Penance is an easy medium to lead a living being towards spiritual uplift. Those who adopt austerity in life, sail across the ocean of the world smoothly i.e. get rid of the cycle of birth and death. Austerity is the only path to attain liberation. Tapa (penance) is of two folds;

a) Bahya Tapa (external austerities), referring to food and physical activities. The Bahaya Tapa - six external austerities which are:

Vivikta-Shayyasana - sitting and sleeping in a secluded place devoid of animate beings;

Kayaklesha - mortification of the body so long as the mind is not disturbed;

Vritti-Parisamkhyana - taking a mental vow to accept food from a house-holder only if certain conditions are fulfilled without letting anyone know about the vow;

Anashana - fasting, to give up all the four types of food for the sake of meditation;

Avamodarya - eating less than one's fill or less than one has appetite for.

Rasa-Parityaga - daily renunciation of one or more of six kinds of delicacies namely, ghee (clarified butter), milk, curd, sugar, salt and oil.

b) Abhyantara Tapa (internal austerities); referring to spiritual discipline. The Abhyantara Tapa - six kinds of internal austerities are:

Svadhyaaya - study of scriptures for getting rid of the ambition for name and fame, for 'Fame is the last infirmity of noble minds.'

Prayashchit - expiation or confession and repentance of sins;

Dhyana - concentration of mind and not to let the mind go astray;

Vaiyaprtyaya - rendering service to other saints, who have been rendered helpless due to sickness or old age;

Vyutsarga - giving up attachment to the body;

Vinya - reverence or modest behavior - to practice four types of humility in conduct.

The penance performed in a perfect way alone is real penance. Only such penance can be helpful to the monks to attain salvation - Moksha. Any other penance contrary to it is Bal tapa (ignorant penance). This ignorant penance is the cause of migration in the world.