

The Niyam

"The illuminated Yogi regards a realized, selfless Brahmin, a cow, an elephant, a dog, and even an outcaste who eats the flesh of dogs as the same. Those who in this way keep an equal mind gain liberation while still living, for the Supreme Self is free from sin and equal-minded; therefore they rest in their true nature. The man who knows God, who is not deluded, and whose mind is fixed on Him alone does not rejoice at obtaining what is pleasant or grieve when passing through that which is unpleasant. He whose heart is not attached to sense objects finds pleasure within himself and, through devotion, united with the Supreme Self, enjoys undying bliss."

PARAPHRASE FROM THE BHAGAVAD-GITA, CHAPTER 5

Om

By Yogi Sri Dharma Mittra

• May the Supreme Lord protect and guide us as we seek to better understand and live according to Yama and Niyama, and may we move ever closer to achieving the great goal of all life: Self-Realization! Classical Hatha-Raja Yoga is conceived of as having eight parts to it; the eight limbs, as revealed in Patanjali's Yoga-Sutras. All eight are rooted in the ethical rules (*Yama*) and observances (*Niyama*), which are the true foundation of all practice. In turn, Yama and Niyama all begins with the very first of the ethical rules, which is Ahimsa or non-violence. From Ahimsa comes every other aspect of Yoga. Indeed, without Ahimsa, there is no Yoga. Two aspects of the second limb (Niyama) of Yoga are Saucha and Santosha. Saucha is most often translated as "purity", while Santosha is often rendered "contentment" in English. Once the Yogi is established in non-violence in thought, word and deed, every other Yama and Niyama will be easy for him or her to understand and put into

as: Saucha and Santosha



practice. The other six limbs of Hatha-Raja Yoga will ultimately be realized, as well.

Saucha is purity on the level of the physical, the subtle and one's immediate external environment. On the level of the physical, the techniques of Yoga give us a rich menu of options from which to choose. The body's exterior can be cleansed through a variety of means familiar and regularly employed by people reading these words. It is important to keep yourself clean, so as not to disturb anyone else. Wear clean clothes and keep the places that you live and work clean and free of unnecessary clutter.

The practice of Asana (postures) has a powerful purifying effect on every system of the body, right down to the very bones. Some postures increase bone mass, while others stimulate and calm the nervous system. Many stretch and strengthen the muscles and joints, while others stimulate and tone the various organs and glands. Almost all act as a panacea for the digestive system, which is ideal, since the health of the entire body depends on the health of the colon. It's recommended to move the joints a little every day, even if you are a long time practitioner who feels that they have advanced beyond Asana. Asana, in concert with its partners Mudra (seals) and Bandha (locks), will help one to maintain health and age gracefully.

Pranayama (the breathing exercises) are a wonderful means of achieving Saucha on both the physical and subtle levels. Pranayama is such a powerful practice, since, through its means, we take direct control of the Prana or Divine Life-Force. Pranayama can go a long way towards settling the mind into silence all by itself. As far as purification is concerned, there are various breathing exercises which cleanse the psychic channels or Nadis, and, when the Nadis are clean and clear, the energy can really begin to move freely everywhere.

There is a specific class of Yogic cleansing techniques devoted entirely to purifying, healing and restoring the subtle systems that keep the entire body in a state of balanced health known as the "Kriyas". The three that are always recommended, as they are safe and universally accessible, are: Jala Neti, a warm glass of fresh lemon juice and warm water drunk early each morning and Kapalabhati. A Neti pot can be purchased at most Yoga schools or studios, and should come with instructions or ask your teacher concerning its use. Kapalabhati is a Pranayama technique, which is also a Kriya. It is a series of successive, forceful exhalations and complimentary, automatic inhalations especially recommended for those that live in



cities like New York. A glass of warm water with lemon can be sweetened with a little raw honey, maple syrup or agave nectar. It should be ingested upon waking, and helps promote elimination, so you can do your early morning practice free from distraction.

Many Mantras have a special effect on systems of the physical body, as well as the subtle body, and everything else. Your teacher will know through intuition which are best for you to do, and can instruct you accordingly. The Bhakti path of devotion (chanting devotional songs and Mantras) "washes" the intellect of impure thoughts. As the mind is cleansed of impure thoughts and constantly turned to think of God, the mind becomes ready for Self-knowledge.

Some define Santosha as "happiness", but contentment is quite different than mere joy.

Happiness is, for most, a temporary state, experienced when the mind experiences pleasure or fleeting fulfillment through the vehicle of the mind and the senses. When that which leads to happiness is not present or available, there is no choice but to be miserable! The Bhagavad-Gita teaches us that the Yogi is one whom

is beyond pleasure or pain, cold or heat, joy or sadness. Firmly established in the eternal present, he or she is content. All of Yoga exists to help you attain this state of contentment, but the Niyama of Santosha requires of us that we cultivate this quality of mind, as we seek to move ever closer to achieving this state in a lasting way as a direct result of achieving the goal of all life: Self-Realization.

When the mind begins to grow calm and we taste true meditation, something of the experience stays with us afterward. Then, the bliss begins to flow a little and affect every aspect of how the mind perceives reality.

Sri Yogi Dharma Mittra, now 71, "the teacher's teacher," teaches regularly at his schools: Dharma East at 297 Third Ave. (23rd St.) and Dharma West at 61 West 23rd St. Visit us on-line at: www.dharmayogacenter.com.

THE NATURAL GOURMET INSTITUTE

formerly The Natural Gourmet Cookery School

START OUR UNIQUE CHEF'S TRAINING PROGRAM

More than a cooking school. It's a way of life.

The leader in health supportive, mostly vegetarian cooking and theory, The Natural Gourmet Institute offers a range of programs for a career in the natural foods industry or simply enriching your lifestyle:

- Outstanding Job Placement
- Student Loan Available
- Recreational Classes



Call for a brochure about our full and part-time programs today.

48 WEST 21ST STREET, 2ND FLOOR • NEW YORK, NY 10010 • 212.627.COOK
WWW.NATURALGOURMETSCHOOL.COM

NGCS is accredited by ACCET