



Study of yogic niyamas in the practice of Ramadan

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Abstract

Niyamas are internal disciplines that guide self purification and spiritual development. It provides a framework for cultivating positive habits, self-discipline and inner harmony. This paper presents a comparative study of the Yogic Niyamas (ethical observances) and the Islamic disciplines observed during the holy month of Ramadan with the objective of exploring their shared emphasis on inner purification, ethical conduct and spiritual growth. Drawing upon primary scriptural sources such as the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, the Hatha Yoga Pradipika and the Trishikhi Brahmanopanishad alongside Quranic verses and Hadith, the study adopts a qualitative, analytical methodology to examine the philosophical and spiritual elements. The Niyamas- Saucha (purity), Santosha (contentment), Tapa (austerity), Svadhyaya (self-study) and Ishvara Pranidhana (surrender to God) etc are analyzed in relation to core Ramadan practices such as fasting, Namaz, Quranic recitation, charity and self-restraint. The analysis reveals that the practices emphasize the cultivation of purity, self-discipline, humility and devotion as central to the spiritual path. While rooted in distinct frameworks, both Yogic Niyamas and Islamic practices focus ethical living and spiritual devotion. The conclusion drawn from this comparative inquiry underscores the universality of moral and spiritual values across religious traditions and suggests that the disciplined observance of either path leads to heightened self-awareness, inner peace and alignment with the Divine will. This study thereby contributes to interfaith understanding and demonstrates how ancient spiritual disciplines, though arising in different contexts resonate with a common pursuit of truth, self-realization.

Keywords: Fasting, islam, niyama, ramadan, yoga

Introduction

Islam, as one of the major world religions, is not merely a system of beliefs but a comprehensive way of life that integrates the spiritual, moral, social and legal dimensions of human existence. Its foundation rests upon five fundamental principles, commonly known as the five Pillars of Islam, which serve both as an expression of faith and as the structural framework of religious practice. These pillars function as the guiding norms through which Muslims align their lives with divine will, cultivating both individual piety and collective harmony within the community. They consist of the Shahadah (testimony of faith affirming the oneness of God and the Prophethood of Muhammad), Salah (ritual prayer performed at prescribed times), Zakat (obligatory almsgiving for social justice and purification of wealth), Ramadan (fasting, especially during the month of Ramadan, symbolizing self-restraint and spiritual elevation), and Hajj (the pilgrimage to the sacred sanctuary in Mecca, once in a lifetime for those who are able).

Among these pillars, the month of Ramadan holds a profound significance not only as an act of devotion but also as a discipline that nurtures ethical consciousness, social solidarity, and spiritual refinement. As a specific epoch of the religious journey of the Muslim community, Ramadan has a variety of privileges selected for religious piety. Among the specialties is the presence of glory and blessings, where the gates of heaven are wide open, forgiveness, prayers are granted and goodness doubled. Belief in Ramadan as a month of glory and blessings encouraged Muslims to conduct good deeds to obtain the promised piety, increasing the frequency of worship.

Ramadan is the Islamic ritual obligation and a part of spiritual life. (Aziz, Abdullah & Baz, 2015) ^[1].

Ramadan is one of the five pillars of Islam, observed in the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. (Maududi, 2023) ^[2], the first revelation of the Quran, a book of guidance for mankind was given to Muhammad during the lunar month of Ramadan (Siddhiqui, 2012) ^[3]. Fasting in the month of Ramadan was made obligatory for all Muslims following a Quranic revelation establishing it as a fundamental act of worship. The month of Ramadan is embarked for all Muslims to fast together, to ensure similar results. This measure turns individual 'Ibadah' into collective Ibadah. However, Ramadan celebrates Allah's mercy through which He sent the guiding light of the Quran to lead humanity on the path of goodness and virtue protecting the people from evil and vice. Each year during this sacred month, Muslim observe a daily fast refraining from food, water and negative thoughts for strengthening spiritual relations with God. Ramadan serves as a period of discipline for both the body and the spirit, fostering patience and dedication (Ali, 1994).

In Quran it is said:

Shahru Ramadaanallazee unzila feehil Qur'aanu hudal linnaasi wa baiyinaatim minal huda wal furqaan; faman shahida minkumush shahra falyasumhu wa man kaana mareedan aw'ala safarin fa'iddatum min ayyaamin ukhar; yureedul laahu bikumul yusra wa laa yureedu bikumul usra wa litukmilul iddata wa litukabbirul laaha'ala maa hadaakum wa la'allakum tashkuroon.

(Quran 2:185)

Meaning- "Ramadan is the month in which Quran was sent down as a guide for the mankind with clear signs of

guidance and discrimination (between right and wrong). Therefore, who witnesses this month (at home) should observe the fasts as a compulsory duty. But who is sick or is on a journey then such one should keep same number of fasts on other days. Allah wants ease for everyone and desires no hardship and one may complete the number of days fixed in other days and glorify Allah that He guided people be grateful” (Imaan & Auolakh 2012) [5, 21].

This verse explains the importance of Ramadan that the holy Quran was revealed as a guide for humanity, showing the difference between right and wrong. During this month, every healthy person who is present at home is required to fast. However, if someone is sick or travelling, they can make up for the missed fasts on other days. Allah wants to make things easy for people, not difficult. The purpose is to complete the set number of fasting days and to glorify Allah for His guidance, so people may be grateful.

The holy month of Ramadan is one of the deep inward reflections for Islamic people. It comes with the days of self-restraint, introspection, self-discipline and devotion. During this time it is important to keep both body and mind strong. While fasting the body goes through a process of detoxification process. Eliminating and cleansing toxic waste from the body as well as purifying the mind of negative and destructive thoughts and emotions. So this is the perfect time to let go of what don't need and became a human being with adaptability.

Fasting brings about the realization of taqwa (consciousness of Allah) and purifies the mind from heedlessness, as well as lusts and desires. It teaches the mind to patiently abstain from what it craves and desires.

Ramadan is the month in which fasting is made compulsory for the devotee. Therefore, whoever is blessed with success in observing it properly has earned rewards for the entire year?

Suhur (Pre sunrise meal): The pre-dawn meal, known as Suhur is a light but highly recommended meal taken before the fasting begins. It is considered a source of blessing and holds significant importance in the practice of fasting. Therefore, partaking in Suhur is encouraged to gain its benefits.

Iftar (Fast breaking evening meal): Iftar is an Arabic term that refers to the evening meal with which break the fast during Ramadan, immediately after sunset. It is a significant part of the daily fasting routine, often beginning with dates and water.

Overview of Yogic Niyamas

Niyamas in Patanjali's Yoga Sutra

Śauhasantoṣatapaḥsvādhyāyeśvara praṇidhānāni niyamāḥ || 2/32 ||

According to patanjali Yoga Sutra eight-fold path called astanga yoga are considered philosophical foundation of life. By practicing holistically it leads to the state of sublimation of all mental modifications in the mind. It is comprised of Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi (Schmid, et. el 2021) [6]. The second limb of Astanga Yoga, Yogic Niyamas serves as a guiding framework which nurture inner harmony, spiritual growth, and a balanced, purposeful life.

The five Yogic niyamas encompasses Saucha, Santosha, Tapa, Svadhyaya, and Ishvarapranidhana. These are

individual discipline which nurtures inner harmony, spiritual growth, and a balanced, purposeful life. It is about development of positive traits that will transform human's negative nature to positive nature (Shriya & Dave, 2023) [7].

Saucha (Purity both internal and external)

Cleanliness is an important principle of Yoga which means cleanliness of body and mind. External purity generates internal purity & the internal purity means removal of lust, anger, greed, jealousy etc. On the mental plane it means to refrain from having hatred or ill will towards anyone (Shalihin & Sholihin, 2022) [8].

Santosha (Contentment)

Santosha, signifies contentment and inner serenity. It directs practitioners to cultivate gratitude and acceptance rather than seeking external validation or material possessions. The cause of unhappiness and mental pain is always un-fulfillment of some desire and there is no end of desire. Santosha cuts at the roots of all desires by fostering satisfaction with the present moment, Santosha shifts focus from outward achievements to inner peace. It bestows peace, serenity and satisfaction which guides towards spiritual growth. A contented person is happy in whatever condition he is and stops seeking outward approval and find inner fulfillment.

Tapa (Austerity)

Tapa emphasizes self-disciplin and training of senses. It is the capacity to face all difficulty and helps to overcome obstacles by pushing their limits, embrace discomfort, and engage in self-development, self-exploration, and spiritual enlightenment. It implies that one should have strength and fortitude to remain unaffected by opposite of life. Tapas also mean a balanced mind in all condition of life, to bear insult; injury and persecutions to ever serene, contented and peacefully to be cheerful in adverse conditions are forms of tapas (Dash, Mohanty & Biswal, 2024) [9, 14].

Svadhya (Self Study)

Swadhyaya means self study or self-introspection. The study of the self or self analysis leads to progress moral and spiritual life and removes the obstacles in achieving spiritual goals. It helps a practitioner to unite with Ista Devata (Widyastuti & Lucky, 2024) [10].

Ishvarapranidhana (Surrender to God)

Ishwarapranidhana means surrender to god or total dedication of all thoughts and action to supreme. It is the practice of offering up the fruits of one's actions to a God relinquishing attachment to their outcomes. It involves recognizing a greater purpose beyond personal desires and aligning one's actions with the universal order and helps to cultivate a sense of surrender and faith in the divine (Karambelkar, 2011) [11]. When the person completely surrender to God leads to the dissolution of ego, as the individual's sense of self become align with the divine will.

Niyamas in Hatha Yoga Pradipika

Tapah santoṣha āstikyaṃ dānamīśvara-pūjanam | Siddhānta-vākya-śravaṇam hrīmatī cha tapo hutam | Niyamā daśa samproktā yogha-śāstra-viśāradaiḥ || 1/16 ||

Hatha Yoga Pradipika is a classic text on Hatha Yoga compiled by Swami Swatmarama. The text is comprising

four chapters: Asana, Pranayama, Mudra and Samadhi. The text presents a distinct set of ten Yamas and Niyamas. Niyama is concern with the good virtuous habits, behavior, deeds, activities and observances which one needs to do in order to live a healthy and spiritual living. Niyama, when one followed regularly helps one to create a positive environment within self by applying the codes of Niyama to one's mind, body and spirit. Niyama is also said to bestow one with clarity and inner strength need to travel in the pathway of spiritual journey, part from creating a unique positivity, self-confidence and happiness in the practitioner.

Tapa (Austerity)

The Tapa means 'to heat' or austerities. Building inner heat and passion so that one can achieve what they want to achieve in their life. It also means letting go of ego, personal agendas and attachments. There are three types of tapas: Sharirik (Physical), Vachik (Vocal) and Manasik (Mental) (Muktibodhananda, 2012) [13]. These processes mould the body and mind into a purer state which help in spiritual growth.

Santosha (Contentment)

Santosha signifies the cultivation of an inner sense of satisfaction irrespective of external circumstances. Whether one encounters abundance or scarcity, gain or loss, the practice of santosha requires the perception that what is available is sufficient. Human life is inherently marked by a continuous search for fulfillment. For many, contentment is initially sought in material acquisitions; however, such satisfaction does not last and soon discontent appears again. When one understands that worldly desires can never be fully satisfied, it turns to the inner or spiritual search. This is the way to feel santosha or satisfaction (Dash, Mohanty & Biswal, 2024) [9, 14].

Astikyam (Belief in God)

Astikyam means having the faith in God, the cosmic power of God, Nature or supreme consciousness. It also includes believing the higher force which controls the lower existence.

Dana (Charity)

Charity must be spontaneous and unrestrained. Helping to others in any way required. It means not only giving possessions, knowledge or money to others but also offering mental or emotional support.

Ishvara poojanam (Worship of God)

Worshipping and devoting to the divine. It signifies cultivating devotion, surrender and humility by acknowledging a higher principle beyond the ego.

Siddhantavakya sravanam (Listening to the sacred scripture)

Siddhanta is the culmination of spiritual knowledge collected in a concise form. Listening to Vedic knowledge to become enlighten and knowledgeable. It helps to understand the spiritual path and the way in which the spirit unfolds.

Hree (Modesty)

Be modest and humble. Refrain from boasting to others. Spontaneous humility comes with divine awareness and

surrender of the ego or 'I' awareness. It is ego which creates the feeling of separation from the atman and prevents from feeling the inner being.

Mati (A discerning intellect)

Developing cognition and intellect that one can determine right from wrong using intuition wisely.

Japa (Mantra repetition)

Japa means 'repetition of mantra'. Mantra can be repeated mentally, whispered, sung. Chanting mantras daily focuses attention and mind, giving deeper awareness as well. Chanting also changes the vibration of brain waves, switching to the calm, relaxed alpha brainwave state where one can control in reactions and thoughts.

Hutam (Sacrifice)

Hutam means internal sacrifice, giving up worldly desires and surrendering the ego, sacrificing sensual experiences for spiritual experiences. Sacrifice is giving up the idea that life is for worldly pleasure alone.

Niyamas in Trishiki brahmanopnishad:

Tapah santuṣṭir āstikyaṃ dānam ārādhanam hareḥ || 33 ||

Vedāntaśravaṇam caiva hīr matiś ca japo vratam ||

The ten Niyamas (ethical observances) in Trishiki Brahmanopnishad are spiritual disciplines that guide a seeker toward self-purification and higher consciousness. Niyamas serve as a framework for ethical and spiritual living, helping one progress toward Moksha (liberation).

Tapa (Austerity)

The first discipline, Tapa is the practice of austerity or self-regulated discipline, which purifies the senses and strengthens endurance. It generates the inner heat that burns away impurities and gives the practitioner mastery over bodily urges. Without tapas, higher states of meditation remain inaccessible. Tapa refers to spiritual and physical austerities, such as fasting, silence (mauna), meditation, and penance. It helps in cultivating inner strength, endurance, and detachment from worldly pleasures.

Santosha (Contentment)

Santosha is the cultivation of inner satisfaction irrespective of external conditions. It neutralizes the restless pursuit of worldly acquisitions and creates stability of mind, a quality indispensable for meditation. Being satisfied with what one has and not constantly seeking more. It leads to peace of mind and reduces greed and envy.

Astikyam (Belief in God)

Believe in the existence of God. It Strengthens bhakti and commitment to spiritual practice. To this is added Astikyam, which denotes faith in the authority of the Vedas, trust in the guru and confidence in the reality of the Divine. Faith ensures continuity of effort even when immediate results are not visible and provides the practitioner with inner assurance in the face of doubt.

Dana (Generosity)

By sharing one's resources, kindness, time or knowledge without expectation of return, the yogi diminishes selfishness and develops empathy. This external act of service to those people who in need without expecting anything in return.

Hari aradhana (Worship of God)

The internal devotion and worship of the Supreme Being, here referred to as Hari. Worship integrates love, surrender, and reverence into the path of discipline. Worship, chanting and devotional practices dedicated to Hari or any personal deity. It helps in developing surrender and love for the Divine.

Vedanta Shravanam (Hearing to Vedas)

Vedanta Shravanam, the attentive listening to the wisdom of the Upanishads, Bhagawad Gita etc from a guru. This discipline ensures that practice is illumined by knowledge and the aspirant does not fall into mechanical routine but continually aligns actions with higher truth. It also leads to Jnana (wisdom) and realization of the true self.

Hree (Modesty)

The sense of modesty and moral conscience restrains one from wrong actions. Being humble, avoiding arrogance, and maintaining dignity in thoughts, words, and actions.

Mati (Determination)

This inward sensitivity to right and wrong is complemented by mati. The clarity of intellect and resolute discrimination that enables the aspirant to remain oriented toward liberation rather than distraction. Firmness in spiritual pursuit develops Viveka (discrimination between real and unreal). Involves studying scriptures, reflecting on their meaning, and applying them in life.

Japa (Repetition of Mantra)

Japa means continuous repetition of sacred names or mantras which anchors the mind and transforms thought patterns through the vibration of mantra. Japa calms the mind, enhances focus, and deepens spiritual connection.

Vrata (Resolution)

Vrata refers to sacred vows such as fasting, silence, or adherence to specific rules, which give form to discipline and serve as milestones in the aspirant's journey.

It uplifts self-discipline and devotion (Dalal, 2019) [15].

Yogic concept of Niyamas with the discipline of Ramadan**Saucha**

Saucha not only limited in cleanliness of the physical body but also includes clarity of the mind. It gives a message in this concept that if the body is kept clean, it influences the inner environment of mind and senses and also enables the inner environment to be clean and healthy. It explains the impact of external purity over the inner purity and the importance of such synchronizes purity to travel in the path to attain spirituality (Macauley & blashki, 2021) [16]. During Ramadan, the concept of Saucha aligns deeply with the spiritual and ethical discipline observed throughout the month. Fasting is not just about abstaining from food and drink but also from negative thoughts, anger, jealousy and resentment. A clean mind is one that cultivates patience, gratitude and compassion. Just as saucha encourages inner purification, Ramadan emphasizes self-reflection and seeking forgiveness allowing individuals to cleanse their hearts of past mistakes.

In Yoga, Saucha is linked to maintaining purity in speech and conduct. Similarly, during Ramadan, believers are

encouraged to avoid lying, backbiting and any form of harmful speech, fostering a disciplined and serene mind. Thus, Saucha as mental cleanliness finds a strong parallel in the purification of thoughts, emotions and intentions during Ramadan. It emphasizes inner discipline, self-control and an elevated state of consciousness making mental cleanliness a key aspect of spiritual growth.

Santosha

Santosha means contentment, being happy with whatever we have and are blessed with. This quality comes naturally as a reflection of courage to accept. One should gradually, in the process of life and maturity should learn to accept the world, oneself, possessions one has, the circumstances and the environment given to make a living by creation and destiny, as they are. This acceptance is by itself contentment and is the source of bliss and liberation. On the backdrop, contentment demands sacrifice and letting go off one's cravings and desires for what one doesn't have, more than what he has, greed of acquiring everything and not being content with anything (Kumar, et. el. 2024) [17].

During Ramadan, fasting teaches contentment by making one appreciate basic necessities like food and water, fostering gratitude for what is available. If difficulty is experienced in fasting, one should bear it cheerfully and not complain. It trains the mind to be satisfied with less, reducing dependency on external pleasures. Ramadan provides a path to spiritual purification, freeing the soul from worldly distractions and leading to God-consciousness. Practicing Santosha during Ramadan means embracing fasting, prayers and challenges with a grateful heart. It transforms hunger into spiritual growth, desires into self-discipline and struggles into contentment. Ultimately it guides individuals toward inner peace, self-control and deeper faith.

Tapa

Tapa means heat. It refers to austerity, penance and self-discipline. When it comes with human body and mind it spiritually described and understood as activities leading to burning off and destruction of impurities of the body, mind and senses. It helps on to travel in the spiritual way of attaining self liberation and eternal bliss. In Ramadan, fasting generates a form of spiritual heat that cleanses the soul, disciplines the body and strengthens faith. Fasting serves as an act of self-discipline, purification and devotion to God. (Alam, Gangwani & Mohan, 2024) [18]. Fasting in Ramadan is a means to burn away impurities not just physically but also spiritually by abstaining from food, drink and negative behaviors. This period of fasting encourages self-control, patience, gratitude and deeper connection with God. By the process of Tapas (Purification action), when the impurities are destroyed the physical body and senses become perfect. Purification action is been performed to destroy the dirt of veil of impurities. After the destruction of this veil of impurities our physical body performs the best with potential and the senses remains in control.

Svadhyaaya

Svadhyaaya means to self-analyze, action and deeds. It keeps oneself away from any sins and mistakes and keeping pure by mind, senses and thoughts. Just as Svadhyaaya encourages individuals to reflect on their actions and thoughts, Ramadan is a time for deep self-examination, repentance

and spiritual growth. In Ramadan, the Quran is recited and studied deeply as this holy month is its revelation. Fasting during Ramadan promotes mindfulness of one's behavior and connection with the divine. Practicing spiritual activity fosters detachment from material desires and focus on inner self-improvement.

Ishvara Pranidhana

Ishvara pranidhana means devotion, dedication and surrendering to God. It is also dedicating the fruits of one's practices to God. It includes all deeds performed without any expectation of fruits and devoted to God. Ramadan is a time of submitting fully to Allah through fasting, prayer and self-restraint. The believers during Ramadan fast pray and give charity purely for the sake of God, rather than seeking material benefits. Surrender to God involves letting go of personal desires and the ego which is also a key practice in Ramadan. Fasting disciplines the body and soul, reducing the influence of worldly distractions. It encourages a path of inner purification, faith and trust in God's plan.

Dana

The Prophet Muhammad was known for His generosity and he became even more generous during Ramadan. According to a hadith from Sahih Bukhari (Volume 3, book 31, Number 126), he was the most generous among people, especially in this blessed month. Since Allah has blessed with wealth and provisions, Muslims should also be generous in Ramadan. They do this by giving Zakat (Charity). When a person gives charity, Allah makes life easier for them, both physically, spiritually and mentally. Charity is not limited to money. Any good deed done for the sake of Allah counts as charity, such as helping others without expecting anything in return. Muslims choose to give zakat during Ramadan because the rewards are greater in this month.

The wealth is like flowing water if it is blocked, it becomes stale but if it keeps flowing, it stays fresh and pure. The Prophet also said that Ramadan is the month of charity and during this time, a believer's sustenance increases. He encouraged people to feed those who are fasting even if it is just a date or a sip of water. The reward for this is great. God forgives their sins, saves from Hell and gives them the same reward as the fasting person they helped. This hadith teaches the importance of generosity, kindness and helping others especially in Ramadan when the rewards for good deeds are multiplied.

Vrata

Fasting in Ramadan is abstaining from eating, drinking and conjugal relations from dawn to sunset. It is compulsory for Muslims. The Prophet said that those who fast will enter paradise through a special gate called Ar-Raiyan. Good deeds in Ramadan receive greater rewards. A small good act is equal to an obligatory duty in other months and an obligatory duty is rewarded seventy times more. Fasting develops self-control, patience and empathy for the poor. It teaches moderation and discipline, preventing people from being controlled by their desires. Fasting is a way to strengthen spiritual and moral character. It is essential for following Islamic teachings and becoming a true devotee of God.

Fasting enhances bodily health. It gets rid of contaminated matter, eases the stomach, purifies the blood, eases the

working of the heart, brightens the spirit, refines the soul and disciplines the character. When an individual fasts his soul is humbled and his carnal desires are dispelled. There is a great reward for fasting as it shows a Muslim obeying God and submitting to His command (Hussaini, 2018) [19].

Japa

Ramadan is a holy month because it is when the Quran was revealed as guidance for humanity. It is time to reflect on its teachings and follow the right path. The Quran described as a source of mercy, wisdom and spiritual life. (Quran 31:3). The Prophet Muhammad encouraged reading the Quran, saying it will intercede for believers on Judgment Day. Muslims are encouraged to read the Quran at least once in Ramadan. Even those who cannot recite Arabic should listen to recitations. Ramadan is the best time to build a habit of daily Quran reading or listening. So recitation of Quran during Ramadan enhances focus of the mind, attain inner peace and connect with the divine. (Al-Baqarahi, 2003) [20].

Hutam

Sacrifice during Ramadan aligns with spirituality, emphasizing self-discipline, purification and devotion to God. Ramadan is the time for believers to practice self-restraint by giving up not only food and drink but also negative habits, harmful thoughts and worldly distractions. It also involves sensual experiences and prioritizes prayer, Quranic recitation and acts of worship over physical pleasures, reinforcing the idea of elevating the soul over bodily desires. In essence, Hutam during Ramadan defines as fasting, self-reflection, increased devotion and pursuit of a higher spiritual state.

Discussion

The comparative study of Yogic Niyamas and the practices of Ramadan highlight a remarkable closeness in their moral and spiritual teachings, despite belonging to two different religious traditions. Both systems place strong emphasis on controlling the body and mind, refining behavior, and directing human life toward higher spiritual goals. What emerges is a picture of universal values, discipline, purity, contentment, self-reflection, and surrender that transcend cultural boundaries.

In Yoga, the Niyamas are considered essential for inner discipline and spiritual progress. They are not external rituals but inner qualities that shape the life of a seeker. Similarly, Ramadan in Islam is not only about abstaining from food and drink; it is a period of deep training in ethics, patience, and God-consciousness (Taqwa). The parallel here shows that both Yoga and Islam see self-control as the foundation for spiritual growth. The Niyama of Saucha (purity), for instance, is central in Yoga. It emphasizes purity of body, mind, and environment. This idea is strongly present in Ramadan as well. Muslims are taught that fasting is not valid if one engages in immoral speech or harmful acts, since the true aim of fasting is to cleanse the soul. Thus, fasting becomes a practical method of achieving Saucha, where one's thoughts, words, and actions are purified alongside the body. The Niyama of Santosha (contentment) also finds clear reflection in Ramadan. A fasting person experiences hunger and thirst but learns to accept it with patience and gratitude. Instead of complaining, the believer is trained to remember the

blessings of God and to feel compassion for those who suffer poverty. This spirit of contentment is a powerful spiritual lesson that connects directly with the Yogic teaching of being satisfied with what one has, rather than constantly desiring more. Tapas (austerity) are perhaps the closest link between Yoga and Ramadan. In Yoga, Tapas is the willingness to endure discomfort for the sake of higher goals. During Ramadan, fasting itself is a form of Tapas, where one willingly gives up basic needs during the day. This discipline strengthens the willpower, purifies the body, and elevates the mind. Both traditions see self-imposed discipline not as punishment but as a way of gaining mastery over the senses. The Niyama of Swadhyaya (self-study and study of scriptures) also has a strong place in Ramadan. Muslims are encouraged to recite and reflect on the Quran during the month, often completing the entire text in prayer. This is parallel to the Yogic practice of reciting scriptures and reflecting on their meaning. Both aim to deepen knowledge, inspire faith, and guide behavior in daily life. Finally, Ishwara Pranidhana (surrender to God) connects very deeply with the spirit of Ramadan. In Yoga, this means giving up ego and offering all actions to the Divine. In Islam, fasting is seen as an act done only for God, and it cultivates Taqwa, a state of constant awareness of God. The believer submits his or her will entirely to Allah, which is the highest goal of Ramadan. Thus, the essence of this Niyama is fully realized in the Islamic practice.

Despite these similarities, important differences must also be noted. The Yogic Niyamas are primarily individual practices, designed for personal growth on the spiritual path. They do not have a fixed collective schedule but are continuous guidelines for daily living. In contrast, Ramadan is a community-wide observance, where millions of Muslims fast together at the same time. This adds a strong social dimension. The community prays together, shares meals, and gives charity (Zakat). This creates bonds of solidarity, empathy, and mutual support. While Yoga highlights personal liberation (moksha), Ramadan connects the personal discipline of fasting with social ethics and collective well-being. Another important point is the role of charity. While not part of the Niyamas in Patanjali's Yoga Sutra, charity (Dana) appears in later Yogic texts like the Hatha Yoga Pradipika and the Trishikhi Brahmanopanishad. This corresponds closely with Zakat in Islam, which is often paid during Ramadan. Both see giving as a way to purify wealth, reduce selfishness, and promote social harmony.

This comparison shows that spiritual discipline, whether through the Yogic path of Niyamas or the Islamic observance of Ramadan, aims at transforming the whole human being. It is not limited to physical restraint but extends to the heart, the mind, and the social life of the individual. The similarities suggest that human beings across cultures have recognized the same truths about the need for purity, patience, gratitude, self-control, and surrender to God.

By studying these two traditions side by side, it becomes clear that Yoga and Islam, though different in theology and practice, point toward a common goal of inner purification and closeness to the Divine. Such a study does not only deepen our understanding of spiritual disciplines but also opens doors for interfaith dialogue and mutual respect. It shows that universal values can unite humanity, even when external practices differ.

Conclusion

All religions share a common foundation that is ethics which serves as the basis for spiritual growth and evolution. Without acceptance of ethical principles, it is impossible to make a near approach to God (Imaan & Auolakh, 2012)^[5, 21]. Niyama plays an important role in personal transformation and self-discipline. The Niyamas are ethical observances that refine an individual's inner world, fostering purity, mental clarity and devotion to the divine. These practices not only improve one's personal life but also contribute to psychological well-being and spiritual evolution. The principles of Niyama resonate with various religious traditions, particularly in their emphasis on self-restraint, devotion and inner purity. A striking example of this parallelism is observed in the practices of Ramadan where disciplines such as fasting, prayer and introspection align closely with the essence of Niyama. The first Niyama, Saucha (Cleanliness) emphasizes both external and internal purity. Fasting during Ramadan purifies the body and mind, encouraging self-discipline and awareness of one's action. Santosha (Contentment) teaches the acceptance of life as it is cultivating inner peace and gratitude. Fasting in Ramadan is not only an act of self-restraint but also a practice of contentment. Tapa (Austerity) is another essential Niyama that signifies endurance and perseverance in the face of hardships. The fasting observed during Ramadan embodies this principle as it requires patience, self-control and the ability to rise above physical desires for a higher spiritual purpose. Swadhyaya (Self study) encourages study of Holy Quran and following the spiritual practices which guiding believers toward self-awareness and divine wisdom. The practice of Ishwarapranidhana (Surrender to God) is fundamental during Ramadan. It teaches individual to submit their ego and will to the divine will, fostering humility and devotion. In Ramadan the act of fasting signifies the total surrender to God and developed the connection to God. Additionally Charity, Vrata, Japa and Hutam further strengthen the religious discipline. Charity is an essential practice during Ramadan which enhances the importance of generosity and compassion. Vrata during Ramadan is a commitment to fast for entire month with sincerity and dedication. Japa aligns with the recitation of Quran, prayer which reinforce mindfulness and remembrance of God. Hutam is embedded in fasting where individual abstain their basic desires to attain spiritual enlightenment. Thus the Yogic Niyamas are universal discipline that guide individual toward self-purification, ethical living for the attainment of spiritual fulfillment.

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