

# OUTREACH

Volume 3 Edition 2

## Editorial - Diwali, A day of Hope & Celebration



Diwali, also known as Deepotsavi, marks the final day of the Hindu year. Historically, it is celebrated in recognition of several vital milestones in Hindu culture,

including the Pandavs' return from twelve-years of exile in the forest, Lord Shree Krishna's triumph over the beast Narkasur, and Lord Shree Ramchandra's return to Ayodhya after defeating Ravan in Lanka. This victory of good over evil is celebrated by lighting *divas* (small oil lamps), which is an act of prayer to invite peace, purity, unity and harmony into each day of the upcoming year.

While Diwali is a time to establish new goals, hopes, and resolutions for the new year, it is also the time to re-examine the past year. Diwali is a unique opportunity for each and every individual to reflect on the previous year by asking a handful of honest questions:

- *What did I aspire to do at the start of last year?*
- *Were my endeavors successful? Or did I lose focus and divert my attention elsewhere?*
- *What are the major lessons I learned from my experiences?*

- *How can I better prepare myself to achieve my dreams and ambitions?*

Developing the habit of asking such questions is one way to stay on track and maintain focus in reaching a set goal or destination. This type of focused mindset goes hand-in-hand with our current theme of 'Yuvan Dhare Tevo Thai Shake' - "A Youth Can Become What He Desires". Continuing with this theme, the previous edition of 'Outreach' posed an important poll question: What do YOU think is the most important factor for a youth to maximize his/her potential? The majority of youths agreed that Good Company is the most important factor; we explored the importance of having good company over several previous editions and we observed the strong impact of company on a given individual. Another critical factor for maximizing our potential is cultivating a 'positive attitude'. Remaining positive in deplorable situations may perhaps seem very difficult, but as Gunatitanand Swami says, "All moral excellences can be internalized by regular practice and good company". Remaining positive in all situations, good or bad, comes with practice.

**In this Outreach, we will explore some of the techniques we could imbibe as small steps towards Remaining Positive in seemingly Negative Situations.**

## In the face of adversity - All izz well

Remaining in a positive state of mind when everything is running smoothly is quite easy; but the true challenge is to remain positive through life's twists and turns. Is there a type of mental attitude that can keep a person happy in any and every situation? What type of thinking needs to be cultivated?

There once lived a king who had a wise minister. Among the minister's many virtues, there was one unique virtue that stood out: his positive attitude. Under any circumstance, he would always remain optimistic and utter the words, "All is well". Because of his positive attitude, the minister would always accompany the king and offer insightful advice. One day, the king lost his thumb in an accident and called upon the minister to summon a doctor. But it was too late and the king's thumb could not be reattached. While the king was in misery, the minister remained calm and said in his usual manner, "All is well". Hearing these words, the king was infuriated and called upon his guards to imprison the minister.

A few days later, while the minister was imprisoned, the king went hunting in the jungles. Unfortunately, it was there that he was caught by cannibals. The cannibals tied him up and were ready to offer him as a sacrifice to their deity. The fearful king pleaded, "I am the king of the neighboring state,

and I will give you whatever you want! But just spare me my life!" But the cannibals did not budge and were ready to kill him. Suddenly, the head of the clan shouted, "Wait! This king will not satisfy our deity! He is not complete! He is missing his thumb! He is useless to us, so let him go at once." Within



moments, the king remembered what the minister had said: "All is well". He ran to his palace and met with the minister and hugged him. He said, "Losing my thumb was actually for my best. If I still had my thumb, I would have been killed!" The king then profusely apologized for imprisoning the minister. The minister calmly replied, "All is well." In amazement, the king asked, "I imprisoned you for so many days. How can you say 'All is well'?" The minister smiled and replied, "If I was not in prison, I would have been with you in the jungle and I would have been the perfect offering for the deity."

When things are not going well, or if a situation takes a turn for the worse, it is essential to remain positive like the minister. How beneficial is it to sulk around or become depressed in difficult situations? **Keeping an 'All is well' attitude can keep our minds stable and give us the strength to face any situation.**

## Seek the Best to Become the Best - Building Unshakeable Positivity

In Japan, officials held a conference and invited expert architects from around the world to propose designs for a building that could withstand the tremors of an earthquake. One of the expert architects also invited his junior architect, so he could learn about construction and design from the worlds brightest architects. With the start of the conference, the first presenter proposed plans for a unique design of a building that could withstand earthquakes. However, due to a lack of resources, the plans were rejected by the executive committee. The second presenter proposed his plans for a building that seemed very practical and had an excellent design. But again, the plans were rejected due to the high budget. One after another, each expert architect proposed plans for constructing an unshakeable building, but each plan was rejected for one reason or another.

Out of desperation, there was a call for any architect with a plan to present in front of the committee. The junior architect bravely stood up and approached the podium. He starts, "I came to this conference as only a spectator, eager to



learn from the best around the globe. While I was listening to all the presenters, I made a note of the positive attributes from each building design that was presented. I believe that this new design is the solution to our problems." The junior architect proposed plans for a building with a creative design that could

indeed withstand earthquakes, was in budget, and was feasible to build within the required specifications. The committee was amazed by this junior architect's ingenuity and creativity!

The junior architect simply kept a keen eye to grasp the good qualities in the different building designs. He simply identified at least one positive attribute from each

presenter, enabling him to create the desired building. Likewise, observing only positive virtues in the people and environment around us can bring us similar fortune. *Seeking, identifying, and imbibing positivity can uplift spirit and keep us happy. Just try it for yourself!*

## Learning from the Great - Guruhari Yogiji Maharaj: Ever Laughing Personality

Can you imagine being able to smile in each and every moment of your life? Can you imagine remaining undisturbed, cheerful and optimistic in even the most unfavorable and conflicting of situations? At the same time, can you imagine transforming a tense situation into a fleeting breeze by bringing inexhaustible joy to yourself and all of those around you?

While this may seem like a personality beyond our imagination, these are just a few qualities that describe Guruhari Swamiji's cherished guru Yogiji Maharaj. Swamiji passionately and vividly describes different aspects of Yogiji Maharaj's life in such fine detail that any listener would feel as though they have personally met Yogiji Maharaj. From time to time, Swamiji has described Yogi Bapa as having a unique "ever laughing personality". Yogiji Maharaj could find a positive attribute in the smallest of things. One time, a devotee shows Yogi Bapa a watch and says that it is broken. Bapa responds, "Guru, the watch is not broken! It tells you the correct time at least twice in the day!"

Yogi Bapa was well-versed in breaking seemingly uneasy circumstances into a moment of laughter. One time,



Yogiji Maharaj, a devotee and a driver named Harmanbhai were traveling by a horse-drawn carriage to visit a nearby village. Along the way, the wheel of the carriage suddenly broke and the carriage tipped over. Everyone was quite bruised and hurt, but they managed to get out of the carriage. After

getting out, the devotee started to scold Harmanbhai for causing such a disaster. Yogiji Maharaj, dusting the sand and dirt off his clothes, humorously asks, "A miracle has happened, isn't that so Harmanbhai?" Stunned by Yogiji Maharaj's question, the devotee mockingly says, "Miracle? What miracle?!" Yogiji Maharaj replied, "Guru, we were saved!" On these words, everyone broke out laughing. Defusing the most painful and irritating of circumstances was a hallmark of Yogiji Maharaj's life.

Charged with utmost positivity in each and every pore of His body, Yogiji Maharaj's life is a prime example of how we can remain positive in all situations. However, to truly bring this type of positivity into our lives, we must constantly remember and think about incidents from the lives of such great saints.

*Dwelling in the lives of great saints is the easiest path for cultivating an ever positive attitude.*

### Cool Fact

Always see the glass half empty instead of half full? A recent study says that the people with a positive attitude (optimists) have a lower risk of heart disease and tend to live longer than people with a negative attitude (pessimists). So, you might want to brighten up a bit, that is, if you want to live longer!



### Lasting Thought

All the water of the sea cannot sink a ship unless it gets inside. Similarly, all the negativity of the world cannot affect you unless you let it in.

