

Sādhana Catuṣṭayaṃ

Saadhana Chathushtayam

Fourfold Qualifications

Compiled by
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According to vedas, our goals in life are artha (wealth), kāma (entertainment), dharma (puṇyam or favorable results) and mokṣa (liberation). The first three – dharma, artha and kāma – are preyas (apparent goals) while the fourth goal of mokṣa is śreyas or real goal. To accomplish this real goal we should study the scriptures under a competent guru for an extended period of time. A qualified student will get Jñāna phalāḥṛṇṇ (benefit of the knowledge) at the same time he or she gets Jñānam (knowledge). However, if there is inadequate Sādhana Catuṣṭayaṃ, the four qualifications, he or she may not get the benefit of knowledge even after years of scriptural studies. In the Karikas to Mandukya Upanishad, Gowdabadhachariyar advises us to give maximum effort to Sādhana Catuṣṭayaṃ. Scriptures and guru can only lead us to Jñānam (knowledge), they will not be able to give us Jñāna phalāḥṛṇṇ or mokṣa. To get the benefits of knowledge, we must increase our level of Sādhana Catuṣṭayaṃ or the fourfold qualifications.

Swami Paramarthananda discusses Sādhana Catuṣṭaya Saṃpatti (Fourfold Qualifications) or SCS for short, in many classes¹. I have compiled this document based on my notes on Swamiji's teachings of these classes. I also referred to the notes written by Sri Jayantilal Patel², Sri R. Ganapathy³, and by Sri Ram Ramaswamy⁴. These notes are based on Swami Paramarthananda's teachings.

A student of Swami Paramarthananda may know that Swamiji's teachings are based on the philosophy of advaitam (non dual universal consciousness). As a result, these notes reflect the philosophy of advaitam. However, it must be noted that SCS is not exclusive to advaitam. These four qualifications can be adopted to help student assimilate other wisdoms as well.

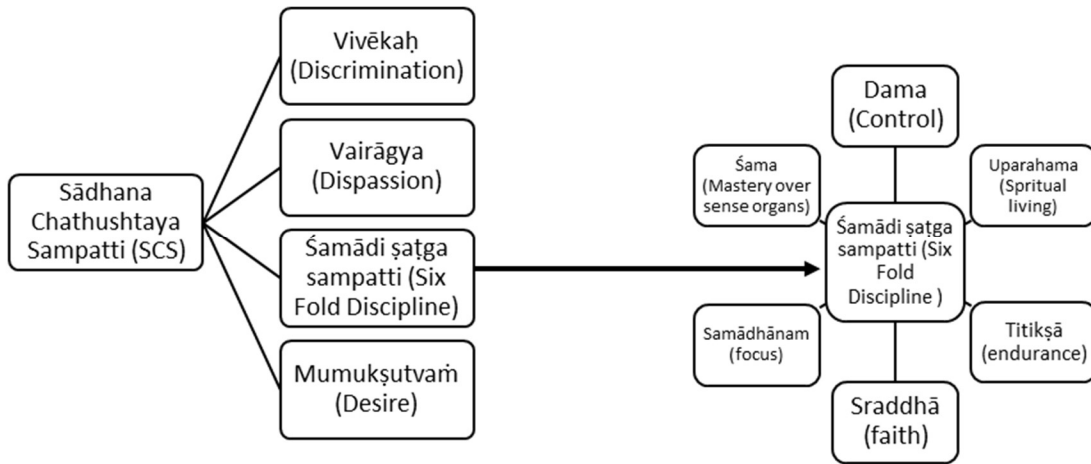
I dedicate this document to Swami Paramarthananda (please note that Swamiji has neither reviewed nor approved this document). It is a privilege and honor to be able to listen to Swamiji's teachings for the past ten years and be able to compile this document. I am also thankful to Dr. Janakiraman, Srimathi Vatsala Jankiraman and my wife Srimathi Usha Chandran for their reviews and comments.

What is Sādhana Catuṣṭaya Sampatti (SCS)

Sādhana Catuṣṭaya Sampatti (SCS) or the fourfold qualifications are required to accomplish the fourth goal of all human beings: moksha or liberation. To reach this ultimate real goal, we must improve the level of our SCS.

The fourfold qualifications or four “D”s are:

1. Discrimination -Vivēka
2. Dispassion -Vairāgyam
3. Discipline - Śamādi Ṣaṭga Sampatti - the six disciplines
4. Desire - Mumukṣutvaṁ



Vivēka - Discrimination

First qualification is Vivēka or discrimination, which is the ability to discriminate between what is permanent and what is temporary; to clearly recognize the superiority of śreyas (mokṣa) over preyas (dharma-artha-kama); to be aware that permanent happiness and security cannot come from temporary and impermanent things. Whatever we possess, all our wealth, all our friends and all our relatives, are temporary. Attachment to any impermanent things will give only momentary happiness and temporary security; eventually that attachment will result in sorrow and create samsāra when we lose the impermanent thing. The wrong expectations of getting permanent security and permanent happiness from impermanent things is the reason for samsāra and sorrow. Vivēka is remembering that Brahman⁵ alone is permanent, and that Brahman alone can give permanent happiness and permanent security.

Vairāgyam - Dispassion

Second qualification is dispassion or freedom from addiction to sensory pleasures; dispassion towards preyas (dharma-ārtha- kāma) and understanding that preyas is not the primary goal of one's life; vairāgyam does not mean hating or minimizing the purpose of dharma-ārtha- kāma, but understating they are only a means to an end. Growing out of dharma, artha and kāma is vairāgyam. Dispassion is the absence of desire for the enjoyment of the fruits of one's actions. Development of vairāgyam requires reduction of priorities of all materialistic needs.

A student of vedanta should eliminate the passion for adharma kāma (sensory pleasures prohibited by the scriptures) and reduce dharma kāma (sensory pleasures allowed by the scriptures). While elimination of dharma kāma (allowed pleasures) is not required, a moderation of dharma kāma is necessary. A student of vedanta should develop and increase dharma kāma. The developed dharma kāma should then be used to reduce and eventually eliminate addiction to adharma kāma. Vedanta considers any addiction to be an obstacle to knowledge. Even addiction to vedanta can prove to be an obstacle in the pursuit of Jñāna phalāḥṃ.

Development of Vairāgyam requires ahankāra ("I") mamakara (mine) tyāgaṃ (renunciation):

- Ahankāra tyāgaṃ (Renunciation of "I"): In this context, ahankāra should be taken as the lower "I" – the śarīra thrayāṃ (three bodies): sthūla śarīram (physical body), sūkṣma śarīram (subtle body) and kāraṇa śarīram (causal body). Ahankāra tyāgaṃ is owning up to the higher "I", the all-pervading eternal atma or Brahman.
- Mamakara tyāgaṃ is renunciation of external and internal possessions:
 - External renunciation requires renunciation of all possessions and becoming a monk or sanyasi; this is not compulsory for a vedantic student.
 - Internal renunciation is to be mentally prepared to lose anything at any time. This means not to be attached to anything for any length of time. This is compulsory for Jñāna phalāḥṃ or liberation.

Śamādi Ṣaṭga Saṃpatti - The six disciplines

The third qualification is śamādi ṣaṭga saṃpatti or six inner disciplines. These six disciplines are one's own internal assets. Sastras require these six self-disciplines to acquire permanent peace and for discovering permanent security (Mokṣa).

1. Śamaha (Mind Control): Śamaha is Mastery over mind; obtaining a tranquil mind, a mind which is free from stress and strain. For a person who does not have peace of mind, the mind itself becomes a burden. A tranquil mind is required for these reasons:
 - a. Only an undisturbed tranquil mind can assimilate vedanta; if the mind is pre-occupied by other burdens, vedantic study is not possible.
 - b. A peaceful mind is needed to keep the physical body in shape and ready for vedantic study.
2. Damaḥ (Sense control): Damaḥ is mastery over sense organs; being able to control sensory organs voluntarily and deliberately. Sense organs are the entry way to the mind. If these sense organs are not controlled, anything and everything will enter the mind; this will result in internal disturbances and addiction to sensory pleasures. If one is addicted to sensory pleasures, then there may not be any time for Vedanta. Mastery over sensory organs is necessary to assimilate vedantic concepts.

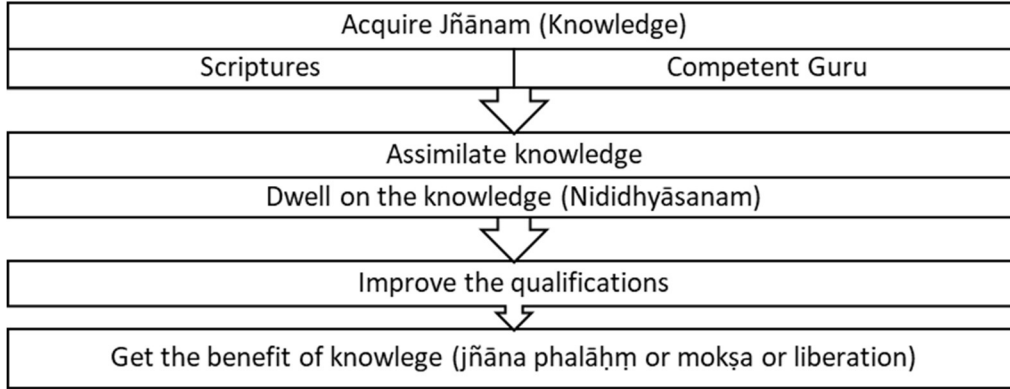
It must be pointed out that vedanta does not require suppression of sense organs; it only requires deliberate and willful regulation of sense organs. For example, vedanta does not ask one to stop eating and go hungry; however, being able to control when, what and how much one eats is necessary to lead a healthy life.

3. Uparamaḥ or Uparatiḥ (Withdrawal): Uparamaḥ is to live a spiritual life. Sri Saṅkarācārya defines uparamaḥ as the strict observance of one's own duties. Increase spiritual activities and reduce material activities. This is done by gradually increasing niṣkāma karma (obligatory duties and rituals) and naimitika karma (duties and rituals required on special occasions) and gradually reducing and eventually eliminating the other three karmas: kama karma (materialistic actions), prāyaścitta karma (karmas to neutralize one's negative actions) and niṣiddha karma (prohibited actions).
4. Titikṣā (Endurance, patience, forbearance): Titikṣā is the physical and mental capacity to be indifferent to all experiences – good and bad. We must have the same attitude towards bad experiences as we do towards good experiences. To increase titikṣā:
 - Improve the capacity to withstand physical experiences by increasing the threshold of endurance for physical pain. Some of the ways to increase endurance are to practice habits like fasting, going on pilgrimages etc.
 - Withstand the events causing mental agony by improving patience. One way to reduce mental agony is to reduce the expectations from external world – friends, relatives and other objects.
5. Śraddhā (Faith or trust): Develop and maintain faith in scriptures and the guru teaching the scriptures.

6. Samādhānam (Concentration, focusing power): This includes concentrating on both short term and long-term goals. Short term goals are freedom from distraction. Long term goal is mokṣa and one should be clear that the primary goal of life is mokṣa. Once that is established, one should always remember that goal and concentrate on achieving that goal.

Mumuṣutvaṁ - (Desire)

The fourth qualification is mumuṣutvaṁ, choosing śreyas as the primary objective. A student of vedanta should have desire for permanent security and liberation. Mumuṣutvaṁ is the desire for freedom from slavery; desire for immunity from problems of saṁsāra; desire for freedom from the fear of immortality; desire for freedom from the fear of death. One should have the intense desire for the difficult journey – from acquiring the knowledge to assimilating the knowledge to improving the qualifications to finally obtaining liberation.



Obstacles (Dhyāna Pratibandha) to SCS and Remedies

In the process of conducting our daily duties and fulfilling karmas, we will face many obstacles in acquiring, maintaining and improving SCS. Some of the obstacles and remedies are described by Lord Krishna in Chapter 6 of Bagawad Gītā, specifically in verses 33 and 34. They are also discussed by Gauḍapāda in the third chapter of Kārikās to Māṇḍūkya Upanishad, specifically in verses 42 to 45 of the third chapter, Advaita Prakaraṇam.

Dhyana Pratibandha (Obstacles to SCS)			
Obstacle	Guna	Cause	Remedy
Layaḥ (Dullness)	Tamo	Not enough sleep; Dullness of stomach; Physical activities	Proper eating; Allow adequate time for sleep
Vikṣepaḥ (Wandering mind)	Rajasa	Active mind; Focussed on vyavakarika sathyam	Develop vairāgyam; Dwell on abyāsaḥ
Kaṣāyaṃ (Stagnant mind)		Rāga (attachment) Dveṣa (aversion)	Develop vairāgyam; Dwell on abyāsaḥ
Svāda (Temporary happiness)		Progressing in meditation	. Vivekaḥ . Abyāsaḥ in vedantic thoughts of pūrṇaḥ and asaṅgaḥ

The primary obstacles are layaḥ, vikṣepitaṃ, kaṣāyaṃ and rasa svāda.

Layaḥ: An inactive or dull mind due to the domination of tāmasika guṇa; being lazy. Layaḥ is caused by one or more of the following:

- Nidrā śeśaḥ: Not enough time given for sleep.
- Ajirnam: Dullness of stomach; dysfunction of body.
- Overeating.
- Extra physical activities.

The remedies given for Layaḥ are:

- Eat properly.
 - Swamiji says⁶ we should not continue to eat until we feel full; there is a time lag between the time the stomach is full, and the time mind gets the signal that the stomach is full. If we eat until we feel full, we would have overeaten, resulting in laziness and dull mind.
 - We should mentally divide the stomach into four parts: two parts for solid food, one part for liquids like water and butter milk. The fourth part should be left empty to give room for the stomach to digest the food.

- Sleep properly and allocate adequate time each day for sleep.
- When the mind wanders bring the mind back by remembering:
 - That the pleasures of the world are always mixed with sorrow
 - The mithyā nature of the world.

Vikṣepitam: A wandering mind, dominated by rājasika guṇa; a mind actively engaged in this materialistic world or focused on vyāvahārika satyaṁ. The remedies for this are vairāgyam and abyāsaḥ.

- Vairāgyam is to develop and remember that anatma prabañca (materialistic world) is a source of sorrow only when you are attached to it. When sense pleasures are distracting you through their temptations, meditate upon the problems that can be caused by them. Continue to do duties towards worldly objects but do not hold on to them for peace, security or happiness. Remember that the pleasure caused by every worldly object has three defects:
 - They are mixed with sorrow.
 - They are temporary and do not produce lasting happiness or security; on the contrary they cause sorrow when they depart.
 - They create bondage, addiction and slavery.

Do not emotionally depend upon them. Once rāga, the attachment, is reduced, the mind will be ready for vedantic study. Educate the mind to detach from worldly things and worldly beings. Remember that the intensity of pain given by an object is proportional to the intensity of pleasure it gives. Remember this defect of the sense objects and turn the mind away from sensory addiction.

- Abyāsaḥ is to dwell on vedantic teaching that Brahman alone is the cause and everything else is nama roopa super imposed on the cause. Abyāsaḥ is repeatedly remembering the mithyātvam of the world. See the world as Brahman with different nama and rūpa. This will help in detaching the mind. Once the mind is detached, the mind will not wander.

Kaṣāyam: Rāga-dveṣa suppresses sorrows and complaints in our mind. These suppressed complaints result in guilt, pain, anger and jealousy. The hidden sorrows and suppressed complaints make the mind unavailable for meditation. Kaṣāyaṁ is caused by

- Rāga (attachment): Attachment to family, friends, and worldly possessions.
- Dveṣa (aversion): Aversion for the things that we do not like.

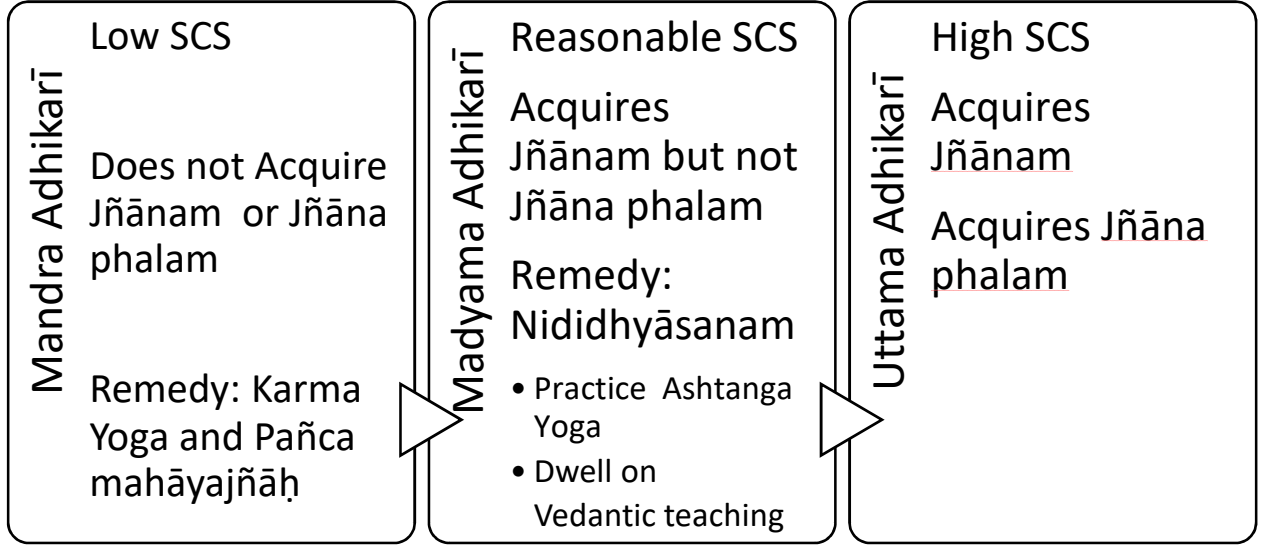
The hidden rāga-dveṣa makes the mind stagnant. When the mind is quiet and not distracted by external disturbances, whatever is hidden inside will surface and make the mind unavailable for vedantic studies. Remedy is to remove rāga-dveṣa by practicing abyāsaḥ and vairāgyam.

Rasa Svāda: Rasa svāda is getting lost in the experiential *ānanda* that may come in meditation. When we practice meditation and progress from dhāraṇā (meditation) to dhyānam (not distracted and not wandering mind) and finally, to samādhi, we may start enjoying ānandamaya or temporary happiness. This is temporary because it is dependent on the relaxed state of mind. This temporary happiness may become an addiction. Enjoying this temporary pleasure is an obstacle to assimilation of vedantic teaching. This temporary ananda is not atma ananda but is a reflected ananda.

The remedy is to remember our own true nature and dwell on vedantic thoughts of pūrṇaḥ (I am complete) and asaṅgaḥ (I am unaffected). So, the viveka, discrimination is the remedy for rasāsvādaḥ problem. We should note that undisturbed mind is not a thoughtless mind, but it is a mind with vedantic thoughts; thoughts that I am pūrṇaḥ and asaṅgaḥ. Abyāsaḥ is repeatedly and consistently remembering these thoughts.

Why SCS

SCS helps a vedantic student (adhikārī) to progress from manda adhikārī (a student in the beginning stages of vedantic studies) to madyama adhikārī (intermediate student) and to uttama (superior/accomplished) adhikārī. This classification is made based on how much progress a student has made in the vedantic studies and the level of SCS.



Manda Adhikārī is a student in the beginning stages of Vedic Study:

- Has low SCS
- Does not acquire Jñānam
- Does not acquire Jñāna phalāḥṃ

Madhyama Adhikārī is a student who has studied vedanta, but not yet assimilated them:

- May have reasonable SCS
- Acquires Jñānam
- Does not acquire Jñāna phalāḥṃ

Uttama Adhikārī is an accomplished student, a Jñāni:

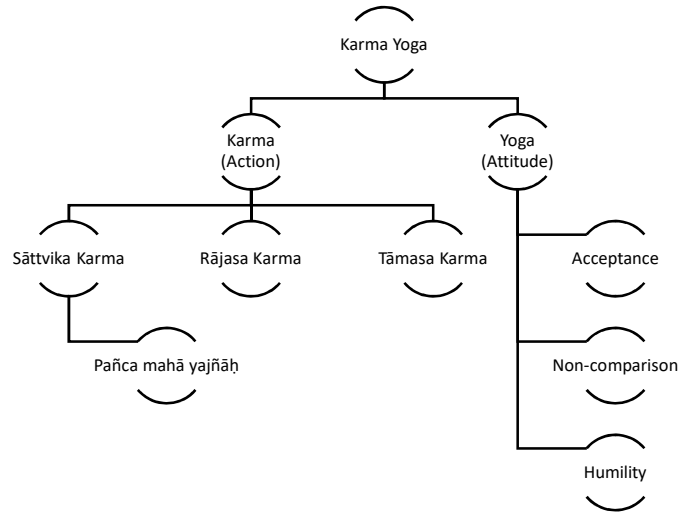
- Has High SCS
- Acquires Jñānam
- Acquires Jñāna phalāḥṃ

One should study sastra (scriptures) for an extended period of time under a competent guru to gain Jñānam. However, this only gives Jñānam – the knowledge that I am Brahman. When we continue to study sastras after getting the knowledge, we may clarify many of our doubts and understand many of the vedic concepts. However, just the study alone will not give Jñāna phalāḥṃ. To get Jñāna phalāḥṃ and mokṣa, we must dwell on vedanta. To assimilate vedic studies, it is not enough to study Vedas and the Upanishads. We must constantly improve our SCS. By practicing pañca mahā yajñā and karma yoga, a beginning student or manda adhikarī can improve SCS and become a madhyama adhikarī. By completing ashtanga yoga, a madhyama adhikarī can acquire jñāna phalāḥṃ and become uttama adhikarī.

Karma Yoga

In this context, the word karma stands for proper action and the word yoga stands for proper attitude. Performing proper action with proper attitude is karma yoga.

Karma: Scriptures divide all our actions into three categories: Sāttvika Karma, Rājasa Karma and Tāmāsa Karma.



- Sāttvika karma are compulsory actions prescribed by the scriptures for every seeker of mokṣa. These karmas are called niṣkākama karma and primarily contribute to one's inner growth and spiritual progress. The actions prescribed for spiritual progress and inner growth are pañca mahā yajñāḥ; they are described later.
- Rājasa karma are actions based on our desires; these actions are permitted by the scriptures but not encouraged; these actions primarily contribute to material growth and secondarily contribute to spiritual growth.
- Tāmāsa karma are niṣiddha karma and are prohibited by the scriptures. These include actions like violence, cheating etc. and have an effect of stunting the spiritual progress.

Yoga: Yoga is proper attitude and Lord Krishna calls it samatvam in Bagawad Gītā. It is the mental condition of equanimity, balance and undisturbed condition. We get proper attitude by cultivating healthy traits.

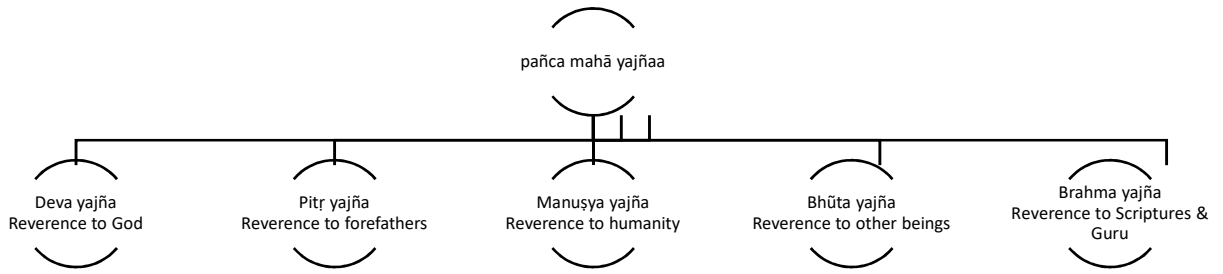
- Acceptance: Learn to accept all results – good and bad – of all actions; accept both choiceless actions and the results of all of actions – whether there was a choice or not.

- Non-comparison: Avoid comparison not only when doing action, but also the results of actions.
- Humility: Be humble when doing a noble action.

Karma Yoga is a lifestyle consisting of proper action and proper attitude. Proper action is any action that will reduce kama (entertainment), krōdha (anger), lōbha (greed) and mōha (attraction). Proper attitude is the right attitude towards the action as well as the result of the action. A healthy attitude towards the action and its result will help us grow through every experience. We may have a choice with regard to the action; however, with regard to results or karma phalāḥṡṡ, we do not have choice; therefore, we should learn to accept all results. When there are choices for an action, choose wisely; when there are no choices, accept both the action and results as a gift from the Lord. This should be the attitude of every karma yogi and student in pursuit of Jñāna phalāḥṡṡ.

Pañca Mahā Yajña⁷

Pañca mahā yajñā are five daily duties required for every seeker of jñāna phalāḥṛṇṇ. These five karmas primarily contribute to our inner and spiritual growth. These are dharma mokṣa pradhāna. These are not artha kama pradhāna. Pañca mahā yajñā help the goals of mokṣa (liberation) and not necessarily for the accumulation of wealth (artha) and kama (entertainment). The benefits of Pañca mahā yajña are subtle and internal; they are not visible or tangible.



The pañca mahā yajñā are:

- Deva yajña (Reverence to God in any form)
- Pitr yajña (Reverence to Parents & Forefathers)
- Manuṣya yajña (Reverence to humanity)
- Bhūta yajña (Reverence to all Other Living Beings)
- Brahma yajña (Reverence to Scriptures & Guru)

Deva yajña: Start the day with remembering the Lord as the live universal organism. Contemplate upon viśvarūpa īśvarā as described by Lord Krishna in the 11th chapter of Bagawad Gīta. Deva yajña can be in the form of:

- A ritualistic sacrifice (a yajña)
- A puja in front of an idol or a photo
- In the form of a japa, repetition of the name of the Lord
- In the form of temple visits
- In the form of service to temple.

Pitr yajña: Treat parents and elderly with respect and take care of them properly. The forefathers, alive or dead, should be treated with respect and reverence.

Manuṣya yajña: All social services are manuṣya yajña. If everybody takes care of manuṣya yajña, then there will be no poverty.

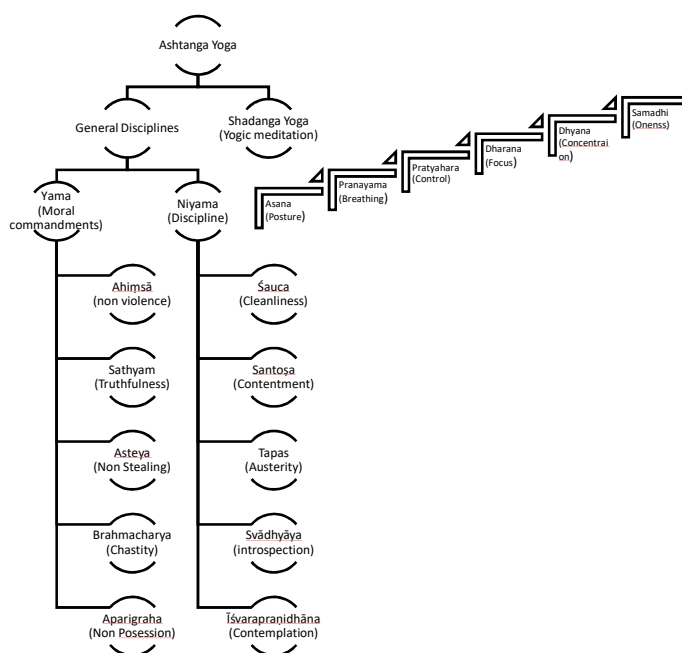
Bhūta yajña: Service to all other living beings is bhūta yajña. Respect towards life is bhūta yajña. Vedas say that if we respect nature, then we will never be selfish. Bhūta yajña helps us become aware of the importance of other animals.

Brahma yajña: Reverence to scriptures and rishis who have given us the scriptures is brahma yajña. If one does not know scriptures, worshipping and remembering the rishis who gave us the scriptures is brahma yajña. Promotion of scriptures by teaching is brahma yajña.

Scriptures requires us to perform the pañca mahā yajñā whether we like it or not. How big or small the pañca mahā yajñā will depend on the availability of time, convenience and the financial resource, but they must be done on a daily basis.

Ashtanga Yoga 8, 9, 10, 11

Ashtanga Yoga was presented by Patanjali Rishi in his well-known work called Yoga Sūtrani. Ashtanga Yoga is a set of disciplines to regulate the functions of our mind. Mind is a very important and powerful internal organ that enables us to accomplish our goals of Dharma, Artha, Kama and Mokṣa. However, the mind has the nature of generating continuous involuntary thoughts. These involuntary thoughts generate several disturbing, toxic emotions like worry, anxiety, fear, depression, regret, hurt, guilt etc. These involuntary thoughts have the disastrous effect of removing our efficiency and cause the loss of health. Ashtanga Yoga makes us aware of this problem and take steps to handle this problem.



Ashtanga Yoga consists of eight steps. The first two steps, Yama and Niyama, are general disciplines and duties everyone must follow. The next six steps, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi, are Shadanga Yoga or yogic meditation. These are different stages that make us aware of the problems of mind and the involuntary thoughts so that these problems can be tackled. Successful completion of all eight steps will lead us to progression in meditation and achieve the ultimate goal of mokṣa or liberation.

1. Yama: Yama are five universal moral commandments. Yama are the practices that are not permitted by scriptures and must be avoided. It describes what we should avoid to grow spiritually. These commandments transcend creed, country, age and time.

- a. Ahimsā (Nonviolence): Ahimsā is avoidance of violence and injury. Ahimsā can be physical or verbal (shouting or using abusive or indecent language) and both must be avoided. Ahimsā is more than a commandment not to kill; it has the wider positive meaning of love. Violence arises out of fear, weakness, ignorance or restlessness. To negate violence, what is needed is freedom from fear. This requires a change in outlook of life and re-orientation of mind; that we are different from our body.
 - b. Satyam (Truthfulness): Satyam is not telling a lie; truthfulness, non-falsehood. If we speak only truth and our life is based on truth, then we become fit to be one with infinite – Brahman. Our words should match our thoughts, knowledge and action.
 - c. Asteya (Not stealing): Asteya is not stealing. The desire to possess and enjoy what another has leads one to steal. Stealing includes misappropriation, breach of trust, mismanagement and misuse. Stealing includes unfair transaction through which one derives undue benefits.
 - d. Brahmacharyam (Chastity): chastity, marital fidelity or sexual restraint. The concept of brahmacharya is not negation, forced austerity or prohibition. Brahmacharyam is giving up indecent and inappropriate attitudes towards the opposite sex.
 - e. Aparigraha (non-possession): Aparigraha is non-possession; leading a simple life. There are two aspects to aparigraha – owning less and having the right attitude towards what we own. Give up luxury, pomp, and show and limit possessions to what is necessary. We should remember that our possessions are given to us temporarily and we should be prepared to lose them at any time with no advance notice. A simple living is suitable for higher thinking.
2. Niyama: Niyama are five disciplines required for self-purification. Niyama are disciplines at individual level (micro); yama, on the other hand, are disciplines at universal level (macro).
- a. Śauca (Cleanliness): Śaucam is keeping ourselves and everything around us clean. This includes our body, clothes, possessions and house. Śaucam is also purity and clearness of mind and intellect; cleansing of mind to be free from disturbing emotions like hatred, passion, anger, lust, greed, delusion and pride; cleansing of the intellect (buddhi) to be free of impure thoughts.

- b. **Santoṣa (Contentment):** Contentment and satisfaction with what we own and what we earn. When we are satisfied with our possessions, our earnings continue but spending decreases. This results in more wealth for the community, society and nation. A contented person will readily share wealth with others. Without santoṣa, dhanam (charity) cannot take place.
 - c. **Tapas (Austerity):** Austerity, self-discipline to maintain one's spiritual and physical health to achieve a goal. Tapas are of three types: physical (kayikam), spoken (vachikam) or mental (manasikam).
 - i. **Physical (Kayikam):** Continence (brahmacharya) and nonviolence (ahimsa) are tapas of the body.
 - ii. **Spoken (vachikam):** Using words that do not offend, reciting the glory of God, speaking the truth and not speaking ill of others.
 - iii. **Mental (manasika):** Developing a mental attitude to remain tranquil and balanced in both joy (sukham) and sorrow (duḥkam).
 - d. **Svādhyāya (Introspection):** self-reflection, introspection. Changing the outlook of life and world and realizing that there is divinity within ourselves and that the energy which moves us is the same energy that moves the entire universe.
 - e. **Īśvara praṇidhāna (Contemplation):** Contemplation of the Īśvara, God; the laws of karma are invisible, but the results are tangible experiences. We should accept every experience without resistance. This acceptance is called Īśvara praṇidhāna or śaraṇāgati. Our inability and unwillingness to accept all experiences will produce unhealthy thoughts in our mind and lead to bitterness, anger, frustration, hatred, etc.
3. **Asana:** Sit in proper posture. The purpose of asana is to enable us to rise above body-consciousness. A straight spine is necessary for the energy to raise up the spine freely when meditating. We may consider that we have mastered asana if we can remain completely motionless, with a straight, upright spine for an extended period of time (three hours is suggested by some authors). Motionlessness will enable us to become aware of the inner energies of our body.

By practicing asana, we free ourselves from physical disabilities and mental distractions. A strong body and mind are needed for the pursuit of vedic studies. Dualities like gain

and loss, victory and defeat, fame and shame, body and mind, mind and soul vanish through the mastery of āsnana.

4. Prāṇāyāma: Prāṇāyāma is rhythmic regulation of breathing. This is regulating over all three functions of breathing – inhalation, exhalation and retention. These rhythmic patterns strengthen the respiratory system, sooth the nervous system and reduce craving. As desires and cravings diminish, the mind becomes free and ready for the assimilation of vedanta. Emotional excitements affect the rate of breathing; by deliberately regulating the breathing one can control emotional excitement.
5. Pratyāhāra: Control sensory input. Pratyahara is the withdrawal of the mind from the domination of senses and exterior objects. It is the final preparatory stage before deep meditation. There are various ways to remove the distraction of the senses, such as remaining still, closing the eyes, and sitting in a quiet place or using earplugs. However, true vedantic knowledge occurs in the mind, not in the body. It is the internalization of the life-force (pranayama) that results in the shutting down of the senses.

The path to satisfy all sensory desires is very broad and our choices are either to pursue them to satisfaction or to eliminate them. Pursuing to satisfy all sensory desires often results in destruction. The path to eliminate all sensory desires is as narrow as a sharp edge and difficult to tread. This is because all human thoughts and actions are impacted by tamasic thoughts (the dark and restraining thoughts), rājasa thoughts (thoughts related to accumulation of material benefits) and sattvic thoughts (pure, illuminating thoughts). The practice of pratyahara enables one to eradicate tamasic and rajasic thoughts. When only sattvic thoughts remain, one has advanced a long way towards the ultimate goal. While the path to eliminate all sensory desires is difficult, ashtanga yoga requires us to pursue this path.

6. Dharana: Dharana is the ability to bring the mind into focus and to hold the concentration on a single point. In true dharana all body-consciousness and restless thoughts cease, enabling one to focus on the object of meditation without distraction. The mind (manas), intellect (buddhi) and ego (ahankāra) are all restrained and there is no feeling of “I” and mine.
7. Dhyāna: Dhyāna is the ability to merge with the object on which you are concentrating. Someone who has achieved the state of dharana would say that they are able to focus completely on a light during meditation. Others who have achieved dhyāna would say that they seemed to become the light, as if they have merged with it.

One's body, breath, senses, mind, reason and ego are all integrated in the object of one's contemplation – Brahman. One remains in this state of consciousness with no qualifications and feels the supreme bliss (sat-chit-ananda).

8. Samādhi: In samādhi, one's body and senses are at rest as if one is asleep; one's mind is alert, yet one is gone beyond consciousness. The person in a state of samādhi is fully conscious and alert. There remains no sense of "I" or "mine" as the body, the mind and the intellect have stopped as though they were in deep sleep. There is no duality between the knower and the known.

Samādhi is complete absorption in the Infinite — literally "oneness." It is a state of super consciousness brought about by profound meditation, in which the meditator becomes one with the object of meditation.

Conclusion

We study and pursue vedanta for jñānam (knowledge) and jñāna phalāḥṃ (the benefit of knowledge); scriptures help us get jñānam (knowledge). Learning vedanta under the guidance of a competent guru helps us understand many of the concepts and philosophies of vedanta. However, guru and scriptures can only lead us to jñānam; they will not be able to give us jñāna phalāḥṃ or mokṣa. Only our own efforts in the form of high state of SCS will lead us to Jñāna phalāḥṃ.

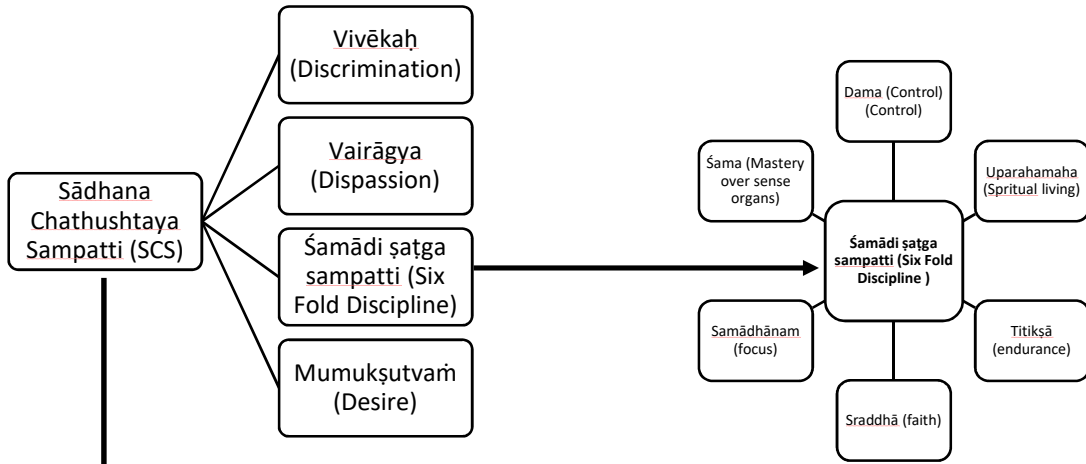
In one of the classes⁷, Swamiji has suggested that we take one of the ten yama and niyama, practice it for a month and assimilate it into our daily life. We can take the same approach and practice the sadhanas of SCS (presented in Appendix 1) and practice each of them for an extended period of time – one at a time and try to assimilate them into our daily life. We may not be able to assimilate all of them in our lifestyle in this janma and our SCS may not improve. But any and all efforts we put in to assimilating any one of the traits and disciplines will make us a better person in this janma and pave the way to mokṣa in future janmas. It is imperative we start this process when we have the resources and health.

Sadhanas of SCS

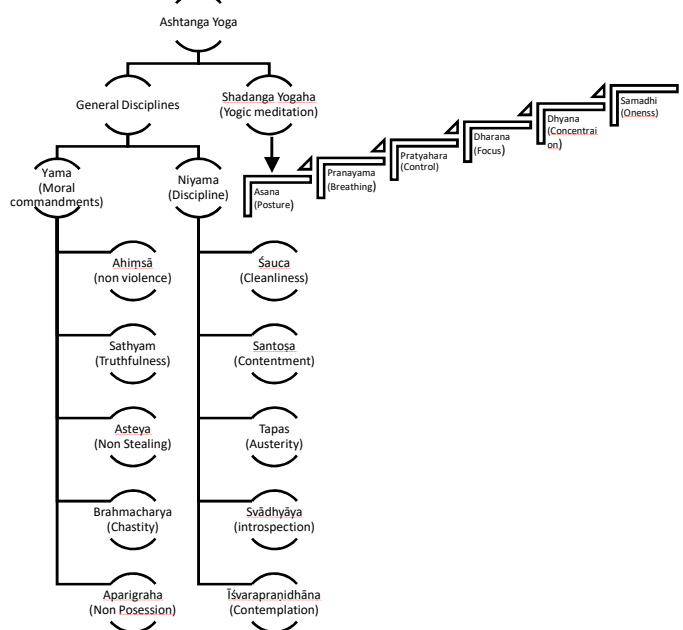
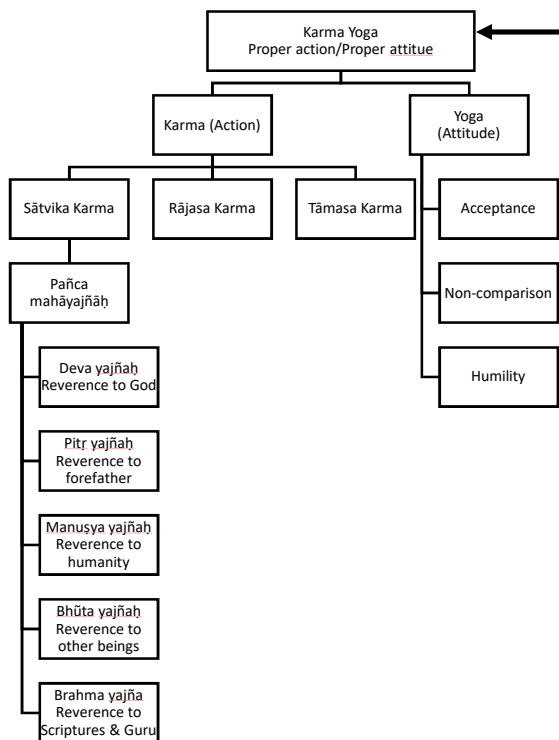
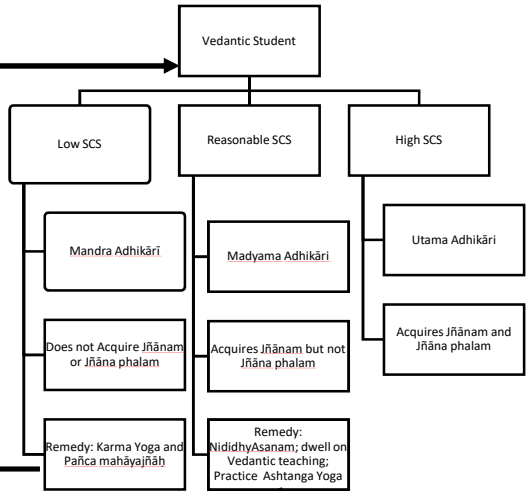
1	Vivēka (Discrimination)
2	Vairāgyam (Dispassion)
3	Śamādi ṣaṭga saṃpatti (Six Fold Discipline) Śama (Mastery over sense organs)
4	Śamādi ṣaṭga saṃpatti (Six Fold Discipline) Dama (Control)
5	Śamādi ṣaṭga saṃpatti (Six Fold Discipline) Uparama (Spritual living)
6	Śamādi ṣaṭga saṃpatti (Six Fold Discipline) Titikṣā (endurance)
7	Śamādi ṣaṭga saṃpatti (Six Fold Discipline) Sraddhā (faith)
8	Śamādi ṣaṭga saṃpatti (Six Fold Discipline) Samādhānam (focus)
9	Mumukṣutvaṃ (Desire)
10	Acceptance
11	Non comparison
12	Humility
13	Deva yajña (Reverence to God)
14	Pitṛ yajña (Reverence to forefathers)
15	Manuṣya yajña (Reverence to humanity)
16	Bhūta yajña (Reverence to other beings)
17	Brahma yajña (Reverence to Scriptures & Guru)
18	Ahiṃsā (non violence)
19	Sathyam (Truthfulness)
20	Asteya (Non Stealing)
21	Brahmacharya (Chastity)
22	Aparigraha (Non Possession)
23	Śauca (Cleanliness)
24	Santoṣa (Contentment)
25	Tapas (Austerity)
26	Svādhyāya (introspection)
27	Īśvarapraṇidhāna (Contemplation)
28	Shadanga Yogaha (Yogic meditation) Start with Asana (Posture) and Pranayama (Breathing)
29	Abyāsaḥ (dwell on Vedantic teaching of pūrṇaḥ and asaṅgaḥ)

Sādhana Catuṣṭayaṃ

Fourfold Qualifications



Dhyana Pratibandha (Obstacles to SCS)			
Obstacle	Guna	Cause	Remedy
Layaha (Dullness)	Tamo	Not enough sleep; Dullness of stomach; Physical activities	Proper eating; Allow adequate time for sleep
Vikṣepaha (Wandering mind)	Rajasa	Active mind; Focussed on vyavakarika sathyam	Develop vairāgyam; Dwell on abyāsaḥ
Kaṣāyāṃ (Stagnant mind)		Rāga (attachment) Dveṣa (aversion)	Develop vairāgyam; Dwell on abyāsaḥ
Svāda (Temporary happiness)		Progressing in meditation	- Vivekaḥ - Abyāsaḥ in vedantic thoughts of pūrṇaḥ and asaṅgaḥ



References

1. These notes are based on Swamiji's discussion of Sādhanā Catuṣṭaya Saṃpatti (SCS) in the following classes
 - a. Introduction to Vedānta
 - b. Bāgavad Gīta, Chapter 6
 - c. Tattva Bodha
 - d. Atma Bodha
 - e. Māṇḍūkya Upanishad
 - f. Sādhanā Panchakam
 - g. Swamiji's special occasion speeches
2. Published at: <http://www.advaiddam.com/2014/11/18/tattvabodha-notes/>
3. Notes of Sri R. Ganapathy are published <http://arshaavinash.in/index.php/books-1/>
4. Published at <http://www.advaiddam.com/category/bagwat-gita/>
5. Vedāntic studies reveal Brahman; it is beyond the scope of this document to discuss Brahman; for the purposes of this document, a simple definition in English for Brahman will be "nondual universal consciousness".
6. Bāgavad Gīta, Class 87: Chapter 6, Verses 14 to 17
7. Based on Swamiji's New Year Talk for the year 2018: "Glory of Sanātana Dharma"
8. Based on Swamiji's New Year Talk for the year 2000: "Ten Commandments – Yamas, Niyamas and ways to incorporate them in daily life". See Sri Ram Ramaswamy's notes on this class at: <http://www.advaiddam.com/2016/11/23/ten-commandments-yamas-niyamas-and-ways-to-incorporate-them-in-daily-life/>
9. Based on Swamiji's New Year Talk for the year 2013. See Sri VLN Prasad's notes on this talk at <http://arshaavinash.in/index.php/books-1/>
10. Based on <https://www.ananda.org/yogapedia/ashtanga/>
11. Based on Sri B.K.S. Iyengar's book "Light on Yoga".