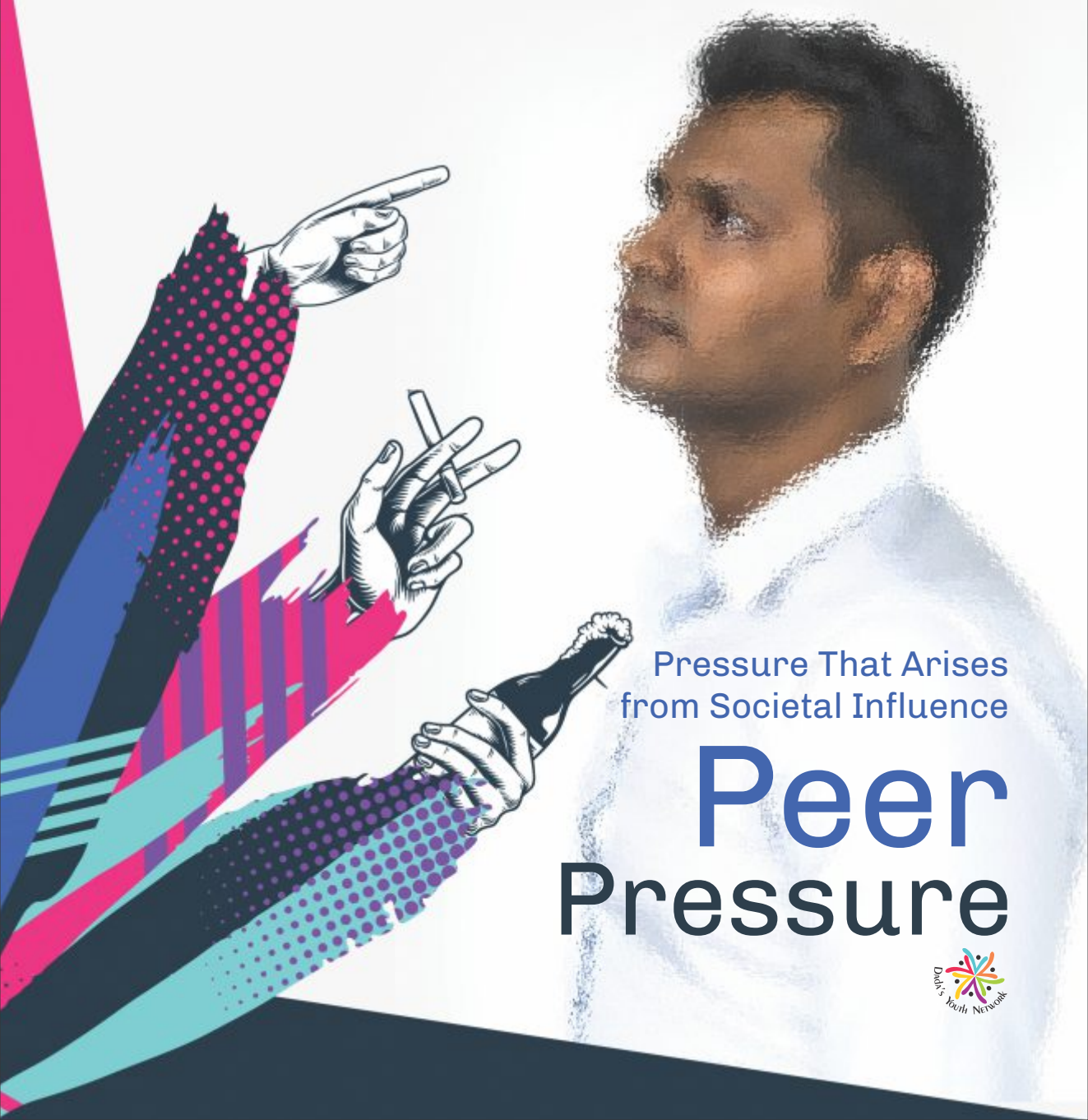


Akram Youth

March 2019 | English

Dada Bhagwan Parivar

Price per Copy - ₹ 20



Pressure That Arises
from Societal Influence

Peer Pressure



Table of Contents

04 What Is a Peer?

06 What Is Peer Pressure?

08 Peers and Their Effect

10 An Invaluable Lesson

12 An Experiment -
You Are the Company You Keep

14 Akrampedia

16 My Confusion

18 Gnani with Youth

19 Turning Point

Pg. 22 - March 2019.
Year: 7. Issue: 11.
Cont. Issue: 71.

Contact :

Gnani Ni Chhayama (GNC),
Trimandir Sankul,
Simandhar City,
Ahmedabad-Kalol Highway,
Adalaj, Dist. Gandhinagar,
Gujarat-382421
Phone: (079) 39830100

email: akramyouth@dadabhagwan.org
website: youth.dadabhagwan.org
store.dadabhagwan.org/akram-youth

Editor: Dimple Mehta

Printer & Published by
Dimple Mehta on behalf of
Mahavideh Foundation
Simandhar City, Adalaj -
382421. Taluka & Dist - Gandhinagar

Owned by
Mahavideh Foundation
Simandhar City, Adalaj -
382421. Taluka & Dist - Gandhinagar

Published at
Mahavideh Foundation
Simandhar City, Adalaj -
382421. Taluka & Dist - Gandhinagar

Printed at : Amba Offset
B-99, GIDC, Sector-25,
Gandhinagar – 382025. Gujarat.
Total 24 Pages with Cover page

Subscription

Yearly Subscription

India :200 Rupees

USA: 15 Dollars

UK: 12 Pounds

5 Years Subscription

India : 800 Rupees

USA: 60 Dollars

UK: 50 Pounds

In India, D.D. / M.O. should be drawn
in favour of "Mahavideh Foundation"
payable at Ahmedabad.

© 2019, Dada Bhagwan Foundation.
All Rights Reserved



Editorial

We all live our lives with some goal or the other. Someone's goal may be to study hard and get a good job, another's goal may be to achieve a respectable status in society, and another's goal may be to give happiness to others. Like this, everyone's goal is different. We make many efforts towards achieving it. At times, we quickly progress towards our goal and at other times, we wander away from it. When we know what our goal is, why do we take steps that lead us away from it?

In this issue, we will learn about the most important force that takes us towards our goal or away from it. This is the force of 'Peer Pressure'. We will get tips on how to avoid the peers that take us away from our goal.

Let's get started!

- Dimple Mehta



What?
Is a Peer?



To understand what a peer is, let's take a simple example. There are a total of twenty-nine states in our country. Each state has its own culture, lifestyle, food and language. And isn't it said that, 'You are the company you keep'? If we had to leave Ahmedabad and stay in Rajkot for one year, then the language of Rajkot would have an effect on us. If we were to leave here and go to America or another foreign country, then that language, environment and culture would knowingly or unknowingly become a part of us. We must have also experienced this to some degree. A peer has a similar effect on us.

The people around us, our friends, family members, neighbors and teachers, can all be considered our peers. Their influence causes changes in us. We can also be a peer to someone else. The people who are knowingly or unknowingly responsible for the changes in our lives, be they good or bad, mental or physical, internal or external, are all our peers.

Although, we can't really consider anyone else responsible for the changes in our lives, because some of our peers were chosen by us, like our friends...

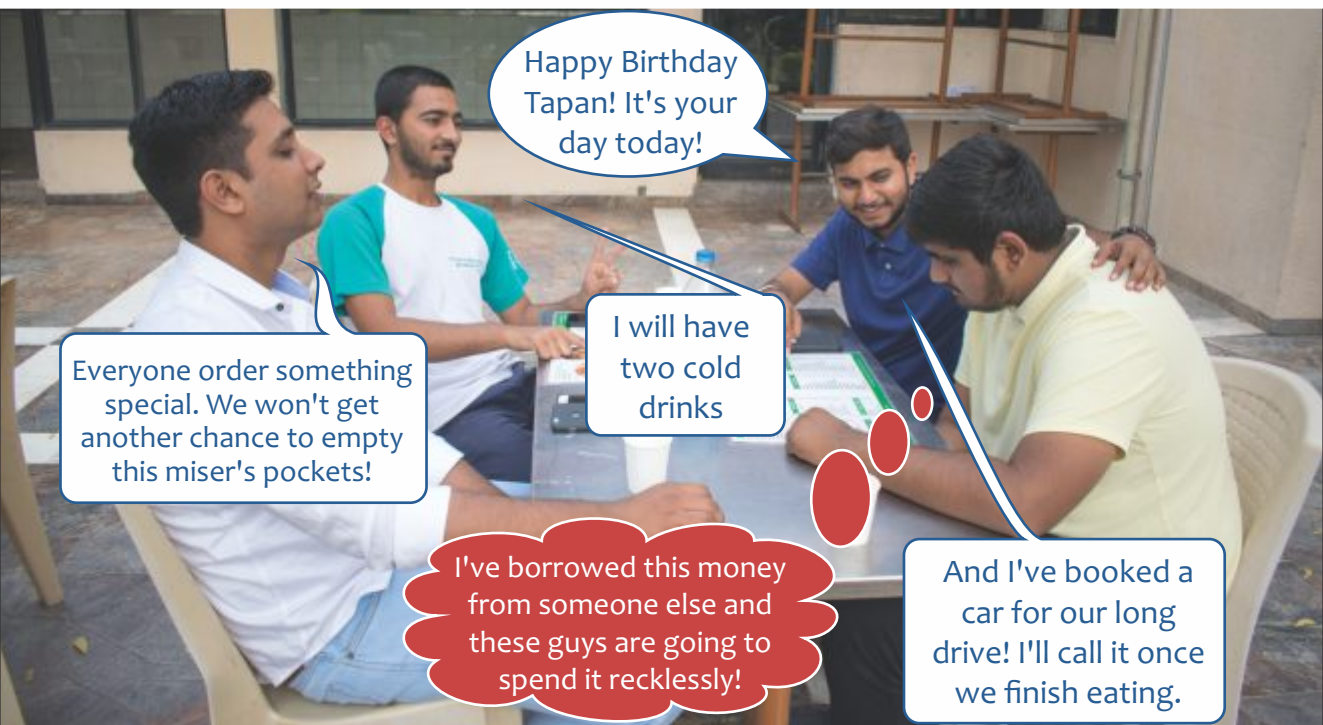
If we do what our friends tell us to do, if we roam around with them, if we do mischief in order to impress them, then those friends are our peers. On the other hand, if we obey our parents, if we stop playing games and watching TV when they tell us to, if we spend time only with the friends they approve of, whether we like it or not, then our parents are our peers.



What Is a Peer ?

- When do we experience peer pressure? When we have to do something we don't like, due to pressure from someone else. Let's see Tapan's example...
- Tapan's birthday is coming up soon. Let's see how his friends are pressuring him to throw a party.

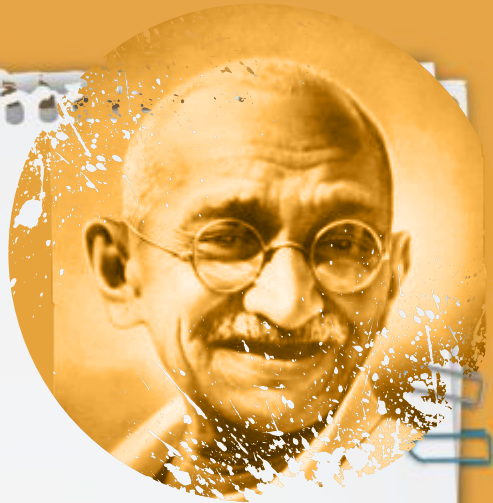




So friends, did you notice? Many times, like Tapan, we also succumb to the pressure of our chosen peers and unwillingly do things we don't like.

Peers and Their Effect

Come on friends; let's find out who our peers are and how they influence our lives. Like Mahatma Gandhi, let's learn from our positive peers and understand the dangers of our negative peers.

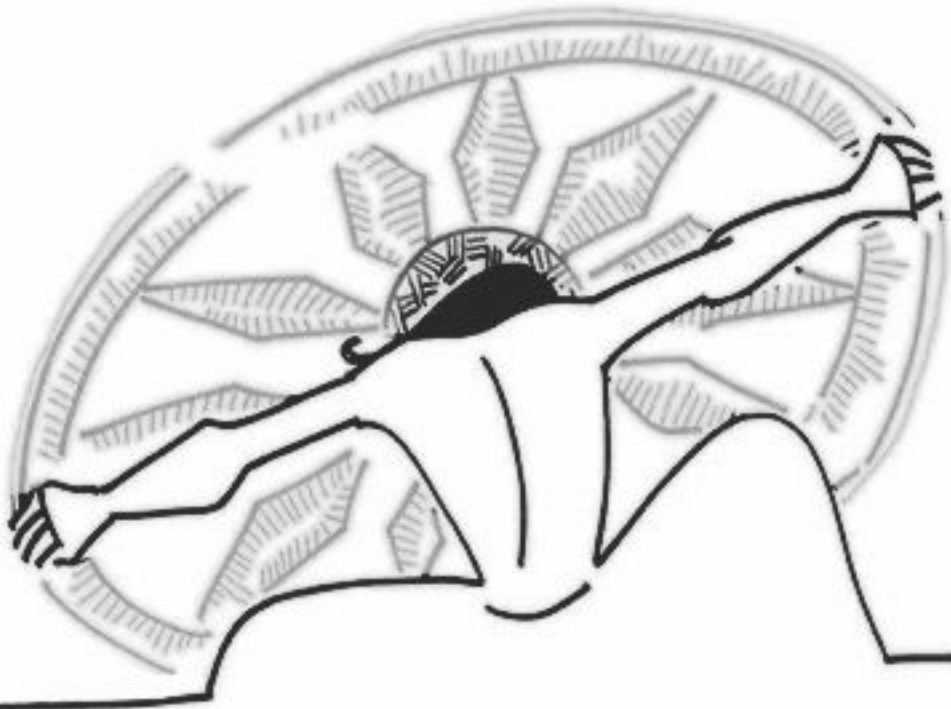


Name: Mahatma Gandhi

Peers	Their Influence
Non-Vegetarian Friends	I also became interested in eating non-vegetarian food.
Father	Because he forgave me for stealing, I became fearless and was able to walk on the path of truth for the rest of my life.
Shrimad Rajchandra	I progressed on the path of spirituality and was able to get my problems solved by writing letters to him.
Mischievous Friends	I incurred a debt and in order to repay it, I had to steal from my parents.
A Strict Teacher	I learned the value of time and to avoid being negligent no matter where I am.

Name: _____





An Invaluable Lesson

The Mahabharata, an epic of ancient India, contains life lessons on each and every page. Today, we will read such a page.

The character of Karna was abandoned by his mother at birth and he was raised by a charioteer couple. Karna was born as a kshatriya (a member of the warrior class).

When Karna wanted to acquire the skills to fight, the guru Dronacharya refused to teach him. Therefore, he posed as a brahmin (a member of the religious scholar class) and went to guru Parshuram to acquire those skills. One day, as Karna was in Parshuram's service, Parshuram fell asleep in his lap. At that moment, a scorpion bit Karna. In order to avoid waking up Parshuram, Karna refrained from reacting to the painful bite. However, when the blood from Karna's wound touched Parshuram, he woke up. That is when he became certain that Karna was a kshatriya. "Only a kshatriya could have such courage and such hot blood. The skills you have acquired by cheating me will not help you in your time of need."

Even though Karna was a kshatriya, he was not allowed to take part in the next competition in Hastinapur. After Karna faced many such insults and injustices, Naresh pleaded with Dhritarashtra (the King of Hastinapur) to give him justice. Hearing this, Duryodhana said to Karna, "My friend, you will definitely get justice. From today, you are my friend and the king of Anga. From today, this city is yours and you will be known as Anga-Raja Karna." This is how, under the guise of a favor, kusang entered into Karna's life.

In order to repay this favor, Karna supported each and every action of Duryodhana's, whether good or bad. To keep his friendship intact, he even had to be a part of Draupadi's vastraharan (disrobing). Karna had always fought for kshatriyas, but when Duryodhana planned to kill the Pandavas through deception, by burning down their palace, Karna went against his kshatriya tendencies and supported this terrible act. Karna always believed that a kshatriya must fight honorably, but he had to support his friend Duryodhana.

During the war of Kurukshetra, Karna knew that his friend was on the wrong path and that he would face his downfall. But instead of giving advice to his friend, he had to support him in order to repay his debt. Karna was considered to be part of the line of powerful and charitable kings; skillful and supremely astute. Despite having many good qualities, because he had to repay his debt to someone of bad influence, he ended up having to go against his most valuable principles.

Like Karna, we also end up choosing our peers based on various favors done for us. Then in order to repay those favors, we end up supporting their good and bad actions and we don't even realize when that bad company has had an influence on us.

From this page of the Mahabharata, we have learned an invaluable lesson. That we should only choose company that will help take us towards our goal. So it is important to be alert when receiving help from someone, otherwise it could end up hurting us.

You Are the Company **You Keep**

Come, let us learn about this concept through an experiment.

Ingredients: A white rose, a knife, hot water, food color or water color and 3 beakers.

Objective: To prove that you are the company you keep.

Step 1: Take a white rose (You can use another color rose, but you can see the result best in a white rose).



Step 2: With the knife, make three long cuts down the stem of the rose, as shown in the picture.



Step 3: Cut the end of the stem at a slant.



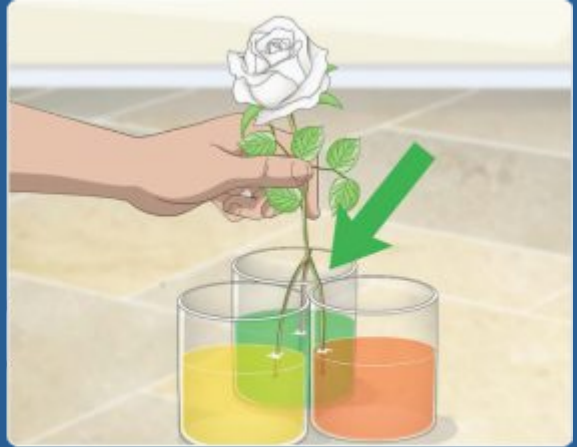
Step 4: Place the rose in clear water.



Step 5: Fill each of the three beakers with two to four cups of hot water and add a different food color to each one (You can use water color as well).



Step 6: Take the rose which you had soaked in clear water and place it in the colored water beakers, as shown in the picture.



Step 7: Wait until you see the color of the rose change.



Observation: When the stems of the rose were placed in colored water, the color of that water changed the color of the rose petals. The color was transferred quickly by lukewarm water.

Conclusion: We see that all things go through changes based on the type of nurturing they get.

Understanding: Changes happen in our life based on the environment around us and where our chit (subtle component of vision and knowledge) is engrossed. Good company helps us progress towards our goal and bad company leads us away from it. The more we feel the warmth of that company, the more quickly it will help us.



Akrampedia

Name: Ayush Mehta
Age: 19



Friends, this is Ayush, and I am here again to tell you one of my life experiences. It was the 26th of November. I was dropping my friend Tanish off at the Mumbai Railway station. He was headed to Kashmir. Tanish had trained for the Indian army and was now going to advance his career. He sat in the train. After saying goodbye, I was heading out of the station, when someone placed their hand on my shoulder and said, “Hey Ayush! How are you?”

“Oh Nishith! I’m doing great. How are you my friend? I’m meeting you after such a long time.” I was delighted to meet my classmate Nishith after many years.

“How come you are here?” Nishith asked. “I came to drop off my college friend Tanish. What about you? How far along are you on realizing your dream of starting a business?” I asked.

We both exited the station together. While Nishith was telling me about his business, he revealed that he was running a bar. He offered to help me get beer, whiskey, or any other alcoholic drink and from then on, if I ever wanted a place to host a party,

his bar would be available to me. Hearing this, I got caught up in a whirlwind of thoughts.

Regaining my composure, I looked at Nishith and said, “My friend, as far as I know, you belong to a family with high moral values and you wouldn’t be able to run a bar!!! How did you get entangled in this?”

Nishith grinned and said, “Ayush, all that matters in business is how much money you make. No one cares what type of business you have or how you run it.”

“So if someone tells you to eat non-veg, would you do it? And you must be drinking, right?” I asked in bewilderment.

“Ayush, you are still living in the 19th century. These things are common nowadays. The food you are referring to as non-veg is meant to be eaten. If you don’t eat it, someone else will.” Nishith said with a grin.

I was stunned by the drastic change in Nishith’s thoughts and attitude. I was curious to know what the reason for this change could be.

I asked him, “Where did you get the

idea to run a bar?"

Nishith responded, "Before starting a business, I wanted to get some experience. I didn't know where to start, so I decided to get a job. After a few days, my college friend's father offered me a job at his bar. At first, I also thought that this wasn't worth doing. But he was in need of someone like me, someone young and free of household responsibilities, so that I could focus on the work. So he insisted that I take the job. As he was my elder, I obeyed his advice and accepted the job. I had a lot of good experiences, I got to learn a lot, and I met a lot of people who taught me how to interact with others. At this point, I wanted to quit the job. But seeing my skills, he gave me an offer to join him in a partnership. I felt that I would benefit a lot from it. Yes, sometimes in a meeting I would have to drink a little. But, if you want to progress in your career, you have to accept small things like this."

"Nishith, you accepted the job at the bar in order to gain experience on how to run a business. And with that experience, you

were supposed to progress towards your goal." Before I could say anything else, my phone rang.

"Ayush, come home quickly. There is a surprise waiting for you."

Instead of finishing my conversation with Nishith, I decided to say bye to him and head home. As I boarded a bus, I kept thinking to myself, 'How could someone forget their moral values and life principles and be diverted onto the wrong path? As it is, many people are on the wrong path and do bad things. Does that mean that we should become like them? There are many students in my class who trick others, rob them, and consider that to be brave. They sell exams for money. But I stayed away from those people. And look what you have done Nishith.'

"Son, will you let me get down here? This is where I live." The old man sitting next to me pulled me out of my whirlwind of thoughts. It appeared that he was suffering from knee pain. As he got off the bus, he left me with a message.

"Wherever there is the desire or intent of making others happy, there is satsang. And whatever takes us on the wrong path is all considered kusang. By going to satsang, one becomes enlightened and his suffering stops, whereas kusang induces suffering. One may say that although he hangs out with a drunkard, he will never drink alcohol. But the nature of kusang is such that, one day he will surely start drinking alcohol. Therefore, one should stay far away from kusang. It affects the mind, the intellect, the chit, the ego and the body. The effects of kusang can remain for twenty-five years."- Dadashri

This note had fallen out of the old man's pocket. I felt as if Dada was giving me this message. As I put the note in my pocket, I strengthened my firm determination to remain in the company of good friends.



A person with dark hair, wearing a white ribbed sweater, is seen from the back, scratching their head with their right hand against a grey, textured wall. The person is wearing grey trousers. The background is a plain, slightly cracked grey wall.

My Confusion

How do I handle a situation where my friends are planning to ditch class to go see a movie and they are pressuring me to join them?

Aptaputra : It is very important to understand one thing. That you will need to maintain awareness at every step of your life. Every day you should ask yourself, 'Why have I come to college? To study? Or to make friends? What is my goal? It is to get good grades and leave with a degree. And there are plenty of colleges I could study at. So why did I come to this particular college? Because this college is very prestigious. So my entire goal of studying, gaining

knowledge, getting a degree and being successful in life... No one's influence should come in the way of that. And this will only be possible if my willpower is strong. Then even if I wander around the entire campus alone, I will not be in danger. I don't want to get involved in a relationship and I don't want to worry about what my group of friends will say about me.'

The youth of today have the mentality that, 'I don't care about anyone.' But it is only for the purpose of saying it. Whereas inside, they strongly feel, 'I want everyone's attention.' This is because their willpower is not strong. So their confidence sways and they become dependent on others. You will notice that every boy or girl is independent at first. But once they enter college, join a friend circle, start comparing themselves to others and face peer pressure, their confidence starts to decrease. Instead, they should keep confidence in themselves. And that doesn't come from a friend circle or from college. It comes from right understanding.

Keep Dada with you, chant 'Asim Jay Jaykar Ho', recite prayers and ask for energies. Understand that Dada, Niruma and Pujyashree are with you. But it will require effort. Every day you will have to tell yourself, 'I am with you'. And most importantly, stay sincere to your life's goal. And the more you remember the hard work you put in to get admission, the less this temporary friend circle will affect you.

Some people have the mentality that, 'I just want to enjoy. I just want to pass the time.' Then they will face difficulties. Whereas those who stay sincere to their goal, will not care what others say. They will remain focused on their school work. When class starts, they will come to campus and when class ends, they will leave campus.

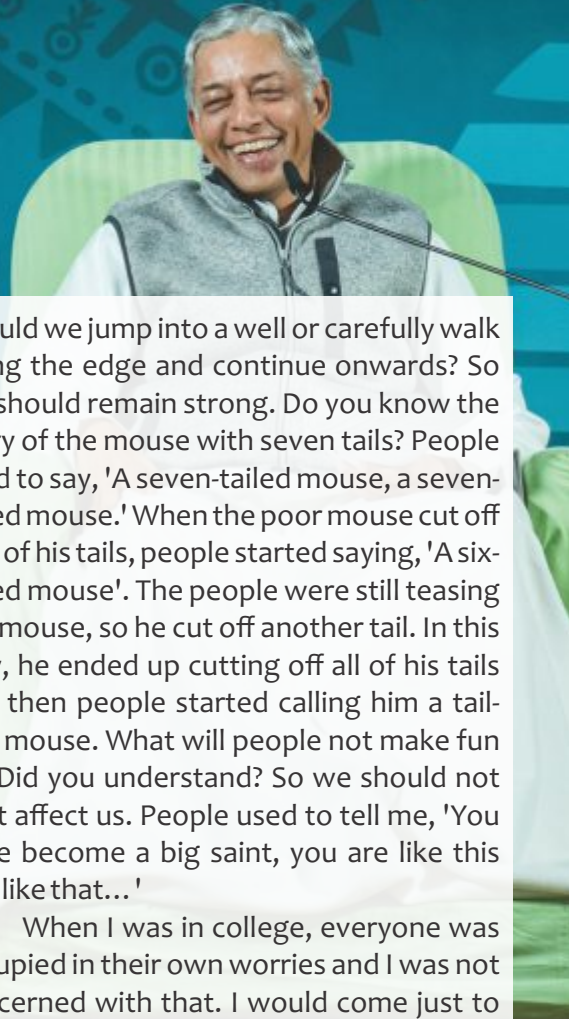
Questioner : It's such that, before we know it, we have chosen negative peers. Once we realize it, we set our goal. But, that only lasts for a short time. Then, we end up going back into negativity.

Aptaputra : Yes, but you have to constantly fight with your mind and drag it back to study sincerely. The road is slippery and there is every possibility for one to fall down. Therefore, this is the biggest challenge facing youth in the present times.

Questioner : 'But what if they emotionally blackmail us? And if we don't do what they say, then we feel, 'What will they think of us?' What should we do there?'

Aptaputra : Yes, so you should understand that you have forgotten what your goal is and why you have come here. And if you are always getting occupied with trying to prove yourselves to others, then all of this will definitely arise. Really, you should focus on not diverting from your goal. Right now you are in college, so with friends, or later, when you get a job, then with coworkers, all this is going to happen. It will happen at every step. This doesn't just apply to college students, but to everyone.

Gnani with Youth



Questioner: Many times at school and college, when our friends are trying to make an impression, we have to be like them. If we don't, they label us as egoistic. What should we do?

Pujyashree: What's the problem with that? Just because they say so, doesn't mean we become like that. If someone says that the Sun is cold and dark, does it become so?

Questioner: But it causes us to become isolated from the group.

Pujyashree: But there are 400 friends here. How can you become lonely?

Questioner: Those friends are here, but when I go out...

Pujyashree: What's the problem with that? Our focus is on our studies. Does the teacher teach us or not? Or does he isolate us? Then are we going to school for the teacher or for friends?

Questioner: For the teacher.

Pujyashree: Does the teacher teach you or does he also isolate you?

Questioner: He teaches.

Pujyashree: Then we should study. This doesn't matter. Would your friends be worrying about themselves or would they be constantly keeping their 'cameras' on you and seeing you as egoistic? So don't let any of this affect you. If they want to go on the wrong path and we want to go on the right path, then should we follow them?

Should we jump into a well or carefully walk along the edge and continue onwards? So we should remain strong. Do you know the story of the mouse with seven tails? People used to say, 'A seven-tailed mouse, a seven-tailed mouse.' When the poor mouse cut off one of his tails, people started saying, 'A six-tailed mouse'. The people were still teasing the mouse, so he cut off another tail. In this way, he ended up cutting off all of his tails and then people started calling him a tail-less mouse. What will people not make fun of? Did you understand? So we should not let it affect us. People used to tell me, 'You have become a big saint, you are like this and like that...'

When I was in college, everyone was occupied in their own worries and I was not concerned with that. I would come just to learn and then leave. No one was concerned about me. It didn't make any difference to me. Those people are now lost somewhere in their jobs or businesses. And I progressed on my path of liberation. What would have happened to me if I had listened to them? Look, if you want to travel on this path, then you shouldn't be scared of the world. Yes, if we are doing something wrong or if we took something that doesn't belong to us, then that is a different story. But we are not doing anything wrong like that.

I have a Diploma in Commerce and a Bachelors of Pharmacy. I started my studies at a young age and I also had an interest in playing games. Up until the tenth grade, I attended school in Maharashtra. After that I wanted to go study in a hostel. The situation at home was not very good. But to satisfy my desire, my parents got me admission in a hostel. There, I lived meagerly, with just the bare necessities. After the twelfth grade, I got admission to medical school, but I wanted to do Pharmacy, for which I fell one mark short. So I decided to go for a Diploma in Pharmacy.

Then my college life started. I became part of a friend circle that represented a variety of ethnicities and religions. They convinced me to smoke cigarettes in order to combat the cold. Before I knew it, I was smoking too. Then, seeing others chew tobacco, I also became interested in it. Before long, I had a habit of that as well. With the excuse of wanting to party with my friends, I tasted alcohol. They convinced me



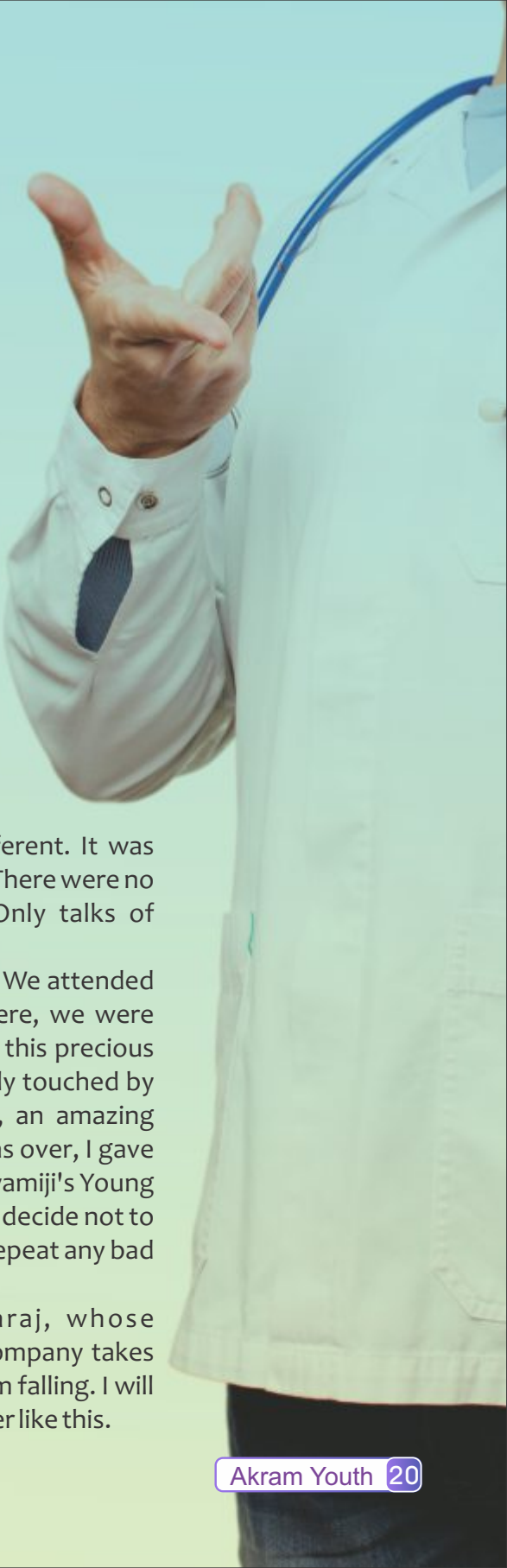
by saying that it was okay to drink once in a while and that everyone drank. They would tease me by saying, “You are just a kid. It's beyond your capacity. You won't be able to digest it!” And to prove them wrong, I would force myself to drink.

Since all this was not allowed at home, I did feel scared inside. But when all this would present itself in front of me, I would get caught in it. Through all this, I developed a serious addiction to tobacco. I even smoked cigarettes and drank wine from time to time. Like this, my life became full of bad company and bad habits.

One day, for a real estate deal, we had to go check out a place. There, we met someone by the name of Sureshbhai. He invited us to listen to a sermon by Shri Hemratnasuriji Maharaj at his Gokulnagar Society. We laughed it off thinking that it was not for us and that it was for old people. He insisted that we at least come see it once because it would be appealing to youngsters. We obliged and went to listen to the sermon. Once there, we heard something different. It was completely opposite of what we had expected. There were no talks of renouncing or performing rituals. Only talks of understanding and determination.

This sermon was a turning point for me. We attended the sermons for the rest of the semester. There, we were inspired to become good people, to not waste this precious life, and to realize who we really are. I was really touched by many such talks. From the very first sermon, an amazing energy arose in me. As soon as the semester was over, I gave up all of my bad habits at once and joined the Swamiji's Young Alert Group. The goal of this group was to firmly decide not to get involved with any bad company and not to repeat any bad habits. I have maintained that till this day.

I am indebted to the Guru Maharaj, whose understanding has given me a new life. Bad company takes one down and good company prevents you from falling. I will always pray that everyone finds a spiritual teacher like this.



Year: 7, Issue : 11
Continuous Issue : 71
March 2019



Send your suggestions and feedback at: akramyouth@dadabhagwan.org

Printed and Published by Dimple Mehta on behalf of Mahavideh Foundation-Owner.

Printed at : Amba Offset, B-99, GIDC, Sector-25, Gandhinagar – 382025.

