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AN INCORRECT READING

Writers, and so-called researchers, often do not consider this, that what they are writing does not at all fit into a Yoga context, or is patently absurd.

THE Hathayoga-pradipikā (1.15) reads:

अत्याहित: प्रयासिक्य स्वतंत्र नियमसः

जनसंस्कार लोहं च पहुँचियोऽतन्तरि

The verse speaks of six factors, on account of which one fails to attain Yoga. As the word niyama means discipline or restrictions and graha means the act of 'accepting, following up', 'undertaking', it become illogical to regard नियमसः (the following up of disciplines or restrictions) as one of the impediments to Yoga.

To avoid this difficulty some are inclined to take the word niyama in the sense of 'unsuitable discipline' (Adyar edition of the Hathayoga-pradipikā). To take niyama in this restricted sense requires strong grounds, which, according to us, are wanting here, though we occasionally find use of words in restricted senses.

A variant नियमसः: (i.e. agraḥa, not taking of the niyamas) is found in the Kaivalayadhamā edition (Lonavla) of the H. Y. Pradipikā. So far as the sense is concerned this reading creates no difficulty, for non-observance of disciplines is always regarded as one of the causes of तोगनासा (absence of success in Yoga practice). This reading is, however, not accepted by the comm. Jyotsnā. The translator of the Kaivalayadhamā edition of the H.Y.P. has rendered niyamāgraḥa as 'severe austerity', which is wrong. Even if we dissolve the word niyamāgraḥa into niyama and agraḥa (obstinate inclination) yet the word would be impotent to convey the sense of austerity.

A perusal of the Jyotsnā comm. on the word niyamāgraḥa leads me to think that the original reading must be accepted as नियमसः (i.e. the 2nd quarter is to be read as प्रजल्लो

अनियमसः:) meaning 'taking or following up the aniyamas i.e. acts that are not sanctioned.' It is evidently clear that the commentary reads graha. Now, if we read graha, we are compelled to read aniyama (and not niyama), for it is the aniyamas which are the causes for failure. One can easily observe that the examples given in the commentary, (namely morning bath with cold water, etc.) fall under aniyama for the author of the H.Y.P. himself asserts in 1.61 that morning bath, etc. are to be avoided (varjayet). It is needless to say that accepting an avoidable thing or act, is an example of aniyama.

I am of opinion that the original reading अनियमसः was changed to नियमसः in later times (and consequently the reading of the relevant passage of the comm. Jyotsnā was also changed as shown above). There is a strong ground for our assumption. We find a similar verse (on bhakti) in the Upadeśa-mālā of Rūpagovāmin (a direct disciple of Caitanyadeva, the wellknown Vaishnava teacher of Bengal), which reads as under:

अत्याहित: प्रयासिक्य स्वतंत्र नियमसः

जनसंस्कार लोहं च पहुँचियोऽतन्तरि

There may be other verses on similar topic bearing the expression नियमसः and it is quite likely that on account of the influence of these verses the original reading अनियमसः of the H. Y. Pradipikā was changed into नियमसः in later times. It also appears that some wrongly read the word as नियमसः: (and not नियमसः:) for the original verse contains the expression स्वतंत्र नियमसः: without considering the fact that the reading नियमसः: does not suit the context as shown above.

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