The practice of Yamas and Niyamas has been likened to picking up a garland of flowers. If you pick up one flower of a garland, the rest will come with it automatically. In the same manner, if you choose just one Yama or Niyama to practice, you will find the others beginning to manifest in your life as well.

—Swami Rajarshi Muni
*Yoga: The Ultimate Attainment*, p. 181


Ahimsa and ecology. Theme of *Journal of Dharma*, Jul-Sep 1991, 16(3). (Individual articles are also cited in this bibliography.)


These essays introduce the Ten Grave Precepts and “shed light on a number of contemporary issues in Buddhist ethics, including the environment.”


On the correlation between the eight limbs of yoga (as described in the second chapter of Patanjali’s *Yoga-Sutra*) and the attitude toward the postures. The author quotes B. K. S. Iyengar, who states, “Practice of asanas without the backing of yama and niyama is mere acrobatics.”


On the necessity to practice the *yamas* and *niyamas* if one is to avoid egotistical involvement with Yoga.


On the importance of the *yamas* and *niyamas*.


“What Brahmacharya is not: It is not austerity. It is not abstinence. It is not ‘no sex’.

“What Brahmacharya is: Brahmacharya is the conservation and self-control of vital factors and forces within the body and mind. Every action, thought and emotion uses up these vital factors. They are replenished by the inputs of sensory experience, diet, oxygen intake and lifestyle. This depletion/replenishment process is going on constantly. If the Yogi can maintain correct levels of these factors at all times and control them, health will be excellent, and progress will be fast . . .”
Brahmeshananda, Swami. We need a different sexual revolution: Few people realize that uncontrolled sexual indulgence can lead to destruction and ruin. *Hinduism Today*, May/Jun 2001, p. 66. (On *brahmacharya.*)


From the author’s website: “. . . explores the basic Yoga Philosophy of Observances and Abstentions. It also takes you through a series of Yoga Asanas/Postures that will strengthen your body as well as relax you.”


“According to former psychologist Marshall Rosenberg, needs are never in opposition—only our strategies for meeting them are. A number of dharma teachers are finding that Rosenberg’s methods can serve as a support for the Buddhist practice of Right Speech.”


“Probes the origins of the practice of nonviolence in early India and traces its path within the Jaina, Hindu, and Buddhist traditions, including its impact on East Asian Cultures.”


From the website: “See Yoga philosophy in action in these candid lecture/discussion classes led by Alice Christensen. Learn along with serious Yoga students as they try to assimilate the ethical guidelines of Patanjali and practice applying the principles to everyday life. Each class includes excerpts from videotapes of interviews with Lakshmanjoo.”


From the website: “Alice and Lakshmanjoo converse in Kashmir about the ethical guidelines of Yoga. These conversations were the inspiration for Alice’s videotaped lectures “Ethics in Yoga” (see above) and her book *Yoga of the Heart.*”


Cummins, Claudia. Life without sex? [on brahmacarya]. *Yoga Journal*, Nov 2002, pp. 96-99, 158-161. (See also follow-up letters to the editor in the Mar/Apr 2003 issue, pp. 14-16.)

“Some ancient texts insist celibacy is a must on the yogic path, but few modern practitioners opt for such an ascetic lifestyle. That raises a sticky question: Can we really have our sex and our yoga too?”


“It has been said that ‘politics is the last refuge of scoundrels,’ but it seems the rascals have found another place to hide—in the field of modern, commercialized Yoga! . . .”
Evolutionary quirks, yama – niyama and the brain of man.


Don’t worry, be santosha. Yoga says you can be happy—even when everything sucks. Article available online: http://www.allspiritfitness.com/library/features/aa033001a.shtml.


Farhi, Donna. *Yoga Mind, Body, and Spirit*


In Chapter 4 Shoban Faulds gives an introduction to the *yamas* and *niyamas*, and subsequent chapters bring Swami Kripalu’s reflections on each of them.


“The moral virtues—non-harming, truthfulness, non-stealing, non-possessiveness, and chastity—form the first ‘limb’ of the eightfold yogic path. They form the foundations of Yoga, yet they are generally ignored in Western Yoga practice. This seminar explores the connection between morality and spirituality. We will learn how traditional notions still apply today and how they can be integrated into our contemporary Yoga practice. Past participants found this seminar quite challenging but also transformative, because pondering moral issues helps us bring our spiritual practice down to earth.

“Topics covered: The five moral disciplines according to Patanjali’s *Yoga-Sūtra* and
various Sanskrit commentaries • Additional moral disciplines of Classical Yoga, such as friendliness (maitri) and compassion (karunā) • Moral disciplines mentioned in other Yoga scriptures, such as rectitude (ārjava) and forbearance (kshamā) • The qualifications through which one succeeds on the yogic path, such as enthusiasm, determination, courage, true knowledge, steadiness • The qualifications of a good disciple • Morality, self-transcendence, and enlightenment • and more

“Some of the questions that will be pondered in the seminar: Is there such a thing as a just war? Do you measure your words to avoid harming others? Are you a vegetarian? Are little white lies justifiable? Do you exaggerate? Would you keep a $100 dollar bill if you found it in the street? Do you engage in sex as a form of prayer? Do you feel conflicted about sex vis-à-vis your Yoga practice? Do you feel you have accumulated more stuff than you need? Do you regard your children as your property? Do you regard your thoughts as your property? Are you kind only to those you like or to everyone? Are you kind toward yourself? Is it possible that by always being forbearing, we deprive others of a valuable lesson? Does anger have any place in social interaction? How does your own instability or disharmony harm others? Etc.”


“Tapas begins with temporarily or permanently denying ourselves a particular desire—having a satisfying cup of coffee, a piece of chocolate, or casual sex. Instead of instant gratification, we choose postponement.”


Discusses greed and the right relationship to money.


“In the wake of 9/11, Dr. Paul R. Fleischman puts into modern context the Buddha’s teaching on determining what constitutes right action.”


**Frawley, David.** Yoga, ahimsa and the recent terrorist attacks. Article available online: http://www.dharmacentral.com/articles/terror.htm.


**Garza, Janiss.** The small side of ahimsa. 21 Feb 2003. Article available online:

On adopting the practice of ahimsa bit by bit over time.
Gitananda Giri, Swami. Take only what you earn. *Yoga Life*, Dec 2000, 31(12):7-8. (Briefly discusses all *yamas*, but especially *asteya* and *aparigraha*.)


On applying the *yamas* and *niyamas* to *asana* practice.


Contents: Modern society and the quest for human happiness; No magic, no mystery; Dependent origination and the nature of reality; Redefining the good; The supreme emotion; The ethic of restraint; The ethic of virtue; The ethic of compassion; Ethics and suffering; The need for discernment; Universal responsibility: Levels of commitment; Ethics in society; Peace and disarmament; The role of religion in modern society; An appeal

From the publisher: “In this collection of interviews, Jean-Claude Carrière asks deeply relevant questions of the Dalai Lama, whose answers provide clarity and perspective on issues such as terrorism, environmentalism, and modern violence.”


Contains sections on: Buddhism and medicine; Buddhism and medical ethics; Buddhist approaches to personhood; Medical ethicists on personhood; Parfit’s deconstruction of personhood; Buddhism and abortion; Key Western writings on abortion; Writings on embryology, rebirth, and karma; Japan and abortion; Buddhism on sexuality and contraception; Genetics and reproductive technologies; Death, dying, and euthanasia; Key Western writings on euthanasia


Jerry, Martin. Practicing the five yamas in daily life. Article available online: http://www.yrec.info/contentid-181.html.


Journal of Buddhist Ethics. URL: http://jbe.gold.ac.uk.

Philosophy of Non-violence audiotaape. South Miami, Fla.: Yoga Research Foundation. To order, call 305-666-2006. 60 minutes.


Kashio, Jikaku. Yoga and ethics, particularly in the astangayoga system. Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies (Indogaku Bukkyogaku Kenkyu), Tokyo, Mar 1978, 26(2):896-900. [In Japanese.]

Kassner, Enid. The best happiness [santosha]. Article available online: http://www.sunandmoonstudio.com/content.html.


Addresses ethical lapses in the Yoga community, structuring the article around the five yamas (moral disciplines) of traditional Yoga.


Chapters include: Spiritual Seeking, Discipline, Letting Go, Self-Judgment, Faith, Perspective, Courage, Compassion, Control, Fear, Patience, Attachment and Aversion, Suffering, Impermanence, Greed, Service, Connection, Truth, Success, Nonviolence, and Love

_____________. To tell the truth: The yogic practice of *satya* (truth) focuses on carefully choosing our words so they do the least harm—and the most good. *Yoga Journal*, May/Jun, 2002, pp. 77-80.


On “Raja Harishchandra, the . . . epitome of *satya* (truth).” Based on a legend from the *Yoga-Rahasya*.


On the *yamas* and *niyamas*.


Written for Yoga teachers in response to the articles that appeared in 2002 on Yoga teachers and institutions that behaved unethically.


__________. Life dancing: If all your actions are based on the pursuit of happiness, why is it that so many things you do yield anything but happiness? Yoga Journal, Jul/Aug 2000, p. 60-65.

On non-clinging.


“Are you relating to yourself in a manner that results in your life being more emotionally or physically violent than it need be?”


On practicing the yamas and niyamas in daily life.


“Peace is not the absence of conflict or aggression. It is the transformation of brute power into strength of mind and heart. Peace is the humane focusing of anger and ambition on the needs of the world and on creative contributions to life and culture. Peace is an active thing, strong and bold.

“Violence appears only when you have lost your strength and have nothing left but to act out with fetishes—guns and other weapons—that betray your weakness. Violence is blocked life-force. It is creativity gone amok and individuality suppressed. Therefore, the worst thing you can do in dealing with violence is to be weak.”


Contents: Yamas/Restraints—Ahimsa, Satya, Asteya, Brahmacharya, Aparigraha; Niyamas/Observances—Saucha, Santosha, Tapas, Svadhyaya, Ishvara-Pranidhana; and more

From the Winter 2001 Kripalu Yoga Teachers Association Yoga Bulletin: “. . . focuses on integrating the moral codes of yoga into our everyday lives in order to achieve greater
balance, peace and harmony. With a compassionate, down-to-earth approach, Maheshvari explores each yama and niyama through explanation and reflection. She weaves together quotations, guided meditations, affirmations and ideas for discussion and journal writing into an inspiring and interesting whole. An accompanying booklet presents the information in a convenient format.”


Om Saraswati, Swami. Yamas and niyamas (Part 1). Yoga (Sivananda Math), Jan 2005, pp. 36-44. (Swami Om was 13 years old at the time of writing this article.)

__________. Yamas and niyamas (Part 1). Yoga (Sivananda Math), Feb 2005, pp. 22-28. (Swami Om was 13 years old at the time of writing this article.)

“Learn how to seamlessly incorporate the five niyamas into your hatha yoga class.”


__________. Force vs. feeling. My Yoga Mentor, Sep 2004, no. 10. Article available online: http://www.yogajournal.com/teacher/1311_1.cfm?email@mail@yrec.org&ctsrc=nl10.

“Teaching students to feel rather than use force during their practice won’t only make them better yogis—it will also make them better citizens of the world.”


“Don’t be surprised if a transport official at any of the offices that you visit talks to you politely and guides you to the right counter. Just thank the Indian sages for inventing yoga and the modern day de-stressing techniques that the transport department is all set to adopt to reform its officials.

“According to senior officials, after drawing flak over harassment of consumers due to staff-tout nexus and alleged corruption in the transport offices, the department has decided to tame its ‘tainted’ staff, albeit differently. ‘Self-motivational plans are at final stages to invite private organizations to provide training to our staff to change their attitude,’ said an official.

“‘As per the plan, the disillusioned personnel will be put through de-stressing sessions, yoga and meditation courses, orientation capsules and may even have to wear a new-look uniform. We are inviting modules from training institutes to change the mind set of our staff,’ the officer said . . .”

Patt, David, Jan Chozen Bays, Lama Surya Das, Thanissaro Bhikkhu, and José Cabezón. War or peace? Thinking outside the box. Tricycle, Spring 2002, pp., 50-57.

A dialogue about the Buddhist precept of non-killing and the war that followed the attacks of September 11, 2001.


Topics addressed: Jungle law and human Dharma; Motive more important than the act; Ahimsa for our own health; Ahimsa is not weakness; Oneness of existence; Attitude towards suffering around us


Prashanthini, M. Padma. Importance of excellent character as the basis of yoga study. *Yoga Life*, Nov 2000, 31(11):8-13


Rea, Shiva. Playing with fire: Cultivating *tapas*—the burning desire that fuels your practice—can help you overcome obstacles on and off the mat. *Yoga Journal*, May/Jun 2001, pp. 77-81.


“Yoga’s ethical precepts teach us to tell the truth and do no harm, but few realize that these teachings can also help us to manage our money.”


_________. The power of satya: Thinking, speaking, being truth. YOGAChicago, Jul-Aug 2003, pp. 16-18.


**Smith, Laureen.** Maitri: A path to ahimsa. Article available online: http://www.sunandmoonstudio.com/maitri.html.


“Representatives of nine world religions offer insights on how their traditions may help to overcome the contagion of hatred through the practice of nonviolence.”


**Somerville, Rebecca.** Relationship of yama, niyama and breath. In the article, “Patanjali’s divine gift – part two: Sadhana Pada.” *Australian Yoga Life*, 2003, no. 6, p. 61.

**Srinivasan.** Brahmacharya. *Sivananda Yoga Life*, Spring/Summer 1996. Article available online:

**Subramuniyaswami, Satguru Sivaya.** Peace by peace: We can change the way all mankind behaves when each one of us works step by step toward ahimsa, nonviolence in thought, word and deed. *Hinduism Today*, Jul/Aug 2001, pp. 33-36.


On the application of ahimsa in business.


“A must-read for serious yoga practitioners, meditators, and anyone deeply involved with transformative spiritual life, *Yoga’s Forgotten Foundation* delves into the integrated approach to yoga as taught by the great masters of India. It is a cogent reminder to those who want to start at the end of the spiritual path that there is an essential beginning, the neglect of which portends failure and disappointment. In 224 pages, with full-color Indian art, it explores the traditional foundation of yoga, twenty little-known guidelines
on personal ethics, self-control, and religious practice, called the yamas and niyamas.

“The yamas and niyamas have been preserved through the centuries as the first and second stage of the eight-staged practice of yoga. They provide the essential foundation to support our yoga practice so that attainments in higher consciousness can be sustained. The modern exponent of hatha yoga B.K.S. Iyengar cautioned, ‘Practice of asanas without the backing of yama and niyama is mere acrobatics. Yama and niyama control the yogi’s passions and emotions and keep him in harmony with his fellow man.’

“The book begins with a forward by the author’s spiritual successor, Satguru Bodhinatha Veylanswami, and takes the reader step by step through non-injury, truthfulness, non-stealing, sexual purity, patience, contentment and other facets of virtue. Grounded in a traditional Hindu point of view, yet admirably relevant to us all, the book discusses some of the toughest issues and challenges of modern life, including promiscuity, domestic abuse, child-rearing, overeating, gambling, vegetarianism, violence, injustice and pornography—relating them all to progress on the yoga path. It also explores the essential practices, including charity, worship, chanting mantras, austerity and scriptural study.”


Detailed examination of Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain concepts of ahimsa.


Takagi, Shingen. Two aspects of knowledge and practical discipline as seen in “yama” and “niyama” of the eight aids to Yoga. Nippon Bukkyo Gakukai Nempo (The Journal of the Nippon Buddhist Research Association), Kyoto, Mar 1971, 36:17-32.

Taniguchi, S. Biomedical ethics from a Buddhist perspective. Pacific World New Series, Fall 1987, 3:75-83.


From the publisher: “The secret of nonviolence is simple—don’t hurt yourself and don’t hurt others. This tape gives precise methods for practicing nonviolence and healing the injured areas of your life. Contains guided contemplations to turn the abstract principles of compassion and love into an active part of reality.”


The truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Satya is the yama of non-lying. But what is truth anyhow? Article available online: http://www.allspiritfitness.com/library/features/aa062901a.shtml.


Abstract: The Yoga, described by Maharshi Patanjali, is eight-limbic; its every constituent part depends upon interrelated equi-development. But often it is misunderstood as sequential and hierarchical levels and the Yama and Niyama are neglected. In present discussion, according to classical Indian psychological perspective with reference to personality and mind, environment and individual response, the symmetrical wholeness and mutual interrelations of Astangika Yoga, significance and exigency of Yama and Niyama, spontaneity and applicability of Samadhi state, have been emphasized with simplified scientific interpretations.

The yoga of non-sex: Brahmacharya is yoga’s most misunderstood yama. Article available online: http://www.allspiritfitness.com/library/features/aa083101a.shtml.


Contents: Restraints (Yamas): 1. Non-violence - Ahimsa (intellectual non-violence, baudhika ahimsa; non-violence of speech, vachika ahimsa; physical non-violence, sharirika ahimsa), 2. Truthfulness – Satya (intellectual truthfulness, baudhika satya; vocal truth, vachika satya; physical truth, sharirika satya), 3. Non-Stealing – Asteya (intellectual non-stealing, baudhika asteya; theft of speech, vachika asteya, physical theft, sharirika asteya), 4. Celibacy – Brahmacharya (intellectual celibacy, baudhika brahmacharya; celibacy in speech, vachika brahmacharya; bodily celibacy, sharirika brahmacharya), 5. Non-covetousness – Aparigraha (intellectual non-covetousness, baudhika aparigraha; verbal non-covetousness, vachika aparigraha; material non-attachment, sharirika aparigraha); Observances (Niyamas): 1. Purity – Shaucha (intellectual purity, baudhika shaucha; purity of speech, vachika shaucha; physical purity, sharirika shaucha), 2. Contentment – Santosha (intellectual contentment, baudhika santosha; contentment in speech, vachika santosha; bodily contentment, sharirika santosha), 3. Austerity – Tapa (mental austerity, baudhika tapa; austerity of speech, vachika tapa; physical austerity, sharirika tapa), 4. Self-Study – Swadhyaya (mental study, baudhika swadhyaya; verbal study, vachika swadhyaya; physical study, sharirika swadhyaya). 5. Meditation on God - Ishwar-Pranidhan (mental meditation, baudhika Ishwar-pranidhan; verbal meditation, vachika Ishwar-pranidhan; bodily meditation, sharirika Ishwar-pranidhan)

Of Related Interest


Contents: Part I: Spirituality, Morality, and Ethics—Spiritual Quests in the Life Structure in Adulthood; Morality, Ethics, Spirituality, and Prejudice in the Writings of Erik H.
Erikson; An Ethicospiritual Analysis of Postmodernism; Critical Consciousness and Its Ontogeny in the Life Span; Part II: Interrelationship, Intimacy, and Involvement—Relationship and Connection in Women’s Identity form College to Midlife; Loving with Integrity: A Feminist Spirituality of Wholeness; Cognitive Aspects of Unitative States; Fifth-Order Consciousness and Early Greek Christianity; On Constructing an Engaged Life; Part III: The Self in Transformation—On Being at Both Center and Circumference; Meditation and the Evolution of Consciousness; The Interplay of Object Relations and Cognitive Development; Conversion and the Self; Conversions across the Culture War Divide: Two Case Studies


From a review by Phil Catalfo in the Sep/Oct 2004 issue of *Yoga Journal*, p. 162: “... without ever mentioning yogic philosophy, [the author] provides a perfectly apt meditation on what contentment—samtosha to yogis—might look like in today’s world.”