

NIYAMA –PRINCIPLE 4 Swadhyaya-SELF STUDY

What is Swadhyaya?

Swadhyaya means Self-study, SELF-INTROSPECTION

Swadhyaya has two words : **Swa** and **Adhyaya**.

Swa means Self and **Adhyaya** or **Adhyayan** means study.

Swadhyaya is a wonderful method of purifying the mind and righteous molding of the thoughts and attitude. Our attitude and thoughts are expressions of what we have accumulated in the mind. The activities around us, the nature and conduct of the near and dear ones, the environment we are exposed to OR what we have been experiencing, learning or grasping, knowingly or unknowingly via the automatic process of nature, continuously creates impressions on our mind. This accumulation, together with the consequences of what we have been desiring, feeling, thinking and doing remain inscribed/stored in the unconscious mind life after life. What we have inherited from the earlier lives and what has been absorbed so far in the present life accounts for our sanskaras. Unless we make an extra effort, our thoughts and personality are shaped up by our sankaras, present environment and training. **Swadhyaya** is an attempt to choose an enlightened aura of influence, superior environment for our mind.

How can you do Swadhyaya?

1. **Satsang**- Imbibing (absorb) good thoughts of saints, Sages and great personalities through their personal contact. If you are in the inspiring company of great personalities, you are bound to be motivated to improve and illumine yourself, to rise and experience the fulfilling and glorifying horizons of life.
2. **Reading of Good Spiritual literature and pondering over it** is essential for wholesome nurturing of human intellect. Many of the great personalities, saints and sages might be living far away. Having a satsang with the great persons in their physical being is indeed a rare opportunity. But you can always communicate with them, have their guidance and experience the benefits of their company by having proximity with their thoughts through their books, listening to their recorded speeches etc.
3. **Keeping companies of Good People, friends, colleagues etc.** It is human nature to compete with, to copy, or to follow others – especially the more influential ones around. This is why you are advised to choose your friends carefully
4. **Communicate with Saints, sages and great personalities**, have their guidance and experience the benefits of their company by having proximity with their thoughts through their books, compilations of their speeches, writings on their lives and works, etc.
5. **Singing Devotional Songs.** Mental Engrossment in Spiritual Music. In order to engage the mind in **swadhyaya** singing devotional songs, spiritual music, listening to recordings of enlightening discourses may also be incorporated in it, along with studying the thoughts of elevated souls.
6. **Attempt towards changing your old habits.** Adoption of the teachings of great souls is not so easy! **Swadhyaya** gives you the direction and inspiration but it is only you who

has to make a resolute attempt towards changing your old habits and remold your 'nature' by instilling the values inspired by swadhyaya.

7. **Examine your convictions, your prejudices, blind** beliefs and illusions in the light of wisdom and guidance of the thoughts and works of those who have lived glorious and purposeful lives.

WHAT YOU THINK WHAT YOU BECOME:

First thoughts comes to mind

Thoughts becomes action

Repeated actions becomes habit

Habit turns into attitude

Over the period, attitude becomes Sanskars (intrinsic impressions and tendencies).

EFFECTS OF GOOD THOUGHTS VS BAD THOUGHTS

Good Thought

Bad Thought

Good Action

Bad Action

Repeated Good Actions become
Good Habit

Repeated Bad Actions become
Bad Habit

Good Habit turn into Good Attitude

Bad Habits turn into bad attitude

Good Attitude becomes good
Sanskars

Bad Attitude becomes bad Sanskars

Quote about Swadhyaya

Swadhyaya is an Essential Daily Ritual

Swadhyaya – the study of self in the light of the thoughts of elevated souls – is a principal means of ascent in human life. It augments knowledge, enlightens the mind and helps purifying the character and awakening the inner self. *Swadhaya* is necessary for preeminent progress and happiness in life. Adoption of this as an integral part of daily routine gradually sharpens the intellect, nurtures discerning thoughts and wisdom and illuminates the inner self. Therefore we must cultivate the habit of reading inspiring thoughts and works of great personalities and edifying scriptures and contemplate over what is read and also try disseminating it among others.-

- Pt. Shriram Sharma Acharya