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**Sadhana Chatushthaya**

*(Foundation to Build an Exemplary Human Knowledge)*

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## **Abstract**

Home is the first school and parents are the first teachers – very much within the four walls. When the child is ready to go to school, the teachers take over the child’s future in some manner. An apt quote from the Upanishads reads: “Matru devo bhava, Pitru devo bhava, Acharya devo bhava, Atithi devo bhava.” Teachers referred to as Acharyas in this paper have an exalted status to shape the future of a child, the citizen of tomorrow. Our Upanishads from centuries ago had recognized and highlighted the role of an Acharya through the stories in the Shastras, or through Gurukuls where the students were imparted knowledge through a system of face-to-face education that was essentially residential in nature. With modern digital globalized world taking over all aspects of our lives including educational system and the curriculum, where the system has laid focus on rote learning where the scope is essentially a rat race for marks and merit rank, and not to enhance the child’s knowledge to ultimately become a good and responsible citizen. The race is for broken attention and instant gratification, while the emphasis should have been on laser-sharp focus and undivided attention and overall happiness. Pertinently, this paper aims at underlining four pillars of Sadhana as a means to cultivate ultimate knowledge.

**Keywords:** *Sadhana Chatushthaya*

## **Introduction**

Sadhana Chatushtaya – Illustrates a sequence of steps or means of practice that are outlined in the teachings of Vedanta. They must be cultivated on the path to self-realization and form the foundation for deeper understanding and development. Applying the same principles to our educational framework, with enhanced focus on both the teachers and students make for a holistic development that will benefit the family in particular, the society as a whole, and our country in a larger context.

The diversions are too many, the indulgences multiply, and the gratifications are unending. A student is caught in this whirlpool and is easily misled and misdirected. The need of the hour is to embed in a strong substratum of eternal happiness which can be brought into mainstream through our education system in the form of NEP2020.

Like already stated, the digital platforms with electronic devices in the form of mobiles has become ubiquitous and all-pervading. With literally a veil, hiding behind the walls in a virtual world of facebooks and the twitters and the instagrans, has made the younger generation extremely vulnerable to survive in a real world.

The students need a strong foundation on which they can build their entire career where life skills are the tools, sky is the limit, the horizon is the scope, and the ocean of knowledge to soak them in eternal happiness.

## Discussion

Digital platforms and mobile phones have wreaked havoc in our lives, honestly discounting the benefits derived by the society at large. They have made the four walls collapse to move closer making the environment extremely claustrophobic which has resulted in lack of collaboration, empathy, teamwork, among other things that are counter-intuitive to the growth of individuals as a societal being.

The number of followers on social platforms, the number of likes when something is posted, and a few others have led to a fall in the moral standards which has rendered the human being with a difficult proposition to survive in a real world. In a real world where interactions need to happen, decisions need to be made through collaboration, emotions need to be controlled to prevent caustic environment, the human beings are unable to discern and follow the path of righteousness. They are willing to make a quick compromise to get the task done but then not in an ideal fashion which result in synergy.

The end result is that mental health has been impacted, many are dealing with stress and medical intervention for treatment, and in the overall scheme of things a very unhealthy environment has been created that only increases sadness and cruelty. This indeed is a perfect storm to leverage our teachings from the Vedas and Upanishads, which have essentially stood the test of time. Sadhana Chatushtaya, illustrates a true body of knowledge, essentially a sequence of steps or means of practice that are outlined in the teachings of Vedanta. Applying those principles to our educational framework, with enhanced focus on both the teachers and students make for a holistic development that will benefit the family in particular, the society as a whole, and our country in a larger context

Sadhana Chatushtaya as a body of knowledge extols the following:

1. Discrimination or Viveka - describes the cultivation of the ability to discern between what is real and what is not real. *In the context of this paper, it is to help develop a student's ability to discern what one should pursue for holistic development to be happy where the basic needs are met, and not to go after desires that are never-ending and lead to unhappiness*
2. Non-attachment or Vairagya - once the practitioner has discrimination, one can reduce their attractions and aversions, helping them to become more dispassionate. *In the context of this paper, it is to help develop a student's ability to detach from attractions that are more commercial and hence only for instant gratification, and instead value the true essence of life to follow dharma with no attachment to fruits*

3. Six virtues or Shatsampat - these attitudes and areas of mental training are cultivated in order to bring equilibrium to the mind and emotions. They are tranquillity, training of the senses, withdrawal, forbearance, faith, and focus. Together these allow the mind to enter deeper states of contemplation and meditation. *In the context of this paper, it helps the student to develop inner peace and true happiness that is available within his reach, rather than go in search of it in outside world where it is only illusory and transient*
4. Longing or mumukshutva - this is the great desire for enlightenment and liberation which eventually subsumes all other more superficial desires. *In the context of this paper, it helps the student to develop a burning desire to be a well-rounded responsible citizen of our country in a righteous path with a focus to benefit oneself and the society.*

The above four (4) are briefly discussed below to provide an insight into how this will help in the context of this paper:

1. **Viveka** means a thorough understanding and the ability to discern between what is real and what is not. There may be many rewards in the system like securing a rank in final exam, the recognition with a reward, a high-paying job opportunity, the purchase of a car, etc. that are truly temporary in nature. These things are important no doubt, but to dwell and indulge to achieve these temporary gratifications lead a man astray. Eternal happiness is the ultimate truth and that prods a student to evaluate available options for leading a righteous path with absolute adherence to karma and dharma.
2. **Vairagya** is most essential.
  - a. If the student has developed clarity that all achievements are temporary and should lead him to the eternal path of happiness, then one is not going to develop an ego and a sense of "I did it."
  - b. We do use our sense organs to gain external knowledge by viewing external objects, but when there is good understanding that whatever was created is bound to perish then the person will look at what begets larger and permanent happiness. It will help the person to view things in a more neutral manner without attaching a significant value; while at the same time the value is in understanding the all-encompassing eternal happiness which will then make him tread the path of righteousness and dharma.
  - c. Honourable persons are afraid of being poor, powerful people are afraid of their enemies, virtuous people are afraid of wicked persons, young people are afraid of losing their beauty, and so on and so

forth. In fact, everything in this World is linked in one way or other with fear, but only those persons who practise Vairagya (detachment from worldly desires) live without any fear. This fearlessness or Abhaya is only in Vairagya

3. **Shatsampat**, also called Shamadhi Shatka is a set of six sadhanas.

- a. **Shama** means the resting of the mind steadfastly on its Goal, and in the context of this paper is after having detached oneself from a manifold of sense-objects which offer temporary happiness, the individual is looking to be a perfect well-rounded individual valued by the society. Just as it is difficult to stop and hold air in one place, it is difficult to hold the mind in one place. Lord Krishna agrees and suggests that the solution offered for manonigraha or holding the mind steadfast in one place is to do abhyasa and practise vairagya. When one has to do abhyasa, a lot of effort has to be channelled even when it appears an unattainable task. For example, when one starts to do a new exercise initially there will be lot of stiffness in the body and lot of aches and pains too. After some time, the body will get accustomed to the exercise routine. Similarly, when one starts to do abhyasa of manonigraha, the mind will slowly come to control. One has to practise vairagya too. The reason mind is always turned outwards is due to the samskara of the mind which makes it run towards the external objects in order to satisfy one's needs and desires.
- b. **Dama** means bahyeindriyanigraha - external sense organs, namely eyes, ears, skin, tongue, and nose that need to be kept under control. These indriyas by intrinsic nature are active and are continuously communicating with the outside world to grasp their respective objects, and to stop to control them is difficult. But the control of these indriyas are essential. In certain aspects the mind too is controlled by the indriyas; it becomes that much more difficult for the mind to control the indriyas. In Upanishad, these indriyas are compared to horses. Just the way the intrinsic nature of horse is to run, these indriyas too run outwards towards their respective objects. Humans are drawn towards the external objects since the sense organs are attracted too to them. One has to control these bahyeindriyas and they have to be stabilized.
- c. **Uparati** means Uparamana the cessation of karma or freedom from karma. How can one stop from doing karma? Everyone has to do karma continuously to live, but one has to understand the reason

behind the karma. It is kama / desire in one's mind which makes one to do different karmas. Also, to offer all the work to the higher being and not being attached to the fruits help an individual to drive actions in a noble path

- d. **Titiksha** means forbearance. Due to the changing experiences both due to external and internal aspects, one should not change with them but remain a constant. One should remain unchanged in both sukha and dukkha, if not time and effort will be spent in trying to take care of that situation or experience. One should not sulk or lament in a suffering and waste one's time in thinking about it. In the context of this paper, if the student learns the big picture and focuses entirely on the same then will be able to overcome small obstacles or remain equipoised when rewarded for good small deeds. This leads to a better righteous path for goal achievement
  - e. **Shradha** means trust and faith in the words of Guru. The teacher always teaches good things for attainment of good goals. They act as well-wisher. Initially one may feel that what is being said is not suitable. Slowly one will come to understand that Guru is a true well-wisher, and one has to completely trust and stay firmly believed in their guidance even if the Shishya has any doubts. That the guidance is for a good outcome should be the firm belief. There should not be any doubts at any point in time since the final fruit is a firm outcome of being able to achieve eternal happiness by following steps in a righteous path
  - f. **Samadhana** means not the mere indulgence of thought but the constant concentration of the intellect on the ultimate truth, also called self-settledness. It suggests in placing buddhi / intellect in its right place. The emphasis is on the intellect to comprehend what is right and what is wrong in the path so one remains firmly entrenched in righteous actions.
4. **Mumukshutva** is the desire to understand ultimate happiness which makes one not waver from a righteous path. The constant guidance of the Acharya and staying firm with the belief that one is being guided on the right path to achieve the ultimate happiness makes this an enjoyable journey for the student.

## **Conclusion**

Sadhana Chatushtaya is a critical body of knowledge that helps a true student of Vedanta to achieve self-realization. But then in the context of this paper, a student in any school or college can derive maximum benefits to understand the scope of this and marinate in the same to achieve true benefits.

As has been discussed earlier in this paper, the digital intoxication is of the highest order in today's world. There are many benefits to be derived from the digital era. But like all things that come packaged with both good and bad, there is a tendency when you look around for this generation youngsters to quickly get misguided and fall into a trap. The trap is going after worldly desires, quick wins, unhealthy competition, mental stress, becoming a victim of medicine for quick relief, and so on and so forth. The body and the mind needs Digital Detox program and Sadhana Chatushtaya as a foundation offers the same.

But with Sadhana Chatushtaya being incorporated as body of knowledge or as a system of guidance within the precincts of an educational framework, it helps develop well-rounded individuals for whom it will act as a great leveller. A leveller to handle adversity in a better manner, a victory or a win in a right stride so that they develop an over-arching wholesome diet for better and healthy life.

We want good students guided well by good Acharyas taking the help of a good framework to produce good citizens of tomorrow for the country to reap good benefits in the long run. This is the righteous path derived from our age-old Indian knowledge system to benefit the new-age future citizens.