



EDITORIAL - CLEAR YOUR VISION!

The warm, morning sunlight penetrated through the kitchen window, as the young couple enjoyed their breakfast at the dining table. Glancing out of the window, the wife noticed something unusual. There were clothes hanging outside on the clothesline in their neighbor's backyard. The wife stood up and carefully examined the wet, dangling clothes. She turned to her husband and commented, "Look, our new neighbors do not know how to wash their clothes. Their clothes are still dirty! Someone needs to teach them how it is done."

The following morning, as the husband and wife sat at their kitchen table, the wife again noticed the lady next door hanging clothes in the backyard. The wife turned to her husband and again commented, "Look at those clothes, they have stains all over them. Why does she even hang the clothes if they are still dirty? It seems that our neighbors are very unhygienic." Her husband calmly listened, but did not utter a single word.

The next morning, the husband was already seated in the kitchen when his wife came downstairs to have breakfast. Walking towards the kitchen table, she glanced outside into their neighbor's yard. The wife was surprised and yelled out, "Wow, the clothes are clean! She has finally learned. It seems that someone must have taught them how to wash their clothes!"

Her husband looked up and calmly replied, "Actually, I woke up early this morning and cleaned our window." The wife was speechless.

This short tale gives us a very important message: Instead of trying to improve others, we have to first improve ourselves. We are very quick in finding flaws in others and developing strategies to help them improve. But sadly, we often fail to realize that we may be suffering from the same flaw. Hence, the true challenge in life is to improve ourselves, not others. The day we clean our glass and clear our vision is the day we can truly enjoy life and see the good qualities in others.

*"Fellow devotees are like mirrors,
what you see in them is actually
a reflection of yourself."*

- Bhagwan Swaminarayan



Cool Fact

Ever think you are better than the average?

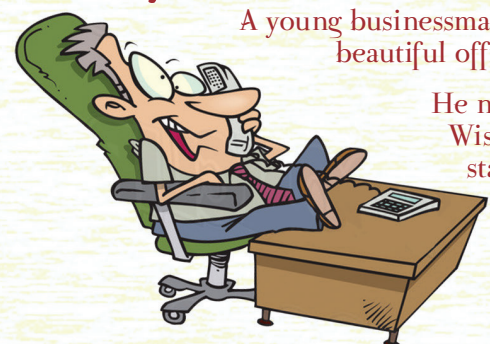
Well most people do! Psychologists call it the **"better-than-average effect"**, which refers to the fact that most people think they are above-average at a variety of things. For example, one survey found that 93% of drivers rated themselves as above-average drivers. So next time you think of yourself as above-average, it may be just average.

Laugh Out Loud

A young businessman had just started his own firm. He had recently rented a beautiful office and had it furnished with antiques, hoping to impress his customers.

He noticed a man enter the lobby of the building start approaching the door of his office. Wishing to appear like a hot-shot, the businessman picked up the phone and started to pretend as if he was negotiating an important contract with other companies. He stated huge figures and made giant commitments.

Finally he hung up and asked the visitor, "Can I help you?" "Yeah, I've come to activate your phone lines."



A MOMENT OF SELF-REFLECTION *THE PARADOX IN LIFE*

Every day, we interact with all kinds of people and build new friendships. Initially, we are drawn to someone due to the good qualities we observe in them. But, with each passing day, we start to recognize their inherent natures and how they behave in a given situation. Soon enough, we start to perceive flaws in them and make judgments on how they should improve. As a result, it becomes very difficult to both accept and get along with the people around us.

But now consider this: if living together with our friends and family is so burdensome, then would living in isolation be peaceful? Well, not exactly. Social interactions have been found to be vital for human health, both physically and mentally. In fact, good social interactions can be the difference between remaining healthy or going insane.

A prisoner who has spent nearly 26 years in prison recently wrote an essay describing what it was like to spend a quarter of a century in solitary confinement. In outlining his unbearable experience, he explains:

“I’ve experienced times so difficult and felt broken and loneliness to such a degree that it seemed to be a physical thing inside so thick it felt like it was choking me, trying to squeeze the sanity from my mind, the spirit from my soul and the life from my body.”

In the end, he sums up his encounter in just one sentence: ‘I have served a sentence worse than death.’ From his experience, we learn the importance of human contact in our day-to-day life. We are all very fortunate to be blessed with comforts and luxuries that we do not have to worry about such difficulties like the prisoner.

Ironically, while the prisoner described above was burdened by the lack of human contact, we tend to find ourselves troubled by the abundance of human contact! Isn’t it funny how we seem to always find ourselves unsatisfied or displeased with the circumstances and people around us?

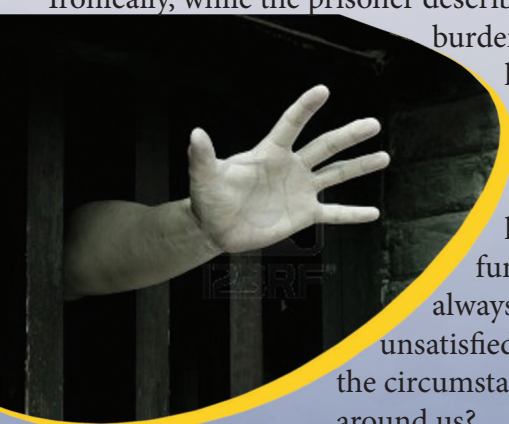
The true joy in life is living together. Supporting each other, tolerating each other’s behaviors and natures, sacrificing time to help others, and accepting others are all essential traits required to experience the joy of living in harmony. Guruhari Swamiji refers to this harmony as Atmiyata. So how can we imbibe this Atmiyata in our lives? It all starts with the first step...

Once, a youth leader by the name of Manibhai had traveled from Germany to the United States to partake in an annual Youth Convention arranged by Guruhari Swamiji. Manibhai, a German citizen from birth, was raised in a country that is known for its discipline, punctuality and great attention to detail. After the Youth Convention finished, a number of volunteers were gathering all the ornaments and stage decorations in an effort to clear the hall. As a result, all kinds of decoration items and boxes were scattered throughout the hall. Seeing this chaos, a

local youth volunteer apologized to Manibhai for any inconvenience and asked for suggestions on how to improve for future Youth Conventions. Manibhai instantly answered in one line, “If I see a flaw, than that is my flaw, and not yours.”

In this way, Manibhai gave a simple, yet powerful lesson to all of us. When living together with our friends and families, others may make mistakes or have flaws, but instead of scolding them and focusing on how they can improve, the first priority is to introspect and see where we need to improve. This is the first step of Atmiyata. By constantly striving to improve ourselves while happily accepting the people around us, we can live in harmony and find true peace of mind.

So let’s make a firm commitment today, that instead of scolding others, arguing with others, or simply observing the flaws in others, we focus on identifying our own flaws and start to see only positivity in all.



Lasting Thought

“Jevo bejane samjavano aagra chhe, tevo potane samajvano hoy; ane jevo bejana dosh jovano aagra chhe, tevo potana dosh tadvano hoy; to kai kasar rahe j nahi!” – Gunatitanand Swami Ni Vaato

“Just as we have a tendency to preach and see the flaws in others, if we keep that same tendency to educate ourselves and improve our own faults, then no deficiencies will remain within us.”



TOP 5 QUESTION TO ASK YOURSELF EVERY NIGHT

1. Did I keep my five senses positive today ?
2. Did I perceive a flaw in anyone today ?
3. Did I raise my voice at anyone today ?
4. Did I upset anyone today ?
5. Did I move one step closer towards pleasing Guruhari Swamiji ?

