

August 17, 2008

[Home](#) > [2008 Issues](#) > [August 17, 2008](#)

Physical strength, spiritual power

By Somnath Kesari

Acharya Swami Avdheshanand Giri Maharaj is the head of Shri Panchdashnam Juna Akhada, the biggest of the thirteen Saint Akhadas of the country. Shri Juna Akhada has more than five million saints in its fold, who form about 80 per cent of the combined strength of saints belonging to all the Akhadas. Swamiji has initiated about one lakh saints during the last about ten years. Ever since he was appointed Acharya Mahaman-daleshwar, he has been the guiding spirit behind all the activities of not only the Juna Akhada but also of the Hindu Dharma Acharya Sabha. Harihar Ashram in Kankhal, Haridwar is the seat of the Acharya. Besides the Guru gaddi, the ancient Maha Mrityunjay temple, the unique Paradeshwar Mahadev and the popular Rudraksh tree in the Ashram attract hundreds of pilgrims to the Ashram every day for darshan.

In order to inculcate among his devotee followers the loft habits of service, self-study and satsang-ultimately leading to the final goal of self-realisation, Swamiji founded the Prabhu Premi Sangh in 1991, which has grown into a big tree by now, having about one hundred branches in India and abroad with a membership running into millions of devoted seekers. Prabhu Prem Ashram on the bank of river Tangri in Ambala Cantt is the Head-quarter of the Prabhu Premi Sangh. Regular daily hawan (yajna) in the morning, satsang (discourse) every evening, Akhand Nam Sankirtan, Akhand jawala and a Goshala are some of the special features of the Ashram.

Swami Avdheshanand Welfare Association (SAWA) is the latest institution founded in Mumbai by Swamiji. It is an organisation engaged in social activities under the guidance of Swami Avdheshanand Giri. These special activities are mainly in the fields of education, health care, food and spiritual awareness. SAWA is helping economically deprived children in their education by providing them educational material such as books, note-books, bags and other articles of stationery. More than a thousand children are getting this benefit every year.

SAWA has a mobile dispensary to treat patients of rural areas. It has already provided medical treatment to more than 2 lakh people. It conducts blood donation camps and eye treatment camps at frequent intervals. It also provides spectacles to the needy. Besides SAWA, the Indore, Jamshedpur and Jabalpur branches of Prabhu Premi Sangh are also serving the patients through their mobile dispensaries. SAWA offers food to the needy regularly and on special occasions bhandaras are also arranged where all those present enjoy community feasts.

To propagate spiritual awareness among the devotees SAWA organises spiritual gatherings

also on weekly basis. Rituals like puja, hawan etc. are organised on some of the main festivals of the Hindus. SAWA organises Bhagwan Jagannath Rath yatra also every year in Mumbai. More than twenty thousand devotees participate in this grand festival every year.

Shiv Ganga Abhiyan is a joint activity of Prabhu Premi Sangh and Samagra Gram Vikas Parishad for the development of the rural Vanvasi areas of Jhabua district in Madhya Pradesh. Eleven hundred villages have already been adopted and work is going on there to dig water resources for water-storage and to build Shiva temples in every village. Many more activities of social welfare are going on in this area for the good of the under-privileged.

Shri Shimon Peres, President of Israel, personally invited Swamiji as a representative of the Hindu community in May 2008 along with the former President of India Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, Shri Ratan Tata and Maulana Jameel Ahmed, president, All India Organisation of Imams to participate in an International Presidential Conference on the subject 'Facing Tomorrow?'. It was a conference focused on exploration of prominent world leaders, thinkers, artists and scientists including young men and women of exceptional promise and originality. It was attended by 18 present heads of state including George W. Bush, President of USA, and many former heads like M. Gorbachev from Russia, Tony Blair of UK along with many state representatives.

Swami Avdheshanand Giri put the Indian and Hindu point of view very lucidly and President Peres was all praise for Swamiji's ideas and called him a Man of Vision. Swami Avdheshanand Giri addressed the students and faculty also of the famous university of Hafia in Israel. At home in India also Swamiji enjoys the reputation of being a great scholar of Vedanta and ancient Hindu scriptures. He is considered as one of the top most orators of Shrimad Bhagwat, Ramayana and Devi Bhagwat and a great orator who can keep the audience spell-bound for hours and hours together.

Vikram University Ujjain, conferred on him the honorary degree of D. Litt. for his extraordinary work in Hindi literature and excellent oratory skills. He has a great command over Hindi language and people love to hear his sermons full of Hindi synonyms. Naturally he enjoys great respect among poets and scholars alike.

On account of his qualities of head and heart Swamiji has been nominated as a member of the World Council of Religious Leaders, a council of great scholars and spiritual leaders of different countries, engaged in establishing and promoting peace all around the world.

Swami Avdheshanand Giri is undoubtedly a great thinker, scholar, spiritual leader, orator, social reformer and beloved of the young and old alike. He has a plan for the future also. He is planning through Swami Avdheshanand Foundation (SAF) to establish a great institution in Bhopal, where highly talented brains will be prepared and nurtured for the propagation of rich ancient Indian culture. They will be trained to play a great role in establishing world fraternity, peace and harmony in the whole world for the welfare and upliftment of the universe. Swamiji strongly believes in the dictum Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam and so his dream institute would be

a multi-dimensional institute where programmes for the all-round development of a person like spiritual education, personality development programme along with Yoga, Ayurvedic and Naturopathy treatment and world class self management and de-stressing programme will be undertaken. The plans are ready and keen to take shape in beautiful surroundings on a deep forest-land covering about 150 acers in the lap of nature. This will benefit not only the present generation, but will also go a long way in the right direction and orientation of future generations.

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