Hinduism's Code of Conduct
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How often do you see a professional team of people misbehaveon the job? You're on a flight from San Francisco to Singapore. Do thestewardesses bicker in the aisle? No way. In Singapore you visit a classypublishing firm. Does the receptionist talk back to the sale representative?No. Are there emotional undertones among the group you meet with? None.And you don't expect any. You know that people at this level of businesshave control of their minds and emotions. If they didn't, they would soonbe replaced. When they are on the job, at least, they follow a code ofconduct spelled out in detail by the corporation. It's not unlike the moralcode of any religion, outlining sound ethics for respect and harmony amonghumans. Those seeking to be successful in all avenues of life strive tofulfill a moral code whether "on the job" or off. Does Hinduism have sucha code? Yes: twenty ethical guidelines called yamas and niyamas,"restraints and observances." They are found in the 6,000 to 8,000-year-oldVedas, mankind's oldest body of scripture.

The twenty "do's" and "don'ts" are a common-sense coderecorded in the final section of the Vedas, called Upanishads, namelythe Shandilya and the Varuha. They are also found in theHatha Yoga Pradipika by Gorakshanatha, the Tirumantiram ofTirumular and in the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali. The yamasand niyamas have been preserved through the centuries as the foundation,the first and second stage, of the eight-staged practice of yoga. Yet,they are fundamental to all beings, expected aims of everyone in society,and assumed to be fully intact for anyone seeking life's highest aim inthe pursuit called yoga. Sage Patanjali (ca 200 bce), raja yoga's foremost propounder, told us, "These yamas are not limited by class,country, time (past, present or future) or situation. Hence they are calledthe universal great vows." Yogic scholar Swami Brahmananda Saraswati revealedthe inner science of yama and niyama. They are the means,he said, to control the vitarkas, the cruel mental waves or thoughts,that when acted upon result in injury to others, untruthfulness, hoarding,discontent, indolence or selfishness. He stated, "For each vitarkayou have, you can create its opposite through yama and niyama,and make your life successful." The following paragraphs, with accompanyingillustrations by A. Manivel of Chennai, (please see hard copy) especiallyprepared in July in honor of the Hindu Student's Council and all similaryouth movements, elucidate the yamas and niyamas. Presentedfirst are the ten yamas, the do not's, which harness the instinctivenature, with its governing impulses of fear, anger, jealousy,

selfishness,greed and lust. Second are illustrated the ten niyamas, the do's,the religious observances that cultivate and bring forth the refined soulqualities, lifting awareness into the consciousness of the higher chakrasof love, compassion, selflessness, intelligence and bliss.

THE 10 VEDIC RESTRAINTS, YAMA

YAMA 1
Noninjury, Ahimsa
Practice noninjury, not harming others by thought, wordor deed, even in your dreams. Live a kindly life, revering all beings asexpressions of the One Divine energy. Let go of fear and insecurity, thesources of abuse. Knowing that harm caused to others unfailingly returnsto oneself, live peacefully with God's creation. Never be a source of dread,pain or injury. Follow a vegetarian diet.

YAMA 2
Truthfulness, Satya
Adhere to truthfulness, refraining from lying and betrayingpromises. Speak only that which is true, kind, helpful and necessary. Knowingthat deception creates distance, don't keep secrets from family or lovedones. Be fair, accurate and frank in discussions, a stranger to deceit.Admit your failings. Do not engage in slander, gossip or backbiting. Donot bear false witness against another.

YAMA 3
Nonstealing, Asteya
Uphold the virtue of nonstealing, neither thieving, covetingnor failing to repay debt. Control your desires and live within your means.Do not use borrowed resources for unintended purposes or keep them pastdue. Do not gamble or defraud others. Do not renege on promises. Do notuse others' name, words, resources or rights without permission and acknowledgement.

YAMA 4
Divine Conduct, Brahmacharya
Practice divine conduct, controlling lust by remainingcelibate when single and faithful in marriage. Before marriage, use vitalenergies in study, and after marriage in creating family success. Don'twaste the sacred force by promiscuity in thought,

word or deed. Be restrainedwith the opposite sex. Seek holy company. Dress and speak modestly. Shunpornography, sexual humor and violence.

YAMA 5
Patience, Kshama
Exercise patience, restraining intolerance with peopleand impatience with circumstances. Be agreeable. Let others behave accordingto their nature, without adjusting to you. Don't argue, dominate conversationsor interrupt others. Don't be in a hurry. Be patient with children andthe elderly. Minimize stress by keeping worries at bay. Remain poised ingood times and bad.

YAMA 6
Steadfastness, Dhriti
Foster steadfastness, overcoming nonperseverance, fear,indecision and changeableness. Achieve your goals with a prayer, purpose,plan, persistence and push. Be firm in your decisions. Avoid sloth andprocrastination. Develop willpower, courage and industriousness. Overcomeobstacles. Never carp or complain. Do not let opposition or fear of failureresult in changing strategies.

YAMA 7
Compassion, Daya
Practice compassion, conquering callous, cruel and insensitivefeelings toward all beings. See God everywhere. Be kind to people, animals,plants and the Earth itself. Forgive those who apologize and show trueremorse. Foster sympathy for others' needs and suffering. Honor and assistthose who are weak, impoverished, aged or in pain. Oppose family abuseand other cruelties.

YAMA 8
Honesty, Arjava
Maintain honesty, renouncing deception and wrongdoing.Act honorably even in hard times. Obey the laws of your nation and locale.Pay your taxes. Be straightforward in business. Do an honest day's work.Do not bribe or accept bribes. Do not cheat, deceive or circumvent to achievean end. Be frank with yourself. Face and accept your faults without blamingthem on others.

YAMA 9

Moderate Appetite, Mitahara
Be moderate in appetite, neither eating too much norconsuming meat, fish, shellfish, fowl or eggs. Enjoy fresh, wholesome vegetarianfoods that vitalize the body. Avoid junk food. Drink in moderation. Eatat regular times, only when hungry, at a moderate pace, never between meals,in a disturbed atmosphere or when upset. Follow a simple diet, avoidingrich or fancy fare.

YAMA 10
Purity, Saucha
Uphold the ethic of purity, avoiding impurity in mind,body and speech. Maintain a clean, healthy body. Keep a pure, unclutteredhome and workplace. Act virtuously. Keep good company, never mixing withadulterers, thieves or other impure people. Keep away from pornographyand violence. Never use harsh, angered or indecent language. Worship devoutly.Meditate daily.

Allow yourself the expression of remorse, being modestand showing shame for misdeeds. Recognize your errors, confess and makeamends. Sincerely apologize to those hurt by your words or deeds. Resolveall contention before sleep. Seek out and correct your faults and bad habits.Welcome correction as a means to bettering yourself. Do not boast. Shunpride and pretension.

THE 10 VEDIC OBSERVANCES, NIYAMA

NIYAMA 1
Remorse, Hri
Allow yourself the expression of remorse, being modestand showing shame for misdeeds. Recognize your errors, confess and makeamends. Sincerely apologize to those hurt by your words or deeds. Resolveall contention before sleep. Seek out and correct your faults and bad habits.Welcome correction as a means to bettering yourself. Do not boast. Shunpride and pretension.

NIYAMA 2
Contentment, Santosha
Nurture contentment, seeking joy and serenity in life.Be happy, smile and uplift others. Live in constant gratitude for yourhealth, your friends and your belongings, Don't complain about what youdon't possess. Identify with the eternal You, rather

than mind, body oremotions. Keep the mountaintop view that life is an opportunity for spiritualprogress. Live in the eternal now.

NIYAMA 3
Giving, Dana
Be generous to a fault, giving liberally without thoughtof reward. Tithe, offering one-tenth of your gross income (dashamamsha),as God's money, to temples, ashrams and spiritual organizations. Approachthe temple with offerings. Visit guru with gifts in hand. Donatereligious literature. Feed and give to those in need. Bestow your timeand talents without seeking praise. Treat guests as God.

NIYAMA 4
Faith, Astikya
Cultivate an unshakable faith. Believe firmly in God,Gods, guru and your path to enlightenment. Trust in the words ofthe masters, the scriptures and traditions. Practice devotion and sadhanato inspire experiences that build advanced faith. Be loyal to your lineage,one with your satguru. Shun those who try to break your faith byargument and accusation. Avoid doubt and despair.

NIYAMA 5
Worship, Ishvarapujana
Cultivate devotion through daily worship and meditation.Set aside one room of your home as God's shrine. Offer fruit, flowers orfood daily. Learn a simple puja and the chants. Meditate after each puja.Visit your shrine before and after leaving the house. Worship in heartfeltdevotion, clearing the inner channels to God, Gods and guru so theirgrace flows toward you and loved ones.

NIYAMA 6
Scriptural Listening, Siddhanta Shravana
Eagerly hear the scriptures, study the teachings andlisten to the wise of your lineage. Choose a guru, follow his path anddon't waste time exploring other ways. Read, study and, above all, listento readings and dissertations by which wisdom flows from knower to seeker.Avoid secondary texts that preach violence. Revere and study the revealedscriptures, the Vedas and Agamas.

NIYAMA 7

Cognition, Mati
Develop a spiritual will and intellect with your satguru'sguidance. Strive for knowledge of God, to awaken the light within. Discoverthe hidden lesson in each experience to develop a profound understandingof life and yourself. Through meditation, cultivate intuition by listeningto the still, small voice within, by understanding the subtle sciences,inner worlds and mystical texts.

NIYAMA 8
Sacred Vows, Vrata
Embrace religious vows, rules and observances and neverwaver in fulfilling them. Honor vows as spiritual contracts with your soul,your community, with God, Gods and guru. Take vows to harness theinstinctive nature. Fast periodically. Pilgrimage yearly. Uphold your vowsstrictly, be they marriage, monasticism, nonaddiction, tithing, loyaltyto a lineage, vegetarianism or nonsmoking.

NIYAMA 9
Recitation, Japa
Chant your holy mantra daily, reciting the sacredsound, word or phrase given by your guru. Bathe first, quiet the mind andconcentrate fully to let japa harmonize, purify and uplift you. Heed yourinstructions and chant the prescribed repetitions without fail. Live freeof anger so that japa strengthens your higher nature. Let japa quell emotions and quiet the rivers of thought.

NIYAMA 10
Austerity, Tapas
Practice austerity, serious disciplines, penance andsacrifice. Be ardent in worship, meditation and pilgrimage. Atone for misdeedsthrough penance (prayashchitta), such as 108 prostrations or fasting.Perform self-denial, giving up cherished possessions, money or time. Fulfillsevere austerities at special times, under a satguru's guidance,to ignite the inner fires of self-transformation.