

The Purpose of Nididhyāsanam

by

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Traditionally, Sanyāsis are supposed to be Parivrājakāha, moving from village to village for eight months of a year. Even though this is not practiced now, traditionally Sanyāsis are supposed to live such a life.

And during the four months of the rainy seasons, they are supposed to live or stay in a village and teach Vedānta to the interested villagers available around. And these four months of rainy season, beginning with the Pournami day, are known as Guru Pūrnimā. Albeit this being done as a ritual, the orthodox Sanyāsis have reduced the four months of Chāturmāsya into two months and generally during these two months, Vedānta is being taught to the public.

In this talk we will discuss one topic of Vedānta. Naturally this talk is addressed to those students of Vedānta who have got a fairly good background of Vedāntik teaching. Today we will discuss the topic of Nididhyāsanam as a unique Vedāntik discipline.

Last year in 2008, while talking about the spiritual journey, we saw the two stages of Sādhana in the form of Karma Yoga and Jñāna Yoga. Karma Yoga is a preparation for Jñāna Yoga. And Jñāna Yoga leads to Jñānam and liberation – this was what we saw then. And this Jñāna Yoga discipline itself consists of three exercises known as *Shravanam*, *Mananam* and *Nididhyāsanam* with which we are all familiar.

The threefold Jñāna Yoga discipline

- ◆ *Shravanam* is defined as the Vedāntānām Tātparya Nirnayaha or extracting the essential teaching of Vedānta. Shravanam is also defined as consistent and systematic study of Vedāntik scriptures for a length of time under the guidance of a competent and live Āchārya.
- ◆ *Mananam* is defined as Yuktitaha Chintanam or logically dwelling upon the teaching until all my doubts with regards to the Vedāntik teaching are eliminated. Through the process of Mananam, I see the Vedāntik teaching as flawless and factual. Through the Mananam process, I or my intellect is able to see the Vedāntik message as flawless and factual only.
- ◆ *Nididhyāsanam* is the internalisation or assimilation of the teaching by dwelling

on the teaching in one way or the other. Nididhyāsanam is also defined as Brahma Abhyāsaha.

*Brahma Abhyāsaha Nididhyāsanam
Tat Chintanam Kathanam
Anyonyam Tat Prabodhanam
Etat Eka Paratvam Cha
Brahma Abhyāsaham Vidur Bhudhāhā*

Dwelling on the teaching in one way or the other, in the form of repeated listening or writing notes or trying to read the notes (!) or discussion with other students or sharing with someone. Or Nididhyāsanam can be in the form of a formal meditation also, as presented in the sixth chapter of the Bhagavad Gītā. Thus, Nididhyāsanam can be done formally or informally – the aim being assimilation of the teaching so that it is spontaneously available for me to access during the day-to-day transactions.

Thus Shāstram presents these three-fold Sādhanā in the Brhadāranyaka Upanishad in Maitreyi Brāhmanam where Yāgnavalkya advises Maitreyi. This is the process of Shravanam, Mananam and Nididhyāsanam which we already know.

Concepts of Karma and Stages in Moksha

And in parallel, Vedānta talks about the process of Moksha which is the destination or goal to be accomplished through the entire spiritual Sādhanā. And the process of Moksha is presented in the form of a few stages known as Jīvan Muktihi, Videha Muktihi and Samsāra Nivritti.

The Jīva or seeker starts as a Kartā [doer] endowed with three types of Karma – Sanchita Karma, Prārabdha Karma and Āgāmi Karma. This is the starting point of Jīva as a Samsārī [migrator].

- ◆ **Sanchita Karma** is all the Punyam [virtue] and Pāpam [sin] accumulated in millions of past Janma [births].
- ◆ **Prārabdha Karma** is that portion of Sanchita Karma which has been activated and which will fructify during the current Janma.
- ◆ **Āgāmi Karma** is what the Jīva accumulates during the current Janma through the good and bad actions.

Thus every Jīva starts with threefold Karma which makes him a Samsārī.

And when this Jīva gains knowledge through Vedānta Sādhanā, the knowledge destroys two Karmas – Sanchita and Āgāmi Karma. This Jñāni then has only Prārabdha Karma. And such a Jñāni has attained **Jīvan Muktihi**. Jīvan Muktihi is defined as possessing only one Karma excluding the other two Karmas. Therefore the life of Jīvan Muktihi is called Charama Janma. Charama Janma means that the Jñāni has avoided all future Janmāhā by destroying Sanchita and Āgāmi. Therefore the current Janma becomes the last Janma for a Jñāni. This is the next landmark where a Jīva attains Jīvan Muktihi.

And when this Jñāni Jīva, exhausts all the Prārabdha Karma, the current Janma and body caused by Prārabdha is destroyed and the death of a Jñāni Jīvan Muktihi is called **Videha Muktihi**. Videha Muktihi is defined as exhaustion of Prārabdha Karma also.

Hence the landmarks are – Jīva attains Jīvan Muktihi; there afterwards attains Videha Muktihi when the physical body drops.

After Videha Muktihi, the Jīva does not have any more Karma left out. Since no Karma is left, there is no reason for Punar Janma or coming back to this world with another body. This is called cessation of Samsāra. The word Samsāra means transmigration – migration from one body to another. Moksha is the culmination of transmigration.

And keeping this process of Moksha as the agenda, as the project alone, every seeker goes through Karma Yoga, Shravanam, Mananam and Nididhyāsanam. All this is already known to us and nothing new is being conveyed.

Affirmation of Brahmatva & negation of Jīvatva

In the Sādhanā that is done for attaining Moksha, the final stage of Sādhanā is said to be **Nididhyāsanam**. What we want to discuss is the uniqueness of Nididhyāsanam as the final stage of Sādhanā.

We saw that the purpose of Nididhyāsanam is internalising the teaching of Vedānta, And what is the teaching of Vedānta ? **Brahma Satyam Jagat Mithyā Jivo Brahmaiva Nā Paraha**. [Brahman is real, world is unreal and Jiva is Brahman alone]. This is the message conveyed through the Mahāvākyam **Tat Tvam Asi** [Thou art That].

The Upanishads are telling me that really speaking, I am Brahman only. **Tat Tvam Asi**. And taking myself as a Jīva is a false notion born out of my ignorance – ignorance of the fact that I am Brahman.

Therefore in Nididhyāsanam, I have to practice **two exercises**:

- ◆ one is **claiming Brahmatvam** [Brahman-ness] which is my real nature,
- ◆ simultaneously I should **negate my Jīvatvam** [Jīva-ness] as a misconception.

Hence Brahmatvam claiming is also important – I am Akartā [Non-doer], Abhoktā [Non-enjoyer] Brahman. And equally important is negation of my Jīvatvam because I know it is a misconception.

Invalidation of Moksha

And the negation of my Jīva status includes another thing as a corollary, which is a unique thing which we have to observe. The process of Moksha that we saw in the beginning in the form of Jīvan Muktihi, Videha Muktihi and Samsāra Nivritti – the entire process of Moksha is based on the idea that I am Jīva. This is because, the process of Moksha itself is discussed based on the assumption that I am a Jīva with three Karma. And based on the foundation that I am Jīva with three Karma, we talk about Jīvan Muktihi as freedom from two Karma and Videha Muktihi as freedom from three Karma and Samsāra Nivritti freedom from trans-migration. Thus, the entire process of Moksha is based on Jīvatvam.

Now in Nididhyāsanam, I am negating Jīvatvam itself as a misconception. This is very important. This means that the process of Moksha, which is based on Jīvatvam, must also be negated along with Jīvatvam. This is because the process of Moksha is valid only

based on Jīvatvam. Therefore Jīvatvam and process of Moksha are like two sides of one and the same coin. This means that negation of one thing should automatically include the negation of the other. Negation of Jīvatvam should automatically include the negation of the process of Moksha. That means that in Nididhyāsanam, the conventional and most popular Moksha must be negated and invalidated. Invalidation of the process of Moksha, invalidation of the conventional Moksha is very important part of Nididhyāsanam.

Invalidation of Jivanmuktihi – also

And when I invalidate the conventional Moksha, I should take away Jīvan Muktihi from my agenda. During Nididhyāsanam, I have to take away Jīvan Muktihi from my agenda because it is a misconception based on the Jīvatvam as my nature. Therefore Jīvan Muktihi cannot be a landmark. Similarly since Videha Muktihi is also based on the misconception of Jīvatvam, Videha Muktihi is also removed from the project or agenda. Samsāra Nivritti also is based on the misconception, and hence should also be dismissed during Nididhyāsanam.

1st Uniqueness of Nididhyāsanam — Invalidation Moksha

Therefore the first uniqueness of Nididhyāsanam is invalidation of the process of Moksha, invalidation of the conventional Moksha. The conventional Moksha must be seen as a Viparīta Bhāvanā. Or conventional Moksha must be seen as a temporary Adhyāropa [superimposition] given by Shāstram which will have to be negated at the time of Nididhyāsanam.

Therefore the first uniqueness of Nididhyāsanam is invalidation of Jīvan Muktihi, Videha Muktihi and Samsāra Nivritti and taking them away from my agenda. I can keep them in my agenda before coming to Nididhyāsanam. But once I come to Nididhyāsanam, I have to remove them from my agenda.

2nd Uniqueness of Nididhyāsanam — Invalidation of Sādhana Chatushtaya

The second uniqueness is that, while talking about Shravanam, Mananam and Nididhyāsanam, while studying different Vedāntik texts, all the scriptures talk about **Sādhana Chatushtaya Sampattihi** as the qualification of the student for the study of Vedānta. And by repeatedly studying different Vedāntik textbooks, the student forms an opinion that Sādhana Chatushtaya Sampattihi is a **condition** for Moksha. This the opinion unconsciously formed during the study of Vedāntik text.

During Nididhyāsanam, the student is assimilating the teaching of Vedānta or the Mahāvākyam. And what does the Mahāvākyam say ? Moksha is my nature. That means that I am Nitya Mukta Svarūpaha [Eternally free by nature]. Nature is that which is always available and which need not be accomplished and which cannot be lost. Moksha is my nature is the teaching of Mahāvākyam – which means that Moksha which is my nature, need not be accomplished and cannot be lost also. Being my nature, it does not depend upon any condition because the nature of a thing does not depend upon any condition.

Upon what condition does the heat of the fire depend ? Heat of the fire being the nature of the fire, is unconditional. Why do we say that nature is unconditional ? This is

because, whatever is unconditional is defined as the nature of a thing. This means that during Nididhyāsanam, ***I am internalising the teaching – that Moksha is my nature*** which does not depend on any blessed condition including Sādhana Chatushtaya Sampattihi.

Therefore in Nididhyāsanam, one should negate Sādhana Chatushtaya Sampattihi as a condition for Moksha. This is the second uniqueness of Nididhyāsanam. Until I come to Nididhyāsanam, I had the fixation that Sādhana Chatushtaya Sampattihi is a condition. But in Nididhyāsanam, one should deliberately negate Sādhana Chatushtaya Sampattihi as a condition of Moksha and claim Moksha as my unconditional nature. It may be a disturbing fact for some people but a disturbing fact is also a fact ! the adjective does not change the validity of a fact.

Hence, the second uniqueness of Nididhyāsanam, is invalidation of Sādhana Chatushtaya Sampattihi as a condition for Moksha.

3rd Uniqueness of Nididhyāsanam — Re-validation of Sādhana Chatushtaya

Third uniqueness. Re-validation of Sādhana Chatushtaya Sampattihi from another angle with slight modification. The previous uniqueness was invalidation of Sādhana Chatushtaya Sampattihi but the third uniqueness is re-validation. This is something that the Nididhyāsuhu, the one who practices Nididhyāsanam, must do.

Even though Sādhana Chatushtaya Sampattihi is not valid as a condition for Moksha, still the Sādhana Chatushtaya Sampattihi is very relevant from other different angles.

Firstly, Sādhana Chatushtaya Sampattihi or maintenance of Sādhana Chatushtayam is the best thanksgiving the Nididhyāsuhu must do to the Lord for bringing him up to Nididhyāsanam. Neglecting Sādhana Chatushtayam is the worst thanksgiving that one can do to Bhagavān.

Secondly Sādhana Chatushtayam maintenance is the best Guru Dakshinā [Gift] a Nididhyāsuhu can give to the Guru. Neglecting Sādhana Chatushtayam is the worst Guru Dakshinā a Nididhyāsuhu can give to a Guru. Therefore as a Guru Dakshinā, Nididhyāsuhu should maintain Sādhana Chatushtayam.

Thirdly, Sādhana Chatushtayam maintenance is the best positive publicity the Nididhyāsuhu can give to Vedānta. Therefore Vedānta Prachārārtham the Nididhyāsuhu has to maintain Sādhana Chatushtayam.

Finally, Sādhana Chatushtaya Sampattihi maintenance is the best service a Nididhyāsuhu can do to the world. Perfect Sādhana Chatushtayam is never possible. And even if there is a perfect Sādhana Chatushtayam, it will keep fluctuating all the time. But maintaining Sādhana Chatushtayam is the best service called Loka Seva.

Therefore the third uniqueness of Nididhyāsanam is the re-validation of Sādhana Chatushtayam as:

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| - Īshvara Kritajñatā | Thanksgiving to Lord (for bringing you to Nididhāsyasana) |
| - Guru Dakshinā | Best gift to the Guru |
| - Vedānta Prachāraha | Best positive publicity to Vedanta |
| - Loka Seva | Best service to the world |

Now, the Nididhyāsuhi should maintain Sādhana Chatushtayam, but in that there should be a slight modification in the fourth point of Viveka, Vairāgya, Shatka Sampattihi, Mumukshutvam. The Nididhyāsuhi must change the Mumukshutvam to Nitya Muktatvam [I am eternally free].

So the Nididhyāsuhi should maintain the Sādhana Chatushtayam in the forms of Viveka, Vairāgya, Shamādi Shatka Sampattihi and also maintain Nitya Muktatvam. This Nitya Muktatvam is for a different purpose of re-validation of Nididhyāsanam.

4th Uniqueness of Nididhyāsanam — Implication of Invalidating Moksha

The fourth and final uniqueness is this. When I come to Nididhyāsanam, I have negated the conventional Moksha. I have removed Moksha from my agenda. I may talk about Jīvan Muktihi, Videha Muktihi from an academic angle. But from my inner-most heart, as a Nididhyāsuhi, I have eliminated the conventional Moksha. Jīvan Muktihi is no more relevant to me because it is based on Jīvatvam which I don't believe as it is a misconception. I have eliminated Videha Muktihi, Samsāra Nivritti from my agenda since these are only provisional definitions which the Shāstram have only temporarily given. This is being given by the Shāstram from a Jīva point of view. But I have negated that conventional definition.

The real definition of Moksha — Svarūpa Avasthānam

Then the question arises – what is the real definition of Moksha ? If the conventional or provisional definition of Moksha has been eliminated by me from my dictionary, what then should be the revised definition of Moksha for the Nididhyāsuhi ? For all other people, the conventional definition of Moksha still applies. Moksha for the Nididhyāsuhi is no more Samsāra Nivritti but Moksha is called Svarūpa Avasthānam.

The revised and real definition of Moksha is Svarūpa Avasthānam. Svarūpa Avasthānam means claiming my real nature as constantly as possible. This is presented generally as internalising the five capsules.

The five capsules

These five capsules are

- ◆ – I am of the nature of eternal and all pervading consciousness.
- ◆ – I am the only source of permanent peace security and happiness.
- ◆ – By my mere presence, I give life to this material body and experience this material universe.
- ◆ – I am never affected by any event that happens in the material world or the material body.
- ◆ – By forgetting my real nature, I convert life into a Samsāra or burden or struggle. By remembering my nature, I convert the life into an entertainment.

Internalising the five capsules or remaining in binary format or Svarūpa Avasthānam, is the real Moksha. Thus having redefined the Moksha, my aim is always to see the whole

life as a wonderful entertainment.

And for assisting us with this, we have fantastic Mantrās and Shlokas. Some of the best ones are in the famous Kaivalya Upanishad which is worth getting by heart:

*mayyeva sakalam jātam mayi sarvam pratishthitam
mayi sarvam layam yāti tad brahmādvayam asmi aham*

“Everything is born in me, all things have their existence in me and everything merges back into me. I am that Brahman, the one without a second.”

Where is the question of “coming to Moksha” or “going to Moksha” etc. I am the Sarva Adhishthānam Brahma [Brahman, the substratum of all] and the whole world is a wonderful drama presented by My Māyā for my own entertainment.

Thus the fourth uniqueness of Nididhyāsanam is re-defining Moksha as Svarūpa Avasthānam.

Summary

Now, let us consolidate all the four types of uniqueness

1. Invalidation of the conventional Moksha. Conventional Moksha being Jīvan Muktihi, Videha Muktihi, Samattvam Nivritti.
2. Invalidation of Sādhana Chatushtaya Sampattihi as a condition for Moksha.
3. Re-validation of Sādhana Chatushtaya Sampattihi as Kritajñatā, Guru Dakshinā, Vedānta Prachāra, and as Loka Seva.
4. Re-definition of Moksha as Svarūpa Avasthānam : practicing binary format and remembering the five capsules of Vedānta.

Hari Om



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This blog contains the TRANSCRIPT of lectures of Swami Paramarthananda of Madras.

Please note that there is no substitute for Guru Mukha Dvara Shraavanam and this is the best way to appreciate the beauty of the topics and relish the clarity of delivery.

But for the benefit of others, these lectures are available in text format. Every attempt has been made to transcribe the lecture as accurately as possible. Any inadvertent errors are purely attributable to the blog owner.

Hari Om

About Me
aprameyaha

I am a student of Vedanta. Through this blog, I want everyone to benefit from the wonderful teachings of Swāmi Paramārthānanda.

Hari Om

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