



॥ विवेकचूडामणि ॥
... Vivekacūdāmaṇi ...

AI Summary – Class 119

For Vivekacūdāmaṇi, by Acharya Tadany Cargnin dos Santos
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Summary

The class focused on verse 118 of Vivekacūdāmaṇi by Adī Śankarācārya, examining the characteristics of miśra sattvaguṇa (mixed sattva quality). Acharya Tadany explained how this verse connects to Patañjali's aṣṭāṅga Yoga system, particularly the concepts of Yama and Niyama.

aṣṭāṅga Yoga as an Integrative System

Acharya Tadany emphasized that aṣṭāṅga Yoga is one of the most comprehensive methodologies for integrating one's entire personality across multiple dimensions:

- Physical level - bodily health and well-being
- Moral and ethical level - character development
- Emotional level - psychological balance
- Intellectual level - mental clarity and wisdom
- Spiritual level - connection with the divine

Acharya Tadany stressed that all these levels must work in harmony and coordination. A person cannot be spiritually advanced while being physically unhealthy, or emotionally balanced while intellectually stagnant. The integration of all personality layers is essential for genuine spiritual progress.

The Foundation: Moral Character

A key teaching emphasized was that **without moral health and ethical soundness, spiritual progress is impossible**. Acharya Tadany explained that even physical health depends on moral character, as a lack of moral grounding leads to:

- A life of indulgence and excesses



- Abuse of the body and mind
- Physical destruction over time

This is why Patañjali places Yama and Niyama as the first two steps of the eight-limbed yoga system - they deal with character, values, morality, and ethical principles.

The Five Yamas (pañca yamāḥ) - The "Do Nots"

Yamas are described as *niṣēda* (prohibitions/avoidances) - the five things to avoid. Acharya Tadany provided detailed explanations with important interpretive nuances:

1. Ahimsā (Non-violence)

- **Meaning:** Avoidance of violence (*himsā nivṛttiḥ*)
- **Important clarification:** This is NOT "avoidance of non-violence" (which would mean being violent), but rather the avoidance of violent actions, thoughts, and speech
- **Application:** Refraining from causing harm at physical, verbal, and mental levels

2. Satyam (Truthfulness)

- **Meaning:** Avoidance of untruthfulness (*Asatya nivṛttiḥ*)
- **Important distinction:** The śāstra does not command speaking all truth all the time
- **Two acceptable options:**
 - Speak the truth
 - Remain silent
- **The prohibition:** Never speak a lie or untruth
- **Example given:** If someone is not good-looking, you don't have to say "you're ugly", you can simply remain quiet rather than lying or being hurtful

3. Asteya (Non-stealing)

- **Meaning:** Avoidance of taking what belongs to others (*Steya nivṛttiḥ*)
- **Basic level:** Not stealing or illegitimately acquiring others' possessions or wealth
- **Advanced level for spiritual seekers:** Understanding that nothing truly belongs to you - everything belongs to Bhagavān (God)
- **Spiritual perspective:** Even legitimately acquired possessions should not be claimed as "mine" - we are temporary guardians or trustees

4. Brahmacharya (Sexual Purity/Chastity)

- **Meaning:** Avoidance of illegitimate sexual relationships
- **Three levels of application:**



- mānasam (mental level) - purity of thought
- vācīkam (verbal level) - purity of speech
- Kāyīkam (physical level) - purity of action
- **Emphasis:** This is also nivṛtṭiḥ (avoidance) - avoiding of incorrect or illegitimate relationships

5. Aparigraha (Non-possessiveness)

- **Meaning:** Avoidance of excessive ownership and possessiveness (Mamakara nivṛtṭiḥ)
- **Key concept:** Withdrawal from the idea of "mine" (Mama)
- **Practical application:** Not amassing tremendous wealth at the cost of others' suffering
- **Spiritual seeker's approach:**
 - Live a simple life with fewer possessions
 - Share wealth with others
 - Act as a trustee rather than owner
- **Reference:** Mahatma Gandhi emphasized this concept of trusteeship extensively
- **Distinction from Asteya:** Asteya deals with illegitimate acquisition (theft), while Aparigraha deals with legitimate acquisition but warns against excessive possession.

The Five Niyamas (pañca niyamāḥ) - The "Dos"

Niyamas are described as *Vidhayah* (injunctions/prescriptions), the five things to proactively pursue and practice:

1. śauca (Purity/Cleanliness)

- **Meaning:** Maintenance of cleanliness and purity at all levels
- **Three levels of application:**
 - Physical level (Kāyīkam) - bodily cleanliness
 - Verbal level (vācīkam) - purity of speech
 - Mental level (mānasam) - purity of thoughts
- **Approach:** Proactively working towards maintaining purity without blemish at all levels

2. santōṣa (Contentment)

- **Meaning:** Proactively entertaining and cultivating contentment
- **Key aspects:**
 - Being happy with what you have
 - Being satisfied with your current situation
 - Clearly declaring joyfulness and happiness
 - Not being jealous of others' possessions, health, wealth, or success



- **Beautiful verse cited:** "mūḍha jahīhi dhanāgamatrṣṇām kuru sadbuddhiṃ manasi vitṛṣṇām " - "O fool, give up this craving for acquiring wealth, cultivate true wisdom and freedom from desires in your mind"
- **Practical wisdom:** "yallabhase nijakarmopāttam vittam tena vinodaya cittam " - "Whatever wealth you acquire through your own efforts, with that alone be content and keep your mind cheerful"
- **The problem:** The mind is insatiable - always projecting into the future, wanting more
- **The solution:** Renounce craving for what is unnecessary; nourish contentment with what you have legitimately acquired; use wealth wisely to keep the mind peaceful.

3. Tapas (Discipline/Moderation)

- **Positive interpretation:** Following moderation in everything
- **Negative interpretation:** Avoidance of excesses in anything
- **Applications across all activities:**
 - Sleeping - neither oversleeping nor sleep deprivation
 - Eating - neither overeating nor undereating; avoiding bulimia
 - Speaking - neither excessive talking nor complete silence (Vak Tapas)
 - Sensory pursuits (jñānēndriyas)
 - Physical activities (Karmendriyas)
 - Intellectual pursuits
- **The Golden Path:** Also called the Middle Path - neither too much nor too little
- **Note on terminology:** While "discipline" sounds harsh, thinking of it as "moderation" makes it more receptive to the mind

4. svādhyāyah (Self-study/Study of Scriptures)

- **Meaning:** Study of the śāstra (scriptures), particularly Vedānta for spiritual seekers
- **Key principle:** Treating the study of Vedānta as one of life's important responsibilities
- **Equal importance:** Studying Vedānta should be as important as:
 - Going to the office/work
 - Maintaining well-being
 - Fulfilling family responsibilities
 - Educating children
 - Earning wealth
- **Integration:** Include study of śāstra as part of day-to-day duties, not as an optional extra.

5. Īśvara praṇidhāna (Devotion to God/Religious Practice)

- **Meaning:** Following a religious life and having a prayerful lifestyle
- **Components:**
 - Puja (worship)
 - Prayer



- Japa (repetition of divine names)
- **Japa - The most accessible practice:**
 - Called "the cheapest worshipping methodology available"
 - No expenses required
 - No need for a priest
 - No need to buy ingredients
 - No need to be at a specific place or time
 - No need to give dakshina (offerings)
 - Simply repeat Bhagavān's name: Om Namah Shivaya, Om Gam Ganapataye Namaha, etc.
 - Can be done anytime, anywhere
- **Additional practices:**
 - Kāyikam Puja (physical worship)
 - Visiting temples
 - Participating in yajnas
 - Going on pilgrimages
- **Minimum expectation:** Every spiritual seeker must practice Japa

Questions after class

Important Philosophical Points

Vedānta and Religious Practice

Acharya Tadany addressed the controversial topic of whether Vedānta requires religious practice:

Pujya Swami Dayanandaji's Position: "We do not believe in secular Vedānta"

- **The secular argument:** Some scholars and intellectuals want to separate Vedānta from:
 - Religious lifestyle
 - Going to temples
 - Performing puja
 - Wearing vibhuti or kumkum
- **Their reasoning:** Vedānta is a purely philosophical system from the brilliant intellect of Śankarācārya
- **Śankarācārya's clear position:** This separation is incorrect
- **The traditional view:**
 - In Indian tradition, religion is intermixed with philosophy
 - There is no Indian philosophy without God
 - There is no Indian philosophy without religion
 - There is no Indian philosophy without a prayerful lifestyle



- Namaskaram, puja, and religious practices are integral parts of one's lifestyle

Vedānta and Other Religions

In response to a question about whether Vedānta students must follow Hinduism:

- **Official position:** Vedānta does not require students to follow Hinduism
- **Natural tendency:** It's almost natural that students eventually gravitate toward Hinduism because it's more aligned and connected with Vedānta teachings
- **The goal of religion:** Common sense and moral understanding
- **Vedānta's radical view:** "Religion is common sense", you don't even need religion to have a morally admirable lifestyle. However, since ignorance is one's natural inheritance, religion plays an important educational role.
- **Reference made:** English philosopher's paper "Why I Am Not a Christian" (Bertrand Russell) - described as controversial but beautifully written
- **Common sense morality:** You don't need religion to know that violence, lying, disrespect, and stealing are wrong.

Hinduism's Educational Approach vs. Commandments

Acharya Tadany highlighted a key distinction between Hinduism and other religions:

Other Religions	Hinduism
Have commandments: "Do this, don't do this"	Educates about Dos and Dont's and states that "You are free to do whatever you want" because you know the consequences of your acts (Law of Karma)
Authority-based: "Because God says so"	Consequence-based: "If you do this, these are the advantages and disadvantages"
Child-like obedience without understanding	Educated decision-making based on understanding implications

- **Example dialogue on ordinary education:**

- Child: "Why shouldn't I do this?"
- Parent: "Because it's wrong."
- Child: "Why?"
- Parent: "Because God says so."
- Child: "What happens if I do it?"
- Parent: "You go to hell."
- Child: "Can I bring our AC to hell?"



- Result: No real education, just fear-based compliance
- **Hinduism's advantage:** It educates the person about consequences, allowing for better-informed decisions
- **The Vedāntic attitude:** Everything is Bhagavān ultimately; no need for proselytizing or arguing about superiority
- **Individual pursuit:** Spiritual growth is personal; if others aren't pursuing it, that's acceptable too

The "Ten Commandments" Question

When asked why Hinduism doesn't have something like the Ten Commandments:

- **Answer:** If we were to identify something similar, it would be the pañca Yama + pañca Niyama = 10 principles
- **Important difference:** These are not commandments but educational guidelines
- **Complexity acknowledged:** Life has complexities that require individual consideration rather than rigid rules

Connection to miśra sattvagūṇa

All these pañca yamāḥ and pañca niyamāḥ are natural expressions of miśra sattvagūṇa (mixed sattva quality). When a person has this quality predominant in their personality:

- Humility naturally arises
- Namaskara (respectful greeting) comes naturally
- Puja (worship) becomes natural
- Devotion to Bhagavān flows naturally
- All these values and practices manifest spontaneously

Practical Considerations

Ritualistic Practice - Individual Variation

- Some people may be more ritualistic-oriented, others less so
- The śāstra doesn't mandate spending five hours daily performing pañca-maha-Yajna
- What the śāstra does require: Inserting a prayerful lifestyle into day-to-day life
- Following a religious lifestyle is essential, but the specific forms can vary

Wealth and Contentment

Regarding Aparigraha and financial planning:

- One can legitimately acquire wealth through inheritance or personal efforts
- It's acceptable to have enough for "rainy days"



- The problem: It's never enough for most people
 - \$10,000 → want \$100,000
 - \$100,000 → want \$1 million
 - \$1 million → want \$10 million
- Solution: Objective calculation with financial advisors
 - Expected lifespan
 - Anticipated health costs
 - Realistic needs assessment
 - Then: Give up the excess

Key Takeaways

1. Spiritual progress is impossible without moral and ethical health
2. All levels of personality (physical, emotional, intellectual, spiritual) must be integrated and work in harmony
3. The five Yamas are avoidances (nivṛttiḥ) - things not to do
4. The five Niyamas are positive practices (Pravṛttiḥ) - things to actively pursue
5. Hinduism educates rather than commands, explaining consequences rather than imposing rules
6. A prayerful lifestyle is essential for spiritual seekers, with Japa being the most accessible practice
7. Vedānta doesn't require following Hinduism specifically, but naturally aligns with religious practice
8. Contentment means being satisfied with what you legitimately acquire while using wealth wisely
9. Moderation (the Middle Path) applies to all aspects of life
10. Study of Vedānta should be given equal importance to other life responsibilities