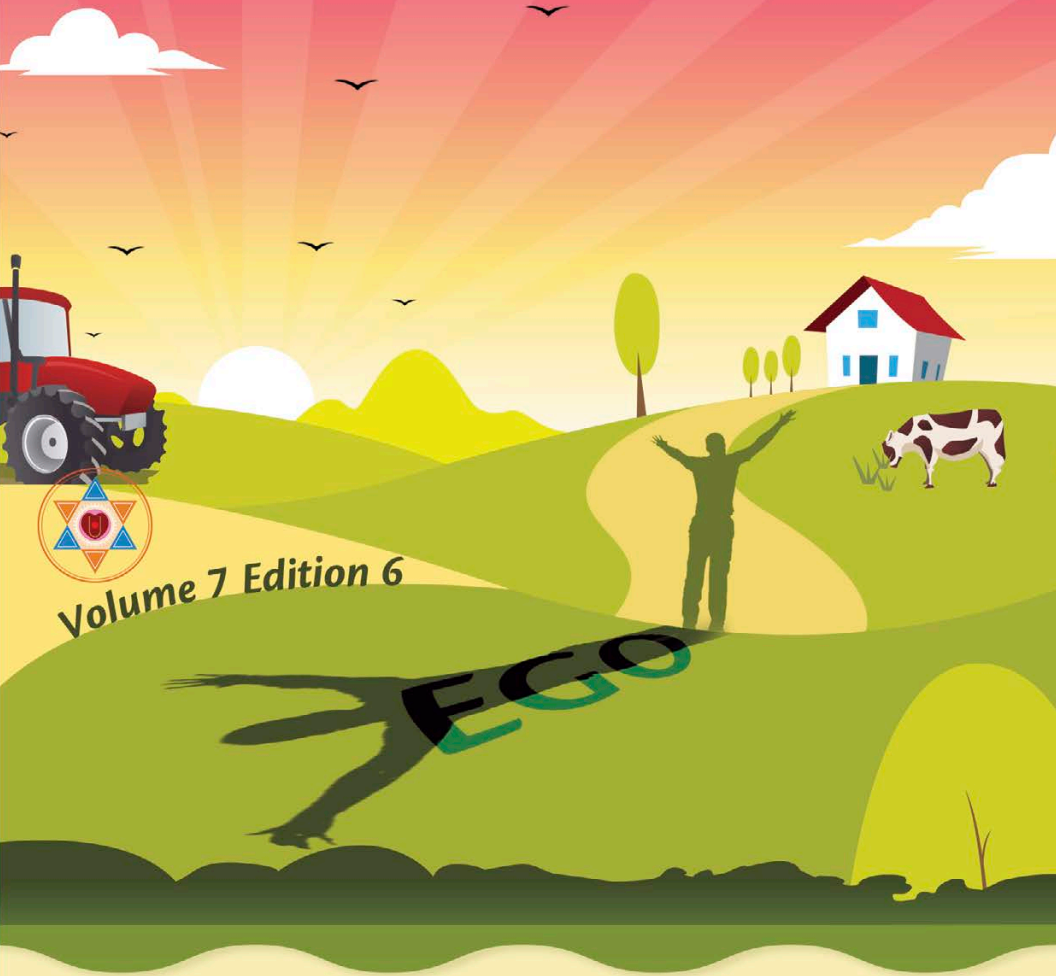


OUTREACH



Volume 7 Edition 6

Humility Adorns Success

An unemployed farmer approached numerous land owners nearby in search of work. Unfortunately, the harvest season was winding down and part-time farmers were no longer required. Frustrated that he could not find work, he became depressed and started to blame God for his miserable situation.

One day, he was walking home when he ran into a wealthy businessman. Coincidentally, the businessman owned a lumberjack business and needed help cutting wood. The farmer was gifted with a healthy physique and natural strength, so cutting wood would be easy for him. He quickly became skilled in cutting wood and outperformed his colleagues. He developed a new technique, allowing him to cut trees twice as fast and make perfect pieces of firewood. The businessman was

pleased and doubled the man's pay.

The shift would normally end at sunset and the man would return home. On the walk home, he passed his time rejoicing over his superb woodcutting skills and the money he was now making. But he was not walking home alone. The man was accompanied by his shadow, cast by the sun on the horizon.

Over the next few days, he started noticing something different in his shadow. It was getting bigger and bigger. For some reason, the shadow would increase in size each day even though he would walk home at the exact same time during sunset. He was really confused and wondered why.

One day, while the man walked home, he heard a voice from the sky. He looked up and saw a divine form of God. The man, still stuck in his thoughts, asked God, "My shadow seems to increase each day. Why does my shadow keep getting bigger and bigger?"

God instantly stated, "Because you have forgotten Me."



The man did not understand the meaning of God's reply, and now he was even more confused. The man asked God again, "Why does my shadow keep growing bigger and bigger each day?"

God then smiled and said, "Because your ego is increasing. The shadow is merely a reflection of your ego. I have given you the strength and skill to cut wood. But you have forgotten Me. Because you believe the ability to cut wood is a result of your own talent, your ego has increased with each passing day." The man realized his mistake, fell to his knees and begged for forgiveness.

This story conveys an important message. Just as the man was gifted with the skill of cutting wood, we may be gifted with a special talent at work, school, or in other aspects of life. As a result we may receive an award, recognition, or a special perk. But at this time, if we forget that our skill is a gift from the supreme, then our ego will grow and we may develop an arrogant attitude.

After achieving success, it is all too common for people to develop an egotistical attitude. People tend to change their walking style, become more self-centered, ignore others, forget the people who helped them, find it difficult to say sorry, or are unable to bow down to others. While we should of course be happy about our success, we should not let that resulting ego seep into our attitude.

True success is only adorned by humility. Humbled individuals are not poisoned by the ego of their successes. In fact, when some cricket players point towards the sky after hitting a six or when some football players kneel after scoring a touchdown, it speaks volumes of their humble character.



Guruhari Hariprasad Swamiji once said, “Just as the kite appears to become smaller and smaller as it flies higher and higher into the sky, we must also learn to become smaller and smaller as we go higher and higher in life. As we achieve success in life, we must refrain from saying I and me.”



To develop a humble nature, it is not needed to publicly acknowledge God for our talent or success. But, it is our responsibility to at least thank Him from the bottom of our hearts each night. With such a humble mindset, we may be able to achieve even more success, not just because our mind will become free from the burdens of egotistical thoughts, but because God will trust and inspire us with even more talent and wisdom.



A student asks a simple question. The teacher wanted the student to develop independent searching skills, so the teacher replies, “Go Google it to find the answer.”

Another student asks a question, to which the teacher again replies, “Go Google it to find the answer.”

After the teacher finished teaching the biology lesson plan, he asked the students, “Did you all enjoy today’s class and learn something new about biology?”

The students reply, “Go google it to find the answer!”



Was It My Effort or Swamiji's Blessings, or Both?

Success comes in many forms, whether it be getting the highest grades in school, acquiring admission into an Ivy League college, obtaining a senior-level job in a Fortune 500 company, or even achieving your childhood dreams. These are only a few examples of what people define as success.

While it is great to achieve success, unfortunately, it comes with a heavy price: pride and ego. A person's ego can get a major boost even from the smallest of successes. For example, if you get a good-paying job before your friend, you would tend to feel slightly more accomplished and better than your friend. And unfortunately, this type of ego keeps accumulating throughout our lives. This ever-increasing sense of pride and ego is dangerous because it is the biggest barrier to true happiness.



Fortunately, Guruhari Hariprasad Swamiji is one saint who will personally ensure that we do not keep accruing ego and remain humble after we achieve success. Such is an example of Dr. Vijaybhai Patel, more popularly known as Vijubhai.

Vijubhai was born and raised in Mumbai, India. From a young age, Vijubhai always performed well in academics. He usually aced his exams and was a top-ranked student. Whenever Swamiji would visit his house, his parents would request him to show his academic report card to Swamiji.

One day, when Vijubhai was only 8 years old, Swamiji came to his house. Influenced by his parents' insistence, Vijubhai showed his report card to Swamiji. Seeing the results, Swamiji became extremely happy. But at the same time, Swamiji was more concerned about Vijubhai's soul. He wanted to ensure the ego from these good grades did not accumulate on the soul of young Vijubhai.

Swamiji told him something that only a visionary saint can say, "Through discipline, hard work, and your own strength and efforts, you can only reach up to a certain level. This is not limited to academics. If you want to go beyond this level, you need to have prayer in your life. You need some intervention. You need blessings."



Although Vijubhai was too young to comprehend the exact meaning and significance of Swamiji's words, it changed his outlook on studies. Swamiji incepted an idea into Vijubhai's mind. Whenever he would get good results on an exam, a lingering voice in the back of his mind would question, "How much of this was my

effort and how much of it was due to Swamiji's blessings? I can never get 100% by my own efforts. Was it all me or was it something else?"

So throughout his life, whenever he accomplished anything, this thought would instantly arise in his mind. Vijubhai completed his Master's degree in Physics as a top ranked student at IIT-Mumbai and received a gold medal. Even then, he was easily convinced that this achievement was not due to his own efforts, but due to Swamiji's blessings. He truly believed that Swamiji inspired him and gifted him with the ability to study well!

Vijubhai then moved to USA to pursue a doctorate degree at Stony Brook University. After five years of spending long hours and performing extraordinary research in the lab, Vijubhai received a Ph.D. degree in Physics. His groundbreaking research in quantum physics was published in one of the top journals in the world, and many companies are currently using the technology he developed!

Even after tremendous hard work and effort, Vijubhai credits all his academic successes to the blessings from Swamiji. As a result, any ego of being intelligent and having achieved all these successes in life did not accumulate on his soul. Vijubhai remains a very humble person and behaves so



naturally, in such a grounded manner, that many cannot even realize his brilliance and achievement. All the credit goes to the words that Swamiji planted in his brain when he was only 8 years old!



Swamiji's inspirational advice to Vijubhai can help us in almost every aspect of life. We are constantly striving to reach our goals. We may set a goal for each day, a goal for the upcoming week, a goal for the month, a goal for a year, or a goal for a lifetime, which is excellent. In fact, setting goals is highly recommended for significantly increasing the chances of achieving success. One thing, however, needs to be added.

Thinking of Swamiji through the journey of reaching the goal and immediately after achieving that goal, is the best way to avoid the ego that comes with it.

Swamiji often says, "All of our strengths and knowledge are a gift from Bhagwan. It was given by Him." So if we use that strength and knowledge to achieve anything great, we have to acknowledge Him and give Him the credit. In this way, we will not accumulate ego. And any ego currently on our soul will slowly be washed away, if we make an effort to imbibe the belief that successes in life are only due to Swamiji's grace and blessings.



DWELLING INTO SWAMIJI'S LIFE

Guruhari Swamiji is a living personification of humility. Not only does He propagate the absolute necessity for harnessing humility to experience peace and joy, but every moment of His life is filled with humility that is unparalleled.

A youth came for the very first time to have Swamiji's darshan at the Haridham mandir in India. This youth had only briefly heard about Swamiji's glory, and did not have any other knowledge about satsang, saints, or Swamiji. When he met Swamiji, he open-heartedly said, "Swamiji, I know nothing about you, I don't even know your name. Please tell me something about yourself."

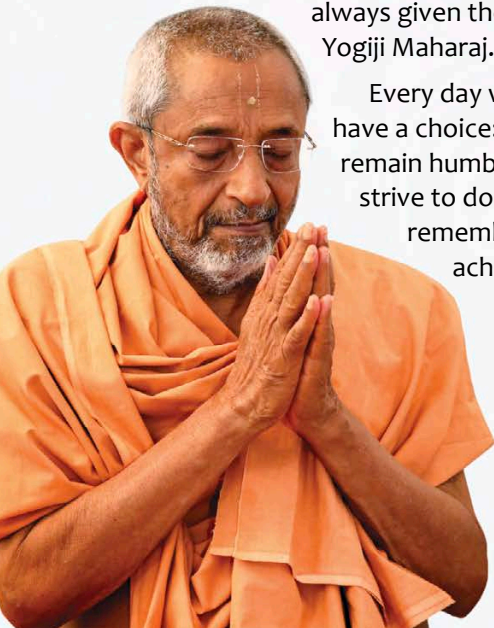
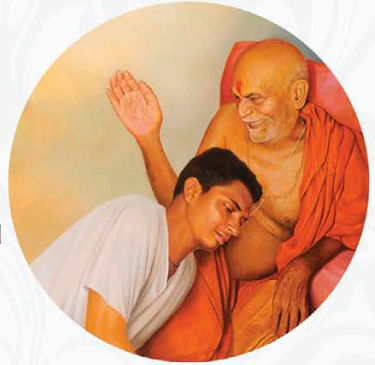
On hearing the youth's innocent comment, Swamiji gave him a loving smile and humbly replied, "I am Yogiji Maharaj's sevak (servant). Yogiji Maharaj came into my life and initiated me into sainthood. He made me a human being. He made me a sadhu and gave me my name, Sadhu Hariprasad."

In this manner, Swamiji—a spiritual leader of hundreds of thousands of devotees worldwide—provided a humble and honest answer. Swamiji could have, if He chose to, talk about the temples He has built, the religious and charitable activities carried out by the temple worldwide, or the exceeding number of youths that He has inspired and transformed. If we were asked a similar question, we would probably over-glorify our achievements.

Swamiji absolutely believes that everything that He is or has achieved is due to Yogiji Maharaj. He has been living such a life for over the past 60 years. There has not been a single moment when Swamiji has spoken about 'I and me', but has always given the credit to Bhagwan Swaminarayan and Yogiji Maharaj.

Every day we are faced with situations where we will have a choice: to glorify ourselves, or to credit God and remain humble. This is not to suggest that we should not strive to do our best, but rather to do everything while remembering God and giving Him the credit for our achievements.

There is a thin line between taking the opportunity to nourish our ego and humbly accepting accolades from others. To achieve this fine balance and to make it part of our lives, we must dig deep into the life of Bhagwan Swaminarayan, Gunatit Saints, and Swamiji.



Four Ways to Boost Your Humility



Understand other people's viewpoints

By opening your mind to accept the opinions of others, you can learn to see things from another point of view. Even if you do not accept their viewpoint, you can learn something new and perhaps arrive at a better outcome.



Admit when you are wrong

Admitting that you are wrong is the ultimate sign of humility. Recognizing your mistake allows you to fix it and ensure that you learn from it.



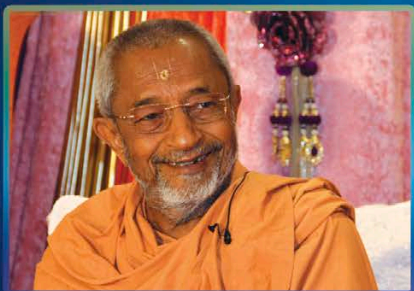
Say Sorry

Apologizing is something which many people find very difficult to do, as it involves admitting a mistake. A simple sorry can repair friendships and bring families together.



Be adaptable

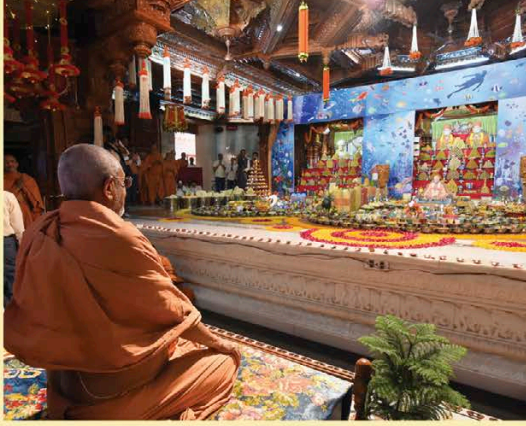
One of the best traits of being humble is being adaptable. A humble person can easily adapt to any situation, even if something does not always go their way. A self-centered person will always try to make sure his needs are met before anyone else's needs.



Lasting Thought

"Everything we have is a gift from Bhagwan. Our intellect, our body, and our strength is powered by the grace of Bhagwan. So please strive to not use your body and knowledge as a means to show-off or impress other people."

~ Guruhari Hariprasad Swamiji



A Divine Glimpse

Guruhari Hariprasad Swamiji - Annakoot Mahotsav - November 12th, 2015 - Haridham, India

- Every person is suffering from the disease of stubbornness, jealousy, and ego. The root of all misery and depression that we experience is due to these diseases. The only medicine is trying to live according to *samp*, *suhradbhav*, and *ekta*.
- We did not come on this Earth to eat *laadus*, but we have come here to be liberated from the endless cycles of birth-and-death and experience the happiness of *Akshardham*.
- If you sincerely do *bhajan* and prayer, then definitely within one year, your stubbornness, jealousy, and ego will reduce by 50%. If you continue *bhajan* and prayer, then by the second year they will reduce by another 40%. And by the third year, they will be completely eradicated and you will experience the eternal state of *brahmbhav*.
- We are most fortunate because Bhagwan Swaminarayan said that He is always with us at each moment, and is always holding our hand and guiding us!

