



RAMĀ ŚAKTI MISSION

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To raise the mansion of life divine, the Sadhaka should first lay a very strong foundation of moral qualities and spiritual virtues. As a mason builds the structure of a building little by little, with bricks and mortar, so too, the spiritual aspirant, the builder of adhyatmic mansion, should go on accumulating virtues, developing faculties, cultivating devotion and practicing spiritual disciplines.

What is designated as Sadhana Chatushtaya in the vedantic discipline, and as yama-niyama in Ashtanga Yoga, is the strong moral foundation for a life of quest. Without ethical soundness and inward purity, one cannot pursue any path to God.

Samsara is in the chittha. Disciplines are also in the Chittha. The final transformation too is for the chittha. When the chittha is transformed into Chit, pure consciousness, one's samsaric career ends. Thus, as a purifying discipline for the chittha, Sadhana Chatushtaya is of primary importance for all God-seekers.

Sadhana Chatushtaya is a fourfold qualification prescribed for a Sadhaka competent for the Knowledge of Brahman. They are Discrimination; Dispassion; the treasure of a six attributes and intense yearning for liberation.

What is meant by Discrimination? It means a higher insight with which one is able to distinguish the permanent from the transient, the good from the evil, dharma from adharma, duty (karmavya) from the forbidden actions (nishiddha karma).

The permanent is only God, the Absolute; everything other than God, is unreal, a fleeting phenomenon, having birth and death, rise and fall, increase and decrease. Such is firm conviction, even in all the stress and strain of life, is the very pillar of strength for a Sadhaka. Continuance in quest is not possible unless one has a living faith in the Omnipotent.

That, which leads to an accumulation of merit (punya), to an increase in sattwa in one's own chittha and to a steady progress on the path towards God, is the good. That which is opposed to these, is evil. The good alone is conducive to mental peace and spiritual welfare. One should discriminate between good and evil and adhere only to the good.

To distinguish between dharma and adharma and to be able to remain steadfastly on the path of dharma, you need an insight coming from the grace of God. Dharma is the moral principle as well as right action. God-guided action, action flowing from the inner reservoir of sattwa, action performed in the light of awareness of Atman or God, is dharma. What is opposed to dharma, is adharma. Deflection from dharma is tantamount to adharma.

So also discrimination is required to do what should be done and to avoid what should not be done. What should be done is one's own duty, svadharma. Actions with selfish motivations (karma) and actions forbidden in the scriptures should never be done. Forbidden actions, nishiddha karma if done, constitute sin.



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That action by performing which one is enabled to move in the direction of God is duty. That, which takes you away from God that, which estranges you from His grace, is not duty. All duties are God-oriented, because, the supreme duty is to get united with God.

Until discrimination becomes a spiritual insight, one has to cultivate it by right thinking, right understanding, constant self-analysis, intense introspection and fervent prayer to God. The field where you have to apply your discrimination is within yourselves. It is your own mental world that obstructs your vision of God. It is in this inner world of passions that you have to discriminate. With regard to every mental mode of yours, every action of yours, you should use your discrimination power. The famous *neti neti* approach in the Upanishads, is an earnest process of self-analysis, investigation and inward diving.

By discrimination, the Sadhaka should isolate not only the outer physical upadhi, but every movement of their mind, even the subtlest ego-mode, knowing them all as unreal, as belonging to the category of the seen, 'drushya'. So too they should, while moving in the world of objects, withdraw their minds from the vishayas by fixing the attention on the Reality. Thus, inwardly and outwardly, they should disentangle themselves from the folds of prakrithi.

Though the intellect is employed in this process of discrimination, the power of discrimination must come from God. Discrimination is innate in every one, for the deepest being of every one, is God only. But the Sadhaka should be able to use it in times of need. For this, the divine grace or Guru's grace is essential. Therefore, an attitude of prayer and a disposition of humility should pervade all aspects of your spiritual quest.

Discrimination and dispassion (*viveka* and *vairagya*) are the two wings with which the aspirant, through grace of the Guru, soars up towards 'Chidakasha', the sky of pure consciousness. The light of *viveka* reveals that all pleasures including the pleasures of the highest heaven are transient, that everything except God is perishable. When this discriminative insight dawns, the mind ceases to have any attachment to any object in this world or in the next. Such a state of mind is called dispassion, *vairagya*. 'Raga' means attachment, *asakti*, to any sense object. *Vairagya* means absence of attachment to the sense objects.

Vairagya born of spiritual insight, alone is real and lasting. It is the blazing fire which reduces all desires into ashes. There is a temporary aversion to life when one meets with disappointments, defeat, loss of the near and dear ones, failure in business etc. This is not dispassion. This is a negative state of the frustrated mind. When circumstances become favorable, the same mind will return to enjoyment. Such a mind cannot become an instrument in the pursuit of the highest reality, God.

The treasure of six attributes is: *Shama*; *Dama*; *Uparathi*; *Thittheekasha*; *Shraddha*; and *Samadhana*. Actually, *Shraddha* is the basic virtue from which flow all other virtues. Hence it must occupy the first place among these attributes of *chittha*.

When the mind, as a result of either discrimination, or devotion to the Deity, withdraws itself from all sense objects and remains steadfastly on one's own Goal, that state is called 'Shama'. Until the *vasanas* perish in *Toto*, until perfect Enlightenment dawns, the



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outgoing tendency of the mind will linger on. Hence the watchful Sadhaka should restrain his own mind as and when it slips into the world of objects.

The jiva contacts and enjoys the world of objects through the mind, the five organs of knowledge and five organs of action. The Sadhaka, whose aim is self-mastery, should, not only restrain his mental movements, but also turn away both kinds of sense organs from their respective vishayas and keep them in their respective centers. This act of keeping the sense organs under control is called Dama. But one should use the sense organs in the discharge of his duty and in the pursuit of disciplines like 'shravana' (listening to Guru's teaching), svadhyaya (study of scripture) etc, which are an aid in Brahma Vidya.

By continued practice of self-control, either through discrimination or through devotional pursuit, the mind comes to a state of poise, a state in which it does not react to the external stimuli. This is the state of 'uparathi'. Uparathi is thus a higher activity which keeps the restrained organs and the disciplined mind from drifting back to the world of sense organs.

By cravings and continued indulgence of numberless births, vishaya vasana (worldly tendency) has become deep-seated in the chittha. When the forces of discrimination, dispassion, devotional exercises and self-control are all united together in the Sadhaka, these vasanas diminish in strength. The measure of success in uparathi is related to the extent of hold the vasanas have on the chittha. When all vasanas are wiped out the mind abides in the Reality as inseparable from it. Till then, the Sadhaka should never relax his efforts in controlling his mind and sense organs.

The main aspect of sadhana is to keep the mind in equanimity in all the stress and strain of life, in the midst of pleasures and sorrows, in the events of success and defeat, in the situations of trials and temptations. Undisturbed state of equanimity, 'samatwa', is itself yoga. The mind must come under one's perfect control. What does it mean? It means, as and when vrittis arise, one should be able to remain a witness without identifying oneself with any. This unbroken state of witness-hood, 'akhanda sakshitwa, is master of the mind. Identification with modes is bondage.

There is an inner connection between the subtle vasana and the perceptible sense objects. When the vasana becomes active, the mind and the organs indulge in enjoyment. So too, when the image of objects reaches the mind through the sense organs, the latent vasana gets stirred up. The vasana gets stimulated even through mere recollection of past enjoyment. Hence the Sadhaka should be attentive and be on guard in all moments. Restrain your sense organs and guard your thoughts. When sattwa guna prevails, even perception of sense objects may not agitate the vasana. But trust not your mind. Rajoguna may come to prevail at another time and then even least relaxation of self-control may lead Sadhaka to danger. Danger means fall from the ideal of self-control. The first phase in this fall is identification with the mental mode; the next is action itself, i.e., indulgence in adharma.

Self-control is indeed hard; you have to swim against the currents of lower nature operating in your own chittha. But it is not impossible. It is an exhilarating adventure for a man of strong resolve, for a man who has set his heart on God. One has to strive persistently. But fall is easy; indulgence needs no mental effort or intellectual tapasya.



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Once one slips from the path of restraint and righteousness, there is no depth to which he cannot fall. A false step makes even a mighty elephant fall. Sadhaka should be extremely watchful, alert and awake.

The next is 'thitheeksha'. Thitheeksha is the inward spiritual stamina, by which one bears all afflictions of life without anxiety, without lament, without complaint to man or God, without mental frustration, without even caring to redress the afflictions. Right understanding is there, behind the thitheeksha. This understanding is that, no one, except one's own past actions, are responsible for one's miseries. This understanding keeps the mind in tranquility. This is the reason why Mother stresses that knowledge is required at all stages of sadhana. Such is the mental poise of a man of thitheeksha that he does not even feel that he is suffering or is put to test.

That which makes one accept the word of the Guru and the teaching of the holy scriptures as truth and enables one to bring the teaching into one's conduct, 'acharana', that power is shraddha. Mother has already explained to you the nature and function of shraddha in spiritual life, in Her earlier discourses. By shraddha alone, the Sadhaka can proceed towards the experience of the Great Unknown, Brahman.

When the mind withdrawn from pleasures and restrained from pursuit of objects, remains concentrated on the supreme ideal of life, namely, Realization, when the intellect remains established in Brahman and Brahman alone, that state of self-settledness is called 'samadhana'. This means, mere intellectual knowledge of philosophy does not qualify one for Brahmavidya. Buddhi should remain fixed in Satyavasthu, everywhere, at all times, in all conditions. Then alone it is samadhana.

The last of virtues enumerated as 'Sadhana Chatushtaya', is 'mumukshutwa', intense yearning for liberation. When one is convinced that one's own ego is the cause of all miseries in one's life and the bondage of samsara, one yearns from the bottom of his heart, to secure release from the clutches of the ego. This yearning for freedom is called mumukshutwa.

As a man, scorched by thirst, runs restlessly in search of water, as a prisoner who feels the misery of imprisonment longs intensely for release, as a fish separated from water struggles to get back to the life-giving water, so too, the real aspirant, wearied of samsara, yearns for freedom.

These virtues and faculties, together forming the essence of 'sadaachara' (a life of noble conduct) constitute the foundation of spiritual life. Unless one acquires these virtues and faculties, one cannot become fit for Enlightenment. (To be continued in the next).