



## PROGRAM E-16

### THE AWAKENING

#### **The Importance of Yama-Niyama**

*The importance of the yamas in your spiritual unfoldment should not be underrated.*

The observance of the yamas, **or abstinences**, is vital in attaining a quiet mind, without which no self-observation can occur; thus no spiritual evolution can manifest.

The observance of the yamas, along with the niyamas, is one of the key first steps to spiritual evolution. Many texts stress the importance of yama-niyama as moral concepts. However, at a deeper level, one needs to understand that the observance of yama-niyama is a fundamentally needed phase of training in order to quiet the mind, so one can see within it, its errors, along with its destructive past life errors.

It is vital that the seeker on the path realize that the mind functions as a computer. Thus, its 'hard drive' pre-fixed patterning needs to be followed to bring quietness and serenity to it. Later you will learn the skill of opening the computer's mind, and changing the hard drive.

Patanjali says that it is not enough to just know the yamas and niyamas, one also needs to observe and follow them. They need to be followed without any desire, other than the desire to bring about a clear, quiet mind, so one can see into it, and thus see the pre-forming of karma release before any negative effects are manifested.

The secret to gaining mastery over the negative thought patterns of the mind is to re-condition the mind so that it thinks of an opposite, positive thought whenever the mind releases an 'anti-yama' concept.

This effortful task needs to be practiced until the habit of thinking positive becomes automatic.

The **yamas** comprise the 'shall-not do' in our dealings with the external world. The **niyamas** comprise the 'shall do' in our dealings with the inner world.

## **YAMA – Restraints**

### ***The Five Don'ts of Yoga:***

Some yoga texts give 15 yamas, other texts give 10 yamas; however, Patanjali offers five key yamas. They are:

1. **Ahimsa:** *Non-violence* is the absence from injury, or not causing pain to any living creature in thought, word, or deed. This includes not causing any pain or damage to your own mind and body.

Ahimsa, along with satyam (truthfulness), are the fundamental yamas. The others are supports of these first two. Avoidance of physical, verbal, and mental violence is a key action of this principle.

2. **Satyam** is truthfulness in word and thought, internally and externally. The practice of satyam leads to the realization of cosmic truth.

3. **Asteya** is non-stealing, non-coveting, and non-entering into debt. Asteya relates to not coveting and not hoarding. It also means not hindering other people from their dreams.

4. **Brahmacharya** is abstaining from any excessive emotional or physical actions of the body.

5. **Aparigraha** is the practice of abstaining from greed, and is linked to the concept of non-possessiveness. The term aparigraha also means limiting possessions to what is necessary. This limit can change as one passes through various stages in life.

## **NIYAMA – Observances**

### ***The Five Do's of Yoga:***

The niyamas are yogic observances. The five principles of niyama control are:

1. ***Contentment with self and life (santosha).***

2. ***Purity in thought, deeds, and body (shaucha).***

3. ***Spiritual discipline*** of austerity (**tapas**).

4. ***Spiritual studying*** and learning (**svadhyaya**).

5. ***Surrender to the cosmic laws,*** (Ishvara pranidhana).

Let's go over these five niyamas again:

1. **Santosa** -- Contentment. This means acceptance of the external and internal situations of your life, and then taking skillful actions to improve what needs to be improved.
2. **Saucha** -- Cleanliness. This means not only external, but also internal cleanliness of the body and mind, such as avoiding places of egoism, places of anger, as well as not allowing your mind to become angry or egotistical.
3. **Tapas** -- Austerity. This means deep commitment and austerity practices to your yoga sadhana.
4. **Svadyaya** – This means self-study and spiritual self-education, and then applying it to your life and to your chosen sacred goal.
5. **Isvara pranidhana** – This means surrender of the lower ego self to the higher self, and attuning to the cosmic laws of your being and your environment. In short, it means acknowledging that there are higher internal principles in your universe than just your own ego-self.

According to one yogic view, we all have evolved from the most basic life-form. Humans have a long way to go before reaching the end goal of evolution. This natural evolution takes an infinity of lifetimes. However, the practice of esoteric kriya yoga, and the observance of the yamas and niyamas, sanction the acceleration of this process. This evolution can be reduced to surprisingly few lifetimes.

Furthermore, who knows when in the past you started your mystical evolutionary process.

You have gained the blessings of having reached the human stage of evolution, where you now have the ability to *consciously* evolve, which will speed up your evolution.

Through the practice of yama-niyama, you can begin to release yourself from the effects of negativity by living in accordance with the cosmic principles symbolized by the yama-niyama principle.

(Also see Chapters 1 & 2, pages 1-34  
in *The Spiritual Science of Kriya Yoga*  
for a more detailed explanation of Yama-Niyama.)

OM

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