

**Bhaktyaloka  
Essay 4**

**Niyamāgraha**

Those who are qualified for bhakti don't have to think in terms of dharma/ adharmā. They think in terms of what is anukula/ pratikula for their bhakti.

ŚB  
11.20.36

The devotees are not obliged to follow the rules of karma/ jnana but sometimes they may follow if they find some of those rules favourable for their bhakti. In that case it should not be thought that they are committing niyamagraha.



The conclusion is that the practitioner attains a higher level as a result of following the rules prescribed according to his qualification.

# Srila Prabhupada on Niyamagraha

## Niyamāgraha

āgraha means "eagerness to accept"

Niyama-āgraha

Accepting some of the scriptural rules and regulations for immediate benefit (and not for the highest benefit).

agraha means "failure to accept"

Niyama-agraha

Neglecting the shāstric rules and regulations that are meant for spiritual development.

Those interested in Krishna consciousness should not be eager to accept rules and regulations for dharma, artha, kama, moksha.

(devotees are not bound by rules of dharma shastra, jnana shastra etc)

They should very faithfully accept scriptural rules and regulations for the advancement of Krishna consciousness.

(but devotees are bound by rules of bhakti shastras)

Commentary by Srila Bhakti Rakshak  
Sridhara Maharaj

Niyamāgraha

too much affinity to abide by  
the law

not willing to abide by any law



We should follow the middle path, the easy path, not the  
extreme. (yukta-ahara viharasya...)

Niyamagraha means to give abnormal attention to any  
particular ruling.

Just as on Ekadasi - we may be very firm to fast without a drop of water.

But the general rule is that I must keep my body fit for the service  
of the Lord, so I may take some water.

A devotee may steal a flower but if he has the sincere  
vision that everything belongs to Krishna, then that is not  
stealing.

We represent an organisation so we must be very careful  
not to steal as it can bring bad name to our organisation.

If at all we have to steal, we must be 100 percent sure  
that it is ONLY for Krishna and not for our sense  
gratification!

Anuvrtti Commentary by Srila Bhakti Siddhanta  
Saraswati Thakura

Niyamāgraha

Niyama-aagraha: attachment to rules of karma shastras or jnana shastras for someone qualified for bhakti

Niyam-agraha: indifferent to the rules that are prescribed for the attainment of bhakti is known as niyama-agraha

Sahajiya mentality - example of niyam-agraha

◆ Srila Bhaktisiddhanta saraswati Thakur quotes from Kalyana-kalpataru to criticise the sahajiya mentality

Sahajiyas prematurely think themselves to be qualified for raganuga sadhana and do not follow any rules for vaidhi sadhana. Thus they neglect the rules of vaidhi sadhana bhakti and are guilty of committing niyamagraha. Thus they cheat themselves and just attain misery in the end.

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura's advice to sahajiyas:

1. The most sacred and pure krishna-prema is extremely rare. First make yourself fit by performing sādhana.
2. You will have to first give up the ten offences against the holy name and chant harināma continuously.
3. You should hear harikathā in the association of pure Vaishnavas.
4. You have become intoxicated by uselessly considering kāma to be prema.
5. At present prema is in a dormant condition being covered by kāma. Therefore you must endeavour to dispel this lust and to initiate the awakening of love.
6. Don't fear to take the step-by-step method of sadhana bhakti.
7. By hearing hari-kathā and performing harināma-kirtana in the association of pure devotees, sraddhā is matured and evolves successively into nistha, ruchi and asakti. From āsakti, bhāva makes its appearance, and from bhāva, prema is manifested.
8. Prema may be obtained only by taking support of this progressive evolution and never by any other means.