

Satsanga with Sri Swami Veditatmananda Saraswati Arsha Vidya Gurukulam

AN OVERVIEW OF THE FOUR-FOLD QUALIFICATIONS

साधनानि - नित्यानित्यवस्तुविवेकेहामुत्रार्थफलभोगविराग- शमादिषट्कसम्पत्तिमुमुक्षुत्वानि ॥

sāadhanāni - nityānityavastuvivekehāmutrārthaphalabhogavirāga-śamādiṣaṭkasampattimumukṣutvāni.

The means to the attainment of knowledge are: discrimination between things permanent and transient; renunciation of the enjoyment of the fruits of actions in this world and the hereafter; six treasures, such as control of the mind and the desire for spiritual freedom [Vedāntasāra, 15].

There are four *sādhanas* or qualifications that can be described as being inner wealth. The scriptures suggest that we acquire this inner wealth. Therefore, they recommend the giving up of *kāmya-karma*, actions directed towards the acquisition of outer wealth, and *niṣiddha-karma*, actions that violate the rules of life in order to acquire material gains.

The beauty of inner wealth is that it is already there, only, it is obstructed, veiled, or enveloped in certain obstacles. This beauty and purity, which is already present, has to be invoked, manifested, or surfaced. It is comparable to water covered by a layer of moss; the water is not visible because the moss covers it, but when the moss is removed, the clear and pure water manifests itself. Similarly, the purity and cleanliness of our personalities is as though buried under a moss of reactions known as *pāpa* or obstacles; all we have to do is remove them so that our inherent inner beauty becomes manifest. Therefore, it is only proper that our lives be such that the beauty, which is within ourselves, becomes manifest. Vedanta points out the secret of life, which is that we already have whatever we are seeking. Not only is there *brahman*, but also, whatever we seek in life is right within ourselves because that is the nature of the Self; all we need to do is to make that Self manifest. Therefore, a life directed toward the manifestation of our own inner happiness, peace, and security is an intelligent life, whereas a life directed toward acquiring that happiness, peace, and security from the outside is a misdirected or misguided life.

Studying the scriptures is necessary in order to gain the correct view or vision of life. Living the life enjoined by the scriptures is conducive to this. When we study the scriptures, we do acquire a certain vision of life even if we do not necessarily understand the entire vision immediately. Hence, the qualified student is one who has studied the Vedas.

Viveka, discrimination

The first qualification is *viveka* or discrimination between the *nitya-vastu* and the *anitya-vastu*. *Vastu* is reality. The *nitya-vastu* is the permanent reality and the *anitya-vastu* is the ephemeral or impermanent reality. *Viveka* is

the ability to tell right from wrong, proper from improper, and the permanent from the impermanent. In the beginning, *viveka* aids in discriminating between *dharma* or right and *adharma* or wrong, and in knowing what one should or should not do. The human intellect has the ability to be discriminative, which, if used properly, leads to *vairāgya*.

Vairāgya, dispassion

The second qualification is *virāgaḥ*, a dispassion that arises naturally on account of *viveka*, which draws us away from the ephemeral, the impermanent, and the gross. We are naturally drawn toward that which is lasting and permanent. As the intellect or mind starts discriminating between the permanent and the impermanent, the question arises, 'what am I seeking?' I realize that what I am seeking is the permanent, the Self, which is *brahman* or God and that everything else is impermanent. This understanding is called *vairāgya* or dispassion. It arises when I become indifferent to all that is not useful to me or contradicts my pursuit of the permanent. There is dispassion for the impermanent because I am seeking the permanent. There is an understanding that the very seeking of the impermanent is a denial of the permanent.

The permanent and impermanent cannot be sought together; they are mutually exclusive. The mind can either run outward and be extroverted, or be abiding and introverted. The mind can be focused either on the non-Self or upon the Self. When I recognize that I hurt myself by running after the impermanent, a healthy or mature understanding about the non-Self or the impermanent arises and I gain dispassion and objectivity. Thus, *vairāgya* or dispassion means a passion for the permanent and a dispassion for the impermanent. We should understand that the mind always has passion for something. When it has passion for the impermanent, it does not have passion for the permanent. As it becomes free from the passion for the impermanent, it discovers a passion for the permanent, the Self. This is *virāgaḥ* or *vairāgya* and will be discussed again, later. From *vairāgya* arises the *śamādiṣaṭkasampattiḥ*.

Śamādiṣaṭkasampatti, the six-fold inner wealth

As a result of *vairāgya*, there arises from within a *sampatti* or inner wealth, the *śamādiṣaṭkasampatti* or six-fold inner wealth beginning with *śama*.

Śama

As I try to acquire *vairāgya*, I see that the mind continues to run after the impermanent on account of habitual error. Having a value for or understanding *vairāgya* is different from the actual practice of *vairāgya*. For example, I have a value for truth. I know what is gained by upholding truth and what is lost by compromising truth. Despite this understanding, I need to be alert to actually speak the truth. If I have been habitually speaking untruth, I need to be alert to restrain the mind from its habitual pattern. Similarly, a mind that has been in pursuit of the impermanent needs to be

restrained and reined in. It needs to be shown that what it is running after is impermanent and that what it is seeking is the permanent. This education of the mind is *śama*.

We accept two faculties within ourselves: the thinking faculty and the habitual or emotional faculty. *Viveka* and *vairāgya* arise in the thinking faculty or the intellect, alongside the impulsive and habitual running after things. Therefore, we should make the mind constantly see that what it is running after is impermanent. We do this by asking whether a particular action is going to give us what we are seeking. We know that when we act on impulse, all our wisdom is relegated to the background and is not useful at that time. When we make the mind see the futility of its pursuits, we can bring it back, not by force, but by education. This restraint of the mind is not through suppression, but education. In this way, the impulsive or habitual faculty learns to see what the thinking faculty sees. Slowly, we establish a harmony between the thinking faculty and the habitual or impulsive faculty.

Dama and Uparama

Dama is *śama* at the level of the sense organs, where there is a natural craving too. Here also, we make the mind see its futility and restrain it. As a result of *śama* and *dama*, the mind discovers an inner poise or silence and, slowly, it no longer wants to run outward. The state of the mind when it abides in the Self is called *uparama* or *uparati*.

Titikṣā

Titikṣā means endurance, forbearance, or forgiveness. It is to be exercised when others violate me. It is the ability to not get disturbed or perturbed by all the changing favorable and unfavorable situations around me.

Samādhānam

Samādhānam is constant alertness or focus. It is possible only when the mind has discovered *śama*, *dama*, *uparama* and *titikṣā*. The mind is able to maintain its focus to the extent that it is free from distractions. This single-pointedness enables me to maintain focus on my objective and ensures that whatever I do becomes a means to achieve that objective. This is a total offering of oneself to the goal or objective.

Śraddhā

Śraddhā is the inner disposition of accepting the statements of the scriptures readily, without any resistance, questioning, or doubt. The scriptures make sense to me and I feel they are true. The disposition of the mind that sees this truth is *śraddhā*. It is because of my *śraddhā* that I am able to have a natural trust, acceptance or faith in the scriptures and the teacher. It is the ultimate attunement with the scriptures and the teacher.

These qualifications are collectively known as the *śamādiṣaṭkasampattiḥ*. When *viveka* and *vairāgya*, discrimination and dispassion become part of one's natural disposition, the wealth of qualities within is revealed. The qualities of discrimination, dispassion, abidance, trust, faith, and devotion have only to be invoked.

Mumukṣutvam

Inner evolution or growth culminates in *mumukṣutvam*, an intense desire to be liberated from this bondage or sense of limitation. As long as our bondage or limitation does not bother us much, this teaching has only a limited impact. However, this teaching creates an intense desire for liberation, which itself is a great qualification. In fact, *mumukṣutvam* is the culmination of inner purification.

To sum up, the idea is that knowledge takes place only when these qualifications are present and does not take place when they are absent. This is what *sādhana*m or qualification means. When one listens to the scriptures after having acquired the four-fold qualifications, knowledge takes place. When the qualifications are not there, knowledge does not take place in spite of listening to the scriptures. The very act of listening or *śravaṇam* is conducive to the acquisition of these qualifications. The lack of qualifications is nothing but a product of ignorance. It is this ignorance that gives rise to the ego or individuality, which, in turn, gives rise to likes and dislikes and creates emotions and complexes. A constant exposure to the scriptures enables us to see the fallacy of our own notions. It is these notions and conclusions alone that restrain, restrict, and bind us. We become free from likes and dislikes as our understanding of the scriptures grows and to the extent that these false notions drop off. Therefore, it is said that one should listen to the scriptures again and again, *punaḥ punyena śravaṇam kuryāt*. Repeated exposure becomes an excellent means to acquire the four-fold qualifications. These qualifications and a maturity of the mind are required for this knowledge to take place¹.

¹ Based on Vedāntasāra lectures. Transcribed and edited by Malini, KK Davey and Jayshree Ramakrishnan.