

May 2009

Following the Footsteps...

Volume 2, Issue 5

Upcoming events:

Summer Camp:
June 1 to June 7
2009

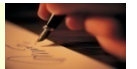
Inside this issue...

- Reflections from Pujya Swamiji's diary
- Newsletter Summary
- The Art of Being Happy
- Source of Real Joy
- Vat Savitri Puja
- Health and Wellness
- Thought of the Month
- The Guru - Disciple Relationship (Part 1)

Prabhu Premi Sangh Newsletter



Reflections from Pujya Swamiji's Diary...

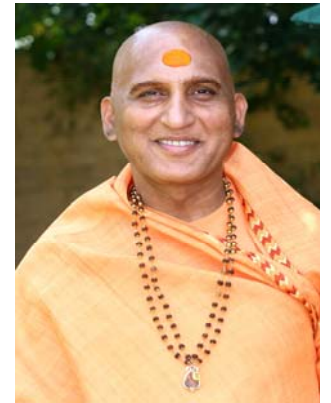


Dear Prabhu Premi,

Prabhu bless you.

Transforming one's nature is indeed a difficult, but not an impossible task. Become soft-spoken. Develop an amiable personality, and do not treat anybody in a manner that you would not like to be treated.

Be easy going and learn to forgive. One who looks for faults in others harms his own image. The essence of life is to be free from weaknesses. Each and every moment of life is precious, therefore, make the best utilization of your time. Not a single moment should go in vain. Think of God at all times and always remain engaged in noble activities.



Inspiring pearls of wisdom from the diary of Pujya Acharya Sri....

With blessings,
Swami Avdhesanand Giri

Newsletter Summary



Hari Om!

No matter what a person's background, race or religion, the quest for happiness is universal. Mankind has struggled since centuries to attain happiness that is everlasting and in this pursuit, he often ends up seeking it in the wrong things. Our sages and saints understood our plight and pointed us in

the direction of perennial joy. In our current issue, we unravel their idea of happiness which when followed, can help even an ordinary person achieve the same state of peace that these great teachers have attained.

In this issue, you also will find some practical pointers for keeping stress at bay under 'Health and Wellness'.

No spiritual success is possible without the umbrella of the Guru's grace. In our article, 'The Guru-Disciple relationship' we humbly explore the sacred bond which transcends distance, space and time.

Prabhu premis will be excited to know that this year's summer camp will be organized in Haridwar from June 1 to June 7.

The Art of Being Happy

Every person desires to be happy. But if you ask someone the definition of happiness, then it is difficult for him to give a precise answer. In general, a pleasant experience is equated with happiness while an unpleasant one with unhappiness. That is the basic definition.

If you analyze your life, you will notice that there is a constant change in the favorable and unfavorable circumstances of your life. If this holds true, then what really is joy and what is sorrow? Developing a positive attitude towards adverse situations can enable you to experience happiness at all times. Then how can unhappiness prevail?

People may earn respect on the basis of wealth, social status and reputation, but the traits of good behavior and politeness are far more superior to any material wealth. Unlike material possessions which can be separated, a person's moral conduct and etiquette can never be taken away from him.

Various aspects of individual behavior enable a person to gain self-sufficiency and honor in society. If his actions are not characterized by faith, selflessness, love and concern for the well-being of others, and the mind is preoccupied with desire, pride and anger, it results in mental agitation. Then he can be contented neither in the present, nor in the future.

In the process of fulfilling our endless desires, we slowly begin to lose our sense of discrimination. Similarly, uncontrolled anger also has its devastating effects and can turn a virtuous person into evil. Then what is lost can only be regretted.

Sin is born from greed. What is the heinous crime that a greedy person does not commit? And the root of all of this is - ego born out of sheer ignorance. To be free from such vices is known as the 'Art of being happy'. A person who seeks the

happiness of everyone, utilizes his monetary resources and his privileges for the benefit of all creatures and can never cause harm to anyone. He will be saddened by their sorrow and pleased with their happiness. He considers God to be residing in the heart of every individual.

One who considers everyone's benefit as his own benefit, such a person's individuality no longer remains limited to a small sphere, it expands and spreads all over. Such a person's wealth and possessions, status and position, education and knowledge, strength and effort, will be used for the welfare of all.

No one can deny the truth that peace and happiness lies in sacrifice. Sacrifice is the basis of love. Where there is sacrifice, there is love and where there is true love, there is eternal joy. Love teaches to give, never

to receive and is beyond the feeling of self-interest. When we love someone, we automatically want to sacrifice for their well-being and happiness. Joy prevails due to the feelings of selflessness and affection.

In contrast to this, desires and sensual pleasures can never give true happiness, because they are endless. If one desire gets fulfilled, another one crops up and even if we go out of our means to fulfill the second, then a third one arises, which will be impossible to fulfill.

To make the impossible possible we get entangled in that net which eventually causes our downfall. This downfall leads to restlessness, drags us in the mire of sin, and snatches that joy from our life which we had originally sought to attain from the world of desires.

(Excerpt from Pujya Swami Avdheshanand Ji's 'Savarein Apna Jeevan')

Source of Real Joy

Our saints have asserted that "Real happiness lies within you." To tap its source, you need to first understand what happiness really is.

Happiness is not an object, or a thing that can be acquired, it is a condition of the mind. It is a state of being and our true nature. To attain that state of bliss and eternal joy is the goal of human life.

Just as the waters of a lake need to be calm to see one's reflection, similarly, the mind also needs to tranquil



to achieve the direct experience of the Divine.

Tranquility of the mind and a pure heart is attained through spiritual practices. God has bestowed man with the unique capacity to quieten his mind through the process of meditation. Sincere and regular practice

of meditation is the best panacea to develop a calm mind.

On the spiritual path, no sincere effort ever goes wasted. There is no wrong way to meditate. "Failures in meditation bring greater gains than success in life."

(Swami Chinmayananda).

Earnestly pursue the supreme goal with full faith, following in the footsteps of the great ones who have gone before, and you will surely acquire the inner spiritual treasure.

"Happiness comes from giving, not getting. If we try hard to bring happiness to others, we cannot stop it from coming to us also. To get joy, we must give it, and to keep joy, we must scatter it".

-John Templeton

Vat Savitri Puja

'Vat Purnima' is an auspicious day in the Hindu calendar when married women observe fast and pray for the good health and long life of their husband. The 'Vat Savitri vrat' has been named after Savitri, who heroically brought back her husband to life from the clutches of Yama (death).

Savitri, the beautiful daughter of king Ashwapati decided to marry the exiled prince Satyawaan, but it was predicted that he was destined to live for only one

more year. However, this did not dissuade Savitri. She performed great penance and leaving her palatial home, began to lead a simple life with her husband and in-laws in the forest.

As a devoted wife and caring daughter in-law she lovingly discharged all her household duties. One day while chopping wood, Satyawaan fell down from the tree and Savitri saw that Yamraj, the god of death had appeared to take away the soul of Satyawaan. She followed him relentlessly,

pleading that he should return her husband. Finally, through her strong determination, power of prayer and sheer intelligence, she not only won back her husband's life, but also the lost eyesight, health and kingdom of her elderly in-laws.

On the occasion of Vat Purnima, married women fast and worship a Vat (banyan tree) by binding a thread around the trunk of the tree which symbolizes their prayer for the well-



being and long life of their husbands.

Garments, holy thread and other articles are also offered and Brahmins are to be fed on this day.

Health and Wellness

Stress management

In simplest terms, stress is the opposite of relaxation. Both positive and negative aspects of life can be equally stressful. Stress comes from the external forces in our lives that cause us to go beyond our limits and provoke extreme emotions.

Managing stress is about taking charge: taking charge of your thoughts, your emotions, your schedule, your environment, and the way you deal with problems.



Tips for Stress Management:

Tip 1: Eliminate any source of stress that can be avoided

It may not be possible to altogether avoid stressful situations, but you can definitely assume more control of the factors and people that stress you out. Use your discrimination to avoid any sources of unnecessary stress.

2) Tip 2: Plan and Organize:

One of the intrinsic causes of stress is bad time management. List out your daily responsibilities, and follow your schedule to the best of your ability but also don't be afraid to step down when you feel that there is too much on your plate. Becoming more organized and planning ahead will eliminate many unpleasant

situations that you may run into, and help you to remain calmer.

Tip 3: Make lifestyle changes:

A healthy lifestyle encompassing regular exercise, nutritious diet, and adequate sleep can also help you to overcome stress. Include sufficient time for recreation and pursue hobbies or any other creative activities that will help your mind focus away from problems.

Tip 4: Develop a positive attitude:

When situations can't be changed, adapt yourself and face the circumstances with a cool mind and optimistic attitude. Perceive challenges as opportunities for growth, they are indeed the ladder to success. Do not bear grudges, and thank the person who points out your defects. You may not be the

controller of your of your external situations, but you definitely have control over your reaction. You can choose to fret and complain, or can remain calm and composed until a solution comes through.

A successful person is not one who does not have problems in his life, but who knows how to effectively handle them.

THOUGHT OF THE MONTH



"God is near those who are eager to serve the poor, neglected, needy and weak."

The Guru- Disciple relationship

“Sab Dharti Kagaz Karu,

Lekhan Ban Raye.

Saath Samundra Ki Mas Karu

Guru Gun Likha Na Jaye”

-Kabir.



“If all the earth was turned into paper, and all the trees into pens, and all the seven seas were transformed into writing ink, even then it would not be possible to describe the glory of the Guru”

The Guru-Disciple bond is the highest, most sacred and the only true relationship. It is a relationship that is purely divine, and not just between two individuals. The Guru is a manifestation of the Supreme Divinity who appears in a personal form to guide and help the seeker on the spiritual path. Scriptures affirm that the Guru is the mother, father, friend and guide. Guru is Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheshwara. It is rare and by good fortune that one attains the company of a true SatGuru. Sri Sankara says, “There are three things which are rare indeed and they are attained only by the grace of God. These are: a human birth, desire for liberation and the protecting care of a perfect Sage.”

Meaning of the Word ‘Guru’

The syllable ‘Gu’ means darkness and ‘Ru’ means the remover. Hence, the word ‘Guru’ refers to the one who dispels the darkness of ignorance and leads us to self-illumination. The letter ‘Gu’ denotes that he is beyond three Gunas and ‘Ru’ means that he is beyond a form, that is why he is known as ‘Guru’. Shri Guru Gita describes a SatGuru as follows: “One who cuts as under, for the disciple, the eight kinds of attachment (doubts, pity, fear, shyness, censure, position in society, high birth and wealth), by the sword of mercy and bestows absolute Bliss is called SatGuru”.

Guru Kripa (The Guru’s Grace)

The word ‘*krupa*’ is derived from the root ‘*krup*’ which means compassion or grace. Guru Kripa is a remarkable and unique factor which helps the seeker at every step of his spiritual journey and enables him to achieve the supreme goal of life. A SatGuru is an embodiment of infinite love and kindness, constantly showering his blessing on the disciple, but it is also the duty of the disciple to receive this grace. Only then will he be truly benefited. In order to receive the Guru’s grace one has to understand and follow the spirit of discipleship.

The Guru’s life is the greatest teaching. To imbibe maximum benefit, the disciple must follow the example set by his Guru, and carry out his instructions with devotion. If the disciple is obedient, then guru kripa will naturally flow into him and commensurate to his faith and yearning for spiritual knowledge, he will receive the Guru’s grace. As Shri Ramana Maharishi said, “The grace of the Guru is like an ocean. If one comes with a cup he will only get a cupful. It is no use complaining of the niggardliness of the ocean. The bigger the vessel the more one will be able to carry. It is entirely up to him.”

Guru kripa may sometimes come to us in as a series of disappointments and failures making us think that the Guru has not blessed us. But in reality, the Guru is like a kind loving vigilant mother, and by denying us what is not good for us, seeks only our highest ‘spiritual welfare’. The duty of the Guru is to bring about transformation in the disciple, not necessarily please the disciple. In the words of Swami Chidananda, “Being our Guru we expect that he should relieve us of small troubles, bodily ills, financial difficulties, domestic problems, little paltry matters of this earthly life. We will get all that if we pray to the Guru, but that is all that we will get. That mysterious lofty thing called guru kripa will not flow into us. Therefore, first of all we should try to efface all human relationships with the Guru”. This implies that we must concentrate more on the spiritual side of the Guru, rather than on the human side.

The seeker should always be conscious of His omnipresence and remember that the Guru lives within him every second, day in and day out. That is the key to developing a true spirit of discipleship and achieving the highest benefit from the SatGuru.

(To be continued in the next issue...)

Prabhu Premi Sangh

Swamiji's Upcoming schedule



- Till 31st May 2009: Various places
- June 1 to June 7 2009: Haridwar



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About the Organization...

'Prabhu Premi Sangh' is founded, directed and led by His Holiness Param Pujya Swami Avdhesanand 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.

"Nothing is equal to forgiveness. It is the greatest penance."