

To address the question on how to use our free will to attain mOkShA in this janmA, we were talking about the guNA manipuLAtion potentials by a jIvA. You have to change the guNAs to increase the potential. How to change the guNAs and what guNAs to change???

We looked at sUta saMhitA jnAna khAnDaM to understand the yamA and niyamAs. yamAs mean restraint. niyamAs mean vow/agreement. yamAs help to increase the satva guNAs. niyamAs help to reduce the rajO and tamO guNAs. These are common qualities that are provided across many yOga shAstrA and vEdAnta shAstrA books. But sUta saMhitA stands out from all these. SuTA maharShI provides the literal meaning as well as vEdAntic meanings for these yamaniyamAs.

We looked at the yamAs last session. In this session we will cover the niyamAs. Just like the yamAs, niyamAs are also 10.

They are:

1. tapaH (austerity or penance)
2. santOShaH (happiness)
3. AstikyaM (belief)
4. dAnaM (charity)
5. IshvarapUjanaM (worship of God)
6. siddhAnta shravanaM (listening to philosophies)
7. lajjA (shy/embarrassment)
8. matiH (intellect/intuition)
9. japaH (chanting)
10. vratam (spiritual vow / pious observance)

If you look at this literally, you might feel that what is the big deal about these? I am doing most of this daily. But let's see what sUtamaharishi says about these.

अथातः संप्रवक्ष्यामि नियमान्मुनिसत्तम ।

तपः सन्तोषमास्तिक्यं दानमीश्वरपूजनम् ॥ १

Hey munis ! Now, I am explaining the different niyamAs. They are –

tapaH  
santOShaH  
AstikyaM  
dAnaM  
IshvarapUjanaM

सिद्धान्तश्रवणं चैव हीर्मतिश्च जपो व्रतम् ।

एते च नियमाः प्रोक्ता योगविद्भिर्महात्मभिः ॥ २

6. siddhAnta shravaNaM
7. hri - lajja ( lajja means shy - that is why hriM bljaM is also called lajja bljaM).
8. matiH
9. japaH and
10. vratam

These are the niyamAs that are known to those mahAtmAs that understand yOgA.

तानहं क्रमशो वक्ष्ये शृणु श्रद्धापुरःसरम् ।

I will explain those in order.

वेदोक्तेन प्रकारेण कृच्छ्रचान्द्रायणादिभिः ॥ ३

शरीरशोषेण यत्तप इत्युच्यते बुधैः ।

As prescribed in vEdAs, the performance of kRicchra, candrAyaNa etc, will cleanse the body - meaning remove sins. When we are born, we have three debts - dEvaRuNaM, RiSHiRuNa, and pitRuRuNA. These debts are paid by performing certain kriyAs. But we also have the sancita karmAs which includes the puNyAs and pApAs. We don't need both. We need to get to a blank state. The problem with this karma philosophy is that it does not operate under one currency. Meaning - pApA has its own currency and puNyA has its own currency and they cannot be exchanged or interchanged. Meaning if you have lets say 2 pApAs, and if you then make 3 puNyAs and even if you assume that they are of similar weights, then you cannot think that you would have a resulting 1 puNyA - a Net 1 puNyA. It doesn't work that way. Why? because your puNyA cannot wipe a pApA. They have their own ledger books and they don't get balanced. You have to reconcile your pApAs and enjoy the fruits of your puNyAs and that is the only way you can make your account blank.

But how can you do that in this one janmA? It is not possible isnt it? This is where, several techniques and kriyAs were prescribed in vEdAs, AgamAs and tantrAs to remove the pApA accounts. Ok... But what about puNyAs? We don't want to be born again in this world just to enjoy the puNyA benefits - even if it means a child in the British Royal family. In this age, it might be considered a result of a sin only. Yes. We need to get rid of our puNyAs too. I will talk about that technique later. But tapas as per vEdAs are done to remove pApAs - mostly as a prAyashcitta kramA.

Since sUtamaharshi talks about kRichrA, candrAyaNa etc, he assumes that the muNIs around already know about these.

What are these types of procedures that has the ability to remove my sins??? The detailed explanation for these can be found in dEvlbhAgavataM ekAdasha skandhaM 23rd adhyAyaM. This whole adhyAyaM is about these kriyAs only. nArAyaNA himself explains these.

I will give a brief description of these and you can go and check dEvl bhAgavata books for further information.

First a brief intro of the kriyAs are given and the benefits of those. Then he would go on to explain how each one of those are performed.

प्राजापत्यस्य कृच्छ्रस्य तथा सन्तापनस्य च ।  
पराकस्य च कृच्छ्रस्य विधिश्चान्द्रायणस्य च ॥

The kriyAs are basically categorized into two - kRuCrA and cAndrAyaNa. Now you know why sUtA simply mentioned the two. He simply referred to the categories.

Within kRuCrA, there are multiple types - prAjApatya, sAntapaNa, AtikRucrA, mahAsantApana kRucrA, tapta kRucrA, parAka kRuCrA.

पञ्चभिः पातकैः सर्वैर्दुष्कृतैश्च प्रमुच्यते ।  
तप्तकृच्छ्रेण सर्वाणि पापानि दहति क्षणात् ॥

These have the potency to burn out all the sins that are in your account.

त्रिभिश्चाद्रायणैः पूतो ब्रह्मलोकं समश्नुते ।  
अष्टभिर्देवताः साक्षात्पश्येत वरदास्तदा ॥

You get cleansed by performing 3 cAndrAyaNaMs and you will attain brahmaIOkA. By performing 8 cAndrAyaNams the prathama dEvatA will appear before you and grant boons.

छंदांसि दशभिर्जात्वा सर्वकामान्समश्नुते ।

By performing 10 cAndrAyaNams, you get bhOgaM and mOkShaM.

1. prAjApatyaM - Let us now in the details of performing this kriyA.

त्र्यहं प्रातस्त्र्यहं सायं त्र्यहमद्यादयाचितम् ॥  
त्र्यहं परं च नाशनीयात्प्राजापत्यं चरेद्द्विजः ।

First 3 days eat once during the day; next 3 days eat once in the evening; next three days eat whatever was offered to you without begging (ayAcitam); the next three days fast. This whole 12 day kriyA is called prAjApatya kRuccraM.

Another method of prAjApatyaM -

नियतस्तु पिबेदापः प्राजापत्यविधिः स्मृतः ।

If one simply drinks water for 12 days, then that is also called prAjApatyaM.

2. sAntapanaM - The next type is called sAntapanaM -

गोमूत्रं गोमयं क्षीरं दधि सर्पिः कुशोदकम् ॥  
एकरात्रोपवासश्च कृच्छ्रं सांतपन स्मृतम् ।

On the first day, take pancagavyaM, along with water soaked with darbha grass. The next day, fast the whole day (nirjalaM). This method is called sAntapanaM.

3. ati kRuCraM - The next type is called ati kRuCraM.

एकैकं ग्रासमश्नीयादहानि त्रीणि पूर्ववत् ॥  
त्र्यहं चोपवसेदित्थमतिकृच्छ्रं चरेद्विजः ।

First three days take one mouthful of cooked rice. The next three days, fast completely. This set of 6 days is called ati kRucRaM.

4. mahA sAntapanaM -

एवमेव त्रिभिर्युक्तं महासान्तपनं स्मृतम् ॥

If the above atikRuCraM is performed three times consecutively - 18 days in total, it is called mahAsAntapanaM.

(There is another method for mahAsAntapanaM explained by yamadharmaAjA in a purAna -

It should be done for 15 days total. First 3 days, live on gOmUtraM, next 3 days only on gOmayam, next three days on kShIraM, next three days on dahi, and the final three days on ghee. A person becomes pure and is rid of all pApAs by this mahAsAntapana kRucRa kriyA.

5. tapta kRucRaM -

तप्तकृच्छ्रं चरन्विप्रो जलक्षीरघृतानिलान् ।  
प्रतित्रयहं पिबेदुष्णान्सुकृत्स्नायी समाहितः ॥

This is done for 12 days and is very popular in purANAs and rishIs. First 3 days - live on hote water. NExt 3 days live on hot milk. The next 3 days on ghee. The last 3 days on air (total fast). This is called tapta kRuCraM.

6. parAka kRucCraM

यतात्मनोऽप्रातस्य द्वादशाहमभोजनम् ।  
पराको नाम कृच्छ्रोऽयं सर्वपापप्रणोदनः ।

If a person can fast without any food for 12 days, then it is called prAka kRuCraM and this can erase all sancita pApaM (sins).

cAndrAyaNaM -

एकैकं तु ग्रसेत्पिण्डं कृष्णे शुक्ले च वर्धयेत् ।  
अमावास्यं न भुञ्जीत एवं चान्द्रायणो विधिः ॥

This is done for a month. You start on a new moon day and fast totally. During the shukla pakShA, You add one piNDA (handful) of cooked rice to your daily consumption everyday. Once you reach pUrNimA, you will eat 15 handfuls. Then you start reducing one piNDA everyday until you reach amAvAsyA.

This can be done pourNami - pourNami as well. But the idea is to reduce one piNDA during kRuShNa pakShaM and increase one piNDA during shukla pakShaM.

This is the cAndrAyaNa vidhi.

There are two more types of cAndrAyaNa vidhi - shishu cAndRyaNaM and yati cAndRAyaNaM. In shishu cAndrAyaNaM it is 4 handful of food and in yati cAndrAyaNaM it is 8 handful of food.

आदौ कुर्यात् व्रतं मन्त्री देहशोधनकारकम् ।  
पुरश्चर्या ततः कुर्यात्समस्तफलभागभवेत् ॥

Now comes the beauty of all this - all the sins should be removed prior to performing purashcaryA to derive the maximum benefits. So it is encouraged to perform a kRucRa kriyA and/or the cAndrAyana kriyA prior to doing purashcaraNaM.

इति ते कथितं गुह्यं पुरश्चर्याविधानकम् ।  
एतत्परस्मै नो वाच्यं श्रुतिसारं यतः स्मृतम् ॥

Thus I shared the most secret technique of all for performing purashcaraNams. Do not disclose this to anyone except for those qualified shishyAs as just these are equivalent to the sArA of all vEdAs.

This is the information of the sin removing techniques from dEvi bhAgavataM that was referred by sUta mahariShI in reference to the first niyamA called tapas.

Now, let us look into the vEdAntic meaning of tapas -

कोऽहं मोक्षः कथं केन संसारं प्रतिपन्नवान् ॥ ४  
इत्यालोचनमर्थज्ञास्तपः शंसन्ति पण्डिताः ।

The true tapAs as per vEdAntIs is to contemplate on “Who am I?” “What is the state and nature of mOkShA?” “How did I end up with this cycle of saMsArA?” etc. How can this be tapas? First knowing Who am I and why did I end up here, whatever planning you do would not be important. The purpose is important. Knowing the purpose results from this tapas.

Let us now look into the next niyamA - santOshaM - happiness.

यदृच्छालाभतो नित्यं प्रीतिर्या जायते नृणाम् ॥ ५  
तत्सन्तोषं विदुः प्राज्ञा परिज्ञानैकतत्पराः ।

If things that we desire are obtained always and makes us pleasant, that is called as happiness in materialistic sense.

ब्रह्मादिलोकपर्यन्ताद्विरक्तस्य परात्मनि ॥ ६  
प्रियं यत्तन्महाप्राज्ञाः सन्तोषं परमं विदुः ।

In vEdAntic sense, having a complete aversion towards all the Universe starting from brahmaLOka and establishing the priyam on paramAtman in the buddhi is the greatest santhOshaM. The strong desire in merging with Him is the true santOShaM.

श्रौते स्मार्ते च विश्वासो यत्तदास्तिक्यमुच्यते ॥ ७

AstikyaM is nothing but having determined belief/trust in the shruti and smriti.

न्यायार्जितं धनं चान्नं श्रद्धया वैदिके द्विजे ।  
अन्यद्वा यत्प्रदीयेत तद्दानं प्रोच्यते मया ॥ ८

When the money and food obtained in dhArmic way is given away as charity to those who live their life as prescribed in the vEdAs, is called dAnam.

अवैदिकाय विप्राय दत्तं यन्मुनिपुङ्गव ।  
नोपकाराय तत्तस्य भस्मनीव हुतं हविः ॥ ९

Any charity that is given to people that do not follow the lives as prescribed in vEdAs, then that charity is wasted as offerings made in the ash (instead of fire).

Remember we talked about the pApA and puNyA ledger and to keep the balance nil in both the ledgers? We understood the techniques of keeping a nil balance for pApA ledger in the tapas section. The dAnA is the technique where the puNyA can be made to a nil balance too. We have seen examples of such in purAnAs where they offer the puNyAs they have accumulated.

ब्रह्माणं विष्णुमीशानं वैश्यक्षत्रियबाडबैः ।  
यथाशक्त्यर्चनं भक्त्या यत्तदीश्वरपूजनम् ॥ १०

From a literal perspective, worship of brahmA, vishNu, rudrA by self or through priests according to their own means, is called Ishvara pUjanam.

रागास्यपेतं हृदयं वागदुष्टाऽनृतादिना ।  
हिंसाविरहितः काय एतच्चेश्वरपूजनम् ॥ ११

From a vEdAntic perspective, when the mind is free from kAma, krOdha and attachments, and the words are free from lies and hurt, and the body refrains from hurting others, then that is called IshvarapUjanaM.

सत्यं ज्ञानमनन्तं च परानन्दं ध्रुवं परम् ।  
प्रत्यगित्यवगत्यन्तं वेदान्तश्रवणं बुधाः ॥ १२  
सिद्धान्तश्रवणं प्राहुर्द्विजानां मुनिसत्तम ।

Until a person can realize the pratyag AtmA as satyam, jnAnam, anantaM, parAnandaM, listening to vEdAnta discourses is called as siddhanta shravaNam.

शूद्राणां च विरक्तानां तथा स्त्रीणां महामुने ॥ १३  
सिद्धान्तश्रवणं प्रोक्तुं पुराणश्रवणं बुधैः ।

For those who cannot relate to vEdAntA, listening to discourses on purANAs will be considered as siddhanta shravaNam.

वेदलौकिकमार्गेषु कुत्सितं कर्म यद्भवेत् ॥ १४  
तस्मिन्भवति यालज्जा हीस्तु सैवेति कीर्तिता ।

Refraining from those actions that are discarded by the vEdAs and to feel ashamed to perform such actions is called LajjA or shame.

The other perspective is - not to even have a desire/thought to perform any action that are not allowed by dharma shAstrAs. Not only that, discarding the fruits of the actions that were performed by someone else in an adharmic way is called lajjA.

वैदिकेषु हि सर्वेषु श्रद्धा या सा मतिर्भवेत् ॥ १५

Having strong belief in all vaidika kramAs, and also living a vEdic means of life while performing any action is called as matiH.

गुरुणा चोपदिष्टोऽपि तन्त्रसंबन्धवर्जितः ।  
वेदोक्तेनैव मार्गेण मन्त्राब्यासो जपः स्मृतः ॥ १६

As prescribed by the Guru, performance of mantra japa kramAs in the vEdic path is called japaH.

कल्पसूत्रेऽथ वा वेदे धर्मशास्त्रे पुराणके ।  
इतिहासेऽनुवृत्तिर्या स जपः प्रोच्यते मया ॥ १७

In fact, reading the kalpasutras, vEdAs, dharmashAstrAs, purANAs, itihAsAs are also considered as japaH.

या वेदबाह्याः स्मृतयो याश्च काश्च कुदृष्टयः ।  
सर्वास्ता निष्फलाः प्रोक्तास्तमोनिष्ठा हि ताः स्मृताः ॥ १८

Those who subscribe to those texts or methods that are discarded by the vEdAs are all useless for those who walk the life of mOkshA. These would only lead them to acquire more tamO guNA. See how direct sUtamaharShI was? He did not say you would acquire karmAs/pApAs/puNyAs - he directly say, you would acquire more tamo guNA. So being compliant to the shAstrAs and living a dhArmic life, would reduce the tamO guNAs.

श्रेयान्स्वधर्मो विगुणः परधर्मात्स्वनुष्ठितात् ।  
स्वधर्मे निधानं श्रेयः परधर्मो भयावहः ॥ १९

Following the sva-dharma (own path) is very important. Even if your own path is limited compared to the other paths, following your own path will always lead to the destination. Discarding the sva-dharma and following another path will only result in fear.

This is a very interesting comment. When we start to walk in our path, there will be times when we come across other sAdhakAs from other paths and we might be curious in comparing notes. But what happens by that action? You either start to feel proud that you are better than the other person or feel inferior and get worried that you haven't reached the state like the other person. What would be the result of such actions?

In the case of pride, you would end up demotivating the other person. In addition, your pride is something that you are really working hard to remove but unknowingly through the same sword, you would be cutting your rope that you are using to climb and fall down deep.

In the case of inferior feeling, the natural human mind would think that you and the other person are on par. But if the other person is reaching heights and you are not, it has to be because he has better tools than you do. This way, you will question your path, you will superimpose limitation on the path you are walking and indirectly question your Guru's ability to take you forward. These are all greater sins and because of these newly acquired sins, you will start to embrace fear. These would again make you fall deeper than what you started with.

This is why in srividya path, it is discouraged to discuss anything about your progress/ what mantrAs you have/ what sAdhanAs you are performing etc even to your saha shishyA let alone other maNDalls. satsang can be about general knowledge acquisition but never about personal sAdhanA matters. Those should ONLY be kept between the Guru and the shishyA. If the Guru asks a jyEShTA to assist a shishyA in some particular thing, then it should be assumed that the permission granted is only for that particular kriyA and should not be taken as a general power of attorney.

So staying in your own path, following your dharmA, sincerely following GuruvAkhyA, and staying away from personal sAdhanA related discussion with anyone else except the Guru are all key.

तस्मात्सर्वप्रयत्नेन वेदमन्त्रसदा जपेत् ।

जपश्च द्विविधः प्रोक्तो वाचिको मानसस्तथा ॥ २०

With all possible efforts, perform veda mantra japA (here any mantra japA that you have received as an upadEsaM from your Guru). There are two types of japAs – vAcikA and mAnasika.

वाचिकोपांशुरुच्चैश्च द्विविधः परिकीर्तितः ।  
मानसो मननध्यानभेदाद्द्वैदिध्यमास्थितः ॥ २१

The vAcikA is also of two types – chanting loud and soft. MAnasika is also of two types – chanting with mananA and dhyAnA.

उच्चैर्जपादुपांशुश्च सहस्रगुण उच्यते ।  
मानसश्च तथोपांशोः सहस्रगुण उच्यते ॥ २२

Chanting gently and softly is 1000 times better and fruitful than chanting aloud. Similarly, chanting within the mind is 1000 times better than chanting softly.

उच्चैर्जपस्तु सर्वेषां यथोक्तफलगो भवेत् ।  
नीचैः श्रुतो न चेत्सोऽपि सुतश्चेन्निष्फलो भवेत् ॥ २३

When chanting aloud, the fruits can be enjoyed by everyone who listens. However, if the mantra reaches those who do not deserve it, then the entire mantra japa will yield no fruits to anyone.

ऋषिं छन्दोऽधिदैवं च ध्यायमानो जपेन्नरः ।  
प्रसन्नगुरुणा पूर्वमुपदिष्टं त्वनुज्ञया ॥ २४

It is important to receive the mantra from a Guru that has attained siddhi in that mantra. Upon His direction and order, chanting of a mantra with its Rishi, chandas, dEvatA and dhyAnA should be performed.

धर्मार्थमात्मशुद्ध्यर्थमुपायग्रहणं व्रतम् ।  
अथवाऽऽथर्वणैर्मन्त्रर्गृहीत्वा भस्म पाण्डुरम् ॥ २५

This should be performed for the cause of Atma suddhi and to lead a dhArmic life. If such a japa is performed, then it is called vrataM. BY chanting the mantrAs given in atharva vEdA, performing bhasma dhAraNam

सर्वाडोद्दूलनं यत्तद्व्रतं प्रोक्तं मनीषिभिः ।  
एतद्वेदशिरोनिष्ठाः प्राहुः पाशुपतं मुने ॥ २६

On all prescribed parts is also called as vrataM. This is called as “pAshupata vrataM” by great seers.

केचिच्छिरोव्रतं प्राहुः केचिदस्याश्रमं विदुः ।  
केचित्तद्व्रतमित्यूचुः केचिच्छांभवमैश्वरम् ॥ २७

Some call this “ShirO vrataM” (by atharva vEdins); some call this “AdyAshramaM” (by yajur vEdins); some call this “ShAmbhavaM” (by Rig vEdins); some call this “IshvaraM” (by SAma vEdins)

अस्य व्रतस्य माहात्म्यभागमान्तेषु संस्थितम् ।  
सर्वपापहरं पुण्यं सम्यग्ज्ञानप्रकाशकम् ॥ २८

The greatness of this vratA is listed in several vEdAs as a technique that can lead to samyag jnana by cutting off all sins and acquiring puNyAs.

यः पशुस्तत्पशुत्वं च व्रतेनानेन न त्यजेत् ।  
तं हत्वा न स पापीयानिति वेदान्तनिश्चयः ॥ २९

Any human will be able to get rid of his “pashutvaM” (rajO and tamO gunAs) and lead a sAtvic life. This is confirmed by the vEdAs. (The literal meaning of this sholka is – those who do not get rid of their pashutvam by performing this vrata should be killed and by doing that no sins are acquired.) Those who have won over their rajO and tamO guNas should stay away from those who are dwelling in those. This way, they can continue in their path of mOkshA with a sAtvic nature.

सर्वमुक्तं समासेन नियमं मुनिसत्तम ।  
अनेन विधिना युक्तो भस्मज्योतिर्भविष्यति ॥ ३०

Oh Munis! I have explained everything about the niyamAs in brief. Those who follow as explained will shine as bhasmajyOti.

Almost all religions would have yamAs and niyamAs like this - they may call it differently. For example, in Chritianity, they call it the Ten Commandments. If you look at those, it would be a sub set of what is given in our yamAs and niyamAs. Same concept in baudhham, jainA, and islAm too. Whatever they list out as the basic commandments, those will all fall within the superset called yamA and niyamA.

Thus, by following these yamAs and niyamAs, you can rebalance your guNA composition. You don't need to know how your balance is tilting. You need not now know what your current % of satvA is. You simply have to follow your Guru vAkhyA. There is nothing else that is needed. Being in His presence, Listening to his instructions, Being in His satsanghAs, a true sharaNAgatI to Him is enough for increasing your satvic nature.

With this, I have completed the answer to the question on how to increase the satva guNA and how to reduce the tamO and rajO guNAs as represented by sUta maharShI.

Guru brahmA guru vishNu Guru dEvOH mahEshvaraH  
Guru sAkShAt paraH brahmA tasmai shrI guravE namaH