

First two limbs of yoga, differing interpretations of the yama and niyama, and their importance as underlying foundations for yoga practice.

Compilation of interpretations of principles of Yama and Niyama by three renown authors: George Feuerstein, Edwin F. Bryant, and Dr. Jonn Mumford.

	The Yoga Sutras of Paatanjali [3]	The Yoga Tradition [1]	The Chakra and Kundalini [4]
<i>Yama</i>	<i>How Yogi interacts with others</i>	<i>The norms of moral discipline (yama) are intended to check the powerful survival instinct and rechannel it to serve a higher purpose, regulating the social interactions of yogins.</i>	<i>When Yamas and Niyamas are taken to be a set of rules for moral behaviour, we are faced with a profound problem.</i>
Ahimsa	Has been defined by Vyasa as not harming any creature anywhere at any time. Nonviolence also encompasses giving up the spirit of malice and hatred, since these produce the tendencies to injure others. This includes avoiding violence in the form of harsh words or causing fear in others.	The word Ahimsa is frequently translated an “nonkilling”, but this fails to convey the term’s full meaning. Ahimsa, in fact, is nonviolence in thought and action. It is the root of all the other moral norms.	What nonviolence means, what Ahimsa means, is an attitude of mind – not a set of actions. One who esoterically practices Ahimsa tries not to permit violence against the higher consciousness or to kill it by the misuse and abuse of the emotional faculties.
Satya	Vyasa defines truth, as one’s words and thoughts being in exact correspondence to fact, that is, to whatever is known through the three processes of knowledge accepted by the Yoga school (sense perception, influence, and verbal testimony).	Truthfulness, or Satya, is often exalted in the ethical and yogic literature. When grounded in truthfulness (satya), action [and its] fruition depend [on his will].	Inner spiritual truth has to do with the most difficult thing that any of us can come to – that is the truth to the self, acknowledging the flows, looking within and seeing what is there, facing it without fear, and going within, even if it tears one apart.

	However, truth must not cause harm to others. Truth must never result in violence.		
Asteya	Not taking things belonging to others and not even harbouring the desire to do so.	When grounded in nonstealing (asteya), all [kinds of] treasures appear [before him]. Nonstealing, or asteya, is closely related to non-harming, since the unauthorised appropriation of things of value violates the person from whom they are stolen.	Each of us must earn what we possess, that if we take something that we have not earned then we are breaking Asteya, or the rule of non-stealing. However, Asteya goes much deeper than that. Stealing that takes place in our life is stealing of time.
Brahmacharya	Vyasa defines celibacy as control of sexual organs. Ultimate self-realisation cannot be attained if one is sexually active.	Chastity, or Brahmacharya (lit. "brahmic conduct"), is of central importance in most spiritual traditions of the world, though it is differently interpreted. In Classical Yoga it is defined in ascetical as the abstention from sexual activity, whether in deed, thought, or words.	In the Upanishads it is clearly indicated that the sexual potential lying within each human is communion, a divine force. Brahma means God, charya means action. And the word itself means "God-action" or "Divine action". What it says is that the celibacy of sex is not in the act, but in the attitude that is held in consciousness.
Aparigraha	Viyasa defines renunciation of possessions as the ability to see the problems caused by the acquisition, preservation, and destruction of things, since these only provoke attachment and injury.	Greedlessness, or Aparigraha, is defined as the nonacceptance of gifts, because they tend to generate attachment and fear of loss.	This Yama has nothing to do with the acquisition of goods. What it has to do with is the attitude or the attachment to these goods. It is not a question of possessing goods – rather, do the goods possess us?
Niyama	<i>Yogi's own personal discipline and practice.</i>	<i>The constituent elements of self restraint (niyamas) are concerned with the inner life of yogins.</i>	<i>Niyamas represent the positive element in the sense of things to be done, acts to be worked at, concrete realities.</i>

Saucha	Vyasa divides saucha into external and internal. External cleanliness pertains to the body and internal to ingesting pure foodstuff. In terms of ingestion, Hariharananda reiterates that meat and intoxication cause the mind to be agitated and stimulated. Therefore, yogi never imbibes such substances.	Through purity [he gains] distance (jugupsa) from his own limbs, [and he also acquires the desire for] noncontamination by others. [Furthermore,] purity of the sattva [constituent of his being], gladness, one-pointedness, mastery of the sense organs, and the capability for Self-vision (atma-darshana) [are achieved].	Saucha does not mean the mind: it refers to the body. It means purity of the body in a physiological sense. The practice of Hatha Yoga – the internal cleansing, the internal massage of the posture.
Santosa	Santos manifests as disinterest in accumulating more than one's immediate needs of life. True happiness comes from contentment with whatever one has, not with thinking that one will be happy when one gets all that one desire.	Contentment, or Santosa, is a virtue prized by sages around the world. Contentment is thus a virtue that is diametrically opposed to our modern consumer mentality, which is driven by the need to acquire ever more to fill the inner vacuum.	Practice of living in present time.
Tapas	Tapas described as the ability to tolerate hunger and thirst as well as all the dualities of life (hot, cold etc.), to avoid useless talk, and to perform fasts. Hariharananda says that yoga requires one to tolerate sufferings of the body, endure hardships, and remain undisturbed by the lack of physical comfort.	The word "tapas" means "glow" or "heat" and refers to great psychosomatic energy produced through asceticism, which is often experienced as heat. Yogins use this energy to heat the cauldron of their body-mind until it yields the elixir of high awareness.	Tapas roughly translates as "indifference". Tapas is the practice to indifference to discomfort when no useful purpose is served by taking notice of that discomfort.

Svadyaya	Reading sacred scriptures. Hariharananda expands this to include devotional mantras.	The purpose of Svadyaya is not intellectual learning; it is absorption into ancient wisdom.	This self-study means that the act of living is a continuous process of learning. Stop learning, and you begin to die in a very special way. Psychologists know that at least fifty percent of senility is psychological – loss of interest in life, loss of willingness to learn by life's experience. In this context, Yoga is the form of re-education.
Isvarapranidhana	Offering all one's activities to Isvara, the original teacher. Such offerings must be done without desire for the fruit.	Devotion to the Lord is the heart opening to the transcendental Being who for the unenlightened individual is an objective reality and force, but who upon enlightenment is found to coincide with the yogin's transcendental Self.	For Yoga to survive in an intelligent way for thoughtful people in the West, a new recasting must come about. Ancient Indian civilisation left us a heritage in the classical scriptures which are short, succinct statements for the minds of future ages to expand, expound, and enlarge upon.

Bibliography

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