

**The Science of Upanishads – Part 41: Foundations of Modern Yoga Practice**  
**(Contd.): Description of Niyamaa (The Discipline) as The Second Anga (Limb) of The**  
**Ashtanga Yoga (Eight Limbed Yoga) of The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali**  
**(December 27, 2017 - January 2, 2018)**

The last week's Mandir Bulletin described 5 Yamas (The Rules) as the First Anga of the Eight Angas (limbs) of Ashtanga Yoga (Eight-limbed Yoga), including (1) **Yama** – Ethical Rules, (2) **Niyama** – Discipline or Virtuous Habits, (3) **Asana** - Physical Poses, (4) **Pranayama** - Breath Exercises, (5) **Pratyahara** - Withdrawal of the Senses from External Objects, (6) **Dharana** – Concentration, (7) **Dhyana** - Meditation, and (8) **Samadhi** - Complete Realization. This week's bulletin will elaborate on **Niyama as the Second Anga of the Ashtanga Yoga in Yoga Sutras of Patanjali. Together, Niyama and Yama are generally considered as the Do's and Don't's that form the very basis on which the Yogi begins to build his spiritual life.**

Like there are 5 Yamas (The Don't Do List), there are **5 Niyamas (The Do List)** as shown below:

1. **Shoucha (शौच)**: purity, clearness of mind, speech and body
2. **Santosha (सन्तोष)**: contentment
3. **Tapas (तपस)**: austerity, self-discipline, persistent meditation, perseverance
4. **(स्वाध्याय)**: study of self, self-reflection, introspection
5. **Ishvara Pranidhan (ईश्वरप्रणिधान)**: contemplation of God/Supreme Being

**1. Shoucha – Purity:** The first niyama is shoucha, meaning purity and cleanliness. Shoucha has both an inner and an outer aspect. Outer cleanliness simply means keeping ourselves clean. Inner cleanliness has as much to do with the healthy, free functioning of our bodily organs as with the clarity of our mind. Practicing asanas or pranayama are essential means for attending to this inner shoucha. Asanas tones the entire body and removes toxins while pranayama cleanses our lungs, oxygenates our blood and purifies our nerves. "But more important than the physical cleansing of the body is the cleansing of the mind of its disturbing emotions like hatred, passion, anger, lust, greed, delusion and pride."

**2. Santosha - Contentment :** Another niyama is santosha, modesty and the feeling of being content with what we have. To be at peace within and content with one's lifestyle finding contentment even while experiencing life's difficulties for life becomes a process of growth through all kinds of circumstances. We should accept that there is a purpose for everything - yoga calls it karma – and we cultivate contentment 'to accept what happens'. It means being happy with what we have rather than being unhappy about what we don't have.

**3. Tapas – Disciplined use of our energy:** Tapas refers to the activity of keeping the body fit or to confront and handle the inner urges without outer show. Literally it means to heat the body and, by so doing, to cleanse it. Behind the notion of tapas lies the idea we can direct our energy to enthusiastically engage life and achieve our ultimate goal of creating union with the Divine. Tapas helps us burn up all the desires that stand in our way of this goal. Another form

of tapas is paying attention to what we eat. Attention to body posture, attention to eating habits, attention to breathing patterns - these are all tapas.

**4. Svadhyaya – Self study** : The fourth niyama is svadhyaya. Sva means "self" adhyaya means "inquiry" or "examination". Any activity that cultivates self-reflective consciousness can be considered svadhyaya. It means to intentionally find self-awareness in all our activities and efforts, even to the point of welcoming and accepting our limitations. It teaches us to be centered and non-reactive to the dualities, to burn out unwanted and self-destructive tendencies.

**5. Isvarapranidhana - Celebration of the Spiritual** : Isvarapranidhana means "to lay all your actions at the feet of God." It is the contemplation on God (Isvara) in order to become attuned to God and God's will. It is the recognition that the spiritual suffuses everything and through our attention and care we can attune ourselves with our role as part of the Creator. The practice requires that we set aside some time each day to recognize that there is some omnipresent force larger than ourselves that is guiding and directing the course of our lives.

**[Read Here for More on Niyama, the second of the eight principal steps of Ashtanga Yoga described in Yoga Sutras of Patanjali](#)**