

# dancing in the divine:

*More Poems from the Heart of Practice, 2006.*

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Yama and Niyama Poems:

## Asteya

the mat calls me—  
and invites me to let go,  
to release,  
and to surrender

but it is not an easy  
thing for me to do—  
I want to resist its calling

the spiritual path of yoga,  
presents me with challenges  
like the practice of non-attachment,  
a lesson I must continually learn—  
over and again,  
inviting me to strip away  
every layer that separates me—  
from Union with the Beloved

**asteya** as an ethical discipline  
is a reminder that non-stealing  
allows for the full flowering  
of my humanity  
and my deepest core  
where my divinity resides

I am called to the mat  
to express the essence of my spirituality  
in an embodied way—  
through the practice of non-attachment

to practice **asteya**—  
I must explore and surrender  
all my attachments,  
and all my desires

to practice **asteya**—  
I must remember

that everything is a Divine Gift,  
even challenges and obstacles  
that I am continually presented with,  
for they are an invitation  
to deepen the recognition  
of my true nature—  
as one always dancing  
in the Beloved

I ask today, in my prayer  
and meditation—  
show me the way to surrender!  
let the offering of my practice  
allow me to strip away  
every strand and barrier  
that keeps me from  
being One with  
the Eternal Dance!

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## Brahmacharya

As practitioners of yoga,  
We are called to a life of wholeness—  
To be pure,  
And to be chaste in our thoughts,  
And deeds,  
And in our relationships with others.

As practitioners of yoga,  
We are called to use all of our energies,  
Physical and creative—  
In responsible ways.

As practitioners of yoga,  
We are invited by the Divine  
Into a sacred Dance—  
Where we channel our creative energies  
And manifest it as **Shakti**,  
Reflecting the very essence,  
And Love  
And energy of the Divine.

As practitioners of yoga,  
We are called to use power wisely  
And responsibly,  
For the edification of others—  
Never to control or undermine.

As practitioners of yoga,  
Each and every one of our actions  
Should lead us closer to our goal—  
Union with the Divine.

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# Satya

truthfulness calls me  
to explore places within myself  
I have not seen  
or have neglected

truthfulness calls me  
to explore my words,  
and align my actions  
with the purity of my intentions

truthfulness calls me  
not only to consider my relationship  
to others,  
and the world at large—  
but to examine the honesty  
of my asana  
and meditation practice

truthfulness calls me  
to re-examine my commitment  
to the Divine—  
and invites me to a deeper,  
and richer  
and fuller sense  
of embodied awareness

truthfulness calls me  
and invites me to reflect honesty  
and integrity  
and Union

truthfulness calls me  
to be true to myself  
and what is being asked of me—  
moment to moment

truthfulness calls me  
to respond to every opportunity  
that comes knocking at my door

truthfulness demands of me  
to use language wisely  
and to open the floodgates  
to the power of intuition

truthfulness invites me  
to be genuine  
and to disclose what truly resides  
in my heart and my soul



# Ahimsa

the *yogini* in me  
asks—  
what does it truly mean  
to practice non-harming?

it is so much more—  
than simply the obvious

non-harming invites me to examine  
the context of my practice,  
by eliciting compassionate respect  
in the truest,  
deepest sense

non-harming asks of me  
to do my practice  
in a way that respects my body,  
my mind,  
and my soul

non-harming illustrates the difference  
between accepting where I am—  
and the parameters of my limitations,  
yet allowing me to pursue the avenues  
of much deeper interior growth

the *yogini* in me  
asks—  
what does it truly mean  
to practice non-harming?

non-harming asks compassionate respect of me—  
it asks me to respect my practice  
and the sacredness of all life,  
and to respect the myriad of ways  
in which the Divine  
seeks to express itself  
within the temple of my soul

the *yogini* in me  
asks—  
what does it truly mean  
to practice non-harming?

it asks me to release,  
to go deeper,  
to see as the Divine sees

and to love  
as the Divine loves



## Aparigraha

If we are to deepen  
Our spiritual practice,  
We must cultivate **aparigraha**.

If we are to deepen  
Our experiences on the mat,  
We must live in greater simplicity.

The virtues of non-attachment  
Are extolled just as equally  
In the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures—  
As it is in the **Bhagavad-Gita**,  
Which urges us to do our work  
Without attachment to the outcomes.

When we practice **aparigraha**,  
We are invited to explore releasing  
Our acquisitive nature—  
We are called to experience the freedom  
That comes from letting go of greed.

When we practice **aparigraha**,  
We can focus on what is really important—  
The cultivation of a deep  
And rich interior life,  
That is intimately more satisfying,  
Taking us into the arms  
Of the Beloved Divine.

When we practice **aparigraha**,  
Letting go of attachments,  
We hear the sweet Sound  
Of the Divine, calling in our hearts.

When we practice **aparigraha**,  
We have time eternal  
To enter into the Infinite Sacred Dance  
With the Beloved Divine,  
Who so deliciously beckons.

Come! Let go! And come into  
The Dance of Ecstatic Bliss!



# Santosha

When I practice **santosha**  
I am content.  
I respect myself—  
And I respect my practice.

When I practice **santosha**,  
I come to my practice  
And I set my intention—  
With a purity of thought,  
That shifts my experience.

When I practice **santosha**,  
I come to my practice  
And my experiences on the mat  
Affects all aspects of my life—  
So that my practice and my life  
Become integrated  
In a seamless manner.

When I practice **santosha**,  
I let go of fear  
And accept myself  
For whom I really am—  
And I accept others,  
As they are as well.

When I practice **santosha**,  
I am content—  
With all that is.  
I surrender.  
I accept.  
And I listen.

When I practice **santosha**,  
The Divine speaks—  
The Divine sings in my heart,  
And I listen  
And hear the Divine's song,  
Singing in my heart  
As my own.  
And then I truly know—  
That I am content.

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# Saucha

**Saucha** calls me  
To a life lived in clarity.

**Saucha** calls me

To cleanliness  
Of heart,  
Of mind,  
Of body,  
And spirit.

When I practice **saucha**,  
I come to my yoga  
And meditation practice  
With a clean heart.  
I come to my practice  
With clarity.

**Saucha** calls me—  
To see,  
Not with my eyes,  
But with Divine Eyes.



## Tapas

I enter into the fire  
Of discipline

The practice of **tapas**  
Invites me to ardently  
Stay on my path—  
And not waver from my course

**Tapas** requires commitment  
And austerity,  
Leading me to the internal joy  
That is the fruit of discipline

**Tapas** reminds me  
That my attitude defines my practice—  
It enables me to see  
That it is about the journey  
And not the destination

I enter into the fire  
Of discipline  
And it consumes me—  
Burning away the chaff,  
Purifying me,  
And leading me to transformation

I enter into the fire  
Of discipline  
And I sink profoundly  
Into more refined  
And exquisite levels

Of consciousness

I enter into the fire  
Of discipline  
As I do my practice with diligence—  
My heart radiating with **tapas**  
I am consumed and purified  
In the furnace of Divine Love



## Svadyaya

I have been told—  
And I know,  
That I came into this life  
With an incredible thirst  
For knowledge

**Svadyaya** invites me  
To move beyond mere learning  
And the acquisition of knowledge

**Svadyaya** challenges me  
To deepen my spirituality

**Svadyaya** demands  
An exacting price—  
It asks me to commit deeply  
To my practice,  
In the times when it is effortless  
And the times when it frustrating.

**Svadyaya** teaches me  
There is a lesson in desolation.

**Svadyaya** invites me  
To look beyond the knowledge  
Of texts and spiritual treatises  
To the truth revealed  
In the text of my physical landscape.

**Svadyaya** prods me to look within—  
For the whole universe resides inside;  
Within my body is every lesson  
I must learn,  
And every truth  
I must discover.

**Svadyaya** affirms  
That within my practice  
Is the answer to every question  
I have ever had.