

Outreach

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EDITION 2

Cool Fact - Company



Tooth enamel is the hardest most mineralized substance in the body. But, when immersed in Cola, this tooth readily degrades into spongy matter.

EDITORIAL



In the previous edition of 'Outreach', we explored the importance of keeping the right company. This edition will examine the **impact of company** on an individual. This concept was aptly demonstrated by Japanese fishing companies. The Japanese have always loved the taste of fresh fish. But, the waters close to Japan have not held many fish for decades. So, to feed the Japanese population, fishing boats have increased in size and ventured further from the coast to acquire the Japanese delicacy. However, the farther the fishermen went, the fish did not remain fresh for the return trip and the Japanese did not like the taste.

To solve this problem, fishing companies installed freezers on their boats, which allowed the boats to go farther to capture. However, the Japanese could taste the

A Shark in the form of a Friend

difference between fresh and frozen fish. So, fishing companies installed fish tanks. They would catch the fish and place them in the tanks. After a little thrashing around, the fish would stop moving; they were tired and dull, but alive. Unfortunately, the Japanese could still taste the difference. Because the fish did not move for days, they lost their fresh-fish taste. The Japanese preferred the lively taste of fresh fish, not sluggish fish. So how did Japanese fishing companies solve this problem? To keep the fish tasting fresh, the Japanese fishing companies still put the fish in the tanks. But, they added a small shark to each tank. Even though the shark would eat a few fish, the problem was solved because most of the fish arrived in a very lively state, with

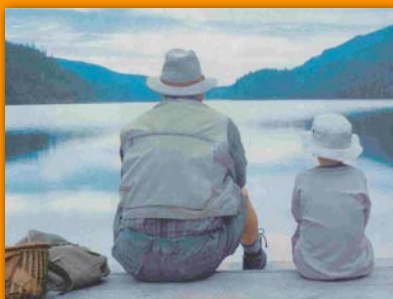
"The key is to keep company only with people who uplift you, whose presence calls forth your best." - Epictetus

the savory taste the Japanese preferred.

Sharks are needed to keep us active in our daily lives. Who are these sharks? Sharks come in the form of high-achieving friends. Just being in the presence of such positive company can truly influence our own behavior. *You always need a person to challenge you and push you forward.*

CELEBRATIONS & APPRECIATIONS

The Significance of Father's Day



While there are countless factors that shape our lives from childhood to adulthood, there is one central factor that is most impactful: a father. A father has an instinctive dedication to always protect, support and nurture his child. Father's Day is a day to appreciate the constant efforts of a father at all stages of our upbringing. While we can easily recognize the value of our father, there is another person who is an equally important father-figure in our lives.

What is the role of this father-figure?

There once lived a father and son, who both painted murtis (portraits) of the Lord. After completing each murti, the son would show it to his father for his approval. However, his father would always find fault with it and point out corrections to be made. The son thought, "My father will never say my paintings are good." So one day, he painted a beautiful murti of the Lord and buried it in the ground. After a month, he dug it up and said, "Father, I've found this murti hidden in the ground." He showed the murti and asked, "Father, what do you think of this murti?" His father praised, "This murti is very good! You should paint like this!" His son said at once, "But I painted this murti!" His father was saddened, "I used to scold you about your paintings so you would always try to do better. Your brush won't improve beyond this point now," he explained.

This other equally important father-figure is a God-realized saint. Just as the father's only intention in this tale was to help his son achieve perfection, a true saint only desires to cultivate perfection in all aspects of our life. While a father takes care of our body and supports our worldly endeavors, a true saint nurtures our soul and fosters our inner growth.

To reap the utmost benefit from the company of a true saint, we must first establish a sincere relationship with him, like that between a father and his child.

Bhavesh Akabri, a youth from Gujarat, was pursuing his MBA in one of London's reputed Universities. He was there not so much as to get a higher education, but to impress the parents of a girl he loved, in hopes of one day marrying her. The fact that the girl he loved was pursuing her medical career in Russia, and not in London, went to show how passionate and willing Bhavesh was to pursue his desires. While studying in London, he got accustomed to the culture of the city and began to party in pubs on a regular basis.

One day, at a job-interview, he happened to meet Ghanshyam, who was also pursuing a post-graduate degree in London. Ghanshyam accepted Bhavesh for who he was and did not make him feel that he was wasting his youth in an effort to impress those who did not even respect him. For Bhavesh, Ghanshyam's actions spoke louder than words; he was impressed with Ghanshyam's humility and poise, the way he led his life with the clarity of giving something to society.

Eventually, Bhavesh became a part of Ghanshyam's group, which included highly intelligent and focused young students from India who were either working or studying in London. Observing these youths living such a joyous life, Bhavesh was inspired and started to wonder whether he too could live such a candid and happy life. But for Bhavesh, the bigger question was how living such a harmonious life was even possible, especially in this day and age. *How were his friends able to live such a blissful life?* After spending more time with these youths, it became very obvious that the foundation of their happiness was Guruhari Hariprasad Swamiji. Bhavesh realized that it was due to Swamiji's efforts that these youths, far away from their homes with full independence, were living such a disciplined

and inspirational life style. Upon meeting Swamiji, Bhavesh felt something he had never experienced. There was a certain glowing charm, a certain genuine affection, a certain compassionate touch, in the way Swamiji talked to him and the way Swamiji listened to all of his concerns, yet expected nothing in return. Even though it was their first meeting, Bhavesh truly felt as though he had been in Swamiji's contact for years.

Bhavesh now had a clear vision for his life; he wanted to do something that would bring him everlasting joy. In a very short time, along with Ghanshyam and the other youths, Bhavesh became actively involved in Swamiji's social and cultural activities in London. He realized that the best path to make every moment count towards his happiness was surrendering to a true saint. The young man who had initially sought education in London, solely to win the hand of a girl he loved in marriage, now had a change of heart: All his passion was now channelized towards the single goal of pleasing Swamiji and following his guidance. With this strong commitment in mind, in 2009, Bhavesh left his job and London altogether, along with Ghanshyam and seven other youths, to become a teacher at Atmiya Vidya Mandir, an International Residential School for Boys near Surat. Established by Swamiji, this school is dedicated to the divinity in each and every child.



Seeing the relatively fast and surprising change in Bhavesh's life begs a very simple question:

Would this life changing journey from London to Surat, from a life without clarity to a path towards lasting happiness, have been possible if Bhavesh was not surrounded by the right company?

Lasting Thoughts



If a drop of water falls in a Lake, it loses its Identity!



If it falls on a Rose, it Shines



If it falls in a Shell, it becomes a Pearl



THE DROP IS THE SAME, BUT THE COMPANY MATTERS

WALL OF REFLECTIONS

"Initially, I came to camp just to play sports. However, I was touched by how the youths interacted with each other as if they were part of one large family. I wish the camp lasted forever."

"I get a chance to meet youths from many parts of the world, from various backgrounds, and they all bring their unique expertise in several fields. Listening to their speeches and interacting with them gives me a whole new dimension of looking at things, which I can practically apply in my life."

"This youth camp is not just a three day event, but a year long reminiscence of what the real joy of life is; it teaches how to perpetually nurture that joy. The camp not only made me a better individual, but also an altruistically responsible member of society."

Please join us for this year's Youth Camp, Aug 13-15, 2010 @ Hudson Valley Resort, NY