

OUTREACH



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God's Abode, Our Sanctuary

A *mandir*, or temple, is central to Hindu culture and traditionally serves as a sanctified place of worship where one can connect with Bhagwan. A *mandir* facilitates activities of *satsang* (*sat* means true and *sang* means company) that guide individuals on a spiritual journey to experience personal growth, peace, and joy. A *mandir* is a holy place where our mind and soul can find solace. Going to *mandir* provides us with the opportunity to detach ourselves from our daily routine and to arrive at a singular purpose: to immerse ourselves in the devotion of the Supreme. A *mandir* provides an escape, allowing us to realign our mind and thoughts. It is a place to reconnect with our inner self and with Bhagwan. Let us examine

how a temple can positively shape and transform our lives.

Spiritual centers promote development and honing of noble human virtues such as honesty, courage, dependability, altruism, generosity, forgiveness, self-discipline, patience, and humility. These characteristics promote a sense of well-being and enhance social relationships. Several scientific studies have proven that people who regularly visit spiritual places of worship, such as *mandirs*, are healthier, are less prone to substance addiction, and show a significant reduction in stress, anxiety, and depression. Hence, visiting a *mandir* regularly can serve as motivation for individuals who aspire to bring positive changes in their lives.

The values learned at a *mandir* result in long lasting happiness and fulfillment. This is because a *mandir* infuses us with positivity, reminds us that we have accepted Bhagwan's refuge and that we are, in reality, souls eternally connected to Bhagwan. Over time, going to *mandir* helps develop the right understanding and wisdom such that our joy will never deflate, regardless of the unfavorable circumstances in our lives. Likely, there are times when we tend to feel dejected by the gravity of certain problems, but going to *mandir* provides strength that allows us to snap out of our sadness and focus on the solutions to our problems.

Going to a *mandir* is not for simply bowing down to *Thakorji* (idols of deities), but also for submitting all of our worries, dilemmas, and frustrations at their lotus feet. *Thakorji*, the heart of the *mandir*, has been consecrated; hence, expressing our devotion there is just like expressing our devotion to Bhagwan. Swamiji once said, "Please do not consider these *murtis* to be marble statues. Bhagwan resides within them. Offer prayers and devotion with such heartfelt intentions." Harnessing the power of prayer brings positive energy and zest to our daily activities. It enables us to feel that we are close to Bhagwan. Prayers purify our minds as we engage in conversations with Bhagwan, and ask Him for forgiveness for our misdeeds and strength for what lies ahead. Whispering a prayer in front of *Thakorji* is just like whispering the prayer directly into Bhagwan's ears.

A *mandir* is a hub for attaining spiritual wisdom. Saints and *bhagwadi* leaders routinely give discourses explaining fundamental concepts of *satsang* and spirituality. Concepts such as *swadharma*, *atmiyata*, *nishtha*, *suhradbhav*, *seva*, *saradta*, and *bhakti* are discussed through discourses and

one-to-one counseling with saints at the *mandir*. This enables individuals to use their external senses appropriately and keep their minds positive, allowing them to establish true harmony with friends and family. In addition, a *mandir* will provide us with numerous opportunities to build a strong bond with saints. We will be able to share our problems and relieve our concerns.

Overall, a *mandir* is essential for rejuvenating our mind, body, and soul, and propelling us forward on the path of *satsang* towards Bhagwan. Fortunately, through Guruhari Hariprasand Swamiji's tireless efforts and inspiration, the new Haridham *mandir* is here. Haridham *mandir* is a place where anyone can find true peace within their hearts and minds. Haridham *mandir* is a place where devotees and aspirants can understand and imbibe core spiritual values within their lives. Haridham *mandir* is a place wherein we can experience Bhagwan's constant presence. Haridham *mandir* is a medium through which thousands of living, breathing *mandirs* will be sculpted—and perhaps this is Swamiji's ultimate vision—to instill the values of a *mandir* in the hearts and minds of thousands of youths and devotee.

Lasting Thought



“There are three key reasons why we build *mandirs*:

- 1) to attain the innermost blessings of Shastriji Maharaj and Yogiji Maharaj, who will be pleased upon the installation of the idols of Akshar-Purushottam Maharaj,
- 2) to foster *atmiyata*, which will allow for the construction of a *mandir* within our hearts, and
- 3) to preserve and imbibe the richness of Hindu culture in the lives of youths and youngsters.

Overall, one who continues to go to *mandir* for *darshan*, *seva* and *samagam* will prosper. One who has even a glimpse of the waving flags atop the *shikhars* will be blessed by Bhagwan Swaminarayan, who will take them to Akshardham.”



Making of

(2015 - 2019)



Haridham
MANDIR

HARIDHAM

From One, Many Will Rise

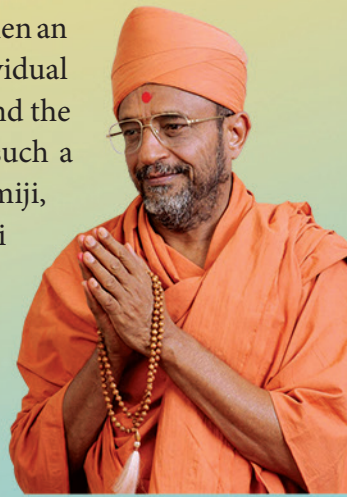
Haridham. The name Haridham perfectly captures the essence of what it represents. The term *hari* refers to the supreme God in the Hindu scriptures and the term *dharm* means abode. Haridham mandir is just that – God’s abode. It is the place where anyone can connect with God. It is a place where we can offer our devotion and pay our respects with great humility.

Haridham, like other *mandirs*, is a place where we can go to feel the positive vibrations associated with the presence of *Thakorji* and absorb the rich spiritual discourses being delivered. Although many of us may be battling with our inner demons such as undesirable habits or negative thoughts, stepping foot in a *mandir* will ease our concerns while we are inside.

But once we depart from the *mandir* to return back home and go on with our daily routine, is there a way we can continue to carry the pious vibrations and positivity of a *mandir* within us?

This is the vision and mission of Guruhari Hariprasad Swamiji: to instill all the values inherent to a *mandir* into our hearts and minds. Such is the premise of a *chaitanya mandir*—a living, breathing *mandir*.

Once, Swamiji was on *vichran* in New Zealand when an individual approached Him with a question. The individual had heard about the many great virtues of Swamiji and the overall *satsang* fellowship and was impressed that such a spiritual movement was blossoming. He asked, “Swamiji, how many mandirs have you built?” Swamiji responded that due to Bhagwan’s grace, one main Haridham mandir was built in Sokhada, India in 1981. After Swamiji briefly explained such details,



the individual curiously asked, “How many more *mandirs* do you plan on constructing in the future?”

Swamiji smiled and simply said, “75,000.”

The individual was surprised. Unable to contain his curiosity, he asked Swamiji, “How will you be able to build so many *mandirs*? Where will you get the funds, the land, and the resources? How will you be able to manage construction of so many *mandirs*?”

Swamiji replied, “I am not talking about a physical *mandir* built out of stone, metal, and cement. I wish to instill a *mandir* within the hearts and minds of 75,000 youths. I want to instill Yogiji Maharaj’s principles of *samp*, *suhradbhav*, *ekta* into their lives and enrich their lives. I want build 75,000 such *chaitanya mandirs*.”

This short conversation reveals Swamiji’s extraordinary vision. His priority has always been ensuring that any devotee who visits a *mandir* takes a piece of the *mandir* back with them. Today, there are thousands of individuals worldwide who are living examples of Swamiji’s profound vision.

So how did Swamiji manage to achieve this feat? He did it by consistently fostering an environment and culture in which one is bound to flourish. He established this type of environment by personally connecting with youths of all ages, by tirelessly relieving their concerns and by curing their ailments.

Over the past three decades, Swamiji has created a phenomenal uplifting environment and a culture in which a *chaitanya mandir* can not only be built, but also thrive. Fortunately, He made the Haridham *mandir*—a *mandir* which is one, but from which many will continue to rise for years to come—the epicenter to experience this transformation.



HARIDHAM Mandir Mahotsav

July 5~6~7, 2019



After much anticipation, we celebrated the Haridham Mandir Mahotsav with great enthusiasm from July 5th to 7th, 2019. The grand celebration of the Haridham Mandir Mahotsav began

with an inspiring International Youth Convention. A sacred *mahayagna* was performed and an incredible cultural program gave insight into the life message and vision of Guruhari Hariprasad Swamiji. Finally, the sacred *murti pratistha* ceremony was performed by Swamiji, which infused a divine spirit within the *mandir* and commenced a new era of building *chaitanya mandirs*.





From the Editor's Desk

Four years in the making and it is finally here! Due to Guruhari Hariprasad Swamiji's blessings and inspiration, along with support of hundreds of volunteers, Haridham *mandir* is now standing tall with beautiful *shikhars* spiraling towards the sky. Coated with thousands of granite tiles and sculpted pillars on the exterior, and adorned with the blissful presence of *Thakorji* inside, Haridham *mandir* is truly a modern marvel!

The construction of Haridham *mandir* actually began almost a decade ago when Swamiji first inspired its inception. From then onwards, hundreds of volunteers around the globe took up this exciting and challenging task to design the *mandir* with utmost *bhakti*, all the while adhering to architectural guidelines established thousands of years ago in the Hindu scriptures. Starting in October 2015, the construction finally began!

From the moment the first shovel broke into the ground to when the idols of *Thakorji* were installed, all of the volunteers performed *seva* with utmost *bhakti* and *mahima*. They knew that the opportunity to partake in construction *seva* for such a magnificent *mandir* was a truly once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

Constructing a magnificent *mandir* is a monumental and historic feat, however, that is not the end. It is just the beginning! It is the start to an even more challenging endeavor. It marks the beginning of Swamiji's greater mission of instilling the values of a *mandir* within our hearts and minds. In fact, while we all awe at the sight of Haridham *mandir*, Swamiji never lets us forget the ultimate purpose of this *mandir*.

On June 26, 2017, Swamiji arrived at the construction site. He walked throughout the site, as the volunteers gave updates on the progress. Towards the end of the approximately 30-minute visit, Swamiji gave one parting message. He turned to all of the volunteers and said, "This *mandir* is marvelous and thousands of people will come. But to truly make this *mandir* a *mandir*,

I would like to request all of the volunteers to speak with utmost *bhakti* and *mithas* with everyone who steps foot in this *mandir*. Only then will our efforts for building this *mandir* be considered successful!"

The timing of Swamiji's message was impeccable! Swamiji went on to reiterate this exact message four more times in a span of 10 minutes. At a moment when all of the volunteers were fully engrossed in doing physical *seva* to build this *mandir*, Swamiji ensured they do not lose sight of the bigger picture—which is to treat all of those who come to the *mandir* with utmost reverence and *bhakti*. While Swamiji certainly values building a magnificent *mandir*, He has always placed greater more emphasis on ensuring the devotees within the *mandir* live and speak with *atmiyata*!



Now that Haridham *mandir* is here, we have a truly precious opportunity. Swamiji has built this *mandir* for us. Swamiji eagerly wants us to reap all of the benefits of the *mandir*. We have the option to engage in *seva* on a weekly basis. We have the option to attend weekly *sabha*. We have the option to connect with saints. We have the option to harness the strength of prayer from *Thakorji*. The more we involve ourselves in the *mandir*, the more we will experience the rewarding happiness. Ultimately, this will truly make Swamiji happy, as His happiness lies in our quick and steady progress on the spiritual path!



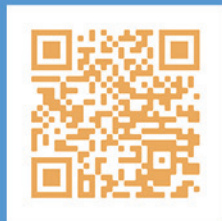
A Divine Glimpse

In the March of 2020, Guruhari Hariprasad Swamiji commenced His *vicharan* by gracing the devotees of New Zealand with *darshan*. To free us from all worries and fears, Swamiji delivered an insightful and thought-provoking discourse on April 6, 2020.

In the live online-streamed discourse, Guruhari Swamiji said, “Bhagwan Swaminarayan has promised to protect His devotees from the wrath of *kaal*, *karma* and *maya*. Then why should we worry? We should sing the kirtan, “*Bolya Shree Hari Re*” every morning and evening with utmost faith and enthusiasm. This will fuel our soul with *nishtha* and take us into a life filled with fearlessness and divine bliss!”



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