

Yama- Niyama

॥ श्रीः ॥

Compiled and edited under the guidance of
Śrī Svāmī Vāgīśānanda Sarasvatī

The Assimilation of Values

By Pūjya Śrī Svāmī Dayānanda Sarasvatī

The fact that one is born with the faculty of choice makes for a unique living being. As a Human Being, one has the capacity to use, abuse, or disuse this faculty. Neither disuse nor abuse are seen as proper uses of this 'free' will. In choosing to use the 'freedom of choice,' one will eventually come to the realization that, in truth, one has no choice at all.

Every individual is born with a certain set of norms or values which govern the ways she may exercise this choice. Knowledge of the universal matrix of values and value-based duties (sāmānya-jñānam) is inborn, innate, and understood with the help of experience and common sense.

This 'common sense' is common for all Human Beings. For instance, everyone knows that they do not want to be injured. Common sense helps one appreciate the fact that no being wants to be injured. No child, or any living organism wants to sustain any type of injury. Not even a mosquito. That is why, by the time you raise your hand to remove it, the mosquito has fled.

The value of 'avoidance of injury' (ahimsā) is one of many universal values. Another universal value is the value for truth-telling (satyam). I do not want to be lied to. By extension, others do not want to be deceived by me. I do not want to be the object of anyone's hatred, anger, or jealousy. I want everyone to be generous, loving and friendly toward me. This means that I am absolutely ethical regarding my behavior toward other people and will then have the hope and expectation that other people will treat me in the same manner.

Even though I have this knowledge, inner conflicts arise regarding right and wrong, and at times I find myself compromising these universal norms. That 'something' which makes me cut corners

regarding ethical behavior is the lack of assimilation of sāmānya-jñānam. Assimilation of any value will only take place through the use of one's will. If right and wrong (Dharma-adharma) is not assimilated properly, one will always be dealing with inner conflict.

For example, a person, on her way to an important Rotary dinner where she will meet some industrialists to whom she hopes to sell her products, dressed in her only business suit, sees an old man stumble and fall into a muddy ditch in front of her. There is no one else around. This is an unfortunate situation as she now has to make a decision. Dharmically, she knows she cannot leave because this fellow is crying for help. She instinctively knows what it means to be in this type of situation. Dharma comes to her first because it is known to her, but there is an inner conflict because she is afraid that if she assists the old man, she will ruin her business suit and not be able to attend the dinner. If she decides to go to the dinner without assisting the old man, her self-image is going to be damaged. Since the choice of not assisting the man is in opposition to universal values (adharma), she will have rubbed up against Dharma, and her heart will be conflict-ridden. She would not want to be left drowning in a ditch. For her to do so to someone else, to not help in any way is wrong. One cannot rub against Dharma without getting rubbed in return. Action will generate an equal and reciprocal reaction. If I were her, I would help the old man and still attend the dinner. A Rotarian would be proud of such an individual.

If she immediately helps the man, without a second thought, only later will she notice that her clothes are ruined. Her spontaneity 'happens' because 'that which is needed to be done' (Dharma and duty) and her natural, spontaneous inclination are in alignment. The word 'spontaneous' in this context may be used to describe an attribute of an action only when that action is in conformity with Dharma; that the value of the value has been completely assimilated. In other words, it is an action 'that needs to be done' on an instinctual level. 'That which is to be done' is duty, and duty

means Dharma. Such an assimilation of Dharma, where one cannot choose to do otherwise, reflects a certain type of maturity. If one becomes incapable of going against Dharma, one has then gained that maturity and has earned the right to be called a 'grown-up.' Human interaction becomes very simple and spontaneous for such an individual.

Inner conflict will remain for a person so long as their assimilation of values is incomplete. If one acts upon desires which go against Dharma (Vedic and universal values), then one will experience inner conflict before, during, and after every action. Every conflict, every compromise, will add up in one's psyche so that by the time one is thirty or forty or fifty, one's personality ends up 'sounding' like a badly tuned piano. If one is to have some peace in life, and look back and say one has lived a life of learning and growth, one needs to take the time to properly tune one's body-sense-mind complex. A 'well-tempered' body-sense-mind complex shows that an assimilation of values has taken place. As a Human Being, we must surrender to Dharma, and in so doing, clearly and spontaneously see that our actions carry the approval of Dharma.

The focus of one's life should be such that it strengthens the desire to assimilate these Dharmic values. For this assimilation to take place, and during this assimilation process, a certain type of thinking has to be initiated through the use of one's will. The Lord/Īśvara has only given you 'common sense knowledge,' which is adequate enough at the beginning of one's life. However, to make life less fraught with conflict, to actually mature, one must use the will when making choices. There is no Dharma other than the Lord/Īśvara. The Lord/Īśvara as a whole may be more than Dharma, but Dharma is nothing other than the Lord/Īśvara. When there is no discordance between the Dharma which is the Lord and oneself, there is joy and beauty. One need do nothing else to fully enjoy and bring beauty into one's life.

The *value* of a value needs to be assimilated in order for that value's

opposite not to manifest and cause inner conflict. Inner turmoil, being in opposition to healthy values (Dharma) is due to skewed priorities and binding likes and dislikes. If one's desires and priorities do not align with Dharma, one will be incapable of avoiding conflict. Therefore, until one fully assimilates the value of a value, one must consciously conform to Dharma, exercising one's will. In doing so, initially there will be inner turmoil and conflict during the process of 'tuning', but eventually this turmoil will go away. For example, if a person who eats rotten food from a rubbish skip is given a value for hygiene and 'quality' food, it is no longer possible for him to even think of picking up and eating something like that ever again. Once one has assimilated the value of a value, the value is one's own. Education lies not in preaching values, but in teaching the value of a value. A person should be able to see the immensity of the loss she will incur if she compromises any value. The growth of a person, to the degree of assimilation of a value, is in terms of the enormity of the loss which will manifest when she compromises any Dharmic/universal value.

Extracted and edited from the essay 'Duties and Conflicts' by By Pūjya Śrī Svāmī Dayānanda Sarasvatī.

NB: It is the editor's belief that great, live classes do not necessarily make for great written word publications. The above essay, transcribed from a live Vedanta class, has been heavily edited and modified for the written word. Great care has been taken to retain both the direct and implied meanings of Pūjya Svāmī jī's words. If for some reason one finds fault in this transcription, the fault lies directly with the editors and not with Pūjya Svāmī jī. Hariḥ om!

The Yama-Niyamas & Tapas

taptam yamena niyamena tapaḥ amunaiva

तप्तं यमेन नियमेन तपः अमुनैव

The yama-niyamas are guides for 'proper' behavior and the 'right' attitude regarding that behavior. The yama-niyamas are a choice; a creative use of one's free-will; an active, moment-to-moment

meditation on 'doing what must be done,' and are directly related to Dharma. Dharma, in this context, may be defined to mean 'Vedic and universal values to be embraced with one's heart which will help a person live a happier, more purposeful life.' Yet, this is not an end in itself, as one will hopefully discover.

Tapas, seen in the overall context of the yama-niyamas, is a commitment; a prayerful vow (to either pursue an action that isn't normally part of one's daily activities or to reduce an action that one may have become attached to) in the form of an austerity, taken under the guidance of a traditional teacher, with the intention of gaining spiritual, emotional and intellectual maturity. Tapas, mentioned in the śloka on the previous page, reveals a strong relationship to the yama-niyamas (all yama-niyamas being potential austerities and life-long commitments).

Embracing the yama-niyamas as well as having a commitment to a prayerful use of tapas will give the spiritual seeker a better insight into the true nature of karma-yoga; the attitude of glad acceptance regarding all 'actions/events' that manifest in one's life, linked with the knowledge that all of one's actions (mentally, verbally or bodily) are seen as an offering to the Lord/Īśvara. This 'glad acceptance' of the karmic model gives one little choice to but take full and unconditional responsibility for all of one's actions (past, present and future). This is done with the understanding that one is not in control and that 'free' will is actually the conscious-awareful-Dharmic use of one's will. However, attitudes cannot be mandated. An attitude is born of knowledge and is embraced because of the fruits of that knowledge. This attitude of glad-acceptance and honoring the Lord may be potentiated (strengthened) by adding a secondary attitudinal layer; the sacred-vow-austerity of tapas. This synergistic approach to one's attitude toward life becomes a double-yoke; two attitudes (that of surrendering to the Lord and a contract of communion with the Lord) supporting and enriching each other with the express desire to gain spiritual, emotional and intellectual maturity.

yasya jñānamayaṁ tapaḥ

यस्य ज्ञानमयं तपः

What the spiritual aspirant 'gets' when the fruits of these combined attitudes towards one's actions begin to take effect is an integrated person. This type of person is calm, flexible, focusable; is one who has the ability to see the difference between what is real and what is, ostensibly, of only nominal value.

na hi jñānena sadṛṣaṁ pavitraṁ iha vidyate

न हि ज्ञानेन सदृषं पवित्रं इह विद्यते

The above quote from the Bhagavad Gītā speaks to the process of 'purification' and its resultant 'freedom'. Purification, in this context, means the removal of obstructions (obstructions to maturity). This process directly relates to one's responses to external stimuli. One knows that the process of purification is working when the frequency of one's reactions are reduced, the intensity of one's reactions is reduced and the recovery period from any reaction is shortened. The applied disciplines of the yama-niyamas are part of this process of purification.

"A value is really only my value when the value
of the value is very valuable to me."

Pūjya Śrī Svāmī Dayānanda Saravati

Yama-niyamas are values. They are habits/disciplines/actions to either be avoided or to be cultivated for the purpose of gaining emotional maturity. Through conscious application of the yama-niyamas one becomes prepared/conditioned/purposed/disciplined. Such a person is ready for Self-inquiry. A person such as this, by then gaining Self-knowledge (mokṣa) through Vedānta śravaṇam (systematic and consistent study of the Vedāntic scriptures under

the guidance of a qualified teacher for a long period of time), is free; free from psychological suffering. Free to live from 'event' to 'event' without fear, without binding desires. Free to 'see' the world as it truly is.

This traditional verse describes the yama-niyamas:

śarīraṁsādhanāpekṣaṁ nityaṁ

yat karma tat yamaḥ

niyamastu sat karma nityamāgantu sādhanam

शरीरंसाधनापेक्षं नित्यं यत् कर्म तत् यमः

नियमस्तु सत् कर्म नित्यमागन्तु साधनम्

The daily, prayerful duties/actions of an individual blessed with a human body are yama-niyamas. They are a means, not an end. The means being the proper practice of and a proper attitude toward Vedic and universal values. These disciplines will bring into effect a more harmonious and balanced person; one who relates with the world in a spontaneous, Dharmic fashion. The 'end' (through the study of Vedānta), being ultimate freedom.

Yamaḥ

Depending on context, the word yama may take on numerous meanings. In the context of spiritual disciplines, yama means 'restraint.' Yama comes from the Sanskrit root (dhātu) 'yam' which means 'to govern/subdue/control.' While 'restraint' is a good starting place for understanding the yamas, a deeper unfolding of the word yama shows the meaning to be closer to 'mastery' (over one's body-sense-mind complex). A secondary meaning for the root 'yam' is 'to stretch out; to expand; to spread.' This implies that the word yama may also indicate how an individual relates to other beings within the contextual environment; the focus here being the

attitude of compassion and empathy regarding the cultural 'conversation' from moment to moment. Even though many of the yamas are listed in their positive aspect (for example, satyam; meaning truth-telling), they are to be cognitively interpreted to be understood as actions and practices to be avoided (because, as human beings we have a propensity toward doing these particular, 'improper' actions). Yamas are highly interconnected and interdependent. It is important to see them as a whole and not simply as individual disciplines. Lists of yamas may be found in many Vedic and non-Vedic texts. The ten most common yamas are:

Brahmacārya - ब्रह्मचार्य

Dedicated Vedāntic studentship; avoidance of distraction. Daily scriptural study under the guidance of a traditional teacher. Having healthy borders when relating to 'significant others'; often unfolded to mean celibacy. The avoidance of intimate relationships where there is not mutual consent. By consciously applying the yama of brahmacārya, the student will help to neutralize the general tendency toward inappropriate (adharmic) intimacy. (see ahimsā; next page)

Dayā - दया

Empathy; compassion for other beings; saintliness. Avoidance of cruelty. The conscious application of dayā will help to neutralize the person's natural tendency to be unkind.

Kṣānti - क्षान्ति

Validation of and accommodation regarding all external actions performed by others. A balanced, conscious, prayerful, measured response regarding external stimuli (with the deep understanding that "if I were you, with your background, I would do *exactly* the same thing.") By consciously applying the yama of kṣānti, the student will help to neutralize the general tendency toward blaming others. (this value may also be found in the 13th chapter of the Bhagavad Gītā; see page 22; value number 4).

Dānam - दानम्

The karma of charitable giving (within one's means) to individuals, causes and organizations which operate within Dharma. The conscious application of dānam will help to neutralize the person's natural tendency to hoard.

Satyam - सत्यम्

Truth-telling; mentally, verbally and physically; the avoidance of lying (of any kind and to any degree). Tapas, in the context of satyam, would be to practice 'maunam' (silence) if one is unable to speak truth. By consciously applying the yama of satyam, one will help to neutralize the natural tendency to tell lies.

Akalkatā - अकल्कता

Avoidance of mean-ness/bullying. A profound respect for others by showing kindness. A sensitivity to the given context and proper behavior (Dharma) regarding that context. Causing the least resistance in moment-to-moment, external activity. An analysis of akalkatā points to the 'perpetrator-victim' karma. The goal is to stop this cycle 'now-now,' with the realization that there is neither perpetrator nor victim. Addiction to this vicious cycle (carried on over infinite lifetimes) will be understood by the student to be an impediment toward gaining maturity. "An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind." Mohandas K. Gandhi

Ahimsā - अहिंसा

Avoidance of injury; sometimes defined as 'non-violence'. Non-violence is not just 'not doing violence,' but actually expressing its opposite in moment-to-moment behavior. Ahimsā is a non-habitual, spontaneous action in the moment based on context (not programmed from past-life and current-life conditioning) rooted in empathy and compassion. Ahimsā is an expression of the value of healing instead of harming and is closely linked to all other yamas.

Asteya - अस्तेय

Avoidance of taking what does not 'belong' to you. Non-stealing. A respect for other's belongings. Respect for nature and Her boundless generosity.

Mādhurye - माधुर्ये

Sweetness in speech; a 'honeyed' tongue; the avoidance of hurtful speech. It is not just what one says (which is Dharmically very important), but also, how one expresses it. By consciously applying the yama of mādhurye, the student will help to neutralize the general tendency toward gossip and verbal bullying.

Damaḥ - दमः

Mastery over and sensitivity to one's body-sense-mind complex; the process of creating more light than heat. The implication being that even if one is in a state of mental/physical agitation, one is able to communicate clearly how one feels in the moment without projecting onto another person. This practice helps to dissolve the habit of external (and internal) blame. By consciously applying the yama of damaḥ, the spiritual seeker will help neutralize the general tendency toward self-loathing and its accompanying emotion of guilt.

Patañjali, in his Yoga Sūtras, lists five yamas. He considers them so important to a spiritual seeker that they appear first on his list of eight limbs toward gaining spiritual maturity:

Ahimsā (see page 9)

Satyam (see page 9)

Asteyam (top of this page)

Brahmacārya (see page 8)

Aparigraḥ - अपरिग्रः

Living a simple life; non-hoarding; non-avarice. "Let us live simply, so that others may simply live." Mohandas K. Gandhi

Another text lists these nine yamas:

Ānṛṣaṃsyam - आनृषंस्यं

Kindness; mildness; gentleness regarding interaction with other beings.

Dayā (see page 8)

Satyam (see page 9)

Ahimsā (see page 9)

Kṣāntiḥ (see page 8)

Ārjavam - आर्जवम्

Integrity; alignment of thought, word and action regarding interaction with other beings.

Prītiḥ - प्रीतिः

Love; unconditional acceptance of others as they are.

Prasādaḥ - प्रसादः

Graceful acceptance of all painful and pleasant facts that present themselves to one 'now-now.'

Mādhuryam (see mādhurye on page 10)

The Trīśikhibrāhmaṇa Upaniṣad lists many yamas already mentioned above plus the following:

Dṛtiḥ - दृतिः

Steadfastness, boldness and courage even in the face of external obstacles. Consistent, adequate and appropriate (Dharmic) efforts to achieve a desired result.

Mitāhāra - मिताहार

A balanced 'diet'; avoidance of gluttony; the implication being that all external things/experiences 'consumed' be done so in a relative, 'proper' and non-wasteful proportion. "Waste not, want not." English proverb.

Śaucam - शौचम्

Cleanliness. Note that since this is a yama, the cleanliness described here predominantly concerns the external environment. Keeping one's 'space' tidy and organized.

The Maṇḍalabrāhmaṇa Upaniṣad lists these unique yamas:

Gurubhaktiḥ - गुरुभक्तिः

Unswerving devotion to one's teacher. As a yama, this generally manifests as the student's outward or external expression of gratitude.

Satya-marga-anurakti - सत्य-मर्ग-अनुरक्ति

Allegiance; adherence and commitment to the 'path' of truth (both relative and absolute). Intellectual sincerity in dealing with others.

Vastu - वस्तु

Understanding that any external event cannot affect my inner equilibrium unless I allow it to do so.

Tuṣṭi - तुष्टि

Contentment with the material wealth which one has 'now-now.' The implication being that if I am content, I have no desire to impinge upon another's happiness or livelihood.

Nissaṅgatā - निस्सङ्गता

Objectivity regarding the external world; uninvolved-ness (by

keeping clear boundaries regarding what is acceptable and what is unacceptable external 'behavior'); identifying where one is in denial and reducing mental reaction to external stimuli.

Ekāntavāsaḥ - एकान्तवासः

Finding a 'place' for solitude. As a yama, this is generally understood to mean a quiet place for contemplation like a temple, holy place or in nature. Avoidance of a frenetic lifestyle.

Manonivṛttiḥ - मनोनिवृत्तिः

Objectivity regarding how one 'relates' to external stimuli. A clear understanding that if I give it a 'handle,' it may 'throw' me.

Anabhilāśa - अनभिलाश

Avoidance of unconscious obsessiveness and compulsiveness; freedom from the binding desire to make the world different from what it is. A cultivation of spontaneous, Dharmic behavior.

Vairāgyam - वैराग्यम्

Objectivity; seeing external 'objects' as they actually are (which implies the need to modify one's subjective projections); the avoidance of binding attachments. Vairāgyam is also one of the four qualifications necessary to begin Self-inquiry.

Niyamaḥ

Yama becomes an 'injunction' when the prefix 'ni' is added to it. In effect, niyama becomes yama's opposite; values and actions that one is 'required' to follow. Niyama also comes from the Sanskrit root 'yam'. If yamas predominantly deal with the external world, i.e., actions to avoid while negotiating that world within Dharma, niyamas may be looked upon as disciplines/values/practices/actions for the spiritual aspirant to cultivate. Niyamas are a form of Dharmic obligation or necessity, with the express understanding that by following them one will gain spiritual, emotional and intellectual

maturity. Again, the Sanskrit word niyama has numerous possible definitions depending upon context. While English is a mercantile language (a language suited/designed for objectifying and handling 'material'), Sanskrit is a language better suited for dealing with non-material; the so-called 'spiritual' world. If one looks at a list of niyamas as a whole, one notices that they predominantly deal with one's relationship with the Lord/Īśvara; the implication being that these disciplines tend to be 'inner'; more introspective than the yamas. This interpretation fits nicely into the secondary meaning for the root 'yam' ('to stretch out; to expand; to spread'); its opposite (also seen as in injunction) meaning 'to look inward; to contract; to introspect.' Niyamas are highly interconnected and interdependent. It is important to see them all as a whole and not simply as individual disciplines. Lists of niyamas may be found in many Vedic and non-Vedic texts. The ten most common niyamas are as follows:

Tapas - तपस्

Spiritual austerities/prayerful vows. Taking a vow/austerity for a length of time under the guidance of a traditional teacher which denies the spiritual aspirant an action that is habitual. For example, the austerity of maunam (non-speaking/silence) is a powerful tapas. It is important that the austerity chosen does no harm to the individual or the contextual environment. Tapas is sometimes translated as 'heat'. This is technically correct. The Sanskrit root (dhātu) for tapas is 'tap,' which, depending on context means 'heat.' However, heat is a potential byproduct from the discipline/austerity of tapas.

Santuṣṭiḥ - सन्तुष्टिः

Being joyful and content with what one has 'now-now'; that all acquisitions are gifts from the Lord/Īśvara. A mental state of equanimity. Understanding that all things/objects are 'borrowed' and will eventually be 'returned'.

Āstikya-buddhiḥ - आस्तिक्य-बुद्धिः

Placing complete trust in the Vedāntic teaching methodology. The discipline of daily, scriptural study with the attitude of surrendering to the Lord.

Dānam - दानम्

The daily discipline of sharing (with zero manipulation). Dānam is also listed as a yama (page 9), but in the context of being a niyama, it carries the implication of honoring Īśvara's Grace by taking on one of the Lord's attributes; that of inner kindness and compassion.

Ārādhnam - आराधनम्

Seeing all objects, moment-to-moment, as a manifestation of the Lord's/Īśvara's Grace.

Vedānta Śravaṇam - वेदान्त श्रवणम्

Daily connection to Vedic scripture, unfolded live by a traditional teacher.

Kṛtajñatā - कृतज्ञता

Gratitude for the-infinite-given; seeing the Lord's Grace in all-and-everything.

Matih - मतिः

Clear conviction that one will act within Dharma in the moment based on context. This conviction comes from clearly understanding the 'fundamental problem' and its solution.*

*Please refer to the ॐ Press booklet 'Bhajagovindam' regarding the fundamental problem.

Japa* - जप

The daily repetition of one of Īśvara's names (invoking God's

Grace and removing obstacles to one's emotional and cognitive growth).

*Please refer to the ॐPress booklet 'Japa' regarding the study and practice therein.

Vrata - व्रत

The ability to follow vows with a sense of proportion and practicality. One avoids extremes and any abuse of the body-sense-mind temple. Knowing when a vow is complete is of utmost importance. It is highly recommended that vows be taken under the guidance and supervision of a traditional teacher. (see tapas, page 14)

Patañjali, in his Yoga Sūtras, lists five niyamas. He considers them so important to a spiritual seeker that they appear second on his list of eight limbs toward gaining spiritual maturity.

Śaucam - शौचम्

Note that Patañjali lists śaucam as a niyama. Therefore, it may be unfolded to mean the discipline of keeping one's thoughts focused on Dharma. Inner cleanliness. An aware-full focus on the Lord/Īśvara.

Santoṣa - सन्तोष (see santuṣṭiḥ, page 14)

Tapas (see page 14)

Svādhyāya - स्वाध्याय

The discipline of inner observation; introspection.

Īśvara praṇidhānam - ईश्वर प्रणिधानम्

The discipline of daily scriptural study under the guidance of a traditional teacher. Trust in the Lord/Īśvara, the teacher and the teaching methodology of Vedānta.

The Uddhava Gītā (13:34), lists the following niyamas:

Śauca (see śaucam, this page)

Japa (see page 15)

Tapas (see page 14)

Homa - होम

Practicing Vedic offerings/sacrifice (fire ritual) performed with all scriptural injunctions under the supervision of a priest/paṇḍit.

Śraddhā - श्रद्धा

Trusting in Vedānta; a clear conviction that the teacher, the teaching and the methodology of Vedānta (being true) is an independent (appropriate, adequate and valid) means by which to 'gain' Self-knowledge (mokṣa).

Ātithya - आतीथ्य

Hospitality and reverence toward all 'unexpected' guests. Seeing all who 'enter' one's 'space' as the Lord/Īśvara. This especially applies to inner (mental) guests.

Ārcana - आर्चन

Worship of the Lord with 108 names, 1008 names, etc. The placing of a flower upon one's heart and then offering it to one's altar while chanting one of Īśvara's names (see japa, page 15).

Tirtha-atanam - तीर्थ-अतनम्

Prayerful pilgrimage to a sacred place. Keeping the Lord/Īśvara in one's heart with every step taken. Performing pūjā (ritual) and prayer in a sacred place with deep gratitude for the-infinite-given. As a niyama, this place may be understood as a type of upāsana/meditation; that the sacred space is within and is the inner dwelling-place for the Lord.

Para-artha-ihā - पर-अर्थ-इह

Performing karmas for the good of others. Emulating the Lord in the practice of giving with non-manipulation. (see dānam on page 15)

Tuṣṭiḥ (listed on page 12 as a yama)

In the context of being a niyama, tuṣṭiḥ may be taken to mean contentment in the knowledge that the Lord/Īśvara has provided everything I need; gratitude for the-infinite-given.

Ācārya sevanam - आचार्य सेवनम्

Being in service to the teacher. Seeing one's guru as a conduit for the Lord's Grace in the form of Vedānta śravaṇam.

It is important to see the contextual differences between the yamas and niyamams. This is especially true when the same discipline shows up in both lists (for example; śaucam and tuṣṭiḥ). The context while observing a yama is that of the individual's relationship to the outer world; actions to avoid if one is to Dharmically negotiate the world of external objects (most notably, other beings). Niyamas may be seen from the point of view of a person's relationship with the Lord; the practice of applied spiritual injunctions and how that application may lead to emotional, intellectual and spiritual maturity. The Trīśikhibrahmaṇa Upaniṣad clearly states that the context regarding niyamams is "one's unbroken, continuous, single-pointed devotion to recognizing the self as Brahman-limitless-being-I." This would be the total commitment to the cognitive pursuit of knowing oneself through listening to the Vedānta pramāṇam taught by a traditional teacher."

Six Essential Values Needed To Achieve Spiritual Goals

udhyamaṁ sāhasaṁ dhairyaṁ buddhiḥ śaktiḥ
parākramaḥ ṣadete yatravartante tatra daivam saḥāyakṛt

उध्यमं साहसं धैर्यं बुद्धिः शक्तिः

पराक्रमः षदेते यत्रवर्तन्ते तत्रदैवं सहायकृत्

The first six words of the above śloka express six essential values (udhyamaṁ, sāhasaṁ, dhairyaṁ, buddhiḥ, śaktiḥ and parākramaḥ) for the spiritual aspirant to embrace and put into practice. By consciously and prayerfully applying these values to one's day to day activities, the spiritual seeker is more likely to succeed in their goals. Material goals may also be accomplished through these disciplines (but be careful how one spends one's 'puṇya dollars').

The Lord/Īśvara (the presiding deity of all cause-effects) is invoked in each of these values. It is important to understand that we have no control over the Grace-factor (daivam; the unseen positive results of our actions) in our lives except in the form of prayer. It is this unseen factor that ultimately makes the difference between success and failure in any pursuit. 'Achieve' in the title of this section means 'to prayerfully invoke and sustain.' In this manner, we earn Grace to help us 'achieve' success.

udhyamaṁ - उध्यमं

Proper discipline; will power. The proper, ethical (Dharmic) application of one's free will.

sāhasaṁ - साहसं Enthusiasm!

dhairyaṃ - धैर्यं

Courage; a clear conviction: "Oh Fear, I'm not afraid of you! You're my best friend. Take my hand. Let's go together!"

buddhiḥ - बुद्धिः

Intelligence; a keen, bright intellect; independent thinking. This quality requires the attitude of a maverick; not blindly following what is popular, but instead, following Vedic and universal values. It is important that the spiritual aspirant be guided by a traditional teacher, while simultaneously making independent, intelligent choices. These choices are to be based on the clear understanding that the desired goal is ultimate freedom from suffering (mokṣaḥ).

śaktiḥ - शक्तिः

A healthy, balanced body-sense-mind complex; strength (physical, emotional and psychological); a balanced, well-nurtured and well-nourished intellect.

parākramaḥ - पराक्रमः

Determination; fortitude in the face of obstacles. The spiritual aspirant makes the commitment to overcome any and all obstacles which may present themselves without becoming discouraged. This conviction helps to give one emotional strength and mental stability. Without this determination, our will may become uncertain and doubtful.

While the first six words of the śloka at the top of page 19 lists six values, the following words state the outcome that will manifest to the student who fully embraces these values. Sahāyakṛt is in reference to the person who has prayerfully earned the ultimate Grace of Self-knowledge (mokṣaḥ) through the application/understanding of all these qualities.

yatra: Wherever... (in whoever these qualities abide)

kṛt: ...the one performing these action(s)...

varānte: ...has...

ṣadete: ...these six (qualities)...

tatra: ...there will be (in that person)...

daivam: ...the Grace of the Lord/Īśvara.

These qualities abide in the Lord/Īśvara in absolute measure, whereas we prayerfully nurture them within ourselves. By worshiping Īśvara we acquire these highly refined (sattva) qualities. We recognize Īśvara's Grace, which comes in the form of all the support we've been given, whether it has been through auspicious opportunities, mentors and teachers, books we've read, etc. By expressing our deepest gratitude for these gifts, we prayerfully earn Grace. In this manner, success won't go to our heads. We won't ever become arrogant. A successful person is one who has relaxed in absolute self-acceptance, and has surrendered to the Lord's/Īśvara's Grace.

An alternate reading of the last line is: 'tatradaivam praśīdati': **tatra** – **to her** (in the one who has all these qualities and has applied them to any given sādhana); **daivam** – **Grace**; **praśīdati** – **will come**. "She will attain the will to gain that Grace and reap all the benefits (sādhyam) of the given spiritual discipline (sādhana)."

One understands that Grace is earned through 'proper' effort; proper in this context meaning the application of deliberate, prayerful thoughts, words and actions based on Vedic and universal values.

This śloka is taken from a text called "Subhāṣita Grantha Mālā Bhāṣita." This title may be unfolded to mean; "A Beautiful Garland of Well-Spoken, Abiding Truths in Grantha-Book Form."

20 Values from the 13th Chapter of The Bhagavad Gītā

- 1 **amānitvaṁ** - अमानित्वं १
Absence of self-worshipfulness (reduction of the expression of physical arrogance).
- 2 **adambhitvaṁ** - अदम्भित्वं २
Absence of pretense (reduction of the expression of verbal arrogance).
- 3 **ahimsā** - अहिंसा ३
Non-injury.
- 4 **kṣāntiḥ** - क्षान्तिः ४
Accommodation.
- 5 **ārjavam** - आर्जवम् ५
Straightness.
- 6 **ācāryopāsanam** - आचार्योपासनं ६
Service to the teacher.
- 7 **śaucam** - शौचं ७
Cleanliness.
- 8 **sthairyaṁ** - स्थैर्यं ८
Steadiness; steadfastness.

- 9 **ātmavinigraḥ** - आत्मविनिग्रहः ९
Mastery over the mind.
- 10 **indriyārtheṣu vairāgyaṁ** - इन्द्रियार्थेषु वैराग्यं १०
Dispassion towards all objects of awareness.
- 11 **anahaṅkāra** - अनहङ्कार ११
Absence of egoism (reduction of the expression of mental arrogance).
- 12 **janma-mṛtyu-jarā-vyādhi-duḥkha-doṣānudarśanam**
जन्म-मृत्यु-जरा-व्याधि-दुःख-दोषानुदर्शनम् १२
Contemplation and clarity regarding the limitations of birth, death, old age, sickness, and pain.
- 13 **asakti** - असक्ति १३
Absence of a sense of ownership.
- 14 **anabhiṣvaṅgaḥ putradāra gṛhādiṣu**
अनभिष्वङ्गः पुत्रदार गृहादिषु १४
Absence of a binding attachment to son, wife, home, etc.
- 15 **nityaṁ ca samacittatvam iṣṭāniṣṭopapattiṣu**
नित्यं च समचित्तत्वम् इष्टानिष्टोपपत्तिषु १५
Consistent even-mindedness in the face of desirable and undesirable objects and/or situations.
- 16 **mayī ca ananyayogena bhakti avyabhicāriṇī**
मयी च अनन्ययोगेन भक्ति अव्यभिचारिणी १६
Unswerving devotion to the Lord, characterized by non-separateness from the Lord.

- 17 **viviktadeśa-sevitvam** - विविक्तदेश-सेवित्वम् १७
Retiring to a quiet place for contemplation.
- 18 **arati janā saṁsadi** - अरति जना संसदि १८
Absence of the craving for the company of people.
- 19 **adhyātma-jñāna-nityatvaṁ** - अध्यात्म-ज्ञान-नित्यत्वं १९
Constant application of the knowledge of the Self (meditation on the ultimate observer).
- 20 **tattva-jñāna-artha-dārsanam etat jñānam**

iti proktam ajñānaṁ yadato nyathā - तत्त्व-ज्ञान-अर्थ-

दार्शनम् एतत् ज्ञानम् इति प्रोक्तम् अज्ञानं यदतो न्यथा २०

Keeping mentally and emotionally connected to the pursuit of the knowledge of Truth. This is declared to be the ultimate knowledge; all that is opposed to this knowledge is ignorance.

Conclusion

The positive impact of the conscious application of the yama-niyamas on a Human Being will only manifest to that being by staying prayerfully aware of one's environment (both internal and external). Through prayerful application of these sacred values, one has the opportunity to reprogram one's inner, habitual world, thereby accelerating the waking-up process needed by the student to begin the process of Self-inquiry. The student of Vedānta will mature rapidly by prayerfully following the yama-niyamas, along with the practice of other Vedāntic-friendly spiritual sādhanans like yoga āsana, prāṇāyāma, Vedic chanting, the 16-step pūjā and japa.

A wonderful resource for the interested student is Pūjya Śrī Svāmī

Dayānanda Saravatī's book entitled "The Value of Values." In it, Svāmī Dayānanda discourses in detail on the 20 values from the 13th chapter of the Bhagavad Gītā listed on pages 22 – 24.

Translations and commentary from the original Sanskrit by [Śrī Svāmī Vāgīśānanda Sarasvatī](#)

श्री स्वामी वागीशानन्द सरस्वती

Śrī Svāmī Vāgīśānanda Sarasvatī

Śrī Svāmī Vāgīśānanda Sarasvatī is a senior disciple of Pūjya Śrī Svāmī Dayānanda Sarasvatī, and has been studying and teaching Vedānta since 1975.

Svāmī jī was in his teens when he became fascinated with mystical poetry and non-dualistic philosophies. In 1975, at the age of 19, he left his home in the United States and traveled to India to study in a traditional gurūkulam. After graduating from a three-year residential course in Vedānta and Sanskrit, he attended four subsequent three-year courses in the United States and in India.

Using the traditional methodology called saṁpradāya, Svāmī Vāgīśānanda 'unlocks' the scriptures of Vedānta, thereby removing the veil of ignorance; the cause of all human suffering. He is a traditional saṁnyāsi (a renunciant who is committed to a life of knowledge and has taken a vow of non-injury). A master of the South Indian Kṛṣṇa Yajur Veda style of chanting, Svāmī jī has traveled the world teaching Sanskrit, Vedic chanting and Vedānta.

॥ हरिः ॐ ॥

पूज्य श्री स्वामी दयानन्द सरस्वती

Pūjya Śrī Svāmī Dayānanda Sarasvatī

Pūjya Śrī Svāmī Dayānanda Sarasvatī (1930 – 2015) is considered the leading figure in the renaissance of the study of Advaita Vedānta in the late 20th century. A 'teacher of teachers', Pūjya Svāmī jī took dikṣa saṁnyāsa in 1962 under the guidance of Svāmī Cinmayānanda Sarasvatī. Pūjya Svāmī jī studied the complete traditional teaching methodology from his sadguru, Svāmī Praṇavānanda. He then refined his teaching skills by studying the Brahma Sūtras with Pūjya Svāmī Tārānanda Giri of the Kailash Ashrama in Rishikesh.

In 1972 Svāmī Dayānanda began the first of what would become 10 three-year courses which would take place over the next 40 years. These courses focused on the study of Advaita Vedānta and Sanskrit.

Pūjya Svāmī jī established four traditional teaching centers for the express purpose of the study of Vedānta and Sanskrit. These centers are located in Rishikesh (Uttarakhand), Annaikatti (Tamil Nadu) and Nagpur (Maharashtra) in India, and in Saylorsburg, PA in the United States.

Current estimates regarding the number of Pūjya Svāmī jī's students who currently teach Vedānta and/or Sanskrit at 200. Saṁghas of these teachers may be found in such diverse locations as California, Madras, Réunion, Sweden, Hawai'i and Brazil and in many other locations around the globe.

Pūjya Śrī Svāmī Dayānanda Sarasvatī's contribution to the study of Vedānta is incalculable. His legacy of centers of learning, recorded discourses, books, and most of all teachers, will continue to bless the world for many years to come.

॥ हरिः ॐ ॥

ॐ Press