

Synopsis

This lesson reveals how Patañjali did not suggest moral-ethical norms to be followed, nor did he suggest that they are the first step to yoga. Then, why has Patañjali mentioned *Yama* and *Niyama*? Are they moral-ethical principles? In the *Darśanic* convention, there is an '*āchār-dharma-nīti-praṇāli*'. Not only *yama* and *niyama*, but the entire *aṣṭanga yoga* is an '*āchār-dharma-nīti-praṇāli*', which may be termed in English as 'ethico-religious practices'. Have *yama-niyama* to be practised only when out in society and not while one is practicing the other limbs of *aṣṭanga yoga*, like *āsana*, *prāṇāyāma*, *dhāraṇa*, *dhyāna*? We need to understand the *yama-niyama* and how they manifest in *āsana*, *prāṇāyāma*, *dhyāna*, *japa* etc. Hence they are '*āchār-dharma-nīti-praṇāli*'. *Achār* is conduct, *nīti* is ethics. But, *dharma* is not to be understood as religion. Religion needs the faith of mankind to sustain. It cannot survive if nobody believes in it. *Dharma* does not need faith or following. It is that which sustains us.

"*Dharma* is that which supports, sustains and upholds one who is falling, one who has fallen, one who is about to fall, one who may fall." B.K.S.Iyengar.

Philosophy and *tattvajñāna* will divulge reality but *dharma* will make us realise realities. There are different types of *dharma* for all creatures big and small as well as for inert matter. *Guṇa dharma*, *svabhāva dharma*, *niyata dharma*, *vihiṭa dharma*; so also there are different *karmas* like *vihiṭa karma*, *niyata karma* ect. All creatures have *dharma* but they do not have a religion. *Dharma* is duty-mindedness.

Q: What is the difference between *karma* & *dharma*? A: *karma* is what you do and *dharma* is what you should do. They are a weave. *Karma* never leaves us and *dharma* should never leave us.

Namaskar all of you.

So, we are in the fourth session on Education in Yoga, Education about Yoga, Education through Yoga.

In the last session I made a concluding remark that I will be dealing with another major misconception prevalent in the field of yoga, that is, the *Yamas* and *Niyamas* are moral¹-ethical² principles, they are moral-ethical practices suggested by Patañjali.

At the outset let me make a statement that these are not moral-ethical principles. Patañjali is not suggesting moral-ethical norms to be practiced. As a matter of fact, anyone, you and me, can also stipulate moral-ethical principles to be practiced, ethics, morality to be practiced in whatever realm of life; why do we need Patañjali? So, therefore, we should know that Patañjali is not trying to suggest that moral-ethical principles are the first step in yoga.

Because the fact of the matter is if we want to get to be good human beings, morality and ethicality should be practiced by each and every one. If we do not practice those, we are nothing but bi-footed animals; one of the factors which keeps human beings as human beings is that the mankind practices morality-ethicality and should be practiced, whether you do yoga or you don't do yoga, morality-ethicality must be practiced.

Then, why Patañjali mentions *Yamas* and *Niyamas*, what is called as restraints and observances? Then we know the five *Yamas* and the five *Niyamas* and these are normative principles that anyone can instruct, anyone can suggest.

But why I'm making a statement that these are not moral-ethical principles is for simple reason that in the *Darśanic* convention, in the convention of Indian philosophical system

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- 1 Morality (from Latin: *moralitas*, lit. 'manner, character, proper behavior') is the differentiation of intentions, decisions and actions between those that are distinguished as proper and those that are improper. Morality can be a body of standards or principles derived from a code of conduct from a particular philosophy, religion or culture, or it can derive from a standard that a person believes should be universal. Morality may also be specifically synonymous with "goodness" or "rightness". <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morality>
 - 2 Ethics or moral philosophy is a branch of philosophy that "involves systematizing, defending, and recommending concepts of right and wrong behavior." The field of ethics, along with aesthetics, concerns matters of value, and thus comprises the branch of philosophy called axiology. Ethics seeks to resolve questions of human morality by defining concepts such as good and evil, right and wrong, virtue and vice, justice and crime. As a field of intellectual inquiry, moral philosophy also is related to the fields of moral psychology, descriptive ethics, and value theory. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morality>

there are set columns on which the expounder must delineate. Now, when Patañjali comes to *āṣṭāṅga yoga*, actually the whole *āṣṭāṅga yoga* it is called as *āchār³ dharma⁴ nīti⁵* aspects, *āchār-dharma-nīti-praṇāli^{6 7}*.

So Patañjali has to offer something as a basic principle of practices and *sādhana*s and they're called *āchāra nīti dharma praṇāli*. In English that is rendered as 'ethico-religious practices'. Now ethico-religious practices are not only *Yamas* and *Niyamas*; all the eight aspects are included, or they are composing the entire *dharma āchāra nīti praṇāli*. In English again I repeat, although it is a faulty rendition: 'ethico-religious principles of yoga'. Not only *Yamas* and *Niyamas* but even *āsana*s, *prāṇāyāma*, *pratyahara*, *dhāraṇa*, *dhyāna*, *samādhi*. They all compose the *āchāra dharma nīti praṇāli* of Patañjali's system. So it's not just *Yamas* and *Niyamas* but all the *āṣṭāṅgas* are part of *āchāra dharma nīti praṇāli*. Because these are all practices. Therefore *Yamas* and *Niyamas* are not moral-ethical principles and practices, because all the normative philosophers have suggested this.

05:35

Many of them have, from the top of their voice, have told us, beseeched us, or sometimes by fiat, that morality and ethicality must be practiced, but we got away. We can be told that we must practice morality-ethicality, but in the practicality of life do we really practice it? Can we really practice it? Does it become major consideration for us? And therefore all the heads of religions in the world have said about morality-ethicality that everyone should practice. But then you know what has happened?

So we don't have to bring in Patañjali to tell us the same thing, that you must practice morality-ethicality; so even if you are not doing yoga, if you are in business of life activity, if you are in practicality of life, yet you must be practicing morality-ethicality. That will be or that should be actually a signature condition of a human being, a good human being. Otherwise we are bi-footed creatures. The point is: the ethico-religious principles of Patañjali circumscribe all the *āṣṭāṅgas* and not just the two *Yama* and *Niyama*.

3 *āchāra* = conduct

4 *Dharma* is a wider concept. It comes from single letter-root called "dhr". *Dhr* means to sustain. So *Dharma* is that which sustains us. That which makes us realize the realities (from this lesson).

5 *nīti* (*Nithi*) = ethics, ethicality.

6 *praṇāli* = adverb: going with, flowing with, towards.

7 *āchāra dharma nīti praṇāli*: an ethical conduct that makes us flow towards-with the *dharma*.

Now what is ethico-religious system? See, in our convention we have philosophy and then we have what is called *tattvajñāna*⁸ and we have *dharma* which is rendered as religion.

So in systems such as Patañjali, even the systems of Kapila, *Sāṃkhya*, Kaṇāda, *Vaiśeṣika*, *Nyāya* of Gautama, or Jaimini *Mīmāṃsā*, or Bhadra *Mīmāṃsā*, or any other philosopher, there are so many philosophies in Indian philosophical systems; each one of those have mentioned something as *āchāra dharma nīti praṇāli*, which again I repeat in English it is 'religion', which is not a proper rendition. So, bear in mind *Yamas. ahimsā's Yama to samādhi* it is all ethico-religious principles of yoga, it is not just *Yamas*.

08:48

And these are all *aṅga*, these are all limbs, they are all integral aspects. Do you want me to say that *Yamas* and *Niyamas* have to be practiced out in society, not while one is practicing *āsana*, *prāṇāyāma*, *dhāraṇa*, *dhyāna*? So it is not only a social face, it doesn't have only a social face, that while you are in social situation, that you must practice morality-ethicity. When you are isolated and when you are going to do yoga, so there are *Yamas* and *Niyamas* in all the other aspects as well.

Usually we bother about what is correct *āsana* and what is correct *prāṇāyāma*, what is right *āsanas*, what is right *prāṇāyāma*. We don't try to understand what is *Yama-Niyama* of *āsanas*, what is *Yama-Niyama* of *prāṇāyāma*, what is *Yama-Niyama*, how does it manifest in *āsana*, *prāṇāyāma*, *dhyāna*, *japa*⁹?

10:04

Guruji made it a point to explain all these things. He would explain you *Yamas* and *Niyamas* in your *Trikonāsana*. He would explain you *ahimsā*, *satya*, *asteya*, *bramāchārya*,

8 Philosophy in Sanscrit is *tattvajñana* i. e. *tat* = that, the soul or the metaphysical principle; *tva* = being; *jñana* = knowledge. The contemplation, knowledge and understanding of this metaphysical principle is philosophy. Prashant S. Iyengar Discourses on Yog vol. 1 pag. 190 Publishers: Ramamani Memorial Yog Institute, Pune and Yog Mumbai.

9 It is a proven principle of *yogashastra* that the evolution of the *sukshma sharira* is effected mainly by *japa* i.e. recitation of *mantras* and God's name and His *dhyāna* or meditation. Page 54 ... This body is subject to hunger and thirst. Its needs are cleanliness, exercise and exercise and excretion. In the same manner, the *sukshma sharira* has subtle needs which cannot be appeased by material substances like food stuffs, air, water, physical rest and exercise. The fulfilment of these needs is obtained through subtle channels. In this respect, it is to be noted that *japa* is food, *japa* is air and water, *japa* is the tonic. *Japa* is the medicine, *japa* is rest, exercise and excretion and purification. *Japa* is bath. *Japa* is everything for *sukshma sharira*. Page 56 - Prashant S. Iyengar Discourses on Yog vol. 1 - Publishers: Ramamani Iyengar Memorial Yog Institute, Pune and Yog Mumbai.

aparigraha in *Trikonāsana*, he would explain *sauca, saṁtoṣa, tapas, svādhyāya, īśvarapraṇidhānā* in your *Trikonāsana, Tadāsana*.

We did not take clue that *Yamas-Niyamas* also come in *āsanas, prāṇāyāma* and in the theory of yoga, in philosophy of yoga they come up to *samādhi*. They will manifest differently.

See what is your morality when you are out in your workplace? And what is your morality when you are back home with your family? You have something called as business ethics. Now, the business ethics comes only in business, but when you are out from business framework, you are back home, do you still have the same ethics that you practice in your business place? So, the ethics will be changing with reference to your workplace, your occupation, where you are, what are you doing. So there is one kind of ethics while you are in office place, another kind of ethics when you are in your business place, another kind of ethics when you are in your family, another kind of ethics when you are with your wife and children. So therefore, again it is an open architecture.

Similarly, we have to see that *Yamas* and *Niyamas*, morality-ethicality comes differently in our *āsanas, prāṇāyāma, dhāraṇa, dhyāna, samādhi* or whatever practices we are putting in. They will manifest differently, they will come differently. Are we studying it?

Now, as I just now said that Indian philosophical system has something called as philosophy. Now, what is this philosophy? Philosophy is that which divulges reality. A human being should be seeking realities and the philosophy is that which divulges reality. Then what is *dharma*? *Dharma* is that which helps one realize. Philosophy will divulge, the *tattvajñāna* will divulge, and *dharma* will make you realize the realities.

So all the practices of yoga, or any plane – body, mind, breath, senses, organs, psyche, consciousness, intellect, emotion – it is for truth seeking and it is for realization of the truth. So, *dharma* is that which helps one realize the realities, by philosophy you will only divulge the realities. That is why *dharma* and *tattvajñāna* are important aspects in structuring Indian philosophical system. These are two major considerations in Indian philosophical system, as to:

- what is *tattvajñāna*,
- what are realities,
- what are absolute realities
- what are relative realities,
- absolute realities,

- ultimate realities

and then *dharma* comes for one to realize. They are realized within oneself, inside, they are realized within. All the realities are realized within and *dharma* comes for that purpose. That's why in English they call it 'ethico-religious system' and notice that it includes from *ahimsā* to *asamprajñātāsamādhi*¹⁰.

If you break up all the *āṣṭāṅgas*, you have:

- five of *Yamas*,

- five of *Niyamas*,

- then you have *āsana*,

- then you have *prāṇāyāma* of three types: *bāhya prāṇāyāma*, *abhyantara prāṇāyāma*, *stambha prāṇāyāma*¹¹,

- then there is *pratyāhāra*,

- then there are *dhāraṇas*¹², several kinds of *dhāraṇas*,

- several kinds of *dhyānas*¹³, which you will come across in the texts of yoga,

10 1.18 विरामप्रत्ययाभ्यासपूर्वः संस्कारशेषोज्ञ्यः॥१८॥

[Then]

The other samādhi is ASAMPRAJNATA |

Having total, absolute, complete restraint of the mind |

With only subliminal impressions |

Subsisting in Chitta |

And, this samādhi is attained via media

SAMPRAJNATA samādhi || 18 ||

Prashant Iyengar Lyricised Yoga Sutras Publishers YOG Mumbai, India

11 2.50 *bāhyābhyantarastambhavṛttir deśakālasamkhyābhīḥ paridṛṣṇo dīrghasūkṣmaḥ* ||

prāṇāyāma has three movements: prolonged and fine inhalation, exhalation and retention; all regulated with precision according to duration and place.

B.K.S. Iyengar Light on the Yogasātra of Patañjali HarperCollins Publishers

12 The commentator says there are two regions for *dhāraṇa*. One is an external region, and the other is an internal region. the mind getting confined to an external object in the mind or internal region of the body, that is *dhāraṇa*. Page 677-78 in Prashant Iyengar Discourses on Yog Series 2 - *aṣṭāṅga YOGA OF Patañjali* Publisher: Ramamani Memorial Yoga Institute 1107 B/1, Model Colony, Pune 411016 India

13 Ibid page 763

- and then there are *sarṁprajñātāsamādhi*¹⁴, *asarṁprajñātāsamādhi*¹⁵.

All put together is included in *āchāra dharma nīti praṇāli*. *Āchāra dharma nīti*: *āchāra* is conduct, *nīti* is ethics, ethicality. And what is *dharma*? *Dharma*, if you have heard Guruji often said:

“What is *dharma*? *Dharma* is not religion, because religion is body of faith. You have to have faith in what religion postulates.”

So, it is locus, any religion in the world is locus for faith, where people will place their faith, they believe in it, they will believe in it.

So, in other words, religion is sustained by mankind. If nobody believes in that religion, if nobody absolutely believes in that religion will it stay on? It won't stay on. So religion is sustained by it's followers. Religion is sustained by those who place faith, those who invest faith in it, they sustain the religion. So, religions need to be sustained.

16:36

What about *dharma*? Very etymological meaning of *dharma* which comes from single letter root, called “*dhṛ*”. *Dhṛ* means to sustain.

So, *dharma* is that which sustains us and religion is that which we sustain. Mankind sustains the religion and *dharma* is that which sustains us.

How does it do this? You have often heard from Guruji which is a very popular famous definition of *dharma*.

“One who is falling, one who has fallen, one who is about to fall, one who may fall, the one which sustains that person is a *dharma*”.

So, *dharma* sustains the falling person, the fallen person. So, that is what the *dharma* is. Therefore, it is not proper to translate *dharma* as religion and religion as *dharma*.

14 वितर्कविचारानन्दास्मितारूपानुगमात् संप्रज्ञातः॥१७॥

[The application and accomplishment of the two means results into a cognitive trance which is.....]

The two means result into |

the four phased cognitive trance |

a) pertaining to elements and senses |

b) pertaining to subtle, intra, supra primal matter |

c) pertaining to subjective bliss |

d) pertaining to essential I-ness || 17 ||

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15 See note N. 9

Religion is a cult, any religion is a cult. *Dharma* is not a cult. *Dharma* is not a cult. *Dharma* is there for non living things. Do we have a religion for non living things? The religion only comes from mankind, even it does not come from subhumans. Religion does not come to animals, cattles, bees, insects, worms, birds. There is no religion to them. However, they have a *dharma*. Why? Because *dharma* is a wider concept.

Let us not mix up with religion and *dharma*. Let us not call religion as *dharma* and *dharma* as religion. Let us look at the *dharma* as to what the *dharma* is.

When it comes to *dharma* there is something called as *svabhāva dharma*, *guṇa dharma*.

So, the vernacular people will be familiar with this *guṇa dharma*. *Guṇa dharma* comes to even in earth matters, there is *dharma* of element of earth, element of water, element of air, element of fire, element of space. They all have *dharma*.

What is that? Their inherent characteristic, intrinsic characteristic, inherent characteristic is their *dharma*, is their *guṇa dharma*.

So all matters have *guṇa dharma*, the word *dharma* has come there, they will never give it up.

The earthness of earth will never be separated. The waterness of the water from water will never be separated, so water has waterness. Earth has earthness. Air has airness. Fire has fireness. Space has spaceness. That is their *dharma*, that is their *guṇa dharma*. So, even they have *dharma* in the form of *guṇa dharma*, though they are all inert, yet they have *dharma* which is called *guṇa dharma*.

20:33

Insofar as living creatures are concerned, they have *svabhāva*¹⁶ *dharma*. So this word is also one is familiar with it, in vernacular: *Svabhāva dharma*.

The *svabhāva dharma* is there even for bacteria, insect, worm, bird, animals, cattles, beasts. They all have *svabhāva dharma*. If they give up their *svabhāva dharma* they will not be sustained, they will perish. If the snake or cobra gives up snakesness or cobraness it will perish. If the tiger or lion give up tigerness or lioness, they will perish. So, if they divorce with their *dharma* they will cease to exist, so they must be having their *svabhāva dharma*. The tiger must be having tigerness. The lion must be having lioness. The snake must be having snakesness. Cobra must be having cobraness. Insect must be having insectness.

16 Sva = own; bhāva means being, worldly existence, becoming, birth, be, production, origin, but also habitual or emotional tendencies. <https://www.definitions.net/definition/bhava>

Sparrow, if the sparrow gives up its sparowness ... You know sparrow is a very timid bird. It is a small, tiny bird and a timid bird, if it gives up timidity it will perish. So, if the sparrow gives up timidity, it will perish. If it maintains its timidity, it will flourish. So the timidity of sparrow sustains sparrow. That is *svabhāva dharma* of the sparrow.

So *dharma* is there for even creatures, there is no religion to creatures, there is *dharma* to creatures. There is no religion to inert matters, but there is *dharma* to inert matters.

So, let us not confuse between religion and *dharma*.

Dharma: niyata dharma, vihita dharma, vihita karma, niyata karma

Coming to mankind, for mankind, what is *dharma*?

Dharma is duty mindedness. If you want to be a better human being, you must be duty aware. You must be having duty consciousness. You must be having duty conscience. You must be having duty conscience. If you don't have it, you are not human being. At part let us not see the exaltation.

So, we will fall from being human beings if you do not have duty mindedness. So duty mindedness is *dharma*. For mankind it is mentioned something called as *svabhāva dharma*. Each one of us has a *svabhāva*, a personalized characteristics and we live by that, we thrive by that, so *svabhāva dharma* comes to man also, human being.

24:00

Then *niyata*¹⁷ *dharma*, we have certain bounded duties without reference to time, space, situation we must adhere to it. A good human being will not compromise there. One who is not a good human being will compromise in time, space, situation. The duty mindedness about one's bounded duties that is called *niyata dharma*, that cannot be left aside in any situation, in any scenario.

Then there is something called as *vihita dharma*.

*Vi*¹⁸-*hita*, *hita* means good, attaining to what is good for me. Sometimes what is right to me is also relative. Because I am here this is right for me to do. Had I not been here, doing this would not have been right. So there are relative aspects where we must have the intelligence to identify that I must do this here, this is my duty here, this is my duty now and here. This is my duty because it is in this time, space I am now, therefore it is a

17 Niyata = Curbed, restrained ... <https://www.wisdomlib.org/definition/niyata>

18 'Vi' = As a prefix to verbs and nouns it expresses:-(a) separation, disjunction (apart, asunder, away, off &c.) <https://www.wisdomlib.org/definition/vi>

bounded duty for me. Had I not been in this time and space dimension then it would not been there as duty.

So, mankind is given intelligence to ascertain what is my right duty now. That is called *vihita karma*^{19 20}, which will be good for me. So, *vihita karma* tells us about what is good for you where and when, adhere to that. *Niyata karma* what is good for you and not only good, but right for you anywhere, anytime, any situation. So that is what *dharma* is.

So, in *āṣṭāṅga yoga* you should know what is bounded duty, what is my absolute duty by being in any practice of yoga, could be *āsana*, *prāṇāyāma*, meditation, *dhyāna*, whatever you might be calling it. And what is my duty because of the condition that I am in. I have this condition, therefore it is my duty to do this. Had the condition been different, then I would have had another duty identified.

So, we must have this flexibility, according to *dharma*: what is right and what is good. We must be able to make a proper plan of good and right, merely going for good will not be ultimately good, merely going for right will be also not ultimately good. So it's a weavetage, like a cloth is a fabric of horizontal and vertical weaves, *dharma* says: you must have weave of *niyata karma*, *vihita karma*.

27:40

19 Essential Yog, Classical Yog commences after one has evolved Karma consciousness. This helps one to rightly identify and recognise one's Svadharma or Vikrita Karma and Niyata Karma. These are appointed duties of a man with conscience. Bhagavad Gita clearly declares in the sixth chapter that, "Yoga of a neophyte begins with Karma consciousness (which means that the cause of beginner's Yog is in Karma)." Page 7 in Prashant S. Iyengar Fundamentals of Patañjali's Philosophy (Theory of Klesha & Karma) - Yog Mumbai

20 Due to lack of spiritual wisdom we consider whatever we do as Karma. But this is a major flaw. "What one does is not really Karma but why one does it is Karma".

"The first factor of Karma is precisely 'why we do'. The second important factor is the effect of our action or doing. The third factor is what exactly do we do.

Karma is the sum of why we do, what happens or would happen by what we do and dynamically what we do."

Karma is thus not merely the act or action. Action has been wrongly equated with Karma in English, which is a major flaw. Karma must be taken as a technical term and not alternatively replaced by words like 'action' or 'acts'.

"THUS WHAT WE DO IS NOT KARMA BUT WHY WE DO IS MORE KARMA".

The point is that if there is a confusion right at the base of this conceptual knowledge tree then confusion grows exponentially. Page 17 in Prashant S. Iyengar Fundamentals of Patañjali's Philosophy (Theory of Klesha & Karma) - Yog Mumbai

Niyata bounded duty, *vihita* which is based on relative facts, relative conditions. So absolute conditions and relative conditions. Both are to be considered and then there is a weave.

So it is not just moral-ethical principle that you usually identify in *Yamas* and *Niyamas*. It is circumscribing entire *āṣṭāṅga yoga*. That is why *āṣṭāṅga yoga* is called ethico-religious practices, ethico-religious principles of yoga and not just *Yamas* and *Niyamas*. So, let's try to reform our idea about *Yamas* and *Niyamas*. Finally I say in case of morality-ethicality, whether you are in yoga or not in yoga, whether you do yoga, or whether you don't do yoga, should you not be in morality-ethicality framework? Is there any scope to break that framework? Is it good to be breaking the framework of morality-ethicality?

Therefore that goes without saying. Now when something goes without saying, why should Patañjali say that? That's why Patañjali doesn't say that. But we have wrongly construed *Yamas* and *Niyamas* as moral-ethical principles. Which all the religious heads, all the normative sciences have prescribed advocated, but we know very well that all that is in vain.

Patañjali doesn't want to do that, he doesn't do it. So, try to have reconsideration of what are *Yamas* and what are *Niyamas*. If they have to be coming in, not only in social reference but also in personal reference onto myself: why did *āsanas* or higher practices, what are the parameters of morality-ethicality? It is one parameter in *āsanas*, another parameter in *dhyāna*, meditation.

So, that's how *Yamas* and *Niyamas* have come. It is not just for morality-ethicality number one, then *āsanas*, then *prāṇāyāma*, then *pratyāhāra*, then *dhāraṇa*, then *dhyāna*, then *samādhi*. If you construe that way, it is lack of Education. That's why I'm telling you: get educated, let us get educated about the precepts or the treatise of Patañjali.

So, the entire *āṣṭāṅga yoga* is ethico-religious principle loosely translated, I don't approve of it, that is, in the modern language, whereas in the classical language *āchāra dharma nīti praṇālī*. *Achāra* is your conduct. How do you conduct, how do you have your conduct when you are practicing *āsanas*, practicing *prāṇāyāma*, practicing *dhāraṇa*, *dhyāna* and *samādhi*? So, we should know the distinction here. Like how do you conduct yourself out on the streets, out in society and back home and while you are totally isolated in your own bedroom? Do you want me to say that morality-ethicality doesn't come when you are isolated? It is a form of morality-ethicality when you are unto yourself, it is another form of morality ethicality when you are out in society. So let's try to reconsider this. Let's try to do

some brushing on our idea, notion, concept of *Yamas* and *Niyamas*. I think that should be enough for this lesson.

Namaskar.

31.50

QUESTION: You spoke about religion and *dharma* and you differentiated that. A lot of students have questions about. Can you differentiate Karma and *dharma*?

It's a question that commonly comes to you. Is this the time to raise it or is it a separate lesson?

ANSWER: we can do it.

Here comes a question to distinguish between *karma* and *dharma*. *Dharma*, as I said, it is conduct. What is your conduct? Can you say the conduct is totally different than my act? Karma is your act. And the conduct gives a framework, a culture to your *karma*. So, *karma* is what you do and *dharma* will tell you what you should do. What you should do, what is right, what is correct, and what is good for you ultimately. Which I also said about *vihita karma*. *Vihita karma* tells you what is ultimately good, so while you are in *karma*, this perspective must be taken into consideration, that what I do should be ultimately good, if not immediately good. So, ultimate good must be considered while you are in a *karma*, in any act. That's why it's a joint word, the *karma-dharma* is a joint word. Karma is also constituted by your intrinsic *guṇas* – *sattva*, *rajas*, *tamas*.

Guṇa karma, so *karma* has *sattva*, *rajas*, *tamas*, *dharma* too has *sattva*, *rajas*, *tamas*.

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So that the combination of *karma-dharma* will be coming in. Your *dharma* will depend upon your disposition, your consciousness, caliber, conscience caliber. On a lower calibration of your conscience, you think something is right, something is perfect, but when you come up from there, then you understand what I deemed as right, was not really right. So there will be reappraisal when you go on higher level of consciousness.

So, *karma-dharma*, again, these are weave. *Dharma* is all pervasive within us because it is sustaining us. And the *karma* is also incessant thing, you will all the time be in *karma*. If you look at the precept that comes in the *Bhāgavadgītā*, not even a moment would pass in *akarma*, not even a moment would pass in non-doing, in non-act. Some kind of act will be going on, even if you are fast asleep, some act is going on. If it is not your act, something in you is acting. Your heart is functioning, your lungs are functioning, your

autonomous system is functioning, so your things are functioning and are you not accountable for your things? Therefore, you are in *karma* even when you are fast asleep, because autonomous system is functioning, digestion is functioning, metabolism is functioning and they are all yours. So you can't say I won't take responsibility for mine, I will only be responsible for me and not mine. Like the parents are responsible for their children, we are responsible for ours: our body, our mind, our autonomous system, our involuntary system.

The *karma* doesn't leave you, even on the point of death, because on the point of death, I've often said: the busiest moment in one's life is the last breath. Because the trial balance of our *karmas* will be drawn, balance sheet will be drawn and will be decided in that moment where are we going to head, based on our *karma* in that life, and it will be immediately given passage for transmigration. Our passage commences right away from our death, from the moment of death. We are busy, you know, what is called as eschatological migrations, trans-migrations.

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So, the immigration, like thing in internationally journeys, here there is transmigration, so we will be busy in that, the vehicle to be going, where to be going, destination, where to be going. So, ticket will be issued on to the point of death. Visa will be given on the point of death. Passport will be issued on the point of death and will be proceeding right from our moment of death, immediately we proceed for eschatological movements. So, even that doesn't stop for activity, comatose doesn't stop, fear of conscious, but still we are living, if you are living, autonomous system is functioning, breathing is going on, some function is going on. *Karma* doesn't leave us, it doesn't leave us even for a moment, *karma* will go on constantly.

How do we carry out *karma*? Unless we are sustained, how do we carry out our *karma*. We must be sustained we must be living, if we don't live how are we going to carry out your *karma*? So, *dharma* keeps you sustained. And because you are sustained, the *karma* is on. So *dharma-karma* are again well related. And therefore in *karma*, if you have *dharma* consciousness, what is right for me, what is ultimately good for me.

If this consideration is there, our *karma* will be reformed The petty thing like selfishness will not creep in, will not spoil the *karma*, otherwise they can all spoil our *karma*. If you have ulterior motives, selfish motives, self-centric motives, then that will spoil our culture of *karma*. *Dharma* will not allow that. Therefore *karma-dharma* are mutually related. Again it

is like weavetage, like a textile, horizontal and vertical threads, it's a weavetage. Weave. *Dharma-karma* can have a weave. If the weave is not proper, the cloth is not strong, so if the weave of the two is not proper our life is not proper, not strong. So, the weave must be proper. That's why *dharma* and *karma* are again, should be considered in a joint manner, composite manner. Because āchāra is *dharma: āchāra prabaho*²¹ *dharmah*. *Āchārya* is your conduct. Conduct means what you do. Therefore they are very much related to each other.

Hope that is sufficient. Thank you.

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21 *Prabaho* = stream