

Six Faults that Destroy Bhakti

Niyamāgraha → Niyama + agraha → reject + wht usually absorbed only in the rule + not in the presence.
→ Niyama + (agraha) →
rule

4. Niyamāgraha – Too much attachment to, or too much neglect of, rules and regulations

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Niyamas, or rules, are of two kinds-vidhis, or prescriptions, and
niṣedhas, or prohibitions. dos
dos

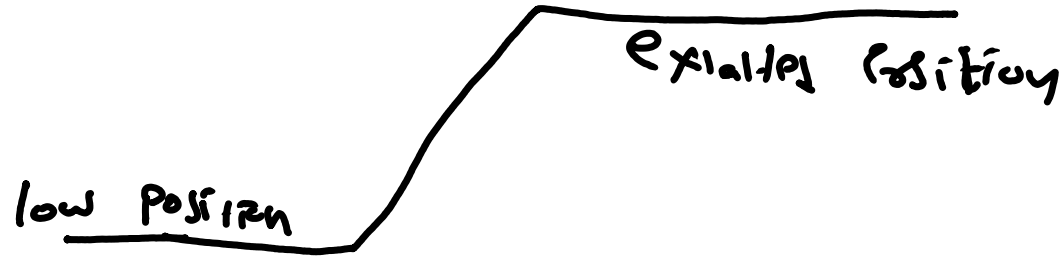
Whatever is enjoined as one's duty is a prescribed rule.

Whatever is enjoined as restricted is a prohibited rule.

Both kinds of rules are auspicious for the living entities.

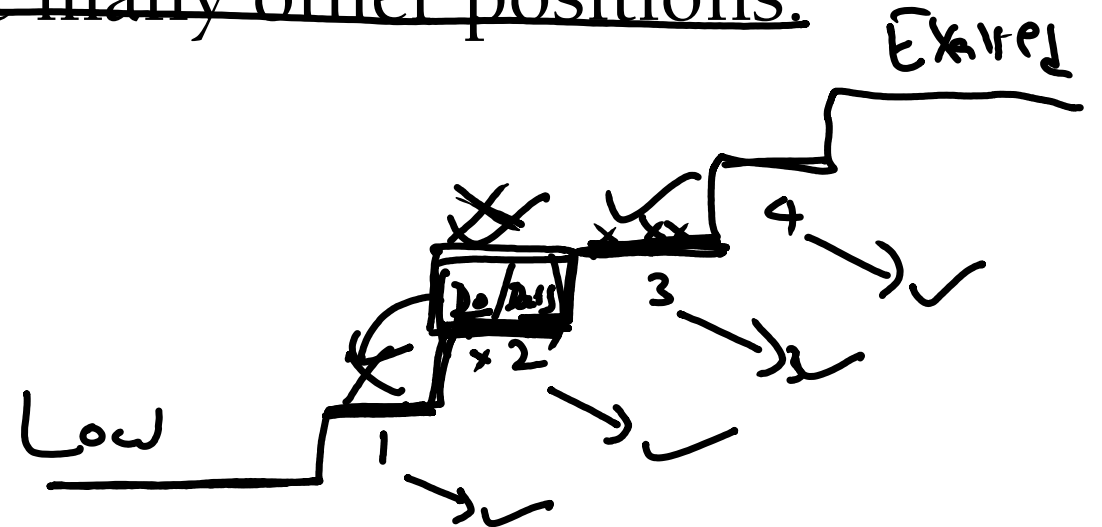
Niyamāgraha – Too much attachment to, or too much neglect of, rules and regulations

Conditioned souls are eligible to attain a very exalted position from a very low position.



Between these two positions there are many other positions.

Each position is a gradual step.



Each gradual step is a distinct level of advancement.

Niyamāgraha – Too much attachment to, or too much neglect of, rules and regulations

Each and every gradual step has different prescriptions and prohibitions.



Whenever a living entity steps to one level and stays there, he is obliged to follow the prescriptions and prohibitions of that step.

By following those enjoined prescriptions and prohibitions, one becomes eligible to attain the next step.

Niyamāgraha – Too much attachment to, or too much neglect of, rules and regulations

If one is unable to attain the next step, he falls down to a lower step.
This is called degradation.

Attaining the higher step is called advancement.

To properly follow the precepts of one's own level is called "one's
prescribed duties" or steadiness in one's own position.

Niyamāgraha – Too much attachment to, or too much neglect of, rules and regulations

Steadiness in one's own position is piety, and deviation from one's position is impiety.

Glorious act → Match b/w Qualification & appropriate prescription
Unglorious act → Mismatch b/w Qualification & appropriate prescription.

There is no other piety and impiety than this.

Therefore in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.21.2-7) Lord Kṛṣṇa spoke these instructions to Uddhava:

Niyamāgraha – Too much attachment to, or too much neglect of, rules and regulations

sve sve 'dhikāre yā nisthā sa guṇaḥ parikīrtitaḥ
viparyayas tu doṣaḥ syād ubhayaor eṣa niścayaḥ

deśa-kālādi-bhāvānām vastūnām mama sattama
guṇa-doṣau vidhīyete niyamārtham hi karmanām

performing acts according to qualification.

"Steadiness in one's own position (sve sve adhikāre yā niṣṭhā) is declared to be actual piety (sa guṇaḥ parikīrtitaḥ), whereas deviation from one's position is considered impiety (viparyayas tu doṣaḥ syād). In this way the two are definitely ascertained (ubhayaor eṣa niścayaḥ).

O saintly Uddhava (sattama), in order to restrict materialistic activities (karmanām niyamārtham hi), I have established (mama vidhīyete) that which is proper and improper among all material things (vastūnām guṇa-doṣau), including time, space and all physical objects (deśa-kālādi-bhāvānām)."

Niyamāgraha – Too much attachment to, or too much neglect of, rules and regulations

Prescribed and prohibited rules are further divided into two categories—conditional and constitutional.

The living entity is pure spirit.

Constitutional level → prescriptions & prohibitions

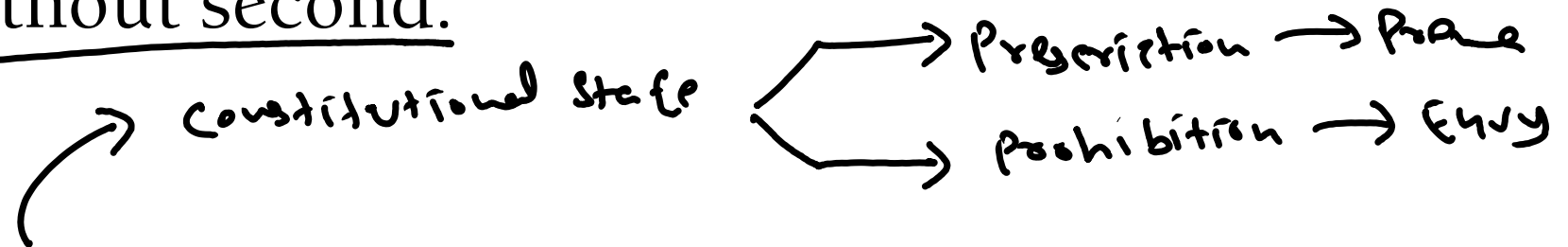
The prescriptions and prohibitions in the living entity's constitutional position are constitutional rules.

Niyamāgraha – Too much attachment to, or too much neglect of, rules and regulations

But when the living entity is separated from his transcendental position, he accepts the designations given by the illusory energy and is entangled in this world—these are false designations.

↳ conditional → prescriptions & prohibitions

These designations are of many varieties, but the constitutional situation is one without second.



In the eternal state of the living entity, prema is the only prescription and envy is the only prohibition.

Niyamāgraha – Too much attachment to, or too much neglect of, rules and regulations

This prescription and prohibition is subordinate to the living entity's eternal nature.

The living entity imbued with prema and devoid of envy is the shelter of eternal rasa.

Although rasa is of five varieties, still they are one undivided spiritual truth.

Niyamāgraha – Too much attachment to, or too much neglect of, rules and regulations

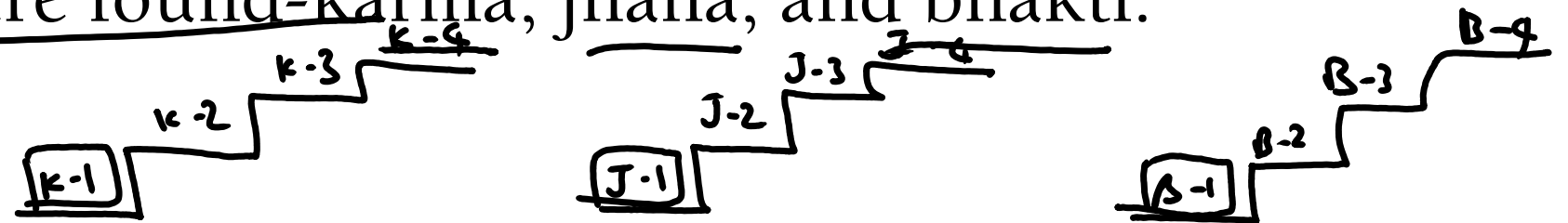
The rules of that position are not to be discussed here.

We must know only that this state is the eternal condition of the
living entity.

Although in the conditional state the rules are of different types, still
all the steps are divided into three principle categories.

Niyamāgraha – Too much attachment to, or too much neglect of, rules and regulations

According to the Vedas, Bhagavad-gītā, and all the smṛtis, three principle divisions are found—karma, jñāna, and bhakti.



In each division certain prescriptions and certain prohibitions are enjoined.

- ① Rules of varṇa & āśrama
 - ② 10 types of saṁskāras
 - ③ regulative prayers.
- } Prescriptions for devotee activities.

In the karma division, the rules of varṇāśrama and the ten supplementary saṁskāras as well as regulative prayers are prescribed.

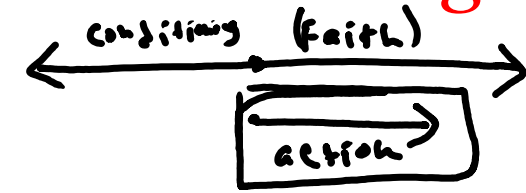
Niyamāgraha – Too much attachment to, or too much neglect of, rules and regulations

Sins and bad habits are prohibited. → Prohibitions for Karma

In the jñāna division, sannyāsa, renunciation, detachment, and discussing matter and spirit are prescribed. } → Prescribing for J-y

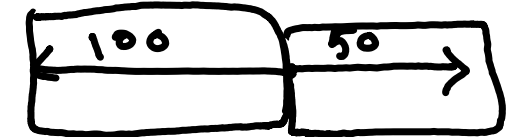
Fruitive activities, forbidden activities, and attachment to sense enjoyment are prohibited.

Niyamāgraha – Too much attachment to, or too much neglect of, rules and regulations



→ Indifference to K, J, Y

In the bhakti division, indifference, performance of activities favorable to devotion, following the prescriptions and prohibitions of the jñāna division, and cultivating devotional service with the help of those prescriptions and prohibitions are prescribed.



→ Prohibitions on the path of Bhakti

→ Y.V



All activities opposed to the Lord, jñāna, renunciation, attachment to sense enjoyment, conclusions opposed to devotional service, and giving up action are prohibited.

Bhakti → Dev. activities fix the true ego of the jīva

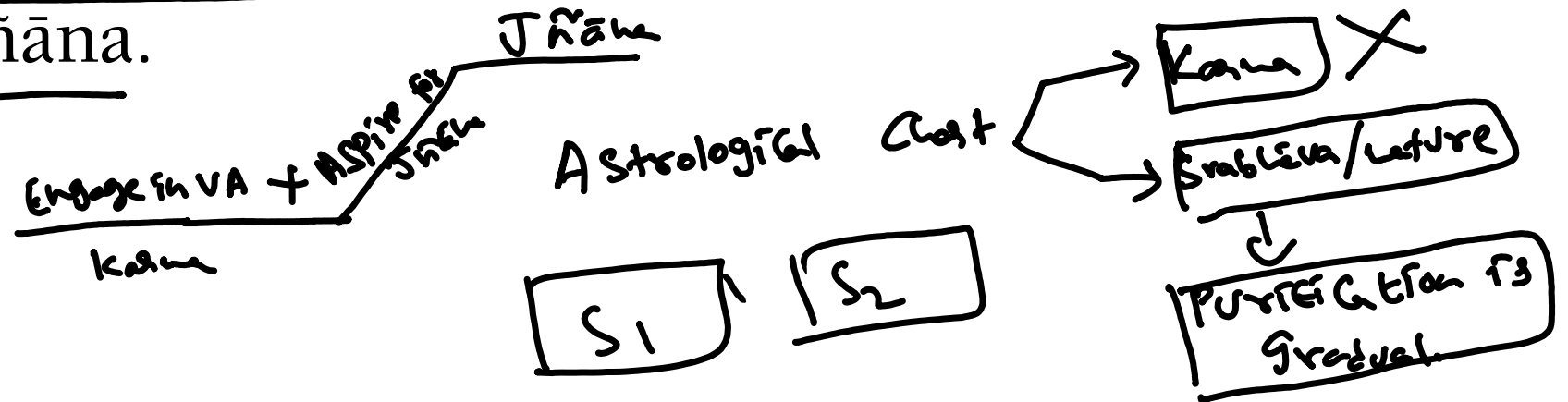
Path Karma → (Samskāra) fix the false ego of the jīva. → Subservient to Lord's rule
 Help him transcend the ego

Niyamāgraha – Too much attachment to, or too much neglect of, rules and regulations

When the conditioned soul advances by giving up his illicit activities, or low-class character, then he attains the level of karma-kaṇḍa.



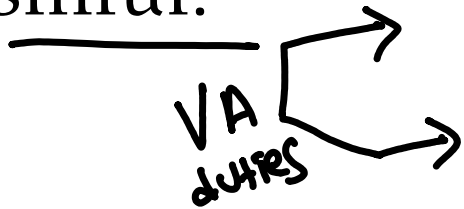
Such a person should remain in varṇāśrama-dharma and aspire to attain the level of jñāna.



This is his duty.

Niyamāgraha – Too much attachment to, or too much neglect of, rules and regulations

He should remain in varṇāśrama until he attains detachment from material activities by discussing the difference between matter and spirit and analyzing the nature of false ego, otherwise he becomes sinful.



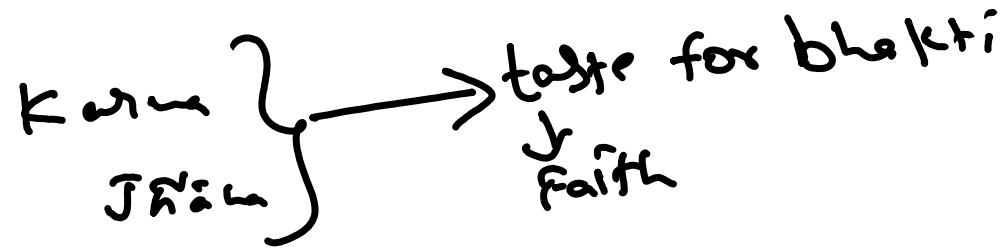
If FE is not gone then VA duties should not be given.

When that detachment is attained, then his higher qualification destroys his attachment to fruitive activities.

But if that person still remains inclined to the rules of karma-kāṇḍa, then he cannot make advancement.

Niyamāgraha – Too much attachment to, or too much neglect of, rules and regulations

The duty of one who has attained the level of jñāna-kaṇḍa is to remain fixed in knowledge.



Until he attains a taste for devotional service, he should remain under the rules of jñāna-kaṇḍa.

As soon as the qualification for devotional service manifests, he should give up his attachment for jñāna-kaṇḍa, otherwise he is guilty of niyamāgraha and will not make advancement.

Niyamāgraha – Too much attachment to, or too much neglect of, rules and regulations

As stated in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.20.9):

tāvat karmāṇi kurvīta → one should perform VA duties till

← na nirvidyeta yāvatā

mat-kathā-śravaṇādaṁ vā
śraddhā yāvan na jāyate

} → Faith in the Process of bhakti
↓
Qualification for bhakti

Qualification for Jñāna
As long as one has not developed detachment from m/h world.

"As long as one is not satiated by fruitive activity (**na nirvidyeta yāvatā**) and has not awakened his taste for devotional service by śravaṇam kīrtanam viṣṇoḥ (**mat-kathā-śravaṇādaṁ vā śraddhā yāvan na jāyate**) one has to act according to the regulative principles of the Vedic injunctions (**tāvat karmāṇi kurvīta**)."

Niyamāgraha – Too much attachment to, or too much neglect of, rules and regulations

- Śraddhā, or faith, is the only qualification for bhakti. As stated in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.20.31):

tasmān mad-bhakti-yuktasya
yogino vai mad-ātmanah
na jñānam na ca vairāgyam
prāyaḥ śreyo bhaved iha

"Therefore (tasmād), for a devotee engaged in My loving service (mad-bhakti-yuktasya yoginah), with mind fixed on Me (mad-ātmanah), the cultivation of knowledge and renunciation (jñānam ca vairāgyam) is generally not the means of achieving the highest perfection within this world (na prāyaḥ śreyo bhaved iha)."

Niyamāgraha – Too much attachment to, or too much neglect of, rules and regulations

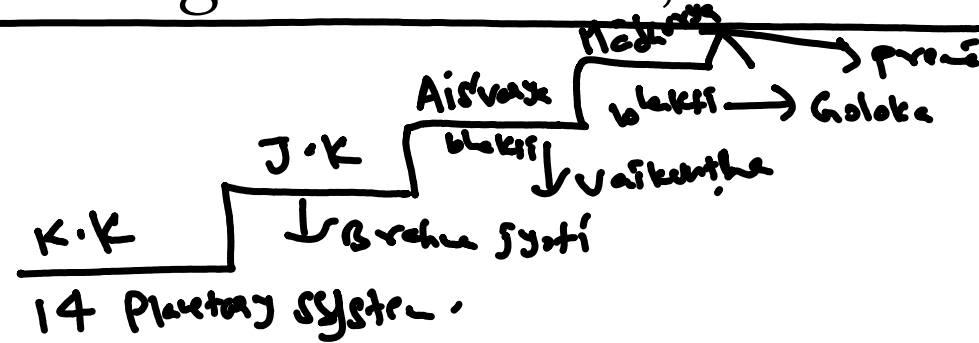
The temple of kṛṣṇa-prema is situated on the highest peak of Goloka
Vṛndāvana.

In order to reach that peak one has to cross the fourteen planetary
systems of karma-kaṇḍa, the Virajā-Brahmaloka of the jñāna-kaṇḍa,
and then rise above Vaikunṭha.

By gradually giving up attachment to the stages of karma and jñāna,
one becomes eligible for bhakti.

Niyamāgraha – Too much attachment to, or too much neglect of, rules and regulations

After crossing the various stages of bhakti, one reaches the temple door of prema.



Śraddhā is the only rule for people established on the level of bhakti.

śraddhā + (śadhu sanga & bhajan kriyā) → śraddhā
nisthā ←

As anarthas, or unwanted habits, are destroyed by the power of devotional service performed under the shelter of sadhu and guru, that śraddhā transforms into devotional service with nistha, or firm faith.

Niyamāgraha – Too much attachment to, or too much neglect of, rules and regulations

As the anarthas are further destroyed, one progresses from the level of nistha to ruci, or taste; from ruci to āsakti, or attachment; and from āsakti to bhāva, or emotion.

When bhāva, in the form of rati, or affection, is mixed with the appropriate ingredients, it becomes rasa.

↓
Samaṅgī bhāvaś → Ingredients of spiritual emotions.

In the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.14.26) it is said:

Niyamāgraha – Too much attachment to, or too much neglect of, rules and regulations

yathā yathātmā parimṛjyate 'sau
mat-puṇya-gāthā-śravaṇābhidhānaiḥ
tathā tathā paśyati vastu sūkṣmam
cakṣur yathaiivāñjana-samprayuktam

"When a diseased eye is treated with medicinal ointment it gradually recovers its power to see (cakṣur yathā eva añjana-samprayuktam). Similarly (tathā), as a conscious living entity cleanses himself of material contamination (yathā ātmā parimṛjyate asau) by hearing and chanting the pious narrations of My glories (mat-puṇya-gāthā-śravaṇa abhidhānaiḥ), he regains his ability to see (tathā tathā paśyati) Me, the Absolute Truth (vastu), in My subtle spiritual form (sūkṣmam)."

Niyamāgraha – Too much attachment to, or too much neglect of, rules and regulations

- Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī clarifies the sequence in his Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu as follows:

ādaḥ śraddhā tataḥ sādhu-saṅgo 'tha bhajana-kriyā
tato 'nārtha-nivṛtṭih syāt tato nisthā rucis tataḥ
athāsaktis tato bhāvas tataḥ premābhyudañcati
sādhakānām ayam premaḥ prādurbhāve bhavet kramāḥ

"In the beginning one must have a preliminary desire for self-realization. This will bring one to the stage of trying to associate with persons who are spiritually elevated. In the next stage one becomes initiated by an elevated spiritual master, and under his instruction the neophyte devotee begins the process of devotional service. By execution of devotional service under the guidance of the spiritual master, one becomes free from all material attachment, attains steadiness in self-realization, and acquires a taste for hearing about the Absolute Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. This taste leads one further forward to attachment for Kṛṣṇa consciousness, which is matured in bhāva, or the preliminary stage of transcendental love of God. Real love for God is called prema, the highest perfectional stage of life."

Niyamāgraha – Too much attachment to, or too much neglect of, rules and regulations

In the process of sādhana-bhakti there are four stages—śraddhā, niṣṭhā, ruci, and āsakti.

(śraddhā + Seṣhe saṅge + bhajant-kriyā + tadante nivr̥tti)

After passing these four stages one comes to the level of bhāva, which is the doorstep of prema.

According to the degree of faith, each level has different rules.

Niyamāgraha – Too much attachment to, or too much neglect of, rules and regulations

As one leaves behind one level and progresses to the next, he should honor the rules of the latter and leave aside those of the former.

Those who do not give up the rules of the previous level are bound by those rules like chains that do not allow him to proceed to the next level.

In the process of devotional service, whatever rules are prescribed for each level are all subordinate to one principle rule.

Niyamāgraha – Too much attachment to, or too much neglect of, rules and regulations

That general rule is given in the Padma Purāṇa as follows:

smartavyaḥ satataṁ viṣṇur
vismartavyo na jātucit
sarve vidhi-nisedhāḥ syur
etayor eva kiṅkarāḥ

Remembering Kṛṣṇa is the eternal duty. All other prescriptions
mentioned in the śāstras have arisen from this main prescription.

Forgetting Kṛṣṇa is never allowed. All other prohibitions mentioned
in the śāstras have arisen from this main prohibition.

Niyamāgraha – Too much attachment to, or too much neglect of, rules and regulations

Keeping this main prescription in mind while advancing, the practitioner should give up his attachment for the prescriptions of the previous level and accept the prescriptions of the next level.

Otherwise he will be guilty of niyamāgraha and weak in reaching the next level.

The practitioner of devotional service must always remember this point.

Niyamāgraha – Too much attachment to, or too much neglect of, rules and regulations

In the conclusion of Hari-bhakti-vilāsa a special instruction is given
in this regard:

kr̥tyāny etāni tu prāyo
gr̥hinām dhaninām satām
likhitāni na tu tyakta-
parigraha-mahātmanām

"Whatever activities are written in Hari-bhakti-vilāsa (**etāni kr̥tyāny tu**) are mostly all meant for householders and rich devotees (**prāyah gr̥hinām dhaninām satām**). There are no rules written (**na tu likhitāni**) for the renunciates (**tyakta-parigraha-mahātmanām**)."

Niyamāgraha – Too much attachment to, or too much neglect of, rules and regulations

Also in the conclusion of the Hari-bhakti-vilāsa it is stated:

avaśyaṁ tāni sarvāṇi
teṣāṁ tād ṛktva siddhaye
prāg apekṣyāṇi bhaktir hi
sadācāraika sadhana

"Although the rules for renunciates are avoided in this book, still
renunciates should follow those rules in order to perfect their
position."

Niyamāgraha – Too much attachment to, or too much neglect of, rules and regulations

The behavior exhibited by the renunciate sadhus is proper behavior in this connection.

That alone is to be followed.

The first symptom of one who has attained śraddhā is surrender to the feet of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Niyamāgraha – Too much attachment to, or too much neglect of, rules and regulations

That surrender is of two types—for the householders and for the renunciates.

Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa mentions only those rules that are meant for householders.

That is why observances such as Śiva-caturdaśī are given therein.

Niyamāgraha – Too much attachment to, or too much neglect of, rules and regulations

The surrendered renunciate should follow whichever observances
are appropriate for renunciates.

Both the householder and the renunciate become unalloyed
surrender souls while advancing on the path of sādhana.

Then their rules are only slightly different.

Niyamāgraha – Too much attachment to, or too much neglect of, rules and regulations

At that stage they attain ultimate surrender due to advancement in sādhana.

It is said in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.18.28), the Hari-bhakti-vilāsa (20th vilāsa), and the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.20.36):

Niyamāgraha – Too much attachment to, or too much neglect of, rules and regulations

jñāna-niṣṭho virakto vā
mad-bhakto vānapekṣakah
sa-liṅgān āśramāms tyaktvā
cared avidhi-gocarah

"A learned transcendentalist dedicated to the cultivation of knowledge (jñāna-niṣṭhah) and thus detached from external objects (virakto vā), or My devotee (mad-bhakto vā) who is detached even from desire for liberation (ānapekṣakah) - both neglect those duties based on external rituals or paraphernalia (sa-liṅgān āśramāms tyaktvā). Thus their conduct is beyond the range of rules and regulations (avidhi-gocarah)."

↓ rules & regulations of VA

Niyamāgraha – Too much attachment to, or too much neglect of,
rules and regulations

ekāntitām gatānāntu
śrī-kṛṣṇa-caraṇābjayoḥ
bhaktiḥ svataḥ pravartteta
tad vighnaiḥ kiṁ vratādibhiḥ

"When one becomes a pure devotee of the Lord (ekāntitām gatānām tu), then devotion (śrī-kṛṣṇa-caraṇābjayoḥ bhaktiḥ) is spontaneously established in his heart (svataḥ pravartteta). What then is the need to observe rituals (kiṁ vratādibhiḥ) that simply obstruct one's devotional service (tad vighnaiḥ)?"