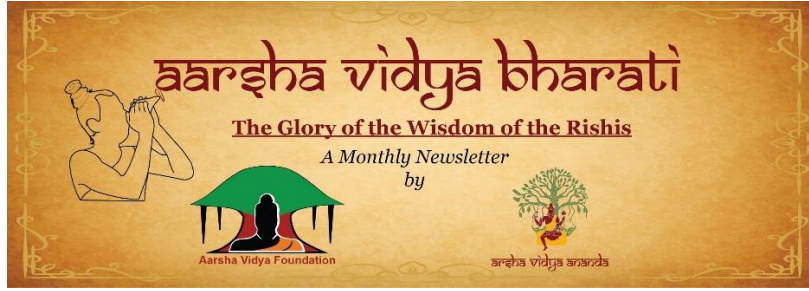


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# Aarsha Vidya Bharati - May 2022

Vaisakha - Jyeshtha 2079

A monthly newsletter that will bring you more happiness, more wisdom and more freedom



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## Value of Values

Ātmavinigrahaḥ (9/20)

By Nirmala Iyer, London

*Ātmavinigrahaḥ* is the 9th value enumerated by *Bhagavān* among the twenty values from the 13th chapter of the Bhagavad Gita. *Ātmavinigrahaḥ* means mastery over the mind. In this context, *ātma* refers to the mind, *antaḥ-karaṇa*. *Vinigrahaḥ* means 'well-restraining' or 'mastery' on all levels. Managing oneself through our body-mind-senses and correcting our patterns of thinking is called *Ātmavinigrahaḥ*.



Generally our ways of thinking are impulsive and mechanical. This value moves us into a deliberate way of thinking. Spontaneous thinking is what one aims to achieve for complete mastery. This manifests in one who has self-knowledge.

This value talks about bringing in more *sattva* into oneself – clarity of thought, transparency, tranquility & purity by bringing it into all our interactions with the world at both a physical (*dama*) & mental (*śama*) level. Controlling our thoughts is not possible, however, recognizing the thoughts as a psychological order of *Bhagavān*, is self-mastery. I can start using the mind as I wish it to be used.

Sometimes, we observe that our emotions take over our understanding capability. Eg. sadness, anger, restlessness, etc. These emotions are not bad, as even great personalities had them. What this value teaches us is to process our emotions in a proper manner and help the mind go inward and be focused (*samādhānam*). I don't let these emotions take charge of me. Eg. Do I blame myself when I fall sick? Similarly, I don't blame myself for being emotional. We don't get rid of these emotions. Instead this value teaches us to accept those emotions for what they are in that situation and not resist them. We then learn to develop more space in that acceptance.

*Ātmavinigrahaḥ* has also been stated in 17.16 of the Bhagavad Gita. Disciplining the mind, i.e. '*mānasaṃ tapaḥ*' or mental austerity. Directing the thoughts to focus on thoughts related to Dharma and not co-operating with unhealthy thoughts.



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*Ātmavinigrahaḥ* means I become the master and wielder of the mind, living my life to the fullest without pain of the past, or worry for the future and managing all those ways of thinking that bring me down like mala (impurities), *vikṣepaḥ* (distractions) & *āvaraṇa* (not knowing).

Personally for me, practicing the limbs of *Aṣṭāṅga* Yoga of Maharishi Patanjali (laid out in the Yoga Sūtra-s) played a great role in applying this value. With *āsana*, I developed body awareness. With *prāṇāyāma*, I learnt to accept the thoughts as they are, by handling it better. With *pratyāhāra*, I learnt to discipline my senses. Eg. Eating only when the body is hungry. With *dhāraṇa* and *dhyāna*, I learnt to be alert and relaxed. Eg. *japa* &  *jyoti trātaka* (candle gaze).

***Swami Chinmayananda Ji used to say that the student must be so absorbed in the class that even if the ceiling comes down, the student should not know what is happening. :)***

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