

Yama and Niyama (Restraints and Observances)



Yamas are restraints and *Niyamas* are observances. The five different *yamas*, which has been defined as the moral code of conduct, are simply the expression of a harmonious, balanced and tranquil mind. Five *yamas* deals with one's ethical standards and sense of integrity. It focuses on our behavior patterns or relationships between the individual and the outside world and how we conduct ourselves in life. The five *yamas* are: *Ahimsa*, (absence of violence from within), *Satya* (truthfulness), *Asteya* (non-theft), *Aparigraha* (not being greedy), and *Brahmacharya* (avoiding inappropriate sexual behavior).

Niyama means rules or laws, inner disciplines, which has prescribed for personal observances and the attitude we adopt towards ourselves.

The five *niyamas* are: *saucha* (cleanliness of body and mind, represents the state of purity); *santos* (contentment, represents the ability to flow in life and not struggle) *tapas* (austerities, means an effort we make or a process we undergo to experience purity of self); *svadhyaya* (self-study); and *isvarapranidhana* (complete surrender to the divine will). The *yama* and *niyam* are the noble virtues intended to cleanse and harmonize the activities of the mind.