

# The Role of Yoga in Relation to Political Approach

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## **Abstract**

*According to yoga Journal's latest study, there are currently 20 million Americans practicing yoga while this number represents people of diverse political and spiritual beliefs, that such a vast array of practitioners come together in a similar space is telling. I am not insinuating, they all enjoy the same thing; with so many styles of yoga available, There is hardly one unanimity on what yoga 'is' as the Romanian Learner of religious Mircea Eliade wrote "If the word yoga means many things, that is because yoga is many things"*

*What I'm suggesting and what I'm seeing more of in a shooting community, is that the values and morals of yoga affect national policy. When you take care of yourself you generally take care of others.*

*In this research paper we are discussing "what does yoga have to do with politics and why should we care?"*

## **Keywords**

*Yoga for politician, Yama and Niyamas, Mahatma Gandhi, Controversy about yoga and politics, My Interpretation*

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## **Introduction**

Political ethics sometimes called political morality or public ethics is the practice of making moral judgments about political actions. As a field of study, It is divided into two branches. One branch, the ethics of process (or ethics of office) focuses on public officials, politicians and the methods they use. The other branch, the ethics of policy (public policy) concentrates on judgements about policies and laws. Both draw on moral and political philosophy democratic theory and political science. Political morality or ethics more closely reflect the considerations that political leader or agents could take into account in making decisions and policies. This is the need of today.

Now the central question is that “should It be essential for our political leaders, representatives or agents to do yoga?” I am not just talking about physical practice but I am talking about the frame work that yoga gives us to live well. The words like ethics, authenticity, kindness, non-violence are too important for a person who administrate a country.

There are some reasons why should politicians do yoga and How do yama and Niyamas help?

## **Ahinsha**

Ahinsha not to hurt anyone by our words, our deeds and even we should not think about hurting anyone. In modern culture if we want to survive we have to follow it. The whole world is understanding this concept. Empathy, compassion. Kindness are vitally important attributes for our elected officials because they are responsible for making decisions for innocent public kindness underpins everything In some commentaries on Ahinsha.<sup>1</sup> there is a reference to its practice meaning also “to rise above anger” and “living in perfect peace and harmony”. Only yoga cultivates compassion and power to get victory on evil.

## **Satya**

Satya means to speak truth and we can say confirming the facts in true way. Truthfulness and honesty are prerequisites in the struggle for social justice. Often those who are in power, use manipulation and deceit cynically to maintain their privileges and to prevent others from changing their rule.

Everybody knows promises are made to gain votes. Sympathy stories are told to public to get votes But political parties should not forget serving self does not benefit the quality of life. I must say here if our politicians want to serve country they should do yoga. As yoga, The ancient science of India is a conscious process for gaining mastery over the mind and thereby grow faster from the animal level to

become normal human beings and reach heights of greatness, super human levels and ultimately attain divinity or perfection itself<sup>2</sup>

### **Asteya**

This goes beyond “thou shalt not steal” and appears in some religions as “do unto others as you would do yourself.” This has wide application in social and political affair both in terms of social and economic equality but also on long term environmental sustainability and our duty to future generation. Contemporary commentators in yoga world have cited this as a strong argument for sustainable living.<sup>3</sup>

### **Aparigraha**

Abstention from greed and hoarding implies modest and equitable life style. Aparigraha also means not to accept gifts or bribes which certainly connected to politics. The non attachment aspect of aparigraha is associated with the non attachment to earthy things or as relationships. Santosha is also connected to this. Swami Satchinanda’s commentary on the yoga sutras has echoes of this approach “we not going to change the whole world but we can change ourselves and feel as free as birds. We can be serve in the midst of calamities.”<sup>4</sup>

### **Saucha**

It means purifications, cleanliness and simplicity. It is also related to spirituality of company one keeps (the concept of satsang) Keeping good company is uplifting whilst that of rogues certainly isn’t politicians should avoid bad company and the flaunting of wealth and corruption.

This conscious process of gaining mastery helps politicians to manifest the innate potentialities dormant in them and blossom into men with the five fold personality development (Physical, mental, intellectual, emotional and spiritual). Yoga harmonies their growth and through balance helps in total development. Such growth brings the divine qualities like love, affection sacrifice etc.<sup>5</sup>

### **Developing and Maintaining a good Foundation**

It is really important to work at having a good foundation. A good physical foundation as well as feeling secure about ourselves, where we are and who we are in the world. But now in every country we see the conflict of power, position. No body care for culture and character. In those corridors of power there seems to be enemies out in front enemies lurking behind closed doors. It is a tough environment to feel secure in The practice of yoga encourages as to tap into our heart centre. So no matter what storm rages around us we can go within and find our own strength. “Politicians are the select few who guide the destiny of humankind. Since they are fallible like the rest of us. Sometimes they contribute in a positive manner sometimes

in a negative manner. Anything that helps to make the difficult work of politicians easier and make their decisions more positive can be of great benefit to the politician themselves as well as to the people whose lives they guide one of these tools is yoga.”<sup>6</sup>

### **Relaxation**

Politics is a art of compromise or we can say a art of diplomacy during a debate or conference a politician needs a clear and logical mind in order to explain his case to other politicians or the general public. A person who can speak clearly is much more likely to influence his listeners than a person who confuses his ideas. Yoga relaxes the mind and allows the individual to propound his ideas with force and clarity. An hour’s practice of yoga before debates or conference can be of immense use and help to influence the final outcome of political discussions. Being a politician, a person must be able to understand the international relation also.

In international political conferences diplomats of many countries participates and behind these conferences there are often ulterior motives, which were not admitted or discussed. By doing yoga, a politician can have clear mind which heightened his faculties of intuitions and understanding. In this way he will be able to detect what other countries really want By the way other people spoke. he can detect whether they were sincere or not and he can represent his country in a useful manner.

### **Managing stress**

Our leaders carry a big burden. Looking after a country of different religions, different language, different culture is not a easy task. Like yogis our politicians should learn to look after our whole self. They should practice being flexible in both body and mind to go with the flow of whatever life throws at us. A regular yoga practice and meditation practice helps to keep stress at bay, allowing to do our duties and live our lives more effectively.

By meditation practice a political leader will be able to purify his mind of the dross that clusters most peoples minds, personal likes, dislikes prejudices, fears and so on. Therefore he was able to view the problems of India and his fellowmen with a mind that only considered the facts of the situation without the influence of personal whims. He can see the world situations in its true light.

### **Concentration detachment**

Now the question remains. Is it possible for political leader to develop a one pointed mind? The answer is most definitely yes. Any politicians can develop one pointed mind and greatness by doing yoga. The interest must come from the depth of the being and from the heart and not be intellectual or half hearted.<sup>7</sup>

Detachment does not mean disdain or non interest in the affair of world. It means our mind does not have negative repercussions and resulting mental disturbances in the mind. One should not allow external situations to affect the mind and fill it with complexes.

### **The greatest politician of 20<sup>th</sup> century**

No doubt it was Mahatma Gandhi. His political career and the deed, he did is a shining symbol of what a man with his high ideals, a man with love. He is an example to all and to politicians in particular. He represents the greatness that a person can achieve with a unified body, mind and soul. He was a yogi. His life was an open book. He always lived with ideals. He had devoted himself to serve public through Karma yoga. He practiced mouna, mantra and fasting. His yoga guru was Paramhansa yoga nanda. Gandhiji was highly educated but his intellectual facilities were not enough. The attribute that made him rise above other people was his firmness, truthfulness, non-violence. These attributes, he developed through yoga (Sadhna). “There were great soul like Mahatma Gandhi for whom politics was an effective means for self purification and enlightenment.”<sup>8</sup>

### **Controversy about yoga and politics**

In ‘light on yoga’ Iyengar discusses the Yamas and Niyamas referring to earthly and social duties. Describing Ahinsha Iyengar says, “The yogi believes... that he is born to help others and he looks upon creation with eyes of love. He rejoices if he can help them to be happy.”<sup>9</sup> I think this is also connected with a politician. There is much more discussion of social and political issues and their relevance to yoga among contemporary yogis and political realist. Some political realist says yoga values, moral and ethics has no place in politics.<sup>10</sup>

They argue politics takes place in a rough and tumble world where individuals and national pursue power in their own interest. If politicians are to be effective in this world they can not be bound in rules that would constrain this pursuit.

On the other hand, Swami Jyotirmayananda argues, “The field of politics is another important area in which the world’s problem must be tackled.... yogis do not become better yogis by abstaining from politics.

“The summer 2009 edition of spectrum included a lengthy feature by shonil Bhagwat which examined the yamas and Niyamas for guidance on our responsibilities to the planet and on social and economic matters. The following year Matthew Remski published a two part article in yoga and health magazine railing against the blinkered attitude of many yogis towards their environmental responsibilities.

“Yoga is more than only physical fitness. We are not celebrating a day but

we are training the human mind to begin a new era of peace.” ,Modi said while addressing the crowd before the half hour yoga programme began at Rajpath. “This is a programme for human welfare, a tension free world and a programme to spread the message of good will.” ,Modi said and thanked the UNO for adopting his idea for a world yoga day. “Yoga is good for both mind and body”, Arvind Kejriwal, the chief minister of Delhi, said on this occasion.

On the other hand International Yoga Day sparks controversy in India. Though yoga brings inner peace but in India last days it had become a cause of stress. The issue has divided political parties and polarized people among religious lines. It is a great fact, over 190 countries including 40 muslim countries supported the move to have a special day for yoga but in India yoga has become a religious issue.

Historian Dilip Simeon writes that “this manufactured controversy is the ‘modus operandi’ of Hindu right wing in India.” In an article in the Indian Express. He says that “It is not wisdom that interests them but the compulsory unification of thought and culture.”

Shripad Yesson Naik denies the allegations and notes that yoga has nothing to do with religion. We are not forcing people to do yoga. Naik, the minister said, “we just want to propagate the virtue of good wealth.”

My personal interpretation of yoga philosophy is one that sees the journey to words “enlightenment as inevitably a social human one implying compassion for others, honesty, equity and justice and respect for the natural resources of world.” I am not suggesting to whom I vote for in elections I am just saying our political must be active trustworthy If they will do yoga they will be able to make a better earth for human being politicians are always obeyed by public If they do yoga public will also do. If they move on the path of ethics public and even world also follow. It could lead to the world of mankind. In the end I exclaimed “what a marvelous place this earth could be if everyone do yoga. It is for everyone and specially for our political representatives.”

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