

## **The Ethics and Morals of Yoga**

by Dharma Mittra

From New York Yoga Magazine – June 2008

*"The Universal principles of Spiritual disciplines elevate the seeker into God communion for all eternity. The true purpose of Yoga is the path of purification of character and conduct thru the cleansing of one's physical and mental nature, wherein the highest state of reality and truth may shine undiminished in the hearts and minds of all participants".*

*Dharma Mittra*

All progress in Yoga practices depend on exemplary personal character, and one's relation to people, animals and the world around them. Intellectual ability, or genius are not required, but confusion, disinterest, neglect, and laziness is adverse to an aspirant. Discrimination is the most important element needed on the journey of the inner path to the self that is Yoga. The prescribed steps for the learning curve of right behavior are authoritatively systematized in the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, written around 300 BC.

The eight limbs or tools are the of a Yoga practice.

They are:

1. *Yama – Abstention*
2. *Niyama – Observance*
3. *Asana – Posture*
4. *Pranayama - Breath-Control*
5. *Pratyahara – Sense Control*
6. *Dharana – Concentration*
7. *Dhyana – Meditation*
8. *Samadhi - Contemplation*

The first two limbs are the main ones, which bring the aspirants to an understanding of the ethics and morals of Yoga.

### *The Yamas*

1. *Non- Injury*
2. *Truthfulness*
3. *Non-Theft*
4. *Spiritual Conduct*
5. *Non-Greed*

### *The Niyamas*

1. *Cleanliness*
2. *Contentment*
3. *Austerity*
4. *Self-Study*
5. *Attentiveness to God*

Yama and Niyama, the ethical disciplines, and moral backbones, serve as the aspirants, guidelines for right conduct in life. Ahimsa, which non-violence in thought, word and action, is the foundation of all the other moral precepts because harming is the source of all suffering. The practice of Universal love is the highest practice for success in Yoga, and the ideals of which the yogi ceaselessly strives. Yoga is rooted in virtue and there is no higher virtue than the abandoning of cruelty and harming. The Yogi must respect all life. The greatest need in this ephemeral material realm is the message of love. Kindle the light of love in your own heart first. Love all. Include all creatures in the warm embrace of your love. You will soon be rooted in true Ahimsa. Have a firm and unshakable faith in the existence of the Absolute One Supreme who exists and supports all three period of time—past, present and future. The Universal One with no beginning, middle or end. Desire is the true enemy of peace, for desires can never be fully satisfied. Strive for true, abiding happiness that can only be obtained by realizing God alone through constant practice, self control, purity, concentration, meditation and above all—observance and practice of Yama and Niyama.

*"See everyone as your friend and family, love all creatures including our inferior brothers "*  
D. Mittra

Many these days equate Yoga with the practice of asanas, postures and breathings. This is not sufficient for spiritual progress. The spiritual purpose of life is to lead the individual soul to the ecstatic communion with the Beloved Divine. A firm belief that we are all part and parcel of the divine creator or God will gradually come. Concentration will lead to meditation, which will lead to Divine Perception when the heart of the aspirant is pure and noble. Foundation in Yama and Niyama is what is needed for this. Transcending all religions and sectarian ideas, the scientific and spiritual precepts of Yoga unite people in all parts of the world, without disturbing their faith or practice of any sectarian religion. There is one Universal Being, adored and worshiped in church, synagogue, temple and mosque alike. This Universal Spirit is the goal of Yama and Niyama and the purpose of Yoga. A sincere spiritual seeker must meditate to realize the Ultimate Reality, their true spiritual nature. Meditation on this Universal Spirit lifts one beyond the planes of mind, intellect and ego to the plane of Super-consciousness, liberating the practitioner from the bondage of illusion and mortal afflictions in this ephemeral earthly plane. The true purpose of Yoga is the purification of character and conduct, the cleansing of one's physical and mental nature, wherein the highest state of reality and truth may shine undiminished in the heart and mind. God Bless You. Om Shanti Om