

OUTREACH



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Whose Hand is Bigger

A mother once took her child to the convenience store. While the mother was shopping, the small child was looking towards the owner of the store and smiling. Seeing the innocence on the child's face, the store owner felt a moment of happiness. It was as if he was immediately relieved of all his stress and exhaustion.

The store owner was so happy that he grabbed a big box of chocolates and called the small child towards him. He offered the box of chocolates to the child and told him to take as many chocolates as he wanted. But for some reason, the child refused to take any chocolates. The store owner kept trying to convince the child to take some chocolates, but the child kept refusing.

Finally, the store owner put his hand into the box and gave the child a handful

of chocolates. The child cupped both hands together and happily accepted the chocolates from the store owner. After thanking the owner, the child ran to his mother jumping with joy.

After leaving the store, the mother was curious about her child's behavior. So she asked, "Son, why did you refuse the chocolates when the nice man was asking you to take them?"

The child beautifully replied, "Mother! My hands are very small and can only fit a few chocolates. If I had reached into the box and taken the chocolates myself, then I would not get that many chocolates. But the store owner's hands were big, and when he handed me the chocolates, it was almost too much for me to hold."

This story conveys a powerful message about the importance of accepting the wisdom and guidance from a greater being – either *bhagwan* or His Saint. *Bhagwan's* hands are much bigger than ours, so instead of asking for things from Him, we should leave it up to Him to give us what He wants. If we try to take what we want, we may only get a small handful, but *bhagwan* and His Saint can give us more than we can even comprehend.

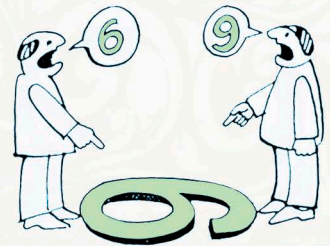
A true saint is someone with an extraordinary vision.

He knows what the future holds for us and where, without guidance, we are prone to making mistakes. And so, He helps us to avoid unseen problems and to circumvent our *prarabdhi*.

Furthermore, we may be thinking from only one perspective—how to prosper in society. But a divine saint has a different vision. He not only wants to see us succeed in society, but He also wants to enlighten our soul and free us from the bondages of our natures. As a result, His advice is so precious because it can help us both socially and spiritually, at the same time! Hence, it is important to not

make big decisions in life independently; it would be wise to allow such a visionary saint to give us advice.

Countless youths stand testament to the transformative advice and wisdom that Guruhari Hariprasad Swamiji has showered upon them. They approach Swamiji for the



most important decisions in their lives, such as selecting their college major, career, marriage, business ventures, and many more. Through the advice that Swamiji offers, youths not only receive the right solution, but Swamiji ensures that they remain on the path of *satsang*—which will ultimately lead them to true happiness.

Fortunately for us, Swamiji has designated saints and *bhagvadi* leaders across different cities, states, and countries. They fully comprehend and understand Swamiji’s vision. And so, taking the first step by approaching them for advice is the easiest and most convenient way to make sure that the important decisions in our life lead to success—both socially and spiritually. By faithfully allowing Swamiji or a *bhagvadi* leader to guide us, we will become truly and unequivocally happy.

Cool Fact

In a study conducted at Pennsylvania State University, researchers found that students of exceptional teachers were able to completely overcome any disadvantages they had due to their social or economic status. They were able to learn just as effectively as anyone else, despite coming from vastly different backgrounds. Likewise, the right guru works to neutralize our past and encourages us to strive towards the best possible future.



Laugh Out Loud

Three guys are stranded on a desert island with very little food and water. One day, they find a magic lantern containing a genie, who grants each of them one wish that will be fulfilled.

The first guy wishes he was off the island, and so, instantly he finds himself at home. The second guy wishes the same and also finds himself at home.



The third guy says, “I am very lonely now. I wish my friends were back here.”

A PASSION FAR GREATER THAN CRICKET



A Nobel Prize winning author, John Steinbeck, once said “No one wants advice, only corroboration.” This insightful comment accurately describes how we tend to seek advice which would only confirm our thoughts—without considering that the thought itself may be wrong. The fact is, most of us do not like to hear that we are wrong or that we could be doing things a different way.

Perhaps this type of mentality will suffice in society. We may hold our stubbornness if we have a clear destination and do not want to deviate from our goal. But when in the presence of our guru, it would be in our best interest to accept any advice He gives, even if our mind refuses.

Surrendering our wishes and desires at the request of our guru has long been established in Hindu culture as the single most important virtue of any person. It is the greatest devotion to our guru and the fastest way to become happy. In this way, Guruhari Hariprasad Swamiji has showed us the true meaning of accepting a guru’s request through His own life.

Prabhudasbhai was energetic and had a charismatic personality. He had many friends and hobbies, one of which included playing cricket. Prabhudasbhai was an exceptional cricket player and played with His friends almost every day. Because of his talent and skill, he was selected to play in the Ranji Trophy, which is a highly selective, first-class cricket champion series.

On the day of the Ranji Trophy, Prabhudasbhai wore his white and white uniform and passionately walked to the cricket ground. Prabhudasbhai had the personality of champion in all of the activities He undertook, and so, losing or coming in second place was not an option.

Coincidentally, as Prabhudasbhai proceeded towards the cricket field, His guru Yogiji Maharaj (also known as Bapa), happened to be passing nearby in a car. Realizing it to be the car in which Yogiji Maharaj usually travels, Prabhudasbhai approached the car to have *darshan* and pay His respects to Yogiji Maharaj.

Yogiji Maharaj rolled down the window, smiled at Prabhudasbhai and admired His cricket uniform. Yogiji Maharaj then asked, “Where are you going?”

Prabhudasbhai replied, “Bapa, I have been selected for the Ranji Trophy and I’m going to the cricket field to play.”



Yogiji Maharaj then lovingly said, “Guru, we should not go play cricket. Our selection has already been made by Shastriji Maharaj.”

Prabhudasbhai was neither shocked nor distraught by Yogiji Maharaj’s request. For almost any other person, decisively following Yogiji Maharaj’s request at this moment would have been impossible. While Prabhudasbhai was extremely talented and passionate about cricket, He was much more dedicated and passionate in pleasing His guru!

Instantly, Prabhudasbhai surrendered his desire for cricket and responded, “If it is your wish, then I will stop playing cricket. But right now, my friends will come looking for me because they know they cannot win without me. They will drag me to the cricket pitch to play.”

Pleased with Prabhudasbhai’s response, Yogiji Maharaj replied “Go hide in someone’s house. If your friends come looking for you, I will turn them away. But I do not want you to play cricket today.”

Following Yogiji Maharaj’s request, Prabhudasbhai scampered away to a neighbor’s house and hid there for several hours to avoid His friends. From that day forward, Prabhudasbhai completely relinquished His desire for cricket, and instead, resolved to stay in the seva of Yogiji Maharaj.

Prabhudasbhai’s commitment and determination to follow the words of His guru are truly unparalleled. Not only did Prabhudasbhai instantly stop playing cricket, but he did not hesitate or question Bapa’s request. This type of unconditional acceptance of a guru’s wish is exemplary for all of us.

We may be passionate about our careers, beliefs, and goals. But if a *Gunatit Sant*, like Yogiji Maharaj or Swamiji, advises us to do something that conflicts with our passion or beliefs, then we would greatly benefit by putting aside our desires and accepting the new path that they lay for us.

Swamiji wants to give us more than we can ever imagine for ourselves. He wants to instill much more happiness within us than we could ever experience by ourselves. He wants to purify our mind and enlighten our soul—which is something we never achieve on our own.

To be the beneficiary of all that Swamiji wants to give to us, all we need to do is make an effort to sincerely follow Swamiji’s each and every request! We may or may not initially accept it, but ultimately, when we will realize that Swamiji’s only objective is to make us happy, then we will truly appreciate His advice and never fall back on accepting His guidance.



LEARNING FROM OUR FRIENDS

In chasing short-term happiness, we may be blinded from making the right choices. Fortunately, Swamiji truly cares for us, and so, He advises us to make the right choices that will ultimately benefit us.

Suhradbhai Patel was born in New Jersey (USA) and has been under Swamiji's guidance since birth. Due to Swamiji's nurturing, Suhradbhai was a sincere and focused youth. However, after Suhradbhai finished high school and entered college, things started to change.

With new found independence, he developed a friendship with those who strictly wanted to enjoy college life. Attracted by these new choices, he got absorbed into this environment. His grades started to decline and his entire lifestyle took a drastic turn for the worse.

Eventually, someone passed a message to Swamiji about the negative change in Suhradbhai's lifestyle. Swamiji then passed a message back, advising him to get out of the campus dormitory and instead commute from home.

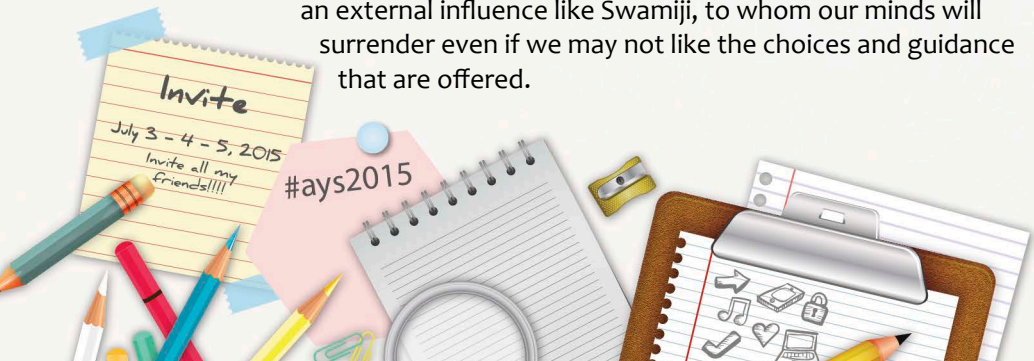
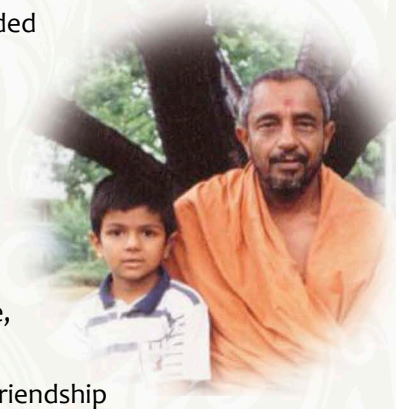
Hearing this, Suhradbhai was shocked and could not accept the possibility of commuting. He wanted to stay with his friends and enjoy the dorm environment, so he decided that he would either continue to dorm or quit college altogether.

Even though his mind refused, he felt obligated to follow Swamiji's advice—which is because of the love and care Swamiji showered upon him all these years.

Following Swamiji's advice, Suhradbhai began commuting from home. This small change made all the difference. His grades started to improve and with less time to spend with his friends, his lifestyle also started changing. Later, Swamiji advised him for further studies, so he went on to finish his Master's degree.

The choice to dorm and the choice on how to spend time in college may seem small. But if Swamiji had not taken the time to personally guide him to make the right choices, Suhradbhai's career and lifestyle would be significantly different.

It is important to train our mind for studies and hardships that come with being in college. But on our own, we cannot do this. Hence, we are truly in the need of an external influence like Swamiji, to whom our minds will surrender even if we may not like the choices and guidance that are offered.



3 WAYS TO MAXIMIZE YOUR FRIENDSHIP WITH A Guru



Seek His Best Qualities

Actively observe your guru's actions and identify all the virtues that set Him apart from the ordinary individual.

By thinking about His virtues, and through prayer, you can emulate those virtuous qualities in your life.



SHARE YOUR MISTAKES

Do not be shy to openly share your mistakes or thoughts to your guru. Confessing your mistakes not only relieves you from the burden of emotional bondage and guilt, but it helps you gain new insight and wisdom to avoid making such mistakes again.



Do Not Be STUBBORN

A guru is much more knowledgeable than you in all aspects of life and spirituality.

When you are fortunate enough to receive His advice, do not be stubborn. Even if it does not make sense at the time, you will ultimately benefit from following his guidance.

Lasting Thought

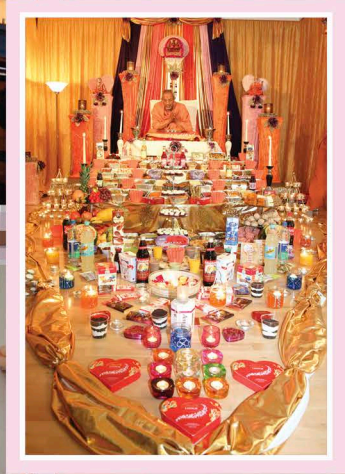
In order to fulfill the *aagna* (request) of a saint, an ideal devotee is willing to: 1) endure extreme physical hardships, 2) disregard hunger and thirst, 3) not trust his mind for even a single second, and 4) remain persistent to wholeheartedly surrender his mind to the saint. On such a devotee, *bhagwan* and His saint become ever happy and enlighten his soul.

~ Bhagwan Swaminarayan (Purushottam Bolya Prite)



A Divine Glimpse

~ Guruhari Hariprasad Swamiji
Germany Vicharan: May 2015



On May 17th, a devotee from Poland, named Nirajbhai, came to meet Swamiji and expressed his interest to worship *bhagwan* and become involved in *satsang*.

Upon hearing his heartfelt prayer, Swamiji replied, "To continuously walk on this path [of *satsang* and worship], it is important to develop a habit of engaging in *katha-vaarta*. The journey of taking your soul just one inch closer towards enlightenment and into the hands of *bhagwan* requires efforts. It is a battle each and every minute. For this, you must develop a habit of engaging in *kaatha-vaarta*. Even if you do *seva*, you still need to have a strong inclination for *kaatha-vaarta*."