



Niyama Principle 1 SAUCHA (*Purity and Cleanliness*)

Niyama : Second limb of yoga consists five observances called Niyama.

What is Saucha?

Saucha (pronounced sow-cha) is the first of the five principles of *niyamas*. It means purity and cleanliness of body, mind, and spirit.

- **Clean body:** When our physical bodies are clean, we feel more relaxed and readily able to focus on the path of Yoga. Distractions, disease and discomfort are less likely to present themselves when you follow hygienic practices. It also helps if the environment where you live and practices Yoga is clean and fresh so that your senses and your mind are not distracted.
- **Healthy body:** One important aspect of Saucha is the importance of the food we eat, the way we eat, and the effect it has on our bodies. Food is meant to nourish and sustain the body so that our spiritual development may continue. Over-eating or avoidance of food can cause physical problems that may negatively affect spiritual development. A weak body cannot lead to or support a healthy mind. Maintaining a diet of fruits, vegetables, grains and dairy products from cows will lead to a healthy body, and thus a healthy mind.
- **Purity of Mind and Spirit:** Besides keeping our body clean, pure and healthy, we also have to clean our Mind and Spirit. Practicing internal saucha is a way to purify our mind and spirit. **Internal saucha is purity in seeing, purity in listening, and cleansing the mind of bad habits and emotions like desire, anger, and jealousy.**

How can you practice Saucha and What are the benefits of Saucha?

1) Cleanliness makes you feel good.

Regardless of whether the feeling is your own or is inspired by your parents and elders, keeping your body, clothes, and home clean feels undeniably great. A hot shower, your favorite clean shirt, and a well organized house makes you feel ready to take on the world. Cleanliness can be thought of as being free from dirt, pollution, bad influence, clutter and bad thoughts.

2) Cleanliness keeps your mind clear and your life organized.

If your house is a total disaster, your thinking is going to feel similarly disorganized. According to the concepts of Vaastu Shastra (an ancient Indian philosophy similar to Feng Shui), there is a natural connection between the order of your environment and the state of your mind. Clutter will weigh you down and stress you out. A clean, well-organized environment will lift your spirits.

3) Cleanliness gives you a good image.

How you present yourself in life is very important. If you, your clothes, or your house looks like a mess, people are certainly going to judge your character and personality on such evidence. Perhaps that is unfair, but that is how the world works. How would you judge your friend who hasn't



showered for 2 days and is all messy and smelly? Would you want to be near that person? If that can disgust you, the same thing can happen when you don't present yourself well. When you present a neat and clean appearance to others, they will respect you and think highly of you.

4) Cleanliness leads to beauty.

That which is neat, well-proportioned and symmetrical creates beauty and appeals to the eye. What attracts you better – a well kept and clean house or a house with clutter all around? Cleanliness appeals to everyone, whether it is personal cleanliness or a clean environment. As we transform our lives to be orderly and clean, we increase the amount of beauty in our lives.

5) Through cleanliness and purity of body and mind, the mind naturally begins toward the divine, and away from the external, physical world.

Cleanliness is much more than outward appearance. It is an embrace of the ethic of sound living. It is also a state of mind and heart that involves our morals and worship.

For example, if you are jealous of your friend, your mind will keep thinking of ways for you to display feelings of resentment towards your friend, either by means of rude behavior or inappropriate actions. Once you have behaved inappropriately or spoken bad words, you cannot take these acts back. How many times have you found yourself regretting your actions after the fact? Uncontrolled emotions destroy your ability to think rationally. When your thoughts and intentions are pure, your actions will be pure and you will do the right thing. A pure mind and heart can get closer to God much easier.

6) One-pointedness with intentness (concentration)

7) Control or mastery over the senses

When our senses are pulled in certain directions, the mind follows, and so does our attention and energy. During the course of the day, most of us experience a constant, random flow of thoughts. The result is a lack of focus that leads us to lose control over our mental activity, ultimately leading to a loss of control of our actions and intentions. Devotion, self-study, and concentration are some of the methods to bring this random mental activity under control. Sri Satya Sai Baba once said, "A person might be an expert in any field of knowledge or a master of many material skills and accomplishments. But without inner cleanliness his brain is a desert waste."

8) Fitness, qualification, or capability for Self-realization

9) Pleasantness, goodness, gladness, high-mindedness (fairness or generosity of spirit), cheerfulness

10) Purification of the subtle (fine) mental essence (spirit)



Homework:

Explain how you can practice saucha to achieve (get) the following, and write benefit of such practice:

	How to practice	Benefit
Fitness		
Cheerfulness		
Beauty		
Control of senses		
Purification of mental spirit		
Organized life		
Goodness / Generosity		