

## CHAPTER 2.0

### 2.0 LITERARY RESEARCH ON YAMA AND NIYAMA

#### 2.1 BACKGROUND AND SCOPE

*Yama* and *niyama* refer to the universal precepts of moral behaviour. They are the ethical laws we find in the scriptures not only in the science of *yoga* but also in all great world religions. These are referred to in various Hindu scriptures; in Buddhist scriptures as the Noble Eightfold Path; in Taoism scriptures as the Ten Precepts; in Confucianism as The Analects; and in Judeo-Christian scripture as the Ten Commandments. They are the fundamental ethical disciplines necessary for happiness and freedom.

Because of the conditioning the modern, mass media-driven world tries to impinge upon us, many people have a rather negative attitude toward what they consider “old-fashioned” ethics. However, as is evident, we are passing through many troubling experiences, high pressure, great turmoil, unrest, and confusion everywhere, and in every nation. It is important to understand what morality is all about. *Paramahansa Yogananda*, a great *yogi*, said: “In essence, that morality is the way of living in the world while retaining our divine connection, retaining that link to what we really are—divine beings” (Chidananda, 2015).

How to behave in this world? Can those ethical laws bring balance and happiness; whether they could be beneficial for physical, mental and spiritual development? In this context, a review of the rich, healthy and valuable ethical principles that mankind inherited is presented. The universal concept of ethics according to *yoga* philosophy and formulations in other classical scriptures are studied.

#### 2.2 SUMMARY OF EARLIER WORKS ON YAMA AND NIYAMA

Ethics are broadly discussed in ancient and medieval era scriptures of Hindu philosophy. No less than sixty texts enumerate *yamās* and *niyamās* (Bharati,2001, pp. 680-691). Most are descriptive in *Saṃskṛta*, but some are in local languages according to the regional areas. The ethical disciplines of *yama* and *niyama* can be traced back to *Vedic* times. *Yama*, the foundation of all spiritual Self-realization practices, is to obey the principles and moral rules underlying all religions, such as non-killing and so forth. *Niyama* are the religious observances that one must be kind, sincere, loving, forgiving, and serve all, forsaking any violent habit that disrupts inner peace. The

number of *yamās* and *niyamās* mentioned in texts list between one and eleven; however, five and ten are observed to be most common (Table 1). Of these ancient scriptures, eleven lists five which are similar to but not identical with *Patañjali's* (Bharati, 2001). Other texts list one to ten kinds which are slightly variant, but 10 are the most common (Table 1). The order of listed *yamās* and *niyamās*, the names, as well as the relative emphasis varies between the texts. Some *yamās* and *niyamās* overlap with each other, for example, *śauca* which is listed as *niyama* in *Patañjali Yoga Sūtra* (PYS, verse 2.32) is listed as *yama* in *Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā* (HYP), and *ahiṃsā* (non-violence) and *mitāhāra* (moderate diet) are called *yama* and also *niyama* in the verse 1.16 and 1.38 in *Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā*.

Ethics as elucidated in Indian philosophy cannot be forced, but typically mean commitments that one has realized their full meaning and is willingly to live up to it. Srinivasan has written:

An ancient sage *Apastamba* has said, “Virtue and vice do not go around saying ‘Here we are!’. Neither do the Gods, *Gandharvas*, or ancestors tell us ‘this is right, this is wrong’.” Ethics is indeed a subtle concept, and it demands careful and sustained examination before one can be confident of applying them correctly in daily life (Srinivasan, 2013, p.2).

## 2.3 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The present literary research is to study information regarding ethics from *yoga* texts and ancient religions scriptures. The objectives are:

- To study the concept of ethics in *yoga* texts.
- To study the concept of ethics in the great world religions.
- To find the commonalities of ethics in *yoga* and various religions.

## 2.4 MATERIALS AND METHODS

Ancient texts related to ethics as five in:

- *Yoga-Upanishads, Patañjali Yoga Sūtra, Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā*
- Buddhism scriptures
- Scriptures of Christianity
- Confucianism and Taoism scriptures
- *Bhagavad Gītā, Dharmaśāstra*

**Table 1: Five and ten numbers of *yama-niyama* in various sources**

Number of <i>yamās</i> in various sources				
No.	Yamās: 5 numbers		Yamās: 10 numbers	
	<i>PatañjaliYoga Sūtra</i> 2.30	Similar Texts	<i>Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā</i> 1.16	Similar Texts
1	Ahiṃsā (अहिंसा):Non-violence	<i>Agni purāṇa</i>	Ahiṃsā (अहिंसा):Non-violence	<i>Ahi-budhnya-saṃhitā</i>
2	<i>Satya</i> (सत्य): Truthfulness	<i>Datta purāṇa</i>	<i>Satya</i> (सत्य): Truthfulness	<i>Devī-bhāgavata-purāṇa</i>
3	<i>Asteya</i> (अस्तेय): Non-stealing	<i>Garuḍa purāṇa</i>	<i>Asteya</i> (अस्तेय): Non-stealing	<i>Gandharva-tantra</i>
4	<i>Brahmacharya</i> (ब्रह्मचर्य): Continence	<i>Īhvara-gītā</i>	<i>Brahmacarya</i> (ब्रह्मचर्य): Continence	<i>Gautamīya-tantra</i>
5	<i>Aparigraha</i> (अपरिग्रह): Non-covetousness	<i>Īśāna-śiva-guru-deva-paddhati</i>	<i>Kṣamā</i> (क्षमा):Patience	<i>Haṭha-yoga-pradīpikā</i>
6	—	<i>Liṅga-purāṇa</i>	<i>Dhṛti</i> (धृति):Fortitude, perseverance	<i>Mahā-kāla-saṃhitā</i>
7	—	<i>Śiva-purāṇa</i>	<i>Dayā</i> (दया):Compassion	<i>Varāha-upaniṣad</i>
8	—	<i>Skanda-purāṇa</i>	<i>Ārjava</i> (आर्जव):Honesty	<i>Śāradā-tīlaka</i>
9	—	<i>Sūrya-purāṇa</i>	<i>Mitāhāra</i> (मिताहार):moderate diet	<i>Śāṅḍilya-upaniṣad</i>
10	—	<i>Śrī-praśna-saṃhitā</i>	<i>Śauca</i> (शौच):purify body and mind	<i>Vasiṣṭha-saṃhitā</i>
11	—	<i>Viṣṇu-purāṇa</i>	—	<i>Yoga-yājñavalkya</i>
Number of <i>niyamās</i> in various sources				
No.	Niyamās: 5 numbers		Niyamās: 10 numbers	
	<i>PatañjaliYoga Sūtra</i> 2.30	Similar Texts	<i>Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā</i> 1.16	Similar Texts
1	<i>Śauca</i> (शौच):purify body and mind	<i>Agni purāṇa</i>	<i>Tapas</i> (तपस् ): austerility	<i>Ahi-budhnya-saṃhitā</i>
2	<i>Santoṣa</i> (सन्तोष): contentment	<i>Nārada-purāṇa</i>	<i>Santoṣa</i> (सन्तोष): contentment	<i>Devī-bhāgavata-purāṇa</i>
3	<i>Tapas</i> (तपस्): austerility, self-discipline	<i>Garuḍa purāṇa</i>	<i>Āstikya</i> (आस्तिक्य): belief in God	<i>Gandharva-tantra</i>
4	<i>Svādhyāya</i> (स्वाध्याय): self-study, introspection	<i>Īśvara-gītā</i>	<i>Dāna</i> (दान): charity	<i>Gautamīya-tantra</i>
5	<i>Īśvarapraṇidhāna</i> (ईश्वरप्रणिधान): surrender to God	<i>Īśāna-śiva-guru-deva-paddhati</i>	<i>Īśvarapūjana</i> (ईश्वरपूजन): worship of the God	<i>Atri-saṃhitā</i>
6	—	<i>Liṅga-purāṇa</i>	<i>Siddhānta śrāvaṇa</i> (सिद्धान्तश्रवण): Listening to the ancient scriptures	<i>Mahā-kāla-saṃhitā</i>
7	—	<i>Śiva-purāṇa</i>	<i>Hrī</i> (ह्री):modesty	<i>Varāha-upaniṣad</i>
8	—	<i>Skanda-purāṇa</i>	<i>Mati</i> (मति): a discerning intellect	<i>Śāradā-tīlaka</i>
9	—	<i>Mārkāṇḍeya-purāṇa</i>	<i>Japa</i> (जप):mantra repetition	<i>Śāṅḍilya -upaniṣad</i>
10	—	<i>Prapañca-sāra-tantra</i>	<i>Hutam</i> (हुतम्): sacrifice or oblation or <i>Vrata</i> (व्रत):religious observances	<i>Vasiṣṭha-saṃhitā</i>
11	—	<i>Paramānanda-tantra</i>	—	<i>Yoga-yājñavalkya</i>

## 2.4.1 VEDIC SOURCES AND CLASSICAL YOGIC TEXTS

### 2.4.1.1 The concept of ethics in yogic literature

The ancient science of *yoga* is not less than 5000 years old. *Yoga* means union: union of soul with spirit (God). *Yoga* is a way of life, it teaches mankind the purpose of life and how to achieve it; it provides a balance between feelings and intellect; increases our will power to overcome strong habits; develops even-mindedness and concentration, as well as improve our ability to know our inherent divinity. The gem of knowledge that has been handed over to us by illumined *r̥ṣis* is gaining recognition by health scientists as a valuable tool for transcending physical, mental, and spiritual suffering. The well-known sage *Patañjali* (ca. 200 BCE) outlined *Rāja Yoga* system of Hindu philosophy as an Eightfold Path, referred to as *Aṣṭāṅga Yoga*. *Patañjali* stated the 8 steps or limbs which lead to the universal path for every spiritual aspirant seeking self-realization (*kaivalya*). The eight steps are as follows:

1. *Yama*: the “don’ts”, moral and ethical disciplines.
2. *Niyama*: the “dos”, religious observances.
3. *Āsana*: posture, holding the body with erect spine in fixed posture without fidgeting or physical restlessness.
4. *Prāṇāyāma*: conscious control of the life force.
5. *Pratyāhāra*: withdrawal from senses.
6. *Dhāraṇā*: concentration, holding the mind on a specific thought or object.
7. *Dhyāna*: meditation on the divine.
8. *Samādhi*: superconscious perception, complete absorption in one thought of God.

All these limbs are interdependent; merely emphasising one limb does not make other limbs perfect to attain the final goal. The ethical principles of *yoga*, namely, *yama* and *niyama*, are the first two steps described in *Patañjali Yoga Sūtra*. Practice of the principles of *yama-niyama* provides the firm moral courage and spiritual support essential to attain higher states of consciousness. The five principles of *yama* are also known as the great universal vows. They are not limited by birth, place, time and circumstances (PYS 2.31). They are the guidelines for how we get on with the outer world, the social disciplines to guide us to form relationships with others. The word *yama* means ‘restraint’ or ‘control’. *Yama* basically means ‘to refrain’ from actions, words and thoughts which cause discomfort and harm to others, including ourselves and the environment. These are five *yamās*:

अहिंसासत्यास्तेयब्रह्मचर्यापरिग्रहा यमाः ॥

*Ahiṃsāsatyāsteyabrahmacaryāparigrahā yamāḥ* ||

“Forbearance consists of harmlessness, truth, abstinence from theft, continence and freedom from avarice” (PYS 2.30). Sage *Vyāsa* has given the commentary of these five restraints:

Harmlessness (*ahiṃsā*)—in no way and at no time wishing ill to any living being. Truth (*satya*)—consists of word and mind corresponding to facts—that is words and mind both tallying with objects as seen, inferred or heard from authentic sources. If speaking truth leads to injury of others, then better to tell the truth with due consideration for the good of all beings. Abstinence from theft (*asteya*)—not accepting of objects (or gifts) from others. Continence (*brahmacarya*)—the control of the generative organs. Free from avarice (*aparigraha*)—consists in the non-acceptance of any objects, on account of a due sense of the discrepancies therein, in the shape of trouble attendant upon its acquirement, protection, waste or consumption, attachment, and malevolence (Jha, 1907, pp. 81-82).

Equally important are the *niyamās*, how we interact with ourselves, our internal world. *Niyama* means that which we should do—positive observances. The five principles of *niyama* are:

शौचसन्तोषतपःस्वाध्यायेश्वरप्रणिधानानि नियमाः ॥

*Śaucasantoṣatapaḥsvādhyāyeśvara praṇidhānāni niyamāḥ* ||

“The five observances consist of purity, contentment, austerity, self-study (introspection) and devotion to God” (PYS 2.32; Yogananda & Kriyananda, 2013). Sage *Vyāsa* has given the commentary as follows:

Purification (*śauca*) of the external, namely the body and the internal, namely the mind. Contentment (*santoṣa*)—the absence of any desire for acquiring things other than those that are required. Penance (*tapas*)—the bearing of the “pair of opposites”, such as hunger and thirst, heat and cold, sitting and standing, through complete and formal silence. Study (*svādhyāya*)—the study of the sciences dealing with emancipation, or the repetition of the *Praṇava* (*Om*). Devotion to the Lord (*Īśvarapraṇidhāna*)—the offering of all actions to the supreme and venerable. In tune with this, it has been declared in *Yoga Sūtra*:

ततः प्रत्यक्चेतनाधिगमोऽप्यन्तरायाभावश्च ॥

*Tataḥ pratyakcetanādhigamo'pyantarāyābhāvaśca* ||

“Hence the cognition of “reversed perception” and absence of obstacles” (PYS 1.29; Jha, 1907, pp. 83-84).

The fundamental ethical principles of *yama* and *niyama* are indispensable to *yoga* practice. *Swami Sri Yukteswar* pointed out the importance of *yama-niyama*, he says: “Hence the eight bondages disappear—hatred, shame, fear, grief, condemnation, race prejudice, pride of family, and smugness. Getting rid of the eight bondages lead to heart magnanimity. Thus one becomes fit to practice *āsana* and other steps of *yoga*” (Yukteswar, 1991, p.71). If we direct to the advanced techniques without simultaneously practicing *yama-niyama*, it is like building a giant structure on a weak foundation.

In addition, to begin meditation, the very first thing one must do is to get into a stable, comfortable position with the spine erect. *Āsana* is the third step of the *yoga* path:

स्थिरसुखमासनम्॥

*Sthirasukhamāsanam*||

“*Āsana* means to be seated in a firm, pleasant, and relaxed position” (PYS 2.46; Yogananda & Kriyananda, 2013). What is required in order for practitioner to achieve that? First of all, there are the physical functions, such as the brain which is influenced by thoughts, feelings, and emotions that are predominant in our consciousness. Further, under the musculoskeletal system, there are all these psychological, emotional, and spiritual issues going on which influence the flow of the *prāṇa* in the body. These determine a stable body and mind for sitting in the right meditation posture. If *himsā* is present, like harbouring thoughts of wanting to hurt another person; or if lacking the quality of *satya*, without practicing *asteya* and *aparigraha*, we will not sit still, relax, calm the breath and mind (Chidananda, 2015, pp. 42-43).

Another famous authoritative *yogic* text is the *Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā* written by *Yogi Svātmārāma* (15th century). He presents ten each of *yama* and *niyama* and as preparation for the practice of meditation.

अथ यमनियमाः।

अहिंसा सत्यमस्तेयं ब्रह्मचर्यं क्षमा धृतिः।

दयाआर्जवं मिताहारः शौचं चैव यमा दश॥

*Atha yamaniyamāḥ*/

*Ahimsā satyamasteyam brahmacaryam kṣamā dhṛtiḥ*/

*Dayārjavaṁ mitāhāraḥ śaucam caiva yamā daśa*||

“Non-injury, truthfulness, abstain from taking what belongs to others, continence, forbearance, fortitude, merciful, straightforward, moderate in diet and purity—these ten constitute *yama*” (HYP 1.16; Brahmananda, 1972, p.8). All these aspects of *yama* refer to action, word and thought. These are clearly elucidated in the *Śāṅḍilya Upaniṣad*:

*Ahimsā* is the state of not causing any suffering to any living being at any time by one’s thoughts, words, or acts. *Satya* is the truth that through the actions of one’s thoughts, words, or acts, leads to the well-being of creatures. *Asteya* is being non-covetous of other’s property in actions and mind. *Brahmacarya* is abstaining from sexual activity in mind, speech or body. *Dayā* is kindness towards all living being. *Ārjava* is the keeping peace of mind, words, or body in the actions or non-actions ordained or forbidden to be done. *Kṣamā* is bearing patiently all pleasant or unpleasant things, such as praise or criticism. *Dhṛti* is the preserving of firmness of mind during period of gain or loss of wealth or relatives. *Mitāhāra* is partake in agreeable and sweet food, leaving one-fourth of the stomach empty. *Śauca* is external and internal purity. Of these, the cleansing of the body by earth and water is the external; cleansing of the mind is the internal (Aiyar, 1914, pp. 173-174).

तपः सन्तोष आस्तिक्यं दानमीश्वरपूजनम्।

सिद्धान्तवाक्यश्रवणं ह्रीमती च जपो हुतम्।

नियमा दश सम्प्रोक्ता योगशास्त्रविशारदैः॥

*Tapah̄ santōṣa āstikyaṁ dānamīśvarapūjanam|*

*Siddhāntavākyaśravaṇaṁ hrīmatī ca japo hutam|*

*Niyamā daśa samproktā yogasāstraviśāradaiḥ||*

“Austerity, contentment, trust in God, charity, reverence of God, listening to *Vedāntic* doctrines, humility, a discerning mind, repeating prayers, and sacrifice—these ten constitute *niyama*, according to *yoga* experts” (HYP 1.16; Brahmananda, 1972, p.9). *Swami Brahmananda Saraswati* explained *niyama* through *Śāṅḍilya Upaniṣad*:

*Tapas* is that the austerity of the body by the observance of fasts, etc. *Santōṣa* means contentment with what one obtains unasked. *Āstikya* means faith in the teaching of the *Veda*. *Dāna* means giving with devotion what one has lawfully acquired. *Īśvarapūjana* means worshipping *Viṣṇu* or *Rudra* with a calm and clear mind. *Siddhānta-śravaṇa* means the study of *Vedānta*. *Hrīḥ* (modesty) means a repugnance to doing a thing prohibited by the *Vedās* and *Śāstrās*. *Mati* (discerning mind) means devotion to the courses laid down in the *Vedās*. *Japa* is practicing *mantrās* that are not prohibited by the *Vedās*, as taught by the Guru. There are two types of it:

audible and internal. Internal *japa* is repeating the *mantrās* mentally. *Hutam* is the regular observance of or the refraining from the actions enjoined or prohibited by the *Vedās* (Brahmananda, 1972, p.9).

The aforesaid two aphorisms of ten moral conduct of *yama* and ten observances of *niyama* are appended to *sūtra* 16 in *Haṭha Yoga*:

उत्साहात्साहसाद्दैर्यात्तत्त्वज्ञानाच्च निश्चयात्।

जनसङ्गपरित्यागात्षड्भिर्योगः प्रसिद्ध्यति॥

*Utsāhātsāhasāddhairyāttattvajñānācca niścayāt|*

*Janasaṅgaparityāgātṣaḍbhiryogaḥ prasiddhyati||*

“*Yoga* succeeds by the six qualifications — Enthusiasm, bold determination, courage, true knowledge, unshakeable faith and renunciation of the unsuitable people” (HYP 1.16; Brahmananda, 1972, p.8). These ethical disciplines of *yama-niyama* should be considered as the essential qualities to be accomplished in *yoga*. *Patañjali* places *yama-niyama* as *yoga*’s foundation—the first two limbs, whereas the *Haṭha Yoga* text commences with *āsana* as the first step. This could be at the age of *Svātmārāma*, the ethical disciplines were taken for granted on the *yogic* path, so he does not elaborate them at length.

## 2.4.2 RELIGIOUS SOURCES AND CLASSICAL TEXTS

### 2.4.2.1 The concept of ethics in Buddhism

Buddhism was founded based on *Buddha*’s teaching more than 2,500 years ago in India. According to traditional Buddhism, the theoretical foundation of the ethics (*śīla*) includes the theory of life, causation and the nature of mind. Buddhist ethics contains extensive concepts; they have been variously described as precept, virtue, and moral discipline. Buddhist *sādhana* theory is an important content of Buddhist ethics, and it put forwards many codes of moral conduct and encourage aspirants to abide by these codes of behaviour. Many of its precepts are established under the principles of “abstain from all evil, offer all good conduct, and purify the heart”. The ethical principles of Buddhism are complex, but the main ones include the Five Precepts, Ten Precepts or ten good acts, The Six *Pāramitās* and Four *Bodhisattva* virtues.

The Five Precepts (*pañca-śīla*) are to refrain from killing, stealing, lying, sexual misconduct, and intoxication. These are the five prohibitions that lay followers in Buddhism should uphold. They are the most basic canons of Buddhism and meant to develop mind and character to make progress



on the path to enlightenment. *Xi Chao* (400 AD) said: “Those who abstain from killing will live long, abstain from stealing will always be in peace, abstain from adultery will be pure, abstain from lying will always be respectful, and abstain from intoxicants will be enlightened.” He emphasized that the Five Precepts are beneficial to the improvement of the ethical quality of the members of the society, which is undoubted of great significance for the development of social harmony and stability.

The Ten Precepts (*dasa-sīla*) is an extension of the Five Precepts, namely, to abstain from: (1) destroying living creatures, (2) stealing, (3) adultery, (4) engaging in false speech, (5) using intoxicants, (6) taking food at inappropriate times, (7) participating in worldly amusements, (8) wearing garlands and using perfume, (9) lying on high or luxurious beds, (10) accepting gold and silver. The ten virtues explain what should not be done from the three aspects of thought, speech, and behaviour. As far as the basic content of the ten virtues is concerned, it can be said to promote universal social ethics.

The Six *Pāramitās* (perfection) and Four Bodhisattva virtues: These virtues are generally promoted in Buddhism. Wright stated that “the Buddhist *pāramitās* as a set of character ideals that guide self-cultivation and provide a concrete image of the Buddhist ideal” (Wright, 2009). The *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras*, and a large number of other *Mahāyāna* texts list six *pāramitās*: (1) *Dāna*: generosity; (2) *Śīla*: proper conduct; (3) *Kṣānti*: patience; (4) *Vīrya*: energy; (5) *Dhyāna*: meditation; (6) *Prajñā*: wisdom. The purpose of the Six *Pāramitās* is to realize the pursuit of altruism. In a moral sense, Six *Pāramitās* is a method of systematic practice to reach the Buddhist moral realm. The Four *Bodhisattva* virtues are: goodwill (*metta*), compassion (*karuṇā*), empathetic joy (*muditā*), and equanimity (*upekkha*). Developing these divine virtues through meditation and right action brings about good merit, promotes happiness, and trains the mind for ethical action. Similarly, *Patañjali Yoga Sūtra* presents four virtues that should be cultivated (Chapter 1.33).

मैत्रीकरुणामुदितोपेक्षाणां सुखदुःखपुण्यापुण्यविषयाणां भावनातश्चित्तप्रसादनम्॥

*Maitrīkaruṇāmuditopekṣāṇām sukhaduḥkhaḥpunyāpunyaviṣayāṇām  
bhāvanātaścittaprasādanam||*

“By cultivating attitudes of friendliness (*maitrī*) toward those who are happy, compassion (*karuṇā*) for the unhappy, delight (*muditā*) in the virtuous, and indifference (*upekṣāṇām*) to the wicked, one’s mind is in peace” (Yogananda & Kriyananda, 2013, p.195). Everyone in the world is longing

for happiness. Sage *Patañjali* provides these right attitudes essential for the aspirants who want bliss to flow consciously through one's being.

The Buddha provided the above mentioned basic ethical guidelines that are an integral part of the Noble Eightfold Path, which was a system of ethics close to the *yama* and *niyama* of *Rāja yoga*. The Eightfold Path is the ideological outline and criterion of Buddhist ethics. This Path is the “middle way” leading to *nirvāṇa* (liberation) having eight factors: (1) correct view or understanding, (2) correct resolve, (3) correct speech, (4) correct conduct or action, (5) correct livelihood, (6) correct effort, (7) correct mindfulness and (8) correct concentration (Harvey, 2000, p.37). These factors are also divided into three sections: Factors 3–5 pertain to *śīla*, ethics; factors 6–8 pertain to *samādhi*, meditation; factors 1–2 pertain to *prajñā*, wisdom. The “ethics” (*śīla*) group includes the ethical elements of right speech, right action and right livelihood (Harvey, 2013, pp. 83-84).

*Karma*, in the Buddhist conception, is that all beings are bound by the cosmic law of actions. Theravada monk *Bhikkhu Bodhi* elaborated *Buddha's* teaching on *karma* and rebirth, which is related to ethical characteristics. The process of rebirth, as taught by Buddha, illustrates a definite lawfulness that is inherently ethical in character. This ethical character is fixed by the fundamental dynamism that determines a being's states of rebirth and circumstances that they come across during their lives. That dynamism is *kamma* (*pali*, *karma* in *Saṃskṛta*), volitional action of body, speech, and mind. Those beings who take part in bad actions such as greed, hate and delusion cause unwholesome *kamma* that give rise to rebirth into lower states of existence. Those beings who perform good actions bring about wholesome *kamma* that give raise them into higher states of existence (Nanamoli, & Bodhi, 1995, p.48).

#### **2.4.2.2 The concept of ethics in Judeo-Christian**

The Ten Commandments are fundamental importance to both Judaism and Christianity; they are the principles associated with ethics and worship in the Bible (Exodus 20:3-17).

1. I am the Lord thy God! No other gods before me.
2. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.
3. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.
4. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.
5. Honour thy father and thy mother.
6. Thou shalt not kill.

7. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
8. Thou shalt not steal.
9. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.
10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, nor his wife, nor his servant, nor his maidservant, nor his cattle, nor anything else that belongs thy neighbour.

Happiness comes only by doing right. *Yoga* master *Paramahansa Yogānanda* said that the Ten Commandments are just another way of formulating the universal rules of *yama* and *niyama*:

The Ten Commandments may more aptly be called the Ten Eternal Rules of Happiness. The word “commandment” is an unfortunate choice, because few persons like to be commanded. When you tell a child not to do a thing, he instantly wants to do it. These Ten Commandments are being broken day in and day out, everywhere. People will still revolt against them until their spiritual sense is known. Yet the breaking of the Ten commandments is the primary source of all the misery in the world (Yogananda, 2016, pp. 309-310).

What is the important role of the commandments? For what a man sows are what he will reap (Galatians 6:7). The law of action applies to all lives. Another quotation from *Paramahansa Yogānanda*, “All the today in one's life are determined by the actions of all the yesterdays, and all the tomorrows of one's life depend upon the way in which all the todays are conducted and lived” (Yogananda, 2000, p.213). Furthermore, he explained why this subject (*yama-niyama*) is so vital:

Divine laws bequeathed to humanity as the foundation principles of all true religions are not arbitrary edicts of a Cosmic Autocrat. They are given to enable man to live in this world of cosmic delusion and satanic temptation as God's child, manifesting His image of divine qualities, rather than being helplessly identified with the flesh and its capricious senses, which are subject to delusive evil. The rules of conduct stressed by Jesus so closely parallel the moral law prescribed more ancient by India's *yogis* because they are expressions of eternal universal principles—*rita*, the divine order that upholds the cosmos and defines man's bounden duty in participating in its governance. A store of a good amount of karma from living in harmony with divine laws and forces. Thus blesses man's earthly environment with peace, health, prosperity. Accumulated bad *karma* precipitates wars, diseases, poverty, devastating earthquakes and other such calamities (Chidananda, 2015, pp. 39-40).

### **2.4.2.3 The concept of ethics in Confucianism and Taoism**

#### **2.4.2.3.1 Confucianism**

Confucianism is a philosophy and belief system concerned with ethics and morality, which was initiated by philosopher Confucius (551 BC - 479 BC) in ancient China. Confucian ethics are at the heart of its basic ideology and practice, and as guiding principle permeating the traditional culture and the way of life in China. Confucianism underlined various codes of moral life, etiquette rules, behavioural patterns and guidelines for social and individual daily life. The Five Constant Regulations (*wu chang*) are the foundational Confucian ethical principles and practises, which are assumed to be as constant and unchanging as natural rules, governing all other values and remaining the same over time. The Five Constants include:

1. *Ren* (仁, benevolence, humaneness) is the essence of humans and the highest level of self-cultivation, which manifests as loving and compassion acting towards fellowmen and the world. The master stressed, “Love all of your fellowmen” (Analects 12.22).
2. *Yi* (义, righteousness or justice) is the upholding of righteousness, and encompass altruism that is not to harm and betray others (especially friends), in exchange for their own survival and interests. *Yi* also a sense of social responsibility for mutual loving care and support between people.
3. *Li* (礼, propriety) is a term of ritual norms, a means to maintain proper etiquette and includes speaking, action and proper behaviour when dealing with others.
4. *Zhi* (智, knowledge, wisdom) implies the inner intuition necessary to perform with propriety in all situations, a knowledge acquired mainly through the study of the classical scriptures and imitating one's elders.
5. *Xin* (信, integrity, honesty) is stressed so that one's deed matches one's word and to adhere to all the proper rules.

The most important ethical teachings of Confucius are documented in the Analects (*Lunyu*) text. Its ethic concepts and themes are mainly related to our human nature, behaviour and interpersonal relationships. Some of the topics that are constantly recurring—for instance, *ren* (benevolence), *li* (propriety), *shu* (kindness and forgiveness), *zhong* (loyalty) and *xue xi* (learning)—are the ethical substances of the Analects text. The core tenet of Confucius teaching is *ren*, which is the main spirit in Analects. *Ren* has been translated variously as benevolence, good, humanity, love, virtue and so on. For various commentators, *ren* seemed to be a virtue, an all-inclusive virtue, the very best of spirit (Fingarette, 1998). The Master said, “A man who lack *ren* cannot for long endure poverty and suffering, nor can he remain long in prosperity and happiness” (Analects 4.2; Lau, 1979, p.80) ... “The *ren* are calm; the *ren* are live a long time” (Analects 6.23; Lau, 1979, p.91). If a man follows *ren* and carries it out in every activity between people, family and society, it is

seen as possible to lead to peace and lasting happiness. Confucius said: “Is *ren* so far away? If I want *ren*, then *ren* is here” (Analects 7.30; Lau, 1979, p.96) ... “First it is difficult, and only afterward do you have success” (Analects 6.22; Lau, 1979, p.91). This implication about the quality of one’s life rests in one’s commitments and constant efforts.

There are still many other elements that represent *ren*, such as *zhong* (忠 loyalty), *cheng* (诚, trustworthiness), *shu* (恕, kindness and forgiveness), *yong* (勇, courage), *wen* (温, cordial), *liang* (良, good, kind-hearted), *gong* (恭, respectful, reverent), *jian* (俭, frugal), *rang* (让, modestly, humility). Confucius gave more explanations about “*ren*” to his disciples:

*Zhong Gong* asked about *ren*. The Master said, “Don’t do to others what he doesn’t want to do to himself” (Analects 12.2; Lau, 1979, p.118).

The Master said, “A man who has *ren* is for certain to possess courage” (Analects 14.4; Lau, 1979, p.130).

*Fan Chi* asked about *ren*. The Master said, “The Master said, “While in his residence, courtesy and respect; do things with the attitude of being serious and conscientious; treat people with loyalty and sincerity” (Analects 13.19; Lau, 1979, p.127).

*Zi Zhang* asked about *ren*. Confucius said, “There are five things and whoever is capable of putting them into practice in the Empire is certainly *ren*.” *Zi Zhang* said, “May I ask what they are?” Confucius said, “They are reverent, forbearance, trust, agile and generosity. If a man is reverent, he will not be handled impolitely. If he is forbearance, he will win the support of the people. If he is trustworthy with word, his fellowmen will entrust him with the responsibility. If he is agile he will achieve results. If he is generous he will be placed in a position of authority over his fellowmen” (Analects 17.6; Lau, 1979, p.150).

There is no doubt, Confucius set himself as an example to his disciples, radiated the virtue of *ren* although he never declared the extraordinary quality and virtue for himself. The noble character of Confucius is discerned from the conversations between his disciples:

*Zi Qin* asked *Zi Gong*, “When the Master comes to a country, he always knows beforehand about its government affairs. Does he seek this qualification himself? Or is it the sovereign take the initiative to give to him?” *Zi Gong* said, “The Master gets it through being cordial, good, respectful, frugal and humility. The way the Master seeks it is, perhaps distinct from that of other men” (Analects 1.10; Lau, 1979, p.67).

*Zeng Zi* replied one disciple, “Our Master’s teaching consists of the principle of loyalty and forgiveness, and that is all” (Analects 4.15; Lau, 1979, p.81).

According to Confucius, the ethical category means that thoughts and behaviours meet certain standards, and this standard is *li*. The function of rites is to make people get along with each other and the society in harmonious ways, “In practising the rules of propriety, it is harmony that is prized” (Analects, 1.12; Lau, 1979, p.67). Confucius told his favourite student *Yan Yuan* the relation between *li* and *ren*:

*Yan Yuan* asked about *ren*. The Master said, “To overcome the self and to turn to propriety constitutes *ren*. If one day he can overcome himself and return to *ren*, the world will turn to *ren* along with him. However, the practice of *ren* comes from oneself, and not come from others.” *Yan Yuan* said, “May I ask for the more detailed items of this?” The master said, “If it is inappropriate, do not look at it. If it is inappropriate, do not listen to it. If it is inappropriate, do not speak of it. If it is inappropriate, do not do it” (Analects, 12.1; Lau, 1979, p.118).

Confucius emphasized the importance of learning and spiritual cultivation, as it is necessary for self-transformation, namely attaining personality development and moral perfection. Confucius described development of his mind on life—learning and cultivation:

Confucius said, “At fifteen, I was determined to study. At thirty, I could stand firm. At forty, I had no more perplexities. At fifty, I knew the decree of Heaven. At sixty, I was contented with whatever I heard. At seventy, I could follow my heart’s desire without break moral principles” (Analects, 2.4; Lau, 1979, p.70).

Thus, Confucius puts forward to his follower the attitude and way towards learning and education for cultivating their complete personality:

The Master said, “To learn from time to time and recite what you’ve learned, isn’t it a pleasure? To have like-minded friends come from far away to discuss and study, isn’t this really a joy?” (Analects, 1.1; Lau, 1979, p.66).

The Master said, “To be silent and understand what I have learned, to learn without losing enthusiasm, never growing tireless to teach, these things do not pose any difficulties for me” (Analects, 7.2; Lau, 1979, p.93).

The Master said, “When reviewing old knowledge, and have new experiences and new discoveries—then one can be a teacher.” (Analects, 2.11; Lau, 1979, p.71).

The Master said, “Learning without thinking, one will be ignorant and have no gain; thinking without learning makes one doubtful and uncertain” (Analects, 2.15; Lau, 1979, pp.71-72).

The Master said, “*Yu*, do you understand what I’ve taught you? when you know, to say you know, and when you do not know, to say you do not, this is wisdom” (Analects, 2.17; Lau, 1979, p.72).

The Master said, “When you see a wise person, turn your thoughts how you can equal with him. When you encounter an unworthy person, you should reflect on yourself (do you have any mistakes similar to him)” (Analects, 4.17; Lau, 1979, p.81).

*Zeng Zi* said, “Each day I inspect myself many times. In what I have done for others, have I failed to loyal to them? In my treating my friends have I being trustworthy in my words? Am I passing on to others anything that I haven’t tried myself?” (Analects, 1.4; Lau, 1979, p.66).

The Master said, “when I walking with two other people, I’m certain to find my teacher there. I pick out good points and learn from them; note their bad points and get rid of my shortcomings” (Analects, 7.22; Lau, 1979, p.95).

*Zi Gong* asked, “Why was *Kong Wenzhi* called ‘*wen*’ (cultured)?” The Master said, “He was clear-sighted and willing to learn, he was not ashamed to seek the guidance from those who were inferiors. That is why he was given the name ‘*wen*’” (Analects, 5.15; Lau, 1979, p.85).

The Analects also mentioned the necessary reverence for gods. The Master said, “Devote to work for common people and guide them obey the ethics. Respect gods and spirits but stay away from them, and this can be called wisdom” (Analects, 6.22; Lau, 1979, p.91). In accordance with this instruction, “The topics the Master did not speak of were prodigies, feats of strength, disorder and gods” (Analects, 7.21). In response to direct questions about the realm of gods and spirits, he said: “Until you are able to serve men, how can you serve spiritual being? Until you realize life, how can you realize death?” (Analects, 11.12; Lau, 1979, p.113).

## **Daoism**

*Daoism* (or *Taoism*) is a traditional religion that originated in China. The principles of *Daoism* have had a profound effect on the political, economy and culture of China in ancient times and it is also actively developing in the modern world. *Daoism* emphasise living in harmony with the *Dao* or “the way” (*Dao* is another name for God), and believes that *Dao* is the origin of everything that exists. Taoist ethical concept is mainly associated with the philosopher *Laozi* (or *Lao Tzu*, around 500 BCE), and based on *Laozi*’s “*Dao De Jing* (also known as the book of *Dao* and Virtue—*Tao Te Ching*)” as one of the fundamental text.

Daoism ethics great emphasize on the way of thinking, speaking, and doing. Kohn (2008) stated The Ten Precepts which described in *Dunhuang* manuscripts (DH 31-32) are primary principles that the seeker should live by:

1. Do not kill but always remembering the host of all living beings.
2. Do not be lustful or think evil thoughts.
3. Do not steal or receive unrighteous wealth.
4. Do not cheat or misinterpret good and evil.
5. Do not get intoxicated but always maintain pure behaviour.
6. I will make harmony with my ancestors and family and never ignore my kin.
7. When I see someone do a good action, I will support him with joy and happiness.
8. When I see someone having bad luck, I will support him with respect to recover good fortune.
9. When someone does harm to me, I will not harbour vengeful thoughts.
10. I would not expect to attain the *Dao* as long as all beings have not done so.

These are the five restraints (1-5) and five positive observances (6-10). The first five precepts (*wujie* 五戒) are universal rules that refrain from killing, sexual misconduct, stealing, lying, and intoxication, together with a set of guidelines to help practitioners to live in harmony with themselves, family members and society. They closely connect to the five prohibitions (*pañcaśīla*) of Buddhism, Jainism, as well as the five basic abstentions of Hinduism, and similar to five ethical principles of *yama* of *Rāja Yoga*. The detailed of the five precepts elaborated in the Precepts of the Highest Lord *Lao* (*Taishang Laojun Jiejing*), reveal that they connect to the cosmology and the five inner organs. Laozi says:

Heaven is led by the five planets that keep it on track. Earth has the five sacred mountains to provide stability. The seasons function according to the five phases, which stabilize their rhythm. Five sage emperors rule the state and establish proper culture. And human beings have the five inner organs to keep them supplied with *qi*, the life force. (Kohn, 2019, p.147).

According to Kohn's review on the above verse, there is a close relationship among the five precepts, five directions and five inner organs. The physical well-being will be affected when the ethical principles are violated. More specifically as follows:

“The precept to abstain from killing belongs to the direction, east. It embodies the energy of life and honours natural growth. People who harm and kill living beings will receive corresponding harm in their livers” (Kohn, 2019, p.147).



“The precept prohibits theft belongs to the direction, north. It embodies the essence of great Yin and presides over the resting and restoration of nature. People who steal will receive corresponding calamities in their kidneys” (Kohn, 2019, p.147).

“The precept to abstain from licentiousness belongs to the direction, west. It embodies the substance power of lesser Yin and preserves the purity and strength of men and women. People who delight in licentiousness will receive corresponding foulness in their lungs” (Kohn, 2019, p.148).

“The precept to abstain from intoxication belongs to the direction, south. It embodies the energy of great Yang and aids all beings in their full growth. People who indulge in drink will receive corresponding poison in their hearts” (Kohn, 2019, p.148).

“The precept to abstain from lying belongs to the Centre; its virtue is faithfulness. People who lie will receive corresponding impair in their spleen” (Kohn, 2019, p.148).

These concepts are generally common to *Daoism*. Khon notes that:

In each case, sickness and physical decline appear in the organ that matches the phase and direction of the precept violated, placing physical well-being in an immediate relationship to the moral quality of thoughts and actions. The body becomes the central agency in the understanding of the close connection between morality and well-being. It is an essential indicator of moral standing and the key vehicle for transformation, purified not only through proper insights and dedicated self-cultivation, but in the moral purity of everyday activities and thoughts (Kohn, 2019, p.148).

The *Dao De Jing* proclaim various ethic principles, such as non-violence, non-attachment, austerity, self-study and contemplation, non-covetousness, charity, worship to God in many aphorisms and the Three Treasures include the basic virtues of compassion (*ci*), moderation (*jian*) and humility (*bugan wei tianxia xian*). Laozi taught:

“Weapons cause violence; all respectable men have aversion to them. Therefore, aspirants of the Tao never make use of them” (Chapter 31; Dyer, 2007, p.186). “More lethal weapons lead to increased violence and chaos in the country” (Chapter 57; Dyer, 2007, p.328). “With the mass of slaughter, we have grief and misery. The victory of violence ends in a festival of mourning” (Chapter 31; Dyer, 2007, p.186).

Laozi emphasis living without attachment (simplicity):

“It is great to see the simplicity, to realize one’s true nature, to cast off selfishness and temper desire” (Chapter 19; Dyer, 2007, p.117).

“If you do, the virtue will be ever-existing. One will be back to the state of a child again (Chapter 38; Dyer, 2007, p.226).” Besides, he points out desire is misconduct, “No graver crime than covetousness” (Chapter 46; Dyer, 2007, p.272).

*Laozi* praises the quality of ‘contentment’ highly, he said: “Contentment alone is enough. Verily, eternal bliss can be found in your contentment” (Chapter 46; Dyer, 2007, p.272). He explained from both positive and negative sides. On the positive side, he believes, “To be content with what one has is truly rich” (Chapter 33; Dyer, 2007, p.198). Moreover, “A contented man is never disappointed. He who knows when to stop is preserved from peril, only thus can you endure long” (Chapter 44; Dyer, 2007, p.260). On its reverse side, if you are ‘discontented’, *Laozi* observed that it will bring disasters to people because: “No greater tragedy than discontentment” (Chapter 46; Dyer, 2007, p.272). The seventy-seven verse of the *Dao De Jing* asks us to decrease desires and follow the example of *Dao* and do needful charity: “Only the one who has the *Dao* offers his surplus to others. What man has more than sufficient and gives it to the world? Only the man of the *Dao*” (Chapter 77; Dyer, 2007, p.432).

*Laozi* said that the Three Treasures are the basic ethical principles for practicing *Dao* in life: “The first is compassion. The second is moderation. The third is humility” (Chapter 67; Dyer, 2007, p.376). Compassion (*ci*) was referred to additional terms such as gentle, kindness, love and charity. Moderation (*jian*) includes frugality, austerity or simplicity of living. Therefore, he advocated “discards the excessive, the extravagant, the extreme” (Chapter 29; Dyer, 2007, p.173) for self-cultivation. Humility is the quality for a successful life and adherence to the nature law of the *Dao*.

In the forty-seventh verse, *Laozi* suggests that knowledge can be attained not from outside but through contemplation on *Dao*:

Know the whole world without going out of the door. Without looking out of the window, you may see the ways of heaven. The farther one goes, the less one knows. Therefore, the sage does not venture forth and yet knows, does not look and yet names, does not strive and yet attains completion (Chapter 41; Dyer, 2007, p.242).

In the fifty-one verse of the *Dao De Jing*, *Laozi* implies the mysterious life force is the divine essence residing in all creation, all beings worship the Supreme Being:

The *Dao* gives them life, virtue nourishes and nurtures them, shapes them according to their kinds, perfects them, giving to each its strength. Therefore, all beings honour the Way and value its virtue. They have not been commanded to worship the Tao and pay respect to virtue, but they always do so spontaneously (Chapter 51; Dyer, 2007, p.298).

*Laozi* offers ethical and spiritual teachings concerning the development of virtue:

Cultivate the Dao within oneself, and one's virtue will be perfected. Cultivate it within the household, and one's virtue will be plentiful. Cultivate it within the neighbourhood, and one's virtue will be long-lasting. Cultivate it within the nation, and one's virtue will be widespread. Cultivate it within the whole world, and one's virtue will be universal (Chapter 54; Dyer, 2007, p.315).

In the review of Khon's book "Cosmos and Community: The ethical dimension of Daoism" (Khon, 2008), the author speaks about the similarities between Daoism and Confucianism:

Daoist integrated Confucian virtues and demands of social cooperation, namely, popular concepts of reciprocity, *karmic* retribution and the perfection of virtue. Additionally, Khon also discusses Buddhist impacts on Daoism and the Ten Precepts: "Buddhist ethics have been identified as ethics of intention, as a form of moral determinism, and especially in Mahayana, as a system that promotes altruism over all other considerations". Daoists and Buddhists believe that the law of *karma* will either reward or punish individuals according to their thoughts, deeds, and actions. However, Daoism places a stronger emphasis on intention than does Buddhism (Waxman, 2012).

#### **2.4.2.4 The concept of ethics in Hinduism**

*Sanātana Dharma*, literally means "eternal *dharma*", is also known as Hinduism. Dharma, from the *Saṃskṛta* root *dhri*, means "to uphold or support", is the eternal principles of righteousness that upholds all creation and harmony of the universe; man's inherent duty is to live in harmony with these principles. Ethics, morality, virtue and righteous are parts of the concept of *dharma*. The concept of ethics in Hinduism emerges from the literature of *Vedās*, which is mainly discussed in the *Dharmaśāstrās* (theological texts on *Dharma*). *Manusmṛiti* is most important among them. For instance, *Manusmṛiti* initially prescribed a tenfold law for the householders to live a *dharmic* life: patience (*dhṛti*), forgiveness (*kṣamā*), self-control (*dama*), non-stealing (*asteya*), purity the body and mind (*śauca*), coercion of the organs (*indriya-nigraham*), wisdom (*dhi*), right knowledge (*vidya*), truthfulness (*satyam*) and abstention from anger (*akrodha*). The highest state

is attained by those *Brāhmanas* who carefully studying the tenfold law and then follow it. (Buhler, 1886, p.215).

*Apastamba* (Chapter 1.23.6) declared the following qualities—there is agreement that these apply to all orders of life:

Avoiding anger, excitement, greed, perplexity, hypocrisy, and malice; speaking the truth; and avoiding overeating, calumny, and envy; sharing, liberality, rectitude, gentleness, tranquillity, self-control, amity with all creatures, *yoga*, *Ārya*-like conduct, benevolence, and contentment. By practicing them according to the rules, a man attains the All (Olivelle, 2000, p.61).

The Persian historian *Albiruni* who visited India in the early 11th century, summed up the nine commandments of Hindu religion of his time, that is, the concept of ethics and virtuous behaviour among Hindus (Sachau, 1910, p.74):

1. A man shall not kill.
2. Nor lie.
3. Nor steal.
4. Nor whore.
5. Nor hoard up treasures.
6. He is perpetually to practice holiness and purity.
7. He is to perform the prescribed fasting continuously and to dress in a shabby manner.
8. He is to cling to God's adoration with praise and thanksgiving.
9. He is always to have in mind the word Om, the word of creation, without pronouncing it.

These restraints and observances correspond to *yamās* and *niyamās* of *Yoga Sūtra*. According to Hinduism, an ethics life is essential for removing ignorance and to achieve a liberated life. Liberation through knowledge can only be obtained by abstaining from evil (Sachau, 1910). These ethical disciplines are mainly related to our behaviour, and are considered to be the very foundation of our spiritual and practical life.

The ethical materials discussed in the classical literature of Hindus are very rich. As Widgery (1930) puts it, "The ethics of the Hindus are based upon a number of fundamental principles, partly metaphysical, partly psychological, and partly sociological. These may be classed in different groups, which one of them is the principle of the *guṇās* (qualities), concerned with the inner tendencies of conduct." The *Bhagavad Gītā* (BG), which is the scripture of *yoga* and the

science of God-realization discusses the three qualities inherent in cosmic nature in the fourteenth chapter:

सत्त्वं रजस्तम इति गुणाः प्रकृतिसम्भवाः ।

निबध्नन्ति महाबाहो देहे देहिनमव्ययम् ॥

*sattvaṁ rajas tama iti guṇāḥ prakṛiti-sambhavāḥ |*

*nibadhnanti mahā-bāho dehe dehinam avyayam ||*

“O Mighty-armed (Arjuna)! the three *guṇās* inherent in *Prakṛti*—*sattva* (purity), *rajas* (passion), and *tamas* (ignorance). These modes imprison in the body the Imperishable Dweller” (BG 14.5; Yogananda, 2016, p.907).

तत्र सत्त्वं निर्मलत्वात्प्रकाशकमनामयम् ।

सुखसङ्गेन बध्नाति ज्ञानसङ्गेन चानघ ॥

*tatra sattvaṁ nirmalatvāt prakāśhakam anāmayam |*

*sukha-saṅgena badhnāti jñāna-saṅgena cānagha ||*

“O Sinless One, of these three *guṇās*, the stainless *sattva* gives enlightenment and well-being. Nevertheless, it fetters man through attachment to happiness and attachment to knowledge” (BG 14.6). This stanza explains why even good actions keep man bound to wheel of rebirth. The good actions that virtuous men to do for others should not be performed with egotistical pride, for attaining name or fame. Instead, all actions should be performed with the thought of devotion to God, then no *karma* will be incurred. Thus, true happiness and wisdom can be attained (Yogananda, 2016, p.908).

रजो रागात्मकं विद्धि तृष्णासङ्गसमुद्भवम् ।

तन्निबध्नाति कौन्तेय कर्मसङ्गेन देहिनम् ॥

*rajo rāgātmakam viddhi tṛṣṇā-saṅga-samudbhavam |*

*tan nibadhnāti kaunteya karma-saṅgena dehinam ||*

“O *Arjuna*, understand that the *rajas* is imbued with passion, giving birth to desire and attachment; it strongly binds the embodied soul by a clinging to works” (BG 14.7; Yogananda, 2016, p.909). Performing activities for selfish purpose one becomes deeply attached to the worldly desires and this binds one by the cosmic law of earthly rebirth. This is *rajasic* characteristic in most human being (Yogananda, 2016, p.909).

तमस्त्वज्ञानजं विद्धि मोहनं सर्वदेहिनाम् ।

प्रमादालस्यनिद्राभिस्तन्निबध्नाति भारत ॥

*tamas tv ajñāna-jam viddhi mohanam sarva-dehinām /*

*pramādālasya-nidrābhis tan nibadhnāti bhārata ॥*

“O Arjuna, *tamas* is caused by ignorance, deluding all embodied beings. It binds them by misunderstanding, idleness, and slumber” (BG 14.8; Yogananda, 2016, p.909). *Tamas* is the quality of carelessness and indolence, which is the cause of the misery of all kinds. The *tamasic* man indulges in oversleeping, shunning the partially uplifting *rajasic* actions and the most uplifting *sattvic* actions (Yogananda, 2016, p.908).

सत्त्वं सुखे सञ्जयति रजः कर्मणि भारत ।

ज्ञानमावृत्य तु तमः प्रमादे सञ्जयत्युत ॥

*sattvam sukhe sañjayati rajaḥ karmaṇi bhārata /*

*jñānam āvṛitya tu tamaḥ pramāde sañjayaty uta ॥*

“*Sattva* attaches to happiness; *rajas* binds toward actions; and *tamas* to misunderstanding by eclipsing the power of prejudice” (BG 14.9; Yogananda, 2016, p.910). A man whose nature and actions are good is usually attached to virtue and it brings inner contentment and happiness. A man accustomed to secular activities is generally attached to those works and show restlessness. A man lacking knowledge is not able to distinguish and comprehend his misconceptions and errors. The majority of mankind carries out actions under the influence of these three *guṇās* and stays in the sphere of *rajasic* state which is bound by the law of *karma*. *Paramahansa Yogānanda* pointed out that activities performed in *sattvic* way can transform *tamasic* and *rajasic* states into a *sattvic* state:

Such worldly people, at the very least, maintain mental alertness, well beyond the *tamasic* plane of sloth and befuddlement. They have a chance to attain a good *sattvic* state if they learn to perform actions for God rather than for egoistic gain. Even if they are not yet free of egotism, people who conscientiously fulfil their proper worldly duties, despite their restlessness and worries, learn to behave in progressively better or *sattvic* ways and to conduct activities in a happy frame of mind. Aspiring human beings living in this middle sphere of activity find their mental trend is moving them upward—even though a great many remain for a long time in this midsphere, entangled in egotistical performance of good actions (Yogananda, 2016, p.910).

रजस्तमश्चाभिभूय सत्त्वं भवति भारत ।

रजः सत्त्वं तमश्चैव तमः सत्त्वं रजस्तथा ॥

*rajas tamaś cābhibhūya sattvaṁ bhavati bhārata |*

*rajaḥ sattvaṁ tamaś chaiva tamaḥ sattvaṁ rajas tathā ||*

“Sometimes *sattva* is predominant, overpowering *rajas* and *tamas*; sometimes *rajas* prevails, not *sattva* or *tamas*; and sometimes *tamas* obscures *sattva* and *rajas*” (BG 14.10; Yogananda, 2016, p.911). This is condition of human conduct mixed of good and evil and subject to the three modes of *guṇās*.

सर्वद्वारेषु देहेऽस्मिन्प्रकाश उपजायते ।

ज्ञानं यदा तदा विद्याद्विवृद्धं सत्त्वमित्युत ॥

लोभः प्रवृत्तिरारम्भः कर्मणामशमः स्पृहा ।

रजस्येतानि जायन्ते विवृद्धे भरतर्षभ ॥

अप्रकाशोऽप्रवृत्तिश्च प्रमादो मोह एव च ।

तमस्येतानि जायन्ते विवृद्धे कुरुनन्दन ॥

*sarva-dvāreṣhu dehe 'smin prakāśha upajāyate |*

*jñānaṁ yadā tadā vidyād vivṛddhaṁ sattvaṁ ity uta || (14.11)*

*lobhaḥ pravṛttir ārambhaḥ karmaṇām aśhamaḥ spṛihā |*

*rajasy etāni jāyante vivṛddhe bhāratarṣhabha || (14.12)*

*aprakāśho 'pravṛttiś cha pramādo moha eva cha |*

*tamasy etāni jāyante vivṛddhe kuru-nandana || (14.13)*

“One may know that *sattva* is prevalent when the light of wisdom shines through all the sense gates of the body” (BG 14.11; Yogananda, 2016, p.912). “Preponderance of *rajas* causes greed, activity, undertaking of works, restlessness, and desire” (BG 14.12; Yogananda, 2016, p.912). “*Tamas* as the ruling *guṇa* produces darkness, sloth, neglect of duties, and delusion” (BG 14.13; Yogananda, 2016, p.913). The ethical concept of the Hindus is based upon the acts of humankind. One reaps what one sows. The good or bad results arise according to one’s *karma* (action). The man in whom *sattva* activity predominates is characterized by wisdom, which brings health and happiness. Worldly actions with attachment and desire cause pain, grief and disillusionments. Wrong activity is ignorance, lack the power of self-control, not understanding life and with no discrimination of right and wrong.

Thus, the *Gītā* exhort the aspirants to right action—physical, mental, and spiritual—toward the goal of liberation. The sixteenth Chapter cites the *sattvic* qualities that lead men to freedom, and points out the *tamasic* or evil tendencies that prevents men to attain divinity. These twenty-six ennobling qualities are imbued with virtue and purity of heart, which also embodied ethic principles of *yama* and *niyama* (Chapter 16, 1-3):

श्रीभगवानुवाच ।

अभयं सत्त्वसंशुद्धिर्ज्ञानयोगव्यवस्थितिः ।

दानं दमश्च यज्ञश्च स्वाध्यायस्तप आर्जवम् ॥

अहिंसा सत्यमक्रोधस्त्यागः शान्तिरपैशुनम् ।

दया भूतेष्वलोलुप्तं मार्दवं हीरचापलम् ॥

तेजः क्षमा धृतिः शौचमद्रोहोनातिमानिता ।

भवन्ति सम्पदं दैवीमभिजातस्य भारत ॥

*Śrī-bhagavān uvāca:*

*abhayaṁ sattva-saṁśudhīr jñāna-yoga-vyavasthitiḥ |*

*dānaṁ damaś ca yajñaś ca svādhyāyas tapa ārjavam || (16.1)*

*ahiṁsā satyam akrodhas tyāgaḥ śāntir apaiśunam |*

*dayā bhūteṣv aloluptvaṁ mārḍavaṁ hrīr acāpalam || (16.2)*

*tejaḥ kṣamā dhṛtiḥ śaucam adroho nāti-mānitā |*

*bhavanti sampadam daivīm abhijātasya bhārata || (16.3)*

“The Blessed Lord said: Fearlessness, purity of heart, steadfastness in gaining wisdom and in practising *yoga*, charity, control of the senses, sacrifice, study of the holy scriptures, austerity, and straightforwardness” (BG 16.1; Yogananda, 2016, p.955); “Non-injury, truthfulness, freedom from wrath, renunciation, peacefulness, non-slanderousness, compassion for all creatures, absence of greed, gentleness, modesty, lack of restlessness” (BG 16.2; Yogananda, 2016, p.955); “Radiance of character, forgiveness, patience, cleanness, freedom from hate, absence of conceit—these qualities are the wealth of a divinely inclined person, O Descendant of *Bhārata*” (BG 16.3; Yogananda, 2016, p.955). *Paramahansa Yogānandaji* said: “These twenty-six qualities are all divine attributes of God; and they are the spiritual heritage of man. The more he expresses these virtues, the more he expresses the true image of God in which he is made” (Yogananda, 2016, p.969).



## 2.5 SUMMARY

Indeed, the underlying essential truths of all great world religions and scriptures can find commonality in ethics, which is equivalent to *yoga* ethics. Even though they were formulated under a specific social and historical background, they go beyond time, race and culture, that is valid for all. In a positive intent, they provide not only personal but also social guidelines for developing physical, mental and spiritual dimensions of well-being. If our actions and ways of thinking engage us in universal ethics with increasing awareness, then it is possible to cultivate one's personality, creating pure altruism in the community and also harmony with nature.

The *yamās* and *niyamās* are the foundation for achieving a meaningful life-changing pattern. Living according to these principles brings benevolence, compassion, love, peace and understanding our inner and outer worlds. This leads to the first key point: We have to convince ourselves that we want to practice these rules. In other words, we need to be constantly be mindful of the wonderful transformation that their practice will accomplish in our lives—how much they will enhance our ability to conduct our lives in a way that is fulfilling and bring lasting happiness.

The results of *yama* and *niyama* studies to be reported in the second part suggest that incorporating ethical disciplines into our everyday practice promotes physical, psychological and spiritual well-being.

The next chapter reports the review of the scientific literature on *yogic* practices and introduce the related measurement tools.