

Importance of Yama And Niyama In Building A Good Society

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to explore the lived experience of yoga practitioners, and their search for the true self. *Yamas and Niyamas* are the social and personal conduct observances in Yoga Sutras of “Patanjali”. The study imports the concept of “Ashtanga Yoga” from the eastern philosophy of Yoga. Good people for a good society are as necessary as healthy cells are essentials for healthy body. A good society in which all people get freedom, justice, equality and opportunity to achieve their goal but at the same time people should realize their responsibility. People should have love, and a sense of respect, good understanding, tolerance, compassion and friendship then only a good society is built. The first two limb of “Astanga Yoga” is “Yama and Niyama” teaches us non- violence, truthfulness, none stealing, sense control, non greed, purity, contentment, austerity, self study and surrender to God. All Yama and Niyama contribute a lot to make a good society.

KEYWORDS: Yama, Niyama, Society, Yoga, Social Discipline, Self Discipline etc

INTRODUCTION

The Precious Gift of Maharishi Patanjali Yoga Sutras

Taking materials about yoga philosophy from ancient traditions, Maharishi Patanjali, sage scientist and propounder of yoga, wrote 196 sutras (aphorisms) on yoga around 400 CE, popularly known as Patanjali's Yoga

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Sutra. In just 196 short sentences, Maharishi Patanjali maps out a complete system of yoga. Each sutra requires the reader to think deeply for themselves and develop a personal understanding of the practice. What an amazing way to transmit spiritual knowledge.

The *Yoga Sutras* are best known for its reference to [ashtanga](#), eight elements of practice culminating in [samadhi](#), concentration of the [mind](#) on an object of meditation, namely [yama](#) (abstinences), [niyama](#) (observances), [asana](#) (yoga postures), [pranayama](#) (breath control), [pratyahara](#) (withdrawal of the senses), [dharana](#) (concentration of the [mind](#)), [dhyana](#) (meditation) and [samadhi](#) (absorption). However, its main aim is [kaivalya](#), discernment of [purusha](#), the witness-conscious, as separate from [prakriti](#), the cognitive apparatus, and disentanglement of *purusha* from *prakriti's* muddled defilements.

According to “Patanjal Yoga Sutra” 'Eight Limbs of Yoga':

- **Yama** (moral discipline)
- **Niyama** (observances)
- **Asana** (physical postures)
- **Pranayama** (breathing techniques)
- **Pratyahara** (sense withdrawal)
- **Dharana** (concentration)
- **Dhyana** (absorption or meditation)
- **Samadhi** (enlightenment or bliss)

This paper shows how the limbs of Yoga, Yama (Social Discipline) and Niyama (Individual Discipline) are helpful in building a good society. Yoga is the spiritual science for integrated and holistic development of our physical, mental, social and moral spiritual aspect of being. Thus Yoga gifts us the practice to be pro-active without aggression. Yoga is a technique for a self mastery overcoming anger, pride, jealousy and hatred. When Yama and Niyama properly practiced it offers help and insight in to our relationship including our responsibility and role in them. Healthy relationship is built by respecting others and giving proper attention to the people around us. Yama and Niyama boost compassion, gratitude and happiness.

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MEANING OF YAMA AND NIYAMA

The Yama and Niyama are yoga's ethical guidelines. Yama and Niyama are the first two limbs of Patanjali's Astanga Yoga (Eightfold Path). The Yamas are social discipline (the things which we have to follow in the society) and Niyama is individual discipline. Yama and Niyama are the first two limbs of yoga, the five Yama and Niyama are the foundation of spiritual life on which the super-structure of Samadhi is built. It is about development of positive traits that will transform human negative nature to positive nature.

Yama (Social Discipline) - Ahimsa, Satya, Asteya, Brahmacharya, Aparigraha

➤ **AHIMSA** - Non-violence

The word ahimsa means to injure or show cruelty to any creature or any person in any way whatsoever. Ahimsa not only means non-violence in other words, kindness, friendliness and thoughtful consideration of other people and things.

Harsh words to the baggers, servants or inferior is himsa (cruelty) even if you think negative thing in your mind for others is also himsa.

➤ **SATYA** – Truthfulness

Satya means truthfulness yet it is not always positive to speak the truth on all occasions, for it could harm someone unnecessarily. If speaking the truth has negative consequences for another person then it is better to say nothing. Truthfulness also means honestly examine ourselves and criticize others, we will find our faults and correct them.

➤ **ASTEYA** – Non-Stealing

Asteya means non-stealing to take nothing that does not belong to us. What is stealing when you remove a thing secretly without the knowledge of the owner and you do not want others to know this act, this is stealing. Taking blotting paper, pin, paper, pencil etc from the office or taking hand towels, shampoo, body lotion from the hotels is stealing. A Yoga student must be free from all these forms of theft.

➤ **BRAHMACHARYA** – Sense Control

Brahmacharya is used mostly in the sense of abstinence, particularly in

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relationship to sexual activity. We must understand Brahmacharya in the wider sense of a life of discipline in every respect, which is conducive to the spiritual progress, leads to the gain of vigour, energy and virility. A discipline life itself means keeping everything in its proper and optimal limit.

- **APARIGRAHA** - Neutralizing the desire to acquire and hoard wealth.

This is the opposite of parigraha. Parigraha is covetousness or greed. Aparigraha is mental state in which sensual craving is dead, parigraha leads to anxiety to preserve, fear of loss, hatred, anger, untruthfulness stealing, delusion, pride etc. Aparigraha means to take only what is necessary. We should only take what we have earned. The Yogi feels that the collection or hoarding of things creates problems in their yogi practice.

NIYAMA (Self Discipline) - Shaucha, Santosha , Tapas, Swadhyaya, IshwarPranidhana

- **SHAUCHA** - means purity both internal and external.

External purity generates internal purity. For example – netikriya and dhoutikriya cleans your body and makes person healthy and we know that a healthy mind is always in a healthy body. Internal purity means removal of lust, anger, greed, jealousy etc. internal purity very important than external purity.

- **SANTOSHA** – Contentment

The cause of unhappiness and mental pain is always unfulfillment of some desire and there is no end of desire. Contentment cuts at the roots of all desires. It bestows peace, one wontedness of mind, serenity and satisfaction. A Contented person is happy in whatever condition he is placed he does not have any desire for any thing

- **TAPAS** – Austerity

It is the capacity to face all difficulty in the performance of righteousness. It implies that one should have strength and fortitude to remain unaffected by opposite of life. Tapas also mean a balanced mind in all condition of life, to bear insult, injury and persecutions to ever serene, contented and peacefully, to be cheerful in adverse condition, to have presence of mind and forename are forms of tapas.

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➤ SWADHYAYA – Study of good literature

Swadhyaya means study scriptures. In general, study of all good literature which guides a person toward moral values, good conduct and righteousness. Swadhyaya also means self study, is not just study of religious book but also study of the self or self analyses which leads to progress moral and spiritual life.

➤ ISHWARPRANIDHANA – surrender to god

IshwarPranidhana means surrender to god in other words total dedication of all thoughts and action to supreme. It includes true and sincere worship of god and complete dedication to him with full faith, love and devotion. The person who surrenders to god, his ego is gone.

YAMAS AND NIYAMAS

What do we do when we find we are going in the wrong direction in our actions, speech, or thoughts?

We may intend to be going

In this direction.



but sometimes we may be

Going in this direction.



YAMAS

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|------------------------|
| ❖ Ahimsa /Non-Harming | ↔ | Harming / Hurting |
| ❖ Satya / Truthfulness | ↔ | Lying /Misrepresenting |
| ❖ Asteya /Non-stealing | ↔ | Stealing /Taking |
| ❖ Brahmacharya /Remem bering | ↔ | Forgetting / Dropping |
| ❖ Aparigraha /Non –possessiveness | ↔ | Immoderate /Excessive |

NIYAMAS

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| ❖ Saucha/Purity | ↔ | Impurity /Unclean |
| ❖ Santosha /Contentment | ↔ | Discontent /Anxiousness |
| ❖ Tapas /Sense Training | ↔ | Unrestrained /Excessive |
| ❖ Savdhyaya /Self Study | ↔ | Ignoring /Binding |
| ❖ IshvaraPranidhana/Surrender | ↔ | Clinging /Holding |



YOU CAN TRANSFORM YOUR LIFE

Rather than thinking of the yamas and niyamas as a mandatory "to-do list," view them as invitations to act in ways that promote inner and outer peace and bliss. "They create harmony within you, and in relationship to your environment and to others. Where there is harmony, consciousness can expand. You get there through practice, contemplation, meditation, and working to transform yourself. Yoga teachers and philosophers to share their interpretations of the yamas and niyamas to help you make them a part of your path.

BENEFITS OF YAMA AND NIYAMAS

Sleepiness Disengagement Physical Relaxation Mental Quiet Mental Relaxation Strength and Awareness Joy Love and Thankfulness Prayerfulness Optimism Acceptance Honesty Taking it Easy Love Inner Wisdom God Deeper Perspective, to develop patriotism.

OBJECTIVES

- A study of Yama and Niyamas , its health benefits, and the search for the true self.
- This study offers insights into the lives of Ashtanga practitioners.

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- The study of positive impact on health benefits and emotions.
- The participant's yoga practice brings them closer to their true self and to God.
- To study Yama and Niyams for yoga's ethical guidelines.
- To study the purifications and disciplines known as the *yamas* and *niyamas*.

PRINCIPLES OF YAMA AND NIYAMAS

- Always be faithful to your duties, thereby contributing to the company and the overall good of the country
- Always strive to build a home-like atmosphere at work that is warm and friendly
- Always be practical and avoid frivolousness
- Always stay ahead of the times through research and creativity
- Always have respect for the presence of a higher spiritual being and be grateful at all times (be reverent and conduct your life in thankfulness and gratitude).

CONCLUSION

The first two limbs of Astanga yoga yama and niyama are very helpful in building a good society. The five yamas teaches people non violence, speaking truth, not to steal, honesty, live a disciplined life and do not accumulate unnecessary goods. Five niyamas teaches mental purity, contentment, self study, Austerity and surrender to god. When all these qualities come inside in every person, then a good society is definitely built. Hence, we should try to follow Yam and Niyam accordingly. If we try to follow the principle of ahimsa as meant in the texts, it may not be possible for us, to stay in this world. Hence, Yam and Niyam should be followed remembering the customs of this world and to the extent possible for us. But, to follow them, we should at least have an idea of the ideal state of Yam and Niyam. We can free negative affect or emotions, such as hate, greed, anger, as not being components of the true self. All of practitioner believes that yoga them connect to their true self.



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