

आदौ नित्यानित्यवस्तुविवेकः परिगण्यते ।
इहामुत्रफलभोगविरागस्तदनन्तरम् ।
शमादिषट्कसम्पत्तिर्मुक्षुत्वमिति स्फुटम् ॥ १९ ॥

*ādau nityānityavastuvivekaḥ pariganyate,
ihāmutraphalabhogavirāgastadanantaram,
śamādiṣaṭkasampattīrmumukṣutvamiti sphuṭam. (19)*

19. While enumerating the qualifications, first we count the ability to discriminate between the Real and the unreal; next comes a spirit of detachment from the enjoyment of the fruits of actions here and hereafter, after that is the group of six essentials such as śama and last is undoubtedly a burning desire for Liberation.

Here, in sequence, the Ācārya repeats the necessary attributes for a student who wants sure success on the spiritual path. While giving a rough outline of these, he elaborates upon the theme of viveka and vairāgya.

Though potentially there, viveka is not generally awakened in all men. However much actually intelligent the generation might be, it is the special privilege of a few to have the subtlety of intellect to delve deep into things and happenings and discriminate between the true and the false. Those who are sufficiently evolved, exhibit a greater keenness of intellect but those who do not have it, should not despair. For, it is not a God given bonus which comes to us from the heavens but it is the aroma of a well-developed and integrated mind and intellect. Where there is a large amount of viveka, it is safe to presume that the individual has a fairly well integrated personality.

Running away from life in cowardice, retiring to a jungle in languor of intellect, unappreciation of things around and about us, denial of the bare necessities of the body – these are not vairāgya. Many educated paṇḍitas too, tell us that detachment means a life of complete mourning and bereavement; an unnatural existence, which has nothing to do with the life lived by others in society. This interpretation is quite wrong and harmful.

As a result of one's discriminative capacity when one differentiates between the Real and the unreal in the world outside or in the world within, all false values automatically drop off. When once a thing is understood to be full of bitterness, pain and imperfection, rare is the man who will continue to court it.

Invariably, we run after a thing only when we hope to get out of it a greater fulfilment of joy or peace. Once we come to the intellectual appreciation that the object is riddled with sorrow, our immediate attempt would be to get rid of it.

Thus vairāgya born out of viveka is what is meant by 'detachment'. In fact, vairāgya is the fulfilment of viveka and wherever the former is strong, the latter gains in essence and efficiency.

Therefore, when Śaṅkara defines 'vairāgya', in the vocabulary of his times, as 'detachment from all the fruits of one's actions here and hereafter', he only means that a spiritual seeker must come to a sufficiently strong intellectual conviction that fruits born as a result of actions cannot be infinite. Hence he must, of necessity, be totally detached from them. These results of action reach us in the form of circumstances in the outer world and mental conditions within and when that mind reacts to those circumstances, we gain our day-to-day experiences.

The other two requisites mentioned in verse 17 are repeated here – the six qualifications such as śama and a passion to redeem oneself (mumukṣutvam).



ब्रह्म सत्यं जगन्मिथ्येत्येवंरूपो विनिश्चयः ।
सोऽयं नित्यानित्यवस्तुविवेकः समुदाहृतः ॥ २० ॥

*brahma satyam jaganmithyetyevamrūpo viniścayaḥ,
so'ayam nityānityavastuvivekaḥ samudāhṛtaḥ. (20)*