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Following the Footsteps...

Prabhu Premi Sangh Newsletter



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Reflections from Pujya Swamiji's Diary...



Dear Prabhu Premi,

Prabhu bless you.

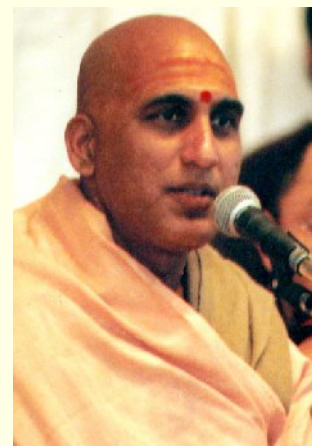
Nature is constantly fulfilling all our requirements; but a greedy person can never be satisfied. The first step in the spiritual journey is to learn to curtail our desires.

Trusting that God is always desirous of the highest welfare for each of us grants the mind power and freedom from fear, worries, and burden.

The maximum benefit for all is assured in God's beautiful plan. Remembering this and knowing Him to be our well-wisher, dearest companion and true friend, is the highest form of devotion.

With blessings,

Swami Avdheshanand Giri



Inspiring pearls of wisdom from the diary of Pujya Acharya Sri

News in a Nutshell



Hari Om!

Here's wishing our newsletter readers a prosperous and happy new year! May this year bring us all good health, joy, fulfillment and peace of mind.

After successful kathas in Banswara and Korba district, Swamiji then conducted Srimad Bhagwad katha in Dhampteri. This katha was organized by the members of Prabhu Premi Sangh and lasted until Dec 2nd.

Following this, Bhagwad katha was organized in the holy land of Sri Krishna,

Vrindavan, from December 11 to 17. This katha was jointly organized by Swami Avdheshanand Foundation, Swami Avdheshanand Welfare Association (SAWA) and Prabhu Premi Sangh, and enthusiastically attended by thousands of prabhu premis in India and abroad.

All prabhu premis will be delighted to know that our Pujya Guruji has been awarded the "Hindu of the Year for 2008" by the Hinduism Today magazine. The conferring of this honor to Pujya Acharya Ji is indeed a remarkable achievement

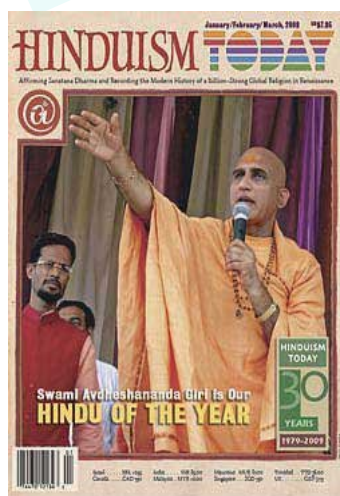
and proud moment for all Prabhu Premis. The Hindu Renaissance Award is presented to prominent leaders working towards the preservation of the Hindu Dharma and society.

Swamiji is currently spending some time in solitude (Ekant). He will be taking a short break from spiritual discourses for the purpose of spending time for health care, spiritual writing, and spiritual practices. During this time, we will continue bringing you the newsletter.

So stay tuned!

Following the Footsteps

"Without hard work and sadhana, success cannot be attained."



THOUGHT OF THE MONTH



"Your attainments will depend on the resolves you make."

The New Year is a good time to reflect about positive change and make resolutions that will help overcome our weaknesses and temptations in the spiritual path. One must also sincerely attempt to stick to these resolves. Initial failures should not discourage us or weaken our spirit as failures are the stepping stones to success.

Swamiji honored as "Hindu of the Year" by Hinduismtoday Magazine



His Holiness Swami Avdheshanand Giri Maharaj was named the "Hindu of the Year" and received the 2008 Hindu Renaissance Award from Hinduism Today magazine. The Hindu Renaissance Award was created in 1991 to recognize worldwide leaders who inspire and strengthen Hinduism.

The January/February/March 2009 issue of Hinduism Today covers in detail the reasons for its choice. Hinduism Today's representative, Easan Katir, delivered the following short address explaining the award's spirit, history and the choice of this year's awardee:

"Such peerless leaders can come in many forms, reflecting the diverse ways of our faith. Some are silent sages, mystics who take us to the heights of our own being by the force of their own enlightenment. Others are tireless social workers, servants of Hindus in need, helping children, priests, villages, the sick and the poor, living the Hindu ideals of ahimsa and compassion. Yet others are scholars, intellectual

champions capable of debating deep scriptural truths and fighting in many arenas to protect dharma. This year's recipient belongs to more than one of these categories.

Swami Avdheshanand Giri Maharaj is the chosen Acharya Mahamandleshwar of the holy Juna Akhara and has excelled at this the task."

This noble achievement serves as recognition of Swamiji's unwavering commitment and dedicated efforts directed towards social wellbeing and protection of the Hindu dharma's ideals.

The magazine also beautifully traces Swamiji's spiritual journey from a simple, young sanyasin and seeker to the head Acharya and spiritual leader of the eminent Juna Akhara group of saints. It elucidates Pujya Swamiji's ongoing projects being carried out by Prabhu Premi Sangh and Swami Avdheshanand Welfare Association such as the Bhopal project and Shivganga project.

In an exclusive interview with the Hinduism Today reporter,



Swamiji stresses the significance of meditation.

Quoting Swamiji in the report, "When you close your eyes and sit in a proper posture, energy will flow and grow at a very rapid speed. There is nothing more powerful than Dhyana (meditation). Dhyana gives birth to you. It introduces you to your own self."

Sending out a special message to today's youth, Swamiji says, "My message to the youth is that without hard work and sadhana, success cannot be attained. A youth must be focused, have qualities of patience and control over his senses, and work hard on both his worldly pursuits and spiritual practices."

(For the full article please visit the website: www.hinduismtoday.com)

Straight from the Heart - Ms Kamlesh Ka'ra



About 6 months ago, my brother experienced chest pain and went for a check-up at the nearest hospital. The doctor frightened us by saying it was a heart problem.

After getting a second consultation, an urgent bypass surgery was advised. We had never dreamed of this. In a helpless state, we contacted Maharaj Ji and narrated what happened.

Maharaj Ji assured that everything was going to be all right. I was surprised how this

could be. I don't know whether Maharaj Ji understood what I was telling him.

I contacted him again before my brother went into the surgery. With his grace and blessings, the surgery was successful and now my brother is fine.

Every time that we have needed him, Maharaj Ji is always besides us, giving us hope and strength. May God bless our Guru Maharaj Ji with a long and healthy life.



Readers are welcome to contribute their personal experiences and anecdotes. Please email your article to: prabhupremisanghnews@gmail.com.

Divinity meets festivity in the holy city of Vrindavan



In all of India, one of the most sacred and beautiful places of pilgrimages is Vrindavan. This city with the holy Yamuna River flowing through and beautiful temples embedded in its landscape is considered by devotees as paradise on earth. It seems to be a replica of the celestial abode of Lord Vishnu - the supreme Goloka (Vaikunth) in the sky.



It is rightly said "Vrindavan is the land where Shri Krishna dwells even today. The joys and abundance of Vrindavan is blessed by the in-dwelling Lord Vishnu who resides not only in the heart of the gopis but also in the sap that animates the birds and bees, trees and creepers."

In this sacred land, Srimad Bhagwad Katha saptah was jointly organized by Swami Avdheshanand Welfare Association (SAWA), Prabhu Premi Sangh and Swami Avdheshanand Foundation from Dec 11th to Dec 17th 2008 at Folga Ashram near the renowned Banke Bihari Temple.



Hanuman Ji was the special yajamaan (Parikshit) of this katha. As seen in the backdrop of the stage, Hanuman Ji was invited to be seated on the stage right next to Swami Ji. Maharaj Ji expressed excitement about this event as he was right next to Banke Bihare Ji and on the banks of Jamuna Ji.

In His katha, He also said "People of Vrindavan really know how to celebrate special events." He cites the time when Sri Krishna was a child and every action and development of the Lord was a reason to celebrate for them. For example, 'karvat utsav' when Kanhaiya first turned, 'cheenk utsav' when Bhagwan sneezed for the first time, 'sanket utsav' when Bal Gopal learned to point, and so on.

All Trustees and secretaries were constantly and tirelessly engaged in making the katha a fruitful and memorable experience for all. Various renowned saints, devotees, spiritual seekers and Prabhu premi sangh members gathered in large numbers from India and abroad to attend this katha.

Due to the special significance of the katha sthal (place), this event seemed to be for all a peculiar blend of mythology, devotion and spirituality.

FUN FACT!!

Legendary folklore has it that the name "Vrindavan" is derived from the ancient groves of "Vrinda" or "tulsi" (basil) which then flourished the land. In another lore, Vrindavan is named after Vrinda Devi, one of Krishna's childhood playmates. Whatever the case may be, Vrindavan is one of Hindu's most sacred pilgrimages as it was here that Lord Krishna did his "Baal leela", and played with the gopis. In Vrindavan, any occasion is celebrated by chanting the name of God, singing, dancing, etc.



Know Your Self



No matter how successful we maybe in gathering knowledge of the external world, until and unless we know our own inner selves we cannot achieve the experience of Self-knowledge.

In this context, what does it mean to “know a lot”? For the purpose of social norms and behavior, we interact with people on a daily basis and this interaction alongwith our surrounding environment influences and shapes our lives. This is why it becomes necessary to gain information but in turn, it is also our responsibility to organize this information.

The importance of worldly knowledge is universally acknowledged. More knowledge leads to the development of a sharper mind and enhances the intellect which helps an individual to advance towards success. But inspite of knowing a great deal about the world, we have so limited knowledge about ourselves. In such a situation, can we even assess ourselves properly in the world? Probably not. We consider our material knowledge to be our sole identity but the meaning of self - knowledge is much more profound than this.

Indian scriptures have used the word ‘Self’ not only for the ‘Atman (Soul)’ but also in context to the mind, intellect and body. The knowledge of *Self* begins from the physical body. According to Vedanta philosophy, there are five different sheaths (covers) or bodies: *Annamaya kosha* (Food sheath - referring to physical body), *Pranmaya kosha* (subtle life force sheath), *Manmaya kosha* (Mind sheath), *Buddhimaya kosha* (Intellectual sheath) and *Anandmaya kosha* (Bliss sheath).

Self knowledge implies that the aspirant should possess complete and clear knowledge of these five koshas. The *Self* element lies hidden under them. In order to get in touch with it, it is necessary to unveil the nature and functions of these five koshas. To undertake this kind of a spiritual practice means to advance from the gross world to the subtle world. This helps to make the aspirant eligible and worthy to achieve the experience of self realization.

The nature of the mind’s preferences and repeated actions (practices) is termed as ‘habit’. Nature and habits build our character. Development of character is not possible without learning and understanding about the nature of the Self, the purpose of life, strength of the inner Consciousness and the power of resolution. In the absence of this knowledge, it will also become difficult to overcome any obstacles that one encounters in the future. This is because the course of our actions is ultimately determined by our thought processes.

An infinite stream of thoughts are scattered in this world. A person’s faith and beliefs determine which thoughts should be welcomed and which ones rejected. What we have to become, what we are yet to attain, all this is decided by our Faith alone. But in order for this decision to take the form of action, the subtle energies of the mind come forth. Subsequently, our actions will also follow in this direction.

The mind does not act in accordance to its own will nor does the intellect (buddhi) have the power to make an independent decision. These two have to live under the supremacy of Faith. It has been noticed that not everyone has the same preferences or likings with regards to objects and situations. The likings of people belonging to the same family can be far apart. This is because the choices and decisions of the intellect are interdependent upon the entire stream of personal beliefs.

Therefore, it is the individual Consciousness which plays the important task of shaping one’s character and directing it. Understanding this truth and steadying the mind by withdrawing it from illusory sense objects through constant spiritual practice can help one achieve direct knowledge of the Supreme Self. Only when one knows his own Self can one acquire the vision to truly know the world.

(Translated from Swami Avdheshanand Giriji’s Amrit Ganga, Chapter 67.)

Prabhu Premi Sangh

Swamiji's Upcoming Schedule

- Until 22nd Feb: Under Spiritual practices (Ekant and Mohn)
- 23rd Feb: Haridwar – Maha Shivratri



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About the Organization...

'Prabhu Premi Sangh' is founded, directed and led by His Holiness Param Pujya Swami Avdheshanand Giriji Maharaj. Sri Swamiji is the spiritual Head of the age old JunaAkhada group of saints, the biggest of the thirteen saint akhadas in the country. Swamiji has also been nominated as Member of World Council of Religions, a council of great religious leaders devoted to the noble purpose of promoting world peace and communal harmony.

His divine vision for the spiritual and social welfare of mankind and his devoted efforts in this direction, led to the formation of Prabhu Premi Sangh. It has beautiful ashrams established in a divine, peaceful setting in the cities of Ambala and Haridwar, as well as numerous branches throughout India and abroad. Prabhu Premi Sangh is constantly engaged in various spiritual pursuits and programs with the mission to promote amongst society a spirit of selfless service, and impart spiritual knowledge via the study of scriptures, yoga camps, discourses and spiritual gatherings (satsang).



Please visit us online at: www.prabhupremisangh.org.



Feedback

Prabhu Premi Sangh's e-newsletter welcomes your suggestions, comments and queries. We invite you to share with us your viewpoints concerning spirituality, prayer and meditation. You can also send us your personal views, experiences with Swamiji which we will publish under the "Straight from the Heart" section. Please email us at prabhupremisanghnews@gmail.com.

"Help Ever, Hurt Never."