



# Outreach

Vol.3-Ed.6



## Editorial

## Atmiyata – The Nectar of Life

The human body is the most intricate and complex creation of the Supreme. In fact, the DNA genome sequence of all humans is 99.9% identical. Yet, there remains a *small difference* of only 0.1%. So, what is this *small difference* that sets each individual apart? The wide range of physical, emotional, and psychological states that is inherent to mankind can be attributed to this *small difference*. Wars begin and loved ones die because of this *small difference*. Friendships shatter and families divide due to this small difference. Fortunately, our Hindu culture is such that it overlooks this *small difference* and instead focuses on the fact that we are all 99.9% identical.

acceptance, regardless of gender, creed, age, religion, or race, is the hallmark of not only the Hindu culture, but also of the Swaminarayan faith. The Swaminarayan faith goes beyond just

principle: we are all the children of God. In turn, the Swaminarayan faith is based on the fundamental understanding that "Service unto humanity is Service unto God."



Trying to serve and help others in any situation is the true essence and bliss of **Atmiyata**. Atmiyata is a universal message advocated and demonstrated by Guruhari Hariprasad Swamiji. At the age of 77, Guruhari Swamiji untiringly perseveres to imbibe this message of harmony into the lives of all those who come in His contact. Atmiyata is embracing others as family members. *Atmiyata is experiencing joy when others are happy and radiating joy when others are down.* This edition of Outreach will focus on **Atmiyata – The Nectar of Life**.

Embracing others with a vision of oneness is the foundation of Hinduism. This universal

universal acceptance as it truly embraces everyone with equality, under one underlying

## Food For Thought

## Heaven and Hell: A State of Mind

Atmiyata, in its simplest form, is the merger of unity, harmony, and unconditional acceptance. Atmiyata is looking beyond ourselves to help others. A simple tale, titled Heaven and Hell, well illustrates the principle of Atmiyata.

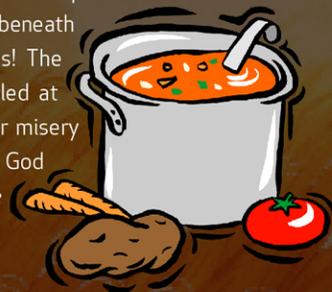
At once, God led the holy man to two doors. He opened the first door and the holy man looked inside. In the middle of the room, the man saw a group of people sitting around a large round table. In the middle of that table was a large pot, brewing with a warm, tasty pot of stew. However, not one person was enjoying this savory stew. For a matter of fact, the people sitting around the table were thin and starving, as though they had not eaten in ages. The man then noticed that the people were indeed holding spoons and even reaching into the pot of stew. But, the handle of the spoons was much longer than their arms. Therefore, it seemed impossible for these poor people to even take a sip of the stew, which was sitting right beneath their very noses! The holy man trembled at the sight of their misery and suffering. God said, "You have now seen Hell."

God then took the holy man to the next room and opened the door. Much to his surprise, this room was much like the first one. There was the large round table with a large pot of delicious stew. The people here were also holding the same type of long spoons. But to his surprise, the people here appeared well-nourished, plump and jolly. Confused, the holy man asks, "I don't understand! Why are these people so happy, when the others are so miserable?" God smiled and replied, "It is very simple. *True happiness requires only one skill. You see, while the greedy think of only themselves, these people have learned to feed each other. And this, my dear friend, is Heaven.*"

The true manifestation of Heaven is where you feed, and are fed in return. To progress together by helping each other, is Atmiyata in its simplest form.



In a conversation with God, a holy man once asked out of curiosity, "O Mighty God! I would like to know what Heaven and Hell are like."



## Laugh-Out-Loud



A big burly man visited the minister's home and asked to see the minister's wife, a woman well known for her charitable impulses.

"Madam," he said in a broken voice, "I wish to draw your attention to the terrible plight of a poor family in this district. The father is dead, the mother is too ill to work, and the nine children are starving. They are about to be turned into the cold, empty streets unless someone pays their rent, which amounts to \$400."

"How terrible!" exclaimed the minister's wife. "May I ask who you are?"

The sympathetic visitor applied his handkerchief to his eyes. "I'm the landlord," he sobbed.

## Cool Fact

By the end of 2011, the world population is expected to exceed **seven billion** people. While this may seem like a lot of people, seven billion people standing shoulder-to-shoulder would merely fill the city of Los Angeles!



## Personal Experiences

Guruhari Swamiji's inspirational life and tireless efforts have motivated thousands of devotees to walk on the path of Atmiyata. Such Atmiyata involves happily staying together, naturally tolerating and accepting the opinions of others



and selflessly lending a hand without expecting anything in return. And when Atmiyata prevails in a family, the greatest reward is experiencing internal happiness. To some extent, everyone has experienced this form of Atmiyata with their family members, but Guruhari Swamiji's message goes above and beyond just treating friends as family members.

In the summer of 2009, the high living costs and rampant unemployment in London was a source of grave financial insecurity. As a result, multiple families were living together in a single house

and sharing all living expenses. Such was the case with Sunilbhai and his family, who had just arrived to London from India with little financial support. They lived in the same house as Rajeshbhai and his family, who have been devotees of Guruhari Swamiji for many years. The two families decided to share the living expenses including the food and utility bills. Sunilbhai was a well-educated IT professional, but faced difficulty finding a job in the extremely competitive London IT market. So, he was not able to pay his share of the expenses for several months.

These devotees had such Atmiyata that Rajeshbhai never confronted Sunilbhai about the missed payments. Moreover, when Sunilbhai would need transportation and any other assistance in looking for a job, Rajeshbhai would selflessly give him a ride or purchase a public transit pass for him. Furthermore, whenever Sunilbhai would need large sums of money for business-related expenses, Rajeshbhai and other devotees would gather up their savings and provide money without expecting anything in return. These devotees were not rich themselves, as they had mediocre jobs and were barely meeting their financial concerns. Yet, they would

## Atmiyata in Daily Life

provide the money in such a subtle manner that Sunilbhai would not feel burdened or indebted to them. What is more touching is that Rajeshbhai would provide moral support and inspire Sunilbhai throughout his hardships. While narrating this incident, Sunilbhai was overwhelmed with emotion and simply stated, "Rajeshbhai and the other devotees treated me as if I was their younger brother. They always comforted me and never made me feel as if I had to struggle. Their Atmiyata was such that I always felt as if I was one with them. Not once have they made me feel obligated to repay them for what they did for me."

**Due to the efforts of Guruhari Swamiji, these devotees are able to live together in harmony even through hardships. Such examples of**

**Atmiyata are commonplace, wherein devotees around the world are striving to imbibe this message into their lives.**

Generally, people attempt to maintain unity and harmony within their own families, but the theme of Atmiyata involves expanding this family to include our friends and associates.



This year's Samanvay Premier League (SPL) cricket tournament featured 20 spectacular teams!

And after three exciting weeks, the top eight teams will battle it out this coming weekend!

Be sure to join us for the playoffs on June 18-19 at Volunteers Park (Parsippany, NJ). The final championship game will be played on June 19th!

For more highlights, pictures and complete details, please visit [www.samanvay.net](http://www.samanvay.net).

## Lasting Thought



"Atmiyata is the best medicine to remove vicious natures like ego, greed, and anger from one self!"

— Guruhari Swamishree