

# THE PILLARS OF ASHTANG YOGA : YAMA AND NIYAM

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## Abstract

*There are various Yoga in scriptures. The techniques of different yoga are different but the main aim of the seeker is one that is liberation. They are Ashtanga Yoga, hatha yoga, karma yoga, bhaktiyoga, mantra yoga, tantra yoga, Laya yoga and Jnana yoga. In Ashtanga Yoga there are eight limbs, the first two limbs are the basic foundation of Ashtanga Yoga. Without that one cannot succeed in other limb. Yama and Niyam is the base of Ashtanga Yoga. Various scriptures has described Yama and Niyam In their text. Just as a building cannot be built without a strong foundation, so no role of a yogic building can be achieved without a Yama-Niyam. They are just not base but interconnected with each other also.*

**Keywords:** Yama, Niyama, Ashtanga Yoga

## INTRODUCTION

In order to attain the liberating samadhi, Maharshi Patanjali has suggested the practice of the eight limbs of yoga, which are as follows:

Yamaniyamasanapranayamapratyaharadharnadhyanasamadhyoashtangani

Meaning Yama, Niyam, Asan, Pranayam, Pratyahar, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi are the eight organs of this yoga. ' Although there are many parts of yoga, yoga is one. Just as a person without limbs or any one of the limbs is considered incomplete, even if one limb is considered less than the yoga with Ashtanga, that yoga is considered incomplete.

Statement of Yama-Niyam in various Yoga texts

Yama

The following 10 Yama are shown in Trishikhibahmanopanishad, Jabaldarshanopanishad, Shandilyopanishad, Yogadarshanopasid, Varahopanishad, Yogi Yajnavalkya, Hathayogapradipika and Vasisthasamhita.

1. Satya 2. Ahimsa 3. Asteya, 4. Brahmacharya 5. Shama 6. Dhriti, 7. Daya 8. Arjav, 9. Mitahar and 10. Sauch Apart from Daya, Arjav and Sauch, the remaining seven Yamas are mentioned in the Shiva Samhita. In the Patanjali Yoga Sutras, four of the above Yamas depict Ahimsa, Satya, Asteya and Brahmacharya. Moreover Maharshi Patanjali has described Aparigraha as the fifth Yama. Apart from this Yogatattvopanishad mentions only two Yama, which include Ahimsa and Mitahar. The Gorakshasamhita also mentions two Yama, which include Brahmacharya and Mitahar. Of these, Brahmacharya is mentioned in Dhyandindu Upanishads and Mitahar is mentioned in the remaining two yoga kundalini upanishad and Gherandsamhita. The statement of mitahar is also found in the Bhagavad Gita.

### Niyam

The following 10 Niyam are mentioned in Shandilyopanishad, Yogadarshanopanishad, Varahopanishad, Yogi Yajnavalkya and Siddha Samhita. : (1) Santosh, (2) Tap, (3) Ishwarpranidhan, (4) Astikya, (5) Daan (6) Siddhantavakyashravan, (7) Hri, (8) Mati, (9) Jap and (10) Vrat.

Hatha Yoga Pradeepika does not have a statement of Jap and vrat from the above Niyam but a statement of home. Thus the Nine Niyam are shown. The Trishikhibahmanopanishad also mentions eight niyam out of the above ten except Mati and Vrat. The first six of the above ten Niyam are stated in Jabaldarshanopanishad

In the Shiva Samhita, out of the above ten, Tapa, Siddhanta Shravan, Hri, Mati and Jap are the statement of these five Niyam. Apart from this, there are four other Niyam mentioned in this scripture, which include home, gurubhakti, vairagya and Sauch. The Mandal Brahmanopanisha mentions six rules. Santosh, astikya, guru bhakti, vairagya, ekantvas and renunciation of fruit.(phalicchya tyag).

### Yam - Niyam means code of conduct for the seeker

The ancient sages have suggested a code of conduct for the welfare of mankind. Obeying the Yama-Niyam is commendable for all the worldly and detached seekers. Since yogic yama practice is a means of purification, its significance is special as a social religion, While the yogic Niyam are an important tool for self-realization as they are a code of conduct for personal purification. However the Yama-Niyam is not completely different from each

other. If Yama is morality then the Niyam is disciplined conduct. Ethics is cultivated through disciplined conduct and polite conduct so both are very close and interdependent principles of each other.

Pure conduct leads to ideological purity and pure thought gives birth to pure conduct. An unethical way of life without discipline leads a person to adhi, vyadhi and upadhi. That is why one who wants to do sadhana should strictly follow the Yama-Niyam. The World Health Organization's final definition of health is as follows. "Health is not only the absence of diseases but also the state of body, mind, social behaviour and spiritual purity and elevation." According to this definition of modern medicine, it is difficult to find a perfectly healthy person in this world. But the only way to achieve such perfect health is through compound Yama-Niyam. Only through this can one attain physical, mental, social and spiritual elevation.

अहिंसासत्यास्तेयब्रह्मचर्यापरिग्रहा यमाः । (Patanta Yoga Sutra, Sadhanapad, Sutra Rs.)

Ahimsa, Satya, Asteya, Brahmacharyaparigraha, these five Yamas make the yoga practitioner eligible.

Rajayoga, Sadhanapada-sutra, 30

Ahimsa, Satya, Asteya, Brahmacharya and Aparigraha are the five Yamas.

एते जातिदेशकालसमयानवच्छिन्नाः सार्वभौमा महाव्रतम्, (Patanjali Yoga Sutra, Sadhna paad, sutra, 31) Because of these five vows, which are devoid of the divisions of caste, country, age and time, this Mahavrata is considered universal. (Sadhna paad, sutra 31)

Yama-niyama is meant only for Yogis, it is not. It means the entire human society. That is Samajdharma. In it, 'Yama' has been honored as the highest throne of Mahavrat. It is pantheism. Eternally, this path of Samajdharma takes man on the highway of Vyashtidharma Mokshadharma. Among the famous and best religions of the world, Sanatan Dharma stands out with its own uniqueness. That uniqueness is its Vyashtidharma. Other religions of the world have only Samajdharma, not Vyashtidharma, Buddhism and Jainism are branches of Sanatanadharma, so Vyastidharma is separate. Vyashtidharma is the path of great men. By following that path, even a common man reaches the extreme limit of the spiritual journey and becomes equal to a great man. Adhering to the path of Mahapurush means acting according to his orders and teachings.

शौचसंतोषतपःस्वाध्यायेश्वरप्रणिधानानि नियमाः॥२.३२॥

Sauch, Santosh, tap, Svadhyay and Ishwar Pranidhan are the five Niyam.

### Main yam

#### 1. Ahimsa

कर्मणा मनसा वाचा सर्वभूतेषु सर्वदा अक्लेशजननं प्रोक्तमहिंसात्वेन योगिभिः

One who does not hurt any animal through mind, word and deed. This is called nonviolence (ahimsa). Not to fight with anyone, not to insult anyone or to hate anyone, to treat everyone with love and to live in harmony with each other in a spirit of brotherhood. These are all common symptoms of non-violence. By implementing ahimsa there is no hatred and love grows.

अहिंसाप्रतिष्ठायां तत्सन्निधौ वैरत्यागः । (Patanjali Yoga Sutra, sadhanapaad, sutra 35)

Affection developed in the application of non-violence, as soon as one come in the contact of those who have establishes non violence there revenge nature is gone. Rajayoga, Sadhanapada, Sutra-35

#### 2. Satya

Truth is not dealing with anyone by mind, word, and deed. Controlling the tendency to deceive others helps in righteousness. Don't hate anyone. Speaking the truth, which is dear to others, is a common feature of this truth. Satyacharana (implementing satya) enhances Sattvaguna. Increasing sattvicism leads to peace with the development of mental powers. सत्यप्रतिष्ठायां क्रियाफलाश्रयत्वम्॥२.३६॥ **Means when a yogi is established in satya, whatever he says will become true that is the fruit of satya.**

#### 3. Asteya

'Steya' means to steal. 'Asteya' means not to steal. Trying to take or take the property of another without the consent of the original owner is considered theft. The root of theft lies in the envy of others. From this point of view, controlling jealousy and greed makes it easier to follow Asteya. Having a tendency to steal is a very big vice. This closes the path to self-improvement and also destroys social prestige.

अस्तेयप्रतिष्ठायां सर्वरत्नोपस्थानम्

When a yogi is established in asteya, he will get all kinds of gems

#### 4. Brahmacharya

Abandonment of sexual intercourse by mind, word and deed is called celibacy. Men and women practicing yoga should avoid heterosexual attraction to empty sex. Ordinary householders should also exercise as much restraint of the senses as possible. Observance of celibacy leads to semen protection. Conversely, non-observance of celibacy leads to ejaculation and rapid progression towards disease, old age and death.

ब्रह्मचर्यप्रतिष्ठायां वीर्यलाभः॥२.३८॥ When a yogi is established in Brahmacharya he gains stamina.

#### 5. Aparigrah

'Parigraha' means 'confluence' and 'Aparigraha' means 'not collecting'. One should be happy with whatever one achieves with the help of one's hard work. One should not accumulate more things than necessary. This is the common characteristic of Aparigraha. Simplicity is also essential for living a quiet and healthy life. Apparently hoarding things reinforces greed and temptation, Greed is like a mirage, never satisfied. Taking unethical measures to achieve the desired things confuses life and ultimately leads to misery.

अपरिग्रहस्थैर्ये जन्मकथन्तासम्बोधः॥३९॥

When a yogi is established in Aparigraha he will get knowledge about his birth.

Maharshi Patanjali has called these five Yamas "Mahavrat". It is free from the constraints of place and time. These five Yamas are Mahavrat that everyone can follow at any time, in any place and in any situation. Yama is to be practiced in social dealings.

### The main Niyam

#### (1) Sauch

'Sauch' means 'purification'. (1) physical and (2) mental. Keeping the body clean on the outside through bathing and on the inside through proper diet and snacks is called physical cleansing. Mental purification is achieved by reading and meditating on scriptures, meeting saints and listening to scriptures from Guru etc.

There is no progress in the path of yoga without purification of body and mind, so the seeker should strive to keep the body and mind pure through prudent eating, so that the practice of yoga does not become painful.

शौचात् स्वाङ्गजुगुप्सा परिसंसर्गः॥२.४०॥

The yogi will not have any misconceptions about his own body and he will develop detachment towards the body of others by practicing Sauch.

#### (2) Santosh

It is a common feature of contentment for a person to be satisfied and happy with whatever is achieved through sincere effort. Satisfaction gives the power to remain equal in happiness and sorrow, so that sorrow is relieved and happiness is attained. There is a saying in Gujarati that, "Satoshi nar sada sukhi."

संतोषादनुत्तमसुखलाभ

#### (3) Tap

Happiness is a common symptom of enduring physical and mental hardships. Through tapa the body-mind becomes pure so the Sattvaguna grows and for hard yogasadhana one attains serenity and mental fortitude.

कायेन्द्रियसिद्धिरशुद्धिक्षयात् तपसः॥२.४३॥

On being established in tapas, a yogic can eliminate his asuddhi. He gets Kaya siddhi and perfection of indriya.

#### (4) Svadhyay

Self means 'one's own soul.' 'Svadyay' means 'the study of knowing one's own soul.' When the extroverted mind wandering in the subjects of the senses becomes introverted, the vision and study of the soul becomes possible. To study the scriptures for introspection, to do yoga regularly and to do introspection. These are all common features of Svadhyay.

स्वाध्यायाद् इष्टदेवतासंप्रयोगः॥२.४४॥

On being established in Svadhyay a yogi can realize his Istadevata.

#### (5) Ishwar Pranidhan

'Ishwar' means 'Sagunbrahma' or 'Paramatma'. 'Pranidhan' means 'to be submissive with prana.' It is a common feature of Ishwar Pranidhan to worship God faithfully and show devotion to Him as the lord of the world. This are the common characteristics of ishwarpranidhan.

समाधिसिद्धिरीश्वरप्रणिधानात्॥२.४५॥

The ultimate role of Ishwar Pranidhan Yoga is the means of attaining Samadhi which is the last stage of yoga. In samadhi one gets ishwar darshan and the seeker becomes free from the bondage of nature.

### Minor Yama :

#### (1) Forgiveness (Shama)

The common characteristic of forgiveness is not to show hatred towards one's loved ones or ones not loved once or become tolerant. Forgiveness is the adornment of heroes as well as the adornment of yogis.

#### (2) Dhriti

Even in the face of adversity, the common characteristic of perseverance is the adherence to a virtuous and self-disciplined adherence to the law, and the constant pursuit of duty.

#### (3) Compassion (Daya)

The common symptoms of compassion are to treat the parks and oneself with sincerity, to be happy and saddened by the happiness and sorrows of others, and to take faithful measures to alleviate the sufferings of the saddened.

(4) Arjav

The ease of mind, body and senses is called Arjav. Avoiding selfishness and delusions is a common feature of simplicity.

(5) Mitahar

Eating a little less than hunger to keep the body and mind healthy and happy is called Mitahar

### Minor Niyam

(1) Astikya

Faith in the scriptural ordinances and always practicing them and fearing the scriptural prohibitions are the common features of Astikya.

(2) Donations (Daan)

Helping the needy in a loving way with the money raised with ethics is called charity. The scriptures command that everyone should donate at least ten percent of their income.

(3) Siddhanta Shravan

Listening to the scriptures and meditating on them from the elders who have realized the scriptural principles is called Siddhanta Shravan.

(4) Hri

In practice or in the spiritual path, to experience the improper work done and to make sincere efforts to correct one's own faults, is called Hri.

(5) Mati

'Mati' means 'the intellect that leads to the true form of God,' the scriptures show the way to Ishwar darshan, so the strong instinct of the mind to follow the scriptural path is called Mati. In order to attain Satyasvarupa Ishwar darshan, the seeker should cultivate a firm mind with faith in the scriptures.

Interconnected with each other

Yogic Yama is mental discipline, while yogic Niyam are applied to control both body and mind. Yet with mental discipline the conduct remains controlled and with controlled conduct the mind becomes restrained. Thus Yama and Niyam are complementary. The firm conduct of one leads to the conduct of the other naturally. E.g. If you want to follow Aparigrah Yam, you have to be content with controlling your greed, and by reducing the need or being satisfied with what you get from hard work, the virtue of simplicity develops, so that Aparigrah is followed automatically. In the same way if we follow Sauch purification of our thoughts also then automatically we will follow ahimsa. If we follow Swadhyay then automatically we will speak truth as written in our scripture. If you have Santosh then automatically you will follow Asteya. As you are satisfied there is no greediness and you not rob things and also you will follow Aparigrah also. Tap will lead to Brahmacharya and Ishwarpranidhan. Yam (morality) and Niyam (code of conduct) are not completely different from one another. Indeed, morality requires conduct and conduct requires morality. The two are closely related and interdependent principles. Therefore, they should be studied together instead of separately. None of these principles can be satisfactorily practiced without ignoring the other. The different behaviours woven into the Yam-Niyam shape human nature, which is why they cannot be separated from each other. One should keep in mind this uniformity of human nature in one's mind and try to develop it collectively; Not in split form. The great goal of life cannot be achieved without proper policy and conduct. This is especially true of spiritual development. Yama-Niyam are the guiding signs of the spiritual path. Without their help the spiritual seeker is only stuck in darkness. So the seeker should honestly stick to the Yama-Niyam. Mumukshu should firmly put them into practice in all circumstances without ignoring any of these. Such a practice of Yama-Niyam stabilizes the Sattvaguna in the seeker. Immorality and an unruly way of life inevitably lead to suffering, unpeace and disease. In an unworthy life whose mind is misled and confused. They do not have the right peace and stability. This requires truthfulness and self-discipline. The mind is of great importance to the seeker of mental character and spiritual point of view to mumukshu. That is why the study of Yama-Niyam is mandatory for him.

### Importance Of Yama and Niyam

Proper adherence to the rules of Yama and Niyam opens the way for social upliftment as well as spiritual development. Hence the observance of the Yama-Niyam is essential for the common man and all seekers. In this too, for the seeker, its implementation becomes inevitable. These two limbs of Ashtang Yoga are the basic tools. Without its strict adherence, it is impossible for a seeker to enter the path of yoga.

Indian yogis have given the highest place to the Yama-Niyam in Ashtang Yoga. Thus it can be called a code of ethics but disciplined conduct is essential for attaining the supreme role of yoga, therefore it is also an essential principle for yoga practice. It is believed that the peace and stability of the seeker's mind is maintained by proper observance of the Yama-Niyam. Usually the mind becomes distracted and restless by impulses and lusts or desires. The seeker can control these impulses and lusts by following the Yama and Niyam. So really it's not just a theory; But there are also commands of conduct. Its firm observance leads the seeker to the perfection of yoga. Violation of any of these rules impedes the seeker's mental stability and peace. These Yama and Niyam should

not only be understood as a formality or a normal way of life, the seeker should also not forget his original goal that he has to become ethical and achieve spiritual secrets in a definite way.

That is why in order to attain happiness and peace one should try to suppress them by practicing Yama-Niyam against such impulses. This cure has been shown by Maharshi Patanjali. He says in Yoga Darshan:

मैत्रीकरुणामुदितोपेक्षणां सुखदुःखपुण्यापुण्यविषयाणां भावनातश्चित्तप्रसादनम्॥१.३३॥

Let's understand the meaning of this. This sutra shows four types of friendship, compassion, tenderness and neglect. The human mind is tainted with anti-vices due to these qualities. The vices like jealousy, cruelty or hatred, grief, feeling of doing evil, anger etc. are born from Rajoguna and Tamoguna and shake the mind through clash. These vices hinder the concentration of the mind, so Maharshi Patanjali's remedy to remove this filthiness of the mind suggests that one should cultivate a friendly attitude towards happy people instead of envying them. We should be satisfied that what a friend has is ours. Seeing a miserable human being, one should show compassion towards him, that is, he should not be despised. Pleasure should be cultivated towards those who do good deeds. One should be happy The ungodly who do sinful deeds should not be despised but should be valued. Neglect means neutrality. If someone treats us with disrespect, instead of being angry with them, behave as if nothing has happened and don't show happiness or sadness at that time. That types of equality should be developed. Thus Sattvaguna in the mind increases by removing the opposing vices. Sattvaguni Chitta begins to assume concentration because Sattvaguni is a virtue of stability. In the end, in Nirbij Samadhi, the mind becomes transcendental, that is, the mind becomes completely retired, until the yogi should continue to study the Yama and Niyam.

## CONCLUSION

The Yama and Niyam description in various scripture how they are interconnected with each other. Various research on Yama and Niyama is done and how it effects on various system of our body. This means that the Yama-Niyam should be followed completely by the Yogasadhaka but only those who abandon the worldly way of life and adopt the Sadhaka life diligently, can do their best to successfully follow it. Many high moral values and principles must be adopted with sufficiently strong mental strength for the continuous practice of Yama-Niyam. Establishing complete control over the Yama-Niyam is as difficult a task as gaining power over the whole world, yet it is by no means impossible. Many yogis in the past have achieved such success.

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