



COMPARATIVE STUDY OF YAMA IN VASHISHTHA SAMHITA AND PATANJALI YOG SUTRA

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ABSTRACT

The *Yamas* and their complement represent a series of "right living" or ethical rules within Yoga philosophy. It means "reining in" or "control". These are restraints for proper conduct as given in the Vedas and the Yog Sutras. They are a form of moral imperatives, commandments, rules or goals. The *Yamas* are the "don't do these" list of self-restraints, typically representing commitments that affect one's relations with others and self.

The earliest mention of *Yamas* is in the Rigveda, and over fifty texts of Hinduism, from its various traditions, discuss *Yamas*. Patañjali lists five *yamas* in his *Yoga Sūtras of Patanjali*. Ten *yamas* are codified as "the restraints" in numerous Hindu texts, including *Yajnavalkya Smṛiti*, the *Śāṅḍilya* and *Vārāha Upanishads*, the *Vashistha Samhita* the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* by *Svātmārāma*, and the *Tirumantiram* of *Tirumular*.

The *Yamas* apply broadly and include self-restraints in one's actions, words and thoughts.

A *YAMA* is a duty or observance recommended by yogic philosophy and teaching as part of the eight-limbed path of yoga. In *Patanjali's Yoga Sutras*, he outlines five *yamas* as his first "limb" of yoga.

The word, *yama*, originally meant "bridle" or "rein" and refers to the restraining nature of the *yamas*. These *yamas* are practices that are considered to be outer observances. They are a way of applying the behavioural codes of yoga to the way the yogi relates to the world. They are considered to be a valuable and highly relevant guide to help yogis live an ethical life.

Practicing the *yamas* is said to give the yogi the opportunity to live in a way that is healthier and more peaceful. They can improve relationships with others, strengthen character and help the yogi progress on his/her spiritual path. It is also believed to reduce or even prevent the accumulation of bad karma, which can be gathered when one lives without awareness or honesty.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Comparative study of description given about YAM in Patanjali Yog Sutra and Vashistha Samhita.

VASHISTHA SAMHITA

अहिंसा सत्यमस्तेयं ब्रह्मचर्यं क्षमा धृतिः ।

दयार्जवं मिताहारः शौचं चैव यमाः दश ॥

In this verse ten types of *Yama* have been described. Which are as follows :-

- | | | | | | |
|-----------|----------|------------|----------------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Ahimsa | 2. Satya | 3. Asteya | 4. Brahmcharya | 5. Kshama | 6. Dhriti |
| | 7. Daya | 8. Arjavam | 9. Mitahar | 10. Sauch | |

AHIMSA - Not causing any kind of pain or suffering to any creature or creature by mind, word or action is called non-violence.

SATYA - As seen, heard and experienced. Tell exactly like that. Don't mix it in any way. Or do not cheat anyone in any way.

ASTEYA - Not taking someone else's thing or thing without his permission is called *Asteya*. That means don't steal.

BRAHMCHARYA - Restraint of the senses and attachment of the mind to Brahma is called celibacy.

KSHAMA - Forgiveness is the feeling of forgiving someone when he / she has made a mistake.

DHRITI - Maintaining patience even in adverse circumstances is called *Dhriti*. That means keeping yourself balanced even in times of crisis.

DAYA - Having compassion for all living beings is called *Daya*. Do not bear ill will towards any living being.

ARJAVAM - *Arjavam* means softness. *Sadhaka* should avoid harshness in following the rules and follow softness.

MITAHAR - *Mitahar* means following moderation in diet. *Yogi* should take only diet suitable for yoga practice.

SHAUCHA - *Shaucha* means purification. Here the matter of physical and mental purity has been mentioned.

PATANJALI YOG SUTRA

अहिंसासत्यास्तेयब्रह्मचर्यापरिग्रहा यमाः॥२.३०॥

In a practical sense, practicing the *Yamas* eliminates or reduces the accumulation of bad karma as well as prevents the draining of our energy when we lead a false and/or unconscious life. When we practice the *Yamas* we are striving towards living a healthier, holier and more peaceful life and at the same time we strengthen our powers of awareness,

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will and discernment. The more we cultivate conscious and skilful action, the easier it will be to navigate strong emotions and negative thought patterns—and much less likely to act from unconscious programming. Engaging in these practices is not an easy task, yet by doing so we fortify our character, improve our relationships with others, and further our progress along the path of yoga.

Patanjali laid out the following five YAMA

- (1) Ahimsa
- (2) Satya
- (3) Asteya
- (4) Brahmacharya
- (5) Aparigraha

AHIMSA (NON-VIOLENCE)

Ahimsa means not to kill anyone. Killing generates pain; hence ahimsa can mean not to cause pain to anyone. Yoga demands ahimsa in totality. That means, himsa does not mean only killing or hitting anyone. That is a limited meaning of the word or only physical aspect. To hurt someone mentally is also a himsa. That is oral himsa. Yoga also states further that even thinking ill of someone is also a himsa, which is a mental himsa. Hence, ahimsa covers all aspects such as physical, oral, mental. This indicates the greatness of the depth of the science of yoga. Patanjali's Yoga aphorism states the results of following such ahimsa :

अहिंसाप्रतिष्ठाय तत्सन्निधौ वैरत्यागः॥२.३५॥

One, who observes ahimsa, succeeds in eliminating feelings of enmity. If ahimsa is followed for a long time, not only the sadhaka, but even his surroundings are affected and enmity is eliminated in the minds of all who come in contact with him. Thus, ahimsa is not only elimination of physical, mental, oral hurt, but also wiping out the feelings of enmity. The surroundings of such a sadhaka are also changed effectively.

Thus, for Yoga studies such high degree ahimsa is prescribed. However, not all Yoga Sadhakas aspire for samadhi. Their expectations from the yoga studies are limited. From their point of view such great ahimsa may not be able to be observed continuously. Hence, in day-to-day life it should be considered how far such ahimsa is to be observed. A common man may not be able to follow ahimsa in entirety.

If we consider the example of fishermen, their basic activity is fishing from the sea and sale of the produce. If he decides to follow the principle, he will not be able to carry on his daily activity. Hence, for him, he may not be able to follow the principle of ahimsa and he is not expected also to follow it. However, those who desire to progress further in Yoga should shun all such activities. Initially, one may not be able to observe total ahimsa. However, one should constantly keep the definition of ahimsa in mind and try to follow it. All the activities should be analysed in the mind to determine what kind of himsa, physical, oral, mental arises from one's activity. After analysis, it may be found that at times, certain activities generate himsa, which can be easily avoided. Then the mind and the body can be trained to avoid such activity. Such training is the first step towards following ahimsa entirely.

SATYA (TRUTHFULNESS)

Satya should also be considered in depth. It does not only cover speaking the truth. Proper understanding of the talk and the mind is the truth. Here, proper means exactly what is seen, understood or heard, the same thing should be followed by our tendency to talk and also by the mind. When we try to explain something to others, the conversation if it generates doubts or if it is not understood correctly by others, or if it is of no use to others, then that is not truth, even if it is true. Also, God has created our tongue for the benefit of all and not for destruction. So the truth, which results in the destruction of someone or something, is also not the truth. Mahabharata has analysed and classified the truth as under: Silence is greater than the speech, true speech is greater than the silence, speech as per one's dharma is greater than it and the true speech according to dharma and which is pleasurable and useful to others is the greatest.

Patanjali Rishi has stated the results of the truth as under :

सत्यप्रतिष्ठाय क्रियाफलाश्रयत्वम्॥२.३६॥

With constant following of the truth and the commensurate behaviour, one gets vachasiddhi. That means without performing any religious rites, the results of the karma accrue to him and to others due to his speech and blessings.

ASTEYA (HONESTY) -

Steya means theft. Asteya means not stealing anything. However, asteya has a comprehensive meaning and is not limited to not stealing something from the other and keeping it in possession. It means not keeping anything with self, which does not belong to the self. If one finds something lying on the street and picks it up thinking that no one has seen him and since that was lying on the street, some one is bound to pick it up, then why not me, then that is also a theft. Picking up or possessing something, which does not have any owner, is also a theft. When one sees some money lying on the deserted street, there is a desire to pick it up. However, then the conscience starts pricking one that the money does not belong to him and hence should not be picked up. The other mind says that why not pick it up, if not me, someone else is bound to pick it up. The battle of the two minds starts increasing the heartbeats. If the bad conscience wins, then the intelligence propels the body to pick it up. But yet the good conscience keeps on advising against it. The money is picked up, but only after losing the calmness of the mind and after increasing



the heart beats. There is an increasing pressure on the mind even after the money is picked up. The mind is disturbed; there is no concentration in work. When this becomes unbearable, one decides to donate the money somewhere, which will reduce the disturbance to some extent. Again while depositing the money in a temple or at some religious place, the heartbeats increase imagining the questions that may be raised by someone else. When ultimately it is deposited and one is free, the mind becomes calm and quiet and the pressure disappears. This process can be viewed in start of theft. The pressure generated in the process does have bad effects on the body and the internal glands. If asteya is observed, the body and the mind do not have to undergo such strain. This is the meaning and conclusion of asteya.

This is an effect of the actual physical process of theft. But even if a thought of the theft peeps into the mind, it can affect the mental and thereby the physical health. If the electronic impulses generated through the brain are measured with the help of a machine, it is observed that there are wide changes while being in such a state. Hence, yoga states that one should not even imagine the theft. The following aphorism states the effects :

अस्तेयप्रतिष्ठायां सर्वरत्नोपस्थानम्॥२.३७॥

A sadhaka is endowed with all jewels (virtues) when he practises asteya.

BRAHMACHARYA (SEXUAL CONTINENCE) -

Yoga sadhaka should follow continence, but this does not mean that he should renounce family life and become a monk; such an action is not expected in Yoga science. When a sadhaka progresses on the path of Yoga, on his own he feels that he should renounce the worldly activities and he will be free from all desires and hence can easily study dhyana and dharana. However, all of us need not follow this path. So we need not stretch the meaning of continence to this level. Controlled enjoyment of desires, staying within the limit of dharma and science can be termed as continence. If we understand this meaning and behave accordingly, we will be able to progress in Yoga. Due to uncontrolled behaviour, we are more restricted. Desires, their fulfillment and enjoyment do have a place in the family life, but there should be some limit. It is we who should control the desires and not desires controlling us. Once the desires start ruling us, we lose our freedom. If the desires are not fulfilled, then we lose our mental and physical well being.

If observing such continence seems difficult initially, when we think deeply about it, it is not so difficult as it seems. However, one has to make an effort. One should deliberately avoid consumption of items, which increase the desire or reading material, which excites the feelings. Old religious texts have detailed clarification on this point.

One who has renounced worldly matters, should abstain himself from the following matters and one who is following family life should avoid the following with other women excluding his wife :

1. Thinking about her in the mind
2. Hearing stories about her
3. Conversing with her
4. Seeing her
5. Smiling with or at her
6. Conversing with her alone
7. Touching her
8. Making love to her

However, in today's world avoiding all these, one may not be able to live. Hence, instead of literally following the instructions, one should try to understand the logic behind it. If such desires are not controlled and not fulfilled, they can prove harmful to the mind and the body. To avoid this, one must follow continence.

Patanjali Rishi has stated the following aphorism :

ब्रह्मचर्यप्रतिष्ठायां वीर्यलाभः॥२.३८॥

One who observes continence, gets illuminated and acquires various siddhis.

APARIGRAH (NON POSSESSIVENESS) -

Aparigrah means not hoarding anything. Storing things, which are not required by us, is known as parigrah. For example: If we are thirsty, we can quench the thirst after drinking a glass of water. Even if one brings a pot full of water, the thirst gets quenched with a glass only. But this gives rise to other problems. First to bring pot full of water, one has to search for so much water as well as for a pot. One has to run around to get these things. To bring water also, one has to put in some efforts. Even after the thirst is quenched, there remains a question as to what is to be done of the remaining water. Where it should be kept, how long the water will remain pure, efforts to keep it safely, all these problems arise thereby increasing the mental and physical strain. If one quenches his thirst by drinking water using his hands, then all these problems do not arise at all. This results in saving all the efforts. This example can be applied to other matters too. We can also say that when we are able to satisfy our hunger by eating the various bulbs and fruits grown by the nature, why do we strive so much? In fact, it is not essential. But yet we strive to grow food crops, and put in a lot of efforts to process them afterwards. To make up for all these efforts, we go on eating more. This circle continues endlessly. Yoga aims at not giving rise to such circles at all. We should enjoy only what is necessary and that too in a controlled manner. Not to store or hoard the things is aparigrah.



Of course, we should think about this by using common sense. To observe aparigraha, one should not run behind acquiring things, which are not necessary. The point is illustrated by a common example. We have food when we are hungry, to satisfy the hunger. Even when the hunger is satisfied, sometimes we tend to eat more, just because we like the taste and it satisfies the tongue. When we consume such excess, it affects the body harmfully. The food does not get digested well and then diseases such as non-digestion, constipation etc arises. If we consume only the necessary amount, then we do not have to suffer. Hence, yoga sadhaka should try to follow aparigraha with efforts.

The results are described as follows :

अपरिग्रहस्थैर्ये जन्मकथंतासंबोधः॥२.३९॥

One who learns and follows aparigraha in entirety gets the knowledge of past, present and future. He also knows about his past birth.

CONCLUSION

We have seen that in both texts, Yama has been described in differently. In Vashistha Samhita there are 10 different Yamas and in Patanjali Yog Sutra there are 5 different Yamas. The first five Yamas are common in both the text with same meaning. Vashistha Samhita has additional 5 Yamas which need to be attained for continue towards Samadhi for a Sadhaka.

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