

FIVE NIYAMS (EXTERNAL DISCIPLINES) IN KASHMIR SHAIIVISM

(As explained by Shaivacharya Swami Lakshmanjoo Maharaj)

The eighteen arms of Lord Shiva in the form of *Swachanandanatha* are created by Lord Shiva for the protection of the individual but in order to receive this protection, the individual must adhere to divine discipline comprising of five *niyams* and five *yams*.

Five Niyams

1. Purity (*Saucha*)

Saucha means cleanliness, the essence of purity; purity of body mind and tongue. To keep the body clean is essential for God Consciousness. The mind must be cleaned and purified of all wretched and impious thoughts. by purity of speech, I mean that the words you speak should not excite, anger or wrath. You must always speak the truth.

2. Contentment (*Santosha*)

Santosha means real satisfaction. You should be satisfied with whatever you have. You must take whatever little you possess as a gift from the lord. The lord knows what to give, how much to give and how to give it. Whatever exists is His property and therefore whatsoever out of that property He, according to His choice bestows upon you, enjoy it. Do not covet others property. For, after all whatever exists is not the property of anyone except Lord Shiva.”

“The fruit that accrues from maintaining complete contentment is that you become completely at peace this lifetime.”

3. Self Control and tolerance (*Tapasya*)

It means follow your duty according to your capacity and circumstances even if you may have to face hardships. It is my advice that you must not overeat by filling yourself with excess food. You should leave your stomach slightly empty. This will keep your body in form and your mind agile and alert.

Bhagwan Patanjali has said: “The fruit that is acquired through practicing self control and tolerance(*Tapah*) is that through it all impurity in your body and organs vanishes and you become filled with power.”

4. Self knowing (*Svadhayaya*)

You should devote your time to study and reflecting upon scriptures such as the Bhagwad Gita. You should try to know yourself by understanding yourself. You must stop all kinds of gossip. Do not speak ill of anyone. “The fruit that accrues from continously striving for self knowledge by a constant study of the scriptures is that the Lord whom you seek (*Ishta Deva*) will shine before you”

5. Devotion to God (*Ishwara pranidhana*)

This is the final and supreme *niyama*. It means love and devotion to God. The love of Lord Shiva creates devotion. If you love Lord Shiva and are devoted to Him, it is not possible for Him to neglect you. He will reveal Himself to you and purify you with His glorious eighteen arms helping you to enter into the realm of God consciousness.

“ Through devotion of Lord Shiva, *samadhi* is effortlessly attained”.