

Statement of Ideals



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As Yoga teachers and practitioners of Yoga we aspire to base our life upon the ethical principles of *yama* and *niyama* as set forth in the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali.

Yamas	restraints, moral obligations
Ahimsa	non-harming, non-violence
Satya	truthfulness
Asteya	non-stealing
Brahmacharya	continence
Aparigaha	freedom from avarice
Niyamas	disciplines, practices
Sauca	cleanliness, purity
Santosha	contentment
Tapas	fervour, self-discipline
Svadhyaya	study of the self, study of the sacred texts
Ishvara Pranidhana	surrender of the self to the Divine

The Yogic Disciplines

The yogic disciplines are *yama* (restraint) and *niyama* (practice or observances). These disciplines channel the energies of the organs of action and the senses of perception in the right direction.

Asana (posture) results in balance, stillness of mind and power to penetrate the intelligence. Through *asana* we learn to know the body well and to distinguish between motion and action: motion excites the mind while action absorbs it.

Pranayama (control of energy through restraint of breath) and *pratyahara* (withdrawal of the senses) help the *sadhaka* to explore his hidden facets and enable him to penetrate the core of his being.



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Dharana (concentration), dhyana (meditation) and samadhi (total absorption) are the fulfillment of yogic discipline, the essence or natural constituents of yoga. They develop when the other five disciplines have been mastered. Actually, all eight intermingle and interweave to form the whole seamless body of yoga.

(BKS Iyengar, Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali)

Yama and Niyama

The first of the eight limbs of yoga is yama (ethical disciplines or restraints) the great commandments transcending creed, country, age and time. They are:

- Ahimsa (non-violence)
- Satya (truthfulness)
- Asteya (non-stealing)
- Brahmacharya (continence)
- Aparigraha (non-coveting)

Intending no harm in word, thought or deed; being sincere, honest and faithful; being careful not to misappropriate another's wealth; being chaste and not coveting the possessions of others or accepting gifts, are the practice of yama. It is essential they be observed and followed. They are to be practised individually and collectively irrespective of lineage, place, time, condition or career. The Yamas are mighty universal vows, says Patanjali.

(BKS Iyengar, Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali)

If the sadhaka adheres to the principles of ahimsa, all being around him abandon their hostile behaviour. By observance of satya spoken words fructify into action. All kinds of treasures are bestowed on him who observes asteya. For brahmachari (a chaste or celibate person), vigour, vitality, energy and spiritual knowledge flow like a river. One who observes aparigraha will come to know of his past and future lives.

(BKS Iyengar, Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali)



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The second limb is niyama (observance or self-purification by discipline). Niyama are the rules of conduct that apply to individual discipline, while yama are universal in their action. (BKS Iyengar, *Light on the Yoga*). The five niyamas are to be followed not merely as individual, but also as spiritual disciplines.

(BKS Iyengar, Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali).

They are:

- Sauca (purity)
- Santosa (contentment)
- Tapas (ardour)
- Svadhyaya (study of the self)
- Isvara pranidhana (surrender of the self to god)

Actually, the observance of yama brings about niyama, and the practice of niyama disciplines one to follow the principles of yama. For example, non-violence brings purity of thought and deed, truthfulness lead to contentment, non-covetousness leads to tapas. Chastity leads to the study of self, and non-possessiveness to surrender to God. Similarly, cleanliness leads toward non-violence, and contentment towards truthfulness.

Tapas guides one not to misappropriate another's wealth. Study of the self leads towards chastity and surrender to God frees one from possessiveness.

(BKS Iyengar, Light on the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali)

Actions mirror a man's personality better than his words. The yogi has learnt the art of dedicating all his actions to the Lord and so they reflect the divinity within him.

(BKS Iyengar, Light on the Yoga)

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