

Standards of Behavior for Integral Yoga Ministers

Part 1 – Introduction

Describes how the Yoga Sutra Yamas and Niyamas guide Ministers in right action. They represent the *principles* on which we should base our actions. The next section, *Standards of Behavior*, defines the detailed behaviors which should govern our actions as ministers. Together, these guide Integral Yoga Ministers in embodying the teachings of yoga, serving selflessly, and leading with spiritual integrity in the spirit of interfaith harmony.

1. Ahimsa (Non-Violence) – *Compassion in Action*: Live and lead without causing harm; create a safe and inclusive space for all; practice active listening and gentle speech.

2. Satya (Truthfulness) – *Honesty with Humility*: Speak and act with truthfulness, balanced by compassion and timing; be honest about your training and own level of realization; Avoid exaggeration or spiritual inflation.

3. Asteya (Non-Stealing) – *Not taking what is not yours (possessions and ideas) not hoarding resources or taking more than one's fair share. Do this by promoting contentment and gratitude.*

4. Brahmacharya (Self-Control) – *Right Relationships*: Maintain appropriate boundaries; uphold celibacy if appropriate; conduct relationships with integrity; avoid power imbalances/romantic entanglements w/ students.

5. Aparigraha (Non-Possessiveness) – *Serve Without Clinging*: Do not seek fame, control, or personal gain through your ministerial role; avoid attachment to titles, followers, or recognition; practice selfless service.

6. Svadhyaya (Self-Study) – *Continuous Inner Inquiry*: Regularly study scriptures and teachings of Sri Gurudev; participate in ongoing self-development; remain humble as a lifelong student of Truth.

7. Ishvarapranidhana (Surrender to God) – *Devotion Above Ego*: Let Divine Will guide your actions; prioritize service to humanity and the Divine above self-interest; begin all actions with the remembrance of Om and the Guru.

8. Saucha (Purity) – *Cleanliness of Body, Mind & Environment*: Maintain physical cleanliness, especially in sacred spaces, purify your mind through daily meditation, japa, and ethical conduct; avoid intoxicants.

9. Santosha (Contentment) – *Inner Peace and Gratitude*: Avoid jealousy, competition, or materialism; serve from a place of contentment/inner joy, not ego; accept others where they are on their path, and rejoice in their growth.

10. Tapas (Discipline) – *Steadfastness in Practice*: Maintain your personal sadhana daily; stay committed to yogic lifestyle and vows; approach ministry with dedication and resilience.

Remember: Integral Yoga Ministers are called not just to teach, but to embody the teachings — to serve with love, humility, and surrender. You are not just a guide, but a living example of the path.

Part 2: Minister Standards of Behavior

The first section outlines the positive behaviors we should exhibit as ministers and the second section describes the behaviors we must avoid as ministers.

Be an inspiration to others!

<i>Treat others with kindness & respect</i>	Maintain a pleasant and authentic self-presentation while interacting with others both publicly and privately. You are an ambassador of Integral Yoga. Respect the confidentiality of sensitive information, including the privacy of individuals receiving services, counseling, or ministry.
<i>Work inclusively & collaboratively</i>	Ensure the people you interact with feel valued, welcomed and that they belong. To build your understanding and collaboration, seek others' input. Be considerate and act with the appropriate sense of urgency when dealing with time sensitive issues.
<i>Maintain personal sadhana & study</i>	Practice some form of a regular daily sadhana for personal spiritual growth, such as the study of practical applications of the Yoga Sutras, Bhagavad Gita, and teachings of the IY lineage.
<i>Offer service to Integral Yoga, the Ministry, Sangha, and the World</i>	Given our commitment to service, we devote at least four hours per month serving various IY organizations, ministry, and sangha and be capable advising others on the Teachings of Integral Yoga. Ensure your actions are free of self-interest and motivation for personal gain. Should your service include providing spiritual guidance, seek appropriate training in spiritual guidance skills. This includes knowledge and awareness of legal and ministerial requirements of counseling others.
<i>Share the teachings of Integral Yoga</i>	Participate in one or more Integral Yoga events that includes attending or sharing the teachings as a speaker, or contributing in writing in any form of media about the teachings of Integral Yoga at least once a year. If you can no longer be active in formal teaching, attending public events or having

	private conversations to discuss the teachings is a valuable ministry activity.
<i>Be open to new ideas and change</i>	The teachings of Yoga are thousands of years old, but we all need to change to adapt the IY organization to new challenges and current social realities. New needs require new ways of doing things, while still maintaining our core values. Old wine; new bottle.
<i>Model an Integral Yoga Lifestyle</i>	Be a living example of the Integral Yoga Teachings, with humility and grace. Conduct ourselves with honesty and integrity in all interactions, both within the ministry and with the public. Maintain a drug, tobacco, and alcohol-free, ahimsa-based vegetarian diet (except for medical necessity). Devote engagement in sexual activity only within a loving committed relationship. Promote and reinforce the feeling of an Integral Yoga community and family, and a ministry community.
<i>Model Truth is One, Paths are Many</i>	Respect all spiritual traditions and create an inclusive, welcoming environment. Do not impose beliefs. Instead, serve with openness and appreciation for other paths.
<i>Operate with Financial Integrity</i>	Be transparent and ethical in all matters involving donations, fees, or use of resources. Avoid financial conflicts of interest or misusing your role for personal profit.

Minimum Standards of Ministry Conduct - Misconduct

The Integral Yoga Ministry is committed to providing an environment that is free from inappropriate behavior or misconduct of any kind. These standards are required of Integral Yoga Ministers. The Ministry follows these principles when dealing with misconduct:

Due process — If the Ministry Board receives a complaint about a minister or seminarian, we will attempt to resolve the problem informally, which works best especially if the complaint is based on a simple misunderstanding. If that fails, we will conduct an investigation which will be performed in a compassionate, confidential, respectful and professional manner.

Progressive discipline — Many organizations use a “progressive” model: minor offenses receive lighter sanctions, with escalation if behavior recurs or is more severe.

Restorative options — Where possible and appropriate, a path of reconciliation, apology, remediation, and/or spiritual counseling may be followed.

Legal obligations — If misconduct involves potential legal violations (e.g. abuse, harassment, financial fraud, etc.), the organization needs to comply with mandated reporting laws and involve legal authorities as needed.

Support and Accountability – We recognize that making a complaint against a minister can be difficult and we will support the complainant to ensure they are supported in the process and that there is NO retaliation for making such complaint.

Being a minister means acting with accountability. Likewise, a complainant is accountable for ensuring all complaints are truthful, accurate, uninflated, and free from any vindictive “get even” sentiment.

Misconduct

<i>Illegal, unethical, or discriminatory behavior</i>	Any action that represents breaking the law, and/or harassment and discrimination based on race, age, gender, ability, culture/religion, and sexual orientation /identity. This also includes abusing/taking advantage of one’s Ministerial role for personal purposes, including doing anything that represents a conflict of interest. (See Harassment Policy.)
<i>Sexual misconduct</i>	Engaging in sexual activity outside of an exclusive loving committed relationship. Also includes harassment, such as unwelcome sexual remarks or physical advances. (See Harassment Policy.)
<i>Offensive interactions with others</i>	Verbal/written interactions that can be reasonably viewed as offensive to another person or organization. This includes blaming, shaming, accusing, bullying, spreading rumors,

	attacking, or making false statements about others.
<i>Offensive comments about Swami Satchidananda, the IY Organization or Teachings, or other spiritual organizations</i>	Making disparaging comments (verbal or print) or in media about the IY teachings, the Organization, or our founder. This includes saying or doing anything that represents demeaning or belittling another religion, spiritual path or organization.
<i>Failure to Support the Ministry</i>	The Ministry Board has the responsibility to fund the operating expenses and activities of the IY Ministry. Ministers are required to financially support the ministry's services through annual dues, except for annually board-approved exceptions for financial hardship. Ministers should not willfully and deliberately disobey official instructions, decisions, or acts of the Ministry Board in response to inappropriate behavior.
<i>Failure to respect confidentiality</i>	Members should respect the confidentiality of sensitive information, including but not limited to; personal, financial, sexual, and organizational matters, especially the confidentiality of those that seek guidance from you. Teams that are investigating a complaint have the right and obligation to interview all relevant principles and witnesses.

Consequences for Misconduct

Consequences are determined by the entire ministry board to ensure fairness. Consequences are also determined by CONTEXT – the circumstances surrounding the incident(s) that may have contributed to outcomes.

Level	Examples	Potential Outcomes
Level 1 – Mild Offenses	Speaking harshly to others, failing to meet obligations, speaking untruths, not meeting service obligations to the IY organization, sangha or ministry community, minor infrequent deviations from IY diet.	Speak with IY Clergy to discuss the gaps and together find ways to close them, counseling, finding alternatives that enable them to still operate as a minister while honoring the standards

Level 2 – Moderate Offenses	Repeated and consistent Level 1 violations, bullying, harshly verbally attacking others, conflicts of interest, sexually inappropriate behavior such as verbal comments, unwelcome advances of an intimate nature, sexual jokes/comments, unwelcome sexual discussions, failure to comply with confidentiality obligations, blatant repeated deviations from IY Lifestyle.	Counseling, remediation between the minister and the complainant with apologies and warnings about repeated behavior, training such as anger management, temporary removal of Ministry privileges.
Level 3 – Severe Offenses	Actions that represent violating the law, discrimination or disrespect based on protected classes, theft, fraud; sexual advances and assault, abuse of ministry power, cover-ups, obstruction of justice.	Permanent removal from the ministry, time- designated suspension from ministerial duties, (seminarians) time designated or permanent removal from the seminary, being censured, extended counseling with repeated follow-ups and monitoring.