta because they come at the end of the Vedas and contain the essence of Vedic teachings. They also point towards the goal of life.

Vedā nta-sū tras ('Aphorisms on Vedā nta'):

See **Brahma Sū tras**.

Vedas ('knowledge'):

Derived from the root-verb 'vid,' 'to know,' the word 'Veda' means 'knowledge'. However, it is used in a more technical sense to indicate the four basic scriptures of Hinduism: The *R̥ gveda*, the *Yajurveda*, the *Sā maveda* and the *Atharvaveda*. Each of these is again divided into four parts, the last of which deals with philosophy and is known as the 'Upaniṣ ad' or the 'Vedā nta'.

videha-mukti ('liberation after death'):

Even after obtaining the knowledge of the *ítman*, the body may continue due to the past momentum of actions. When the body dies, it gets resolved into the original causes. The subtle body also gets disintegrated. Then the soul attains final liberation. This is known as 'videha-mukti.'

Vijñā na ('consciousness'):

Meaning 'awareness' or 'consciousness' the word is generally used to indicate the essential nature of Brahman/*ítman* (= *cit*). It is also used sometimes to describe the *jī va* or the individual self.

Vijñā namayakoś a ('sheath of intellect'):

The *buddhi* or intellect along with the five *jñā nendriyas* or organs of knowledge forms the *vijñā namayakoś a* or the sheath of intellect. It is called a *koś a* or the sheath since it covers and hides the knowledge of the *ítman*.

Vikalpa ('doubt or alternative'):

The word is commonly used in Vedā ntic literature to describe the nature of the mind. *Manas* or the mind is said to be that aspect of *citta* or the mind-stuff which functions as *sañ kalpa* (resolve) and *vikalpa* (doubt). The word *vikalpa* is also used to indicate an alternative.

Vikā ra ('modification'):

According to the Sā ñ khya school of philosophy, any modification of the original unmodified substance called *pradhā na* or *prakṛ ti* is a 'vikā ra'. An apparent transformation of the Absolute into the relative, an alteration from the natural form or state of a substance is also a 'vikā ra'. For instance, curds are a *vikā ra* of milk. Advaita Vedā nta, however, does not accept the world to be a 'vikā ra' of Brahman, but only a 'vivarta.'

vikṣ epa ('throwing up'):

It is the second power of *ajñā na* or ignorance, the first one being *ā varaṇ a* or covering. It projects the object, upon which it acts, as something other than what it is. Like semi-darkness making a rope appear as a snake, this power makes the universe appear in Brahman.

virā ṭ ('the big'):

See **vaiś vā nara**.

viṣ aya ('subject'):

The subject matter of a Vedāntic treatise, viṣ aya is the second of the anubandha-catuṣ ṭ aya or the four preliminaries.

See also **anubandha-catuṣ ṭ aya**.

viś eṣ aṇ a and viś eṣ ya ('an adjective and the substantive'):

This is one of the three relations that can exist between two words. When we say, 'This is a red hibiscus flower,' the word 'red' is the viś eṣ aṇ a or the quality (an adjective) qualifying the hibiscus flower which is the viś eṣ ya or the noun or the substantive. While interpreting the sentence *tat tvam asi*, 'Thou art That,' the word 'thou' is not accepted by the Advaita Vedānta as a viś eṣ aṇ a of 'That' as some schools contend.

Viś va ('one who has entered'):

The caitanya or pure consciousness when identified with the individual gross body and in the waking state, is called 'viś va.' To put in another way, it is the jī va in the jā grat or waking state.

Vivaraṇ a-prasthā na:

See **Bhā matī -prasthā na**.

Vivartavā da ('the doctrine of apparent transformation'):

The basic cause of an erroneous perception, as that of a snake in rope, is called ajñā na or avidyā . It has two powers: ā varaṇ aś akti (veiling power) and vikṣ epaś akti (transforming power). It veils the real nature of the rope and apparently transforms it into a snake. This apparently transformed object is called a 'vivarta' of the original and the theory that propounds it is known as **vivartavā da**.

Viveka ('discrimination'):

Viveka or discrimination between the real and the unreal, is the first of the four sādhanā s called 'sā dhana-catuṣ ṭ aya.' It leads to vairā gya or renunciation.

vṛ tti ('modification'):

The nature of the citta or the mind-stuff is to constantly rise in the form of vṛ ttis or waves. They are obstacles to yoga or perfect concentration on the ĩtman or the Self.

However, by making these vṛttis take the form of the ítman (Brahman) one can attain the ítman (Brahman) in course of time.

vyañ gyā rtha ('suggested meaning'):

When a word has several meanings but the other words used along with it help us to fix it, it is called 'vyañ gyā rtha.' For instance, in the sentence 'Hari is with ś añ kha and cakra (conch and discus)' it is Lord Nā rā yaṇ a that is understood as the meaning of the word 'Hari,' even though the word has several other meanings like a monkey, a lion, etc., because the words 'ś añ kha' and 'cakra' help us to fix it, by suggesting it.

vyaṣ ṭ i ('the individual aspect'):

The word has been used with respect to ajñā na or ignorance. Ajñā na is many when looked at from the standpoint of the individuals.

vyā vahā rika:

See **pā ramā rthika**.

Vyutthā na ('risen'):

It is the normal state of consciousness to which the yogi returns after having risen from samā dhi or total absorption.

Y

Yama ('restraint'):

Yama is the first step of the eight-limbed Yoga. It consists of ahim sā (non-injury), satya (truth), asteya (non-stealing), brahmacarya (continence or celibacy) and aparigraha (non-acceptance of gifts). See under each for details.

Yoga ('union [of the individual soul with the Supreme Soul] '):

The word 'yoga' derived from the root *yuj* has two senses: samā dhi or superconscious experience through perfect concentration of the mind; yoking or uniting the individual self with God. The aṣ ṭ ā ñ ga-yoga of Patañjali which is also known as Yoga has been accepted as a mode of sā dhanā though its philosophy (practically the same as that of the Sā ñ khya system) is not, by the Vedā nta systems.

ADDENDUM

Sthū laś arī ra ('gross body')

Sthū laś arī ra is the first of the three ś arī ras or bodies which bind the jī va or the individual soul. It is the gross body or the physical body that comes into being at birth, is nourished by anna or food-hence called `annamayakoś a' also-and is destroyed on death.

sū kṣ maś arī ra ('subtle body')

It is this body of the jiva that is primarily responsible for its transmigration. It comprises three koś as or sheaths viz., prā ṇ amaya, manomaya, and vijñā namaya. They contain, respectively, the five karmendriyas (organs of action), the five prā ṇ as (vital airs), the five jñā nendriyas (organs of knowledge), manas or mind and buddhi or intellect.

Vyā na ('that which moves in all directions')

The middle one of the five prā ṇ as or vital airs, vyā na pervades the whole body and supplies the necessary energy to do hard work like running or bending a bow.

APPENDIX

SADĀ NANDA'S VEDĀ NTASĀ RA

Mokṣ a or liberation from transmigratory existence is the final goal of human life. Hence it is also called parama-puruṣ ā rtha ('the highest of the ends desired by human beings'). The mortal who attains to that state becomes immortal. He dives and swims in the ocean of bliss, he gets dissolved in it. Who would not wish to get such a beatific experience? However, none can get it without striving for it. There can be no siddhi (fulfilment) without sā dhanā (the means). That is why our philosophical treatises which keep before us the paramapuruṣ ā rtha, give as much importance to sā dhanā as to intellectual speculation. In fact, this is the reason for calling them darś anas. Darś ana means seeing, direct experience. The ṛ ṣ is (sages) `saw' the Highest Truth, experienced not only the nature of that Truth but also the path that leads to It. That is why these treatises were called darś anas. This is the fundamental difference between our darś anas and the philosophies of the West.

Among such darś anas, the Ā stika Darś anas- those which accept the supreme

authority of the Vedas-are six in number. They are: Nyā ya, Vaiś eṣ ika, Sā ñ khya, Yoga, Mī mā ñ sā and Vedā nta. Vedā nta, the last of these, is the crowning glory of the Indian philosophical systems. It depends mainly on the Upaniṣ ads. There are three main branches in Vedā nta, the result of three types of traditions: Advaita, Viś iṣ ṭ ā dvaita and Dvaita. Among these, Advaita seems to have been more popular and gathered greater number of followers. Starting with Gauḍ apā da and Ś aṅ kara, this tradition has flourished continuously for 1,400 years and has produced hundreds of works. Some of these works have been written as commentaries on the Prasthā natraya.* Others have come down as glosses and explanations of the main commentaries. When the arguments put forward in these works to defend their thought were criticized by other schools, newer works-mainly dialectical-to counter them, had to be written. Apart from these, which were meant exclusively for the intellectual elite, simpler works for the benefit of common people were also composed. Such works were called prakaraṇ as. Sadā nanda's *Vedā ntasā ra* has a special place among such prakaraṇ as.

Not much is known about this Sadā nanda. Scholars opine that he probably lived at the end of the 15th century or the beginning of the 16th. He was the paramaguru (guru's guru) of Nṛ siṃ ha Sarasvatī , the author of *Subodhinī* , one of the well-known glosses on the *Vedā ntasā ra*. Two more Sadā nandas are known to us : Sadā nanda Kā ś mī raka, the author of *Advaita-brahma-siddhi*, Sadā nanda Vyā sa, the composer of the work *Advaita-siddhā nta-sā ra*. Scholars are undecided whether all these three are the same person or are different. However there are no two opinions about the beauty and the speciality of this work, *Vedā ntasā ra*, for the following reasons:

1. It pays greater attention to the prameya (the things to be known) which are more relevant to the spiritual aspirants, than to the pramā ṇ as (methods of knowledge).
2. It refers briefly to the post-Ś aṅ kara schools of Advaita.
3. It deals in great detail with the interpretation of the famous Vedā ntic dictum, *tat tvam asi*.
4. It considers the Yoga of Patañjali as an integral part of nididhyā sana

(meditation).

Though short, this work has been very popular among the students of Advaita Vedānta. The five commentaries that are available on it are proof of this. They are:

- (a) *Bālabodhinī* of Āpadeva;
- (b) *Subodhinī* of Nṛsiṃha Sarasvatī;
- (c) *Vidvanmanorañjanī* of Rāmatīrtha;
- (d) *Vedāntasāra-ṭīkā* by an unknown author;
- (e) *Vedāntasāra-vyākhyā* by Rāmacandrānanda Sarasvatī.

Among these, the first three have been printed. The other two are available in manuscript form in some Oriental libraries.

The contents of this work may now be summarized as follows:

The word 'Vedānta' indicates the Upaniṣads which contain the quintessence of the Vedas, the *Brahmasūtras* of Bādarāyaṇa, the *Bhagavadgītā* and all other works which follow the spirit of these. The Vedānta philosophy describes not only the nature of the Truth but also the path that leads to its experience. But one who desires to follow it should have first cleansed his mind by the proper study of the Vedas and by the performance of the various karmas (rituals) and upāsanās (meditations) prescribed in them. After thus attaining a certain degree of purity of mind, he should now take up the practice of sādhanā-catuṣṭaya or the fourfold spiritual practice. It consists of: viveka (discrimination), vairāgya (renunciation), śama-dīpaka (group of six virtues beginning with śama or peace of mind and ending with śraddhā or faith), and mumukṣutva (desire for emancipation).

Viveka is the knowledge that Brahman alone is real and eternal, and this world of attractive sense-pleasures is transient. This naturally produces vairāgya or spirit of renunciation towards the world. Then the aspirant tries to cultivate the six well-known virtues viz., śama (peace of mind), dama (self-control), uparati (withdrawal of the mind from the sense-objects), titikṣā (forbearance), samādhāna (concentration of mind) and śraddhā (faith). As a result of this, his mumukṣutva (desire for liberation) grows. Then he respectfully approaches a competent guru for instructions. He listens (śravaṇa) to the guru's teaching, reflects (manana) over them, and then meditates (nididhyāsana) on the Truth that emerges in his mind as a result. This ripens into

realization of his Ā tman or Self that has always been present in his heart, through the destruction of ajñā na (ignorance). As long as the prā rabdha-karma (the karma that is responsible for this birth) lasts, he continues to live in the body, but as a jī vanmukta (one who is free even while living). Then, when the body falls, he attains videha-mukti (freedom from rebirth).

When the disciple, who is a jijñā su (aspirant after Truth) and a mumukṣ u (aspirant after liberation) approaches the guru, the guru teaches him the Truth by following the method of adhyā ropa and apavā da. These are technical terms commonly used in Advaita literature. Adhyā ropa is also called adhyā sa. In semidarkness, we superimpose a snake on a rope due to the ignorance of the fact that it is a rope. Similarly, we superimpose this world on Brahman due to the ignorance of Its nature. This superimposition is adhyā ropa.

This ignorance, technically called ajñā na or avidyā , is neither `sat' (real) nor `asat' (unreal) nor even `sat-asat' (real-unreal). It is impossible to define it, though it is a fact of experience. Hence it is termed `anirvacanī ya' (indefinable). This ajñā na comprises three guṇ as (qualities) called sattva, rajas and tamas. Also, it is jñā navirodhī (opposed to knowledge) and bhā varū pa (positive).

This ajñā na has two powers: ā varaṇ a (concealment) and vikṣ epa (projection). Semidarkness conceals the real nature of the rope and makes it appear like a snake. Similarly, the ā varaṇ a-ś akti of ajñā na conceals the real nature of Brahman. Its vikṣ epa-ś akti projects the world appearance in the same.

The three aspects of the jī vā tman (individual self) viz., viś va, taijasa and prā jña; the three bodies-sthū la, sū kṣ ma and kā raṇ a; the five koś as (sheaths)-annamaya, prā ṇ amaya, manomaya, vijñā namaya and ā nandamaya; the three forms of Paramā tman, viz., Ī ś vara, Hiraṇ yagarbha and Virā ṭ ; the fourteen worlds beginning with bhū ; the bodies of the beings that inhabit them and the five elements that are their causes-all these are the products of ajñā na, the effect of its vikṣ epa-ś akti!

Through right perception, under the right circumstances, the snake is sublated and its substratum, the rope, is seen as it is. Similarly, when through pramā ṇ a (right means of knowledge), yukti (logic) and anubhava (experience) the world which is being

perceived in Brahman through ajñā na is sublated and its substratum Brahman is seen as It is, the method followed in doing so, is called apavā da or de-superimposition. Brahman appears to evolve into this world, as described in the Upaniṣ ads, in a particular order. In nididhyā sana one should meditate on this in the reverse direction and dissolve the world into Brahman. Then Brahman alone remains and the world totally disappears.

The most important fact that emerges out of this apavā da is that the jī va and Ī ś vara are the same in essence. It is exactly this that the mahā vā kyas (Great Sentences) of the Upaniṣ ads declare. Among these, the sentences *tat tvam asi* ('That thou art') and *aham brahmaasmi* ('I am Brahman') have been described and commented upon in great detail in the Vedā ntic works. Incidentally, the first sentence is called upadeś a-vā kya ('the sentence of teaching'); and the latter, anubhava-vā kya ('the sentence of experience'). In this work *Vedā ntaśā ra*, the method by which *tat tvam asi* is to be interpreted has been depicted in great detail.

As already described, the literal meaning of the sentence; *tat tvam asi*, is 'That thou art;' i.e., Ī ś vara, and jī va are the same, or identical. Since Ī ś vara, the Lord, and jī va, the individual soul, are poles apart, they can never be equal or identical in the literal sense. But the Vedā ntic sentence is our supreme authority in all supramundane matters. Hence we have to interpret this sentence not directly or literally but indirectly or by implication. Among several such implications called lakṣ aṇ as, the particular one known as bhā ga-lakṣ aṇ ā , (in which there is partial acceptance of the literal meaning, the rest being decided by implication) is adopted here for this purpose. ``So'yam devadattaḥ ", 'He is that Devadatta'-this is the oft-quoted example to prove the point.

If the Devadatta whom we saw yesterday at the market in a Western dress comes to our house this morning in Indian dress, we immediately recognize him as 'This is that Devadatta.' The person 'Devadatta' is accepted, rejecting the two different times, places, dresses and other accidental characteristics which are not the real aspects of the person. Similarly, in the sentence *tat tvam asi*, we should reject the accidental characteristics of Ī ś vara and the jī va (Ī ś vara is omnipotent and omniscient whereas the knowledge and powers of the jī va are very limited) and accept

only the fact that both are caitanya, or pure consciousness, which is the essential characteristic of both. It is only then that they can be termed 'identical.' The unity and identity of the two should be accepted only in this sense.

This identity has to be experienced and for this the aspirant has to perform *sā dhanā*. In this scheme of *sā dhanā*, *śravaṇa* comes first. *Śravaṇa* does not mean merely 'hearing.' It is listening attentively to the teachings of the Upaniṣads from the guru, and determining their correct meaning as per six liṅgas or rules of understanding, like *upakrama* (beginning), *upasaṁhāra* (conclusion) and so on. What has been understood thus should then be subjected to *manana*, intensive thinking, to dispel all possible doubts and to sustain it thoroughly through reason and logic. Once this *manana* becomes ripe it leads to *nididhyāna* or meditation on the nature of the *Ātman/Brahman* principle which has been the ultimate conclusion of *śravaṇa* and *manana*. The mind assumes the form of Brahman and flows on continuously. This is called *brahmākāvṛtti*. When this *nididhyāna* ripens, it results in *samādhi*, total absorption, giving superconscious experience.

Samādhi is of two types: *savikalpaka* (with modifications) and *nirvikalpaka* (without modifications). In the former, along with the perception of Brahman there is also an awareness of oneself and the awareness of the process of contemplation. It is similar to the dual consciousness involved in seeing a clay elephant wherein there is a simultaneous awareness of clay as well as the elephant. In the latter, there is the experience of Brahman only, the other two aspects of awareness (of oneself and of the process of contemplation) being transcended.

To attain such *nirvikalpaka samādhi*, it is necessary to undergo the eight steps of Yoga viz., *yama* (general discipline), *niyama* (particular discipline), *āsana* (posture), *prāṇāyāma* (control of vital force), *pratyāhāra* (self-withdrawal), *dhāraṇā* (concentration), *dhyāna* (meditation) and *samādhi* (total absorption). They will ultimately lead to the realization of Brahman.

Prārabdha (the residual karma that is responsible for this body in this birth) can be exhausted only through its experience. Hence if one gets realization of Brahman before death, then he attains the state called *jīvanmukti* (liberation while living). In this state, though he has his body and the sense-organs, he does not have the sense of

identification with them. Nor does he experience pleasure and pain through them as the ignorant do. The experience of Brahman is, of course, never interrupted. All the great and noble virtues come to him naturally and adorn him like ornaments.

Once the prārabdhā gets exhausted, the body falls. Since ajñāna and its effects have already been destroyed, he becomes one with Brahman and never again returns to this mundane existence. This is termed 'videhamukti.'