



417 NE Birch Street
Camas, Washington 98607

(360) 834-5994

info@rushingwateryoga.com

www.rushingwateryoga.com

Eight Limbs of Yoga

Described in the second chapter of *Patanjali's Yoga Sutras*, the *Eight Limbs of Yoga* are set forth as the means, or the path towards the "quest of the soul." The eight limbs are as follows:

Yama – commitment to universal moral commandments

Niyama – self-purification through discipline

Asana – posture

Pranayama – rhythmic control of the breath

Pratyahara – withdrawal and emancipation of the mind from the domination of the senses and exterior objects

Dharana – concentration

Dhyana – meditation

Samadhi – a state of super-consciousness

Yama and *Niyama* control the *yogini's* passions and emotions and keep her in harmony with others. *Asanas* keep the body healthy and strong and in harmony with nature. Finally, the *yogini* becomes free of body consciousness. She conquers the body and renders it a fit vehicle for the soul. These three limbs represent *bahiranga sadhana*, the outward quests. These limbs are also considered the physical pursuits.

The next two stages, *Pranayama* and *Pratyahara*, teach the aspirant to regulate the breathing, and thereby control the mind. This helps to free the senses from the thralldom of the objects of desire. These two limbs represent the *antaranga sadhana*, the inner quests. These limbs are also considered the mental pursuits.

Dharana, *Dhyana*, and *Samadhi* take the *yogini* into the innermost recesses of her soul. The *yogini* does not look heavenward to find God. She knows that God is within, being known as the *Antaratma*, the Inner Self. The last three stages keep the *yogini* in harmony with herself and her maker. These three limbs are called *antaratma sadhana*, the quest of the soul. These limbs are also considered the spiritual pursuits.

The five *Yamas* are as follows:

-*Ahimsa*, non-violence

-*Satya*, honesty and truthfulness

-*Asteya*, non-stealing

-*Brahmacharya*, continence (responsibility), moderation and dedication to the understanding of Divinity

-*Aparigraha*, non-covetousness

The five *Niyamas* are as follows:

-*Saucha*, purity internally and externally

-*Santosa*, contentment, reducing desires, becoming cheerful and creating balance of mind

-*Tapas*, discipline in the mind and body and directing the mind towards the self within

-*Svadhyaya*, study the source of our actions, learn and search for truth and self-realization

-*Ishvara Pranidhana*, dedication to humanity and surrendering to God and the powers that be and abiding to the greater will

References: *Light on Yoga*, *Light on the Yoga Sutras*, and *The Tree of Yoga* all by BKS Iyengar (paraphrased)

