

June 2009

Following the Footsteps...

Volume 2, Issue 6

Prabhu Premi Sangh Newsletter



Reflections from Pujya Swamiji's Diary...



Upcoming events:

**Guru Purnima:
July 7 2009**

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

Dear Prabhu Premi,

Prabhu bless you.

The Guru and the disciple are essentially one. Strong devotion of the seeker draws the Guru-tattva.

God is present in each and every individual. There are infinite divine capabilities in man. Perfection is attained with the help of the Guru who awakens the dormant energies of the seeker and guides him on the spiritual path.

Best wishes on the sacred occasion of Guru Purnima.

*With blessings,
Swami Avdhesanand Giri*

Newsletter Summary

Hari Om!

Just like an eyelid protects the eye, the Guru is always protecting the seeker. It is said that the mere glance of the Guru can transform a sinner into a saint. Such is the significance of the Guru.

On the holy occasion of Guru Purnima, here is an issue devoted to the immeasurable glory of the SatGuru

In this issue we also bring you details of the summer camp conducted in Haridwar from June 1 to June 7 under the guidance of Pujya Swamiji.

After successful completion of the camp, Pujya Swamiji travelled to USA to participate in the Third Hindu-Jewish summit held in New York and Washington DC. Swamiji then spent a couple of days in New York

and New Jersey where he met his devotees, enlightened them with his words of motivation and wisdom. On June 22 He left for India, leaving the bhakts as more awakened, more conscientious and more spiritually inclined individuals.

Here's wishing all prabhu premis a very happy Guru Purnima!

The Glory of the Guru

The glory of the Guru is beyond description. Without the Guru, no knowledge can be attained. Kabir Das Ji has said:

**“Guru Govind dono khade,
Kisko laagu pay,
Balihari Guru aapne, jinhe
Govind diyo milaye”**

(The Guru and Govind, are present before me, to whom shall I bow down first? Glory to you Gurudev, since you showed me Govind.)

Guru is that being who can enable us to realize God. He possesses complete knowledge of God's existence and has Himself experienced it. The meaning of the word 'Guru' is - one who takes from 'darkness to enlightenment'.

This creation is an unparalleled work of God. The whole world is a stage,

every person is an actor who plays his or her role in the world, and then departs. This is how the journey of life progresses. It is not fully known when this journey first began or when it will end. It remains a mystery even today.

Sages and yogis have shared with others the wisdom and experiences that they gained through their spiritual practices. They explained the goal of this journey of life and have also suggested many ways to make it a pleasant one. This is predominantly where the necessity is felt for the SatGuru who can provide us with proper guidance.

After coming into the world, man becomes caught up in worldly affairs and tends to forget God. Enduring problems of all kinds such

as physical, spiritual, and material, there comes a time in every person's life when he demands to know the Truth. Due to the influence of some past virtuous deeds, he begins to harbor spiritual thoughts and feelings.

Inquisitiveness arises within the individual conscience causing him to ponder upon about the nature of his existence. He begins to wonder, 'Who am I?', 'Where have I come from?' and 'Where will I eventually go?' When this curiosity starts to intensify, God sends his way a divine, enlightened and spiritual being to guide him.

This being, who possesses knowledge of both, the individual soul, (Atman) and the Immortal being (Paramatma), is the true Guru. It is He who shows the

seeker the path of Truth, helps him to achieve the state of bliss and gives him freedom from sorrow.

The Guru is a 'living God'. Due to his divine vision he perceives God to be all pervading and residing in each and every individual. Describing the glory of the Guru, scriptures say, 'Guru is Brahma, Vishnu and Shiv'.

The Guru alone can dispel the darkness of ignorance and light the lamp of knowledge.

Whatever we see from our external eyes, that is not the Truth. Truth can be seen only from one's inner eye. This is the divine vision which is attained from the Guru.

(Excerpt from Swami Avdhesanand Ji's 'Brahma hi Satya Hai')

Guru Purnima

The festival of Guru Purnima occurs on the full moon day of the 'Ashadha' month of the Hindu calendar, marking the beginning of "Chaturmas" (four months).

Guru Purnima is celebrated in reminiscence of the revered Sage Maharishi Ved Vyas, the foremost Acharya of the Sanatan Dharma and therefore this day is referred to as 'Vyas Poornima'. We are all indebted to Ved Vyas Ji who organized the four Vedas, wrote the eighteen Puranas, the Mahabharata as well as Srimad Bhagavad Gita.

Having contributed such an immense wealth of wisdom to the world, Vyasji is worshipped as the 'Guru of



Gurus'.

After writing the eighteen puranas, He summed up their message in one sentence, **“Paropkarah Punyaya, Paapaya Padapeedananam.”** This essentially means, “Doing good to others is meritorious, hurting them is sin.”

Vyas Ji's full name is Krishna Dvaipayana Badarayan Vyas. He was called 'Krishna'

because he was dark complexioned, 'Dvaipayana', because he was born on an island (dveep), and 'Badarayan' because his hermitage was in the Badri forest region of the Himalayas. He is one of the immortal rishis.

On the occasion of Guru Purnima, disciples offer their deepest respect, love and gratitude to their Guru. It is said the Guru principle is a thousand times more active during this period as compared to any other day during this year, and any spiritual practices done on Guru Purnima day bring immense benefits. Spiritual aspirants spend their time in worship, prayer, fasting, introspection and service.

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“The Guru is the disciple's guide through life” -Swami Rama

“The SadGuru is Brahman Himself. He is the captain of your soul.” - Swami Sivananda.

“No one can love you like the Guru can.” - Swami Muktananda

“Guru is like an alarm time-piece who wakes us from our sleep and reminds us of our duties” - Sai Amritvani6.

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Summer camp: A peaceful experience for devotees

A week long summer camp was held at Harihar Ashram in Haridwar from June 1st to June 7th by His Holiness Pujya Swamiji. Attended by an overwhelming 3,500 prabhu premis from various parts of India and abroad, this camp was geared towards providing seekers with an opportunity to recharge and revitalize spiritually.



Some of the main highlights of the camp were daily Bhagavad Gita classes conducted by Pujya Swamiji, Rudrabhishek, pravachan (spiritual discourse) and bhajan-sandhya (devotional singing). The camp was also interactive in the sense that it gave bhakts a chance to participate in question-answer sessions and dialogue with Pujya Swamiji.

During his discourse, Swamiji spoke to the devotees on several topics ranging from environmental concerns like global warming to social issues like communal harmony. In reference to personal development and spiritual



growth, Swamiji stressed the importance of building self-confidence. He said "Self-confidence in oneself can open the doors of happiness." One of the prominent features of the occasion was the release of the book, "Divyatma ke Divya Darshan," a unique book written about Pujya Swamiji and authored by Smt. Kalpana Bhargav Ji.

Prabhu Premi Sangh volunteers worked tirelessly towards making the camp a fruitful and memorable experience for all.

Occasionally Swamiji would visit the kitchen or the dining area, mixing around with the volunteers, asking them how they were doing, which in turn gave them immense encouragement and filled their hearts with joy.



Straight from the Heart –Ms. Bhavika Parekh

I have read the Straight from the Heart section very fondly over the last few months and have realized that Guruji has touched so many lives and that by merely thinking about him and praying to him miracles do happen.

Over the last four years that I have known Guruji, I have experienced his love and affection in many ways and have experienced several miracles that have made me realize his greatness and led me to believe in them.

One of my life changing experiences was when I went to meet Guruji before flying to the US to start my job in New York. On my flight over to meet Guruji, I took a moment to reflect and count my blessings and thank God for giving me an opportunity to meet Guruji. I chanted my favorite shloka and the very first I had learnt as a kid –

“Guru Brahma, Guru Vishnu, Guru Devo Maheshwara, Guru Sakshat Param Brahma, Tasmai Shree Guruve Namaha”

(Guru is Brahma, Guru is Vishnu, Guru is Lord Maheshwara. Guru is verily the supreme reality. Sublime prostrations to Him)

The shloka immediately resonated in my mind and at that moment I started to break it down to understand each word. When I had gone through the whole shloka in my mind, it struck me that; here I was always thanking God for blessing me with a Guru when in fact my Guruji himself is Brahma, Vishnu, and Mahesh. He is the omnipresent and the almighty. He knows my future and my past and knows of all my worries and cares even without having to express them in words. I have realized that I do not

need to list down to him each one of my cares and concerns neither does he address them in an orderly and prescriptive fashion, just like God, but I know that all I need to do is to believe in Him and know that He will take care of me. And you know what, he never fails.

In that moment of insight - the thin line of difference between Guru and God disappeared. I realized that my Guruji was in fact God.

But being the skeptic that I am, I continued to question myself whether I had indeed understood the shloka correctly. Once I reached the ashram, to my great surprise, Guruji was addressing that very topic. He said, “In Hindu parampara, Guru has the same status as God”. He said that He has never looked at his Gurudev as merely a source to

understand God, but that he has found God in his Guru. At that time, my belief was crystallized and the skeptic in me had become a true believer.

Until that day I thought that, in my life I will not see or meet God or know him in any form other than an idol that I worship in a temple and that God will never talk to me and that I will have to keep guessing if indeed he is listening to my prayers.

But that moment changed it all. I knew then, what I should have known long ago - that my Guruji is my God!



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

Third Hindu Jewish Summit held in New York and Washington DC

His Holiness was in USA from June 10th to June 22nd to attend the International Hindu-Jewish Leadership Meeting and for the release of the Report of the Second Hindu-Jewish Summit held in Jerusalem in February, 2008.

The members of the Hindu Delegation were warmly welcomed at the American Jewish Committee (AJC) office in Manhattan, where the first meeting was held. The meeting was attended by Mr. David Rousso, Chair, Interreligious Affairs Commission, AJC, Rabbi David Rosen, Director, Interreligious Affairs, AJC, Mr. Bawa Jain, Secretary General, World Council of Religious Leaders, the Hindu delegation headed by Swami Avdheshanand Giri Ji, Trustee, Hindu Dharma Acharya Sabha, Swami Parmatmanand Ji, Secretary, Hindu Dharma Acharya Sabha, Swami Madhavpriyadas Ji, Swami Krishnamani Maharaj Ji, and other dignitaries. The



two leaderships spoke about the two religions as the 'two oldest civilizations' with a common purpose and facing common threats.

Puja Swamiji spoke about the concept of 'Vasudev Kutumbhikam,' explaining how Hindus perceived the world as one family and advocate world peace and non-violence. He also said that we strongly believe that there is only one Supreme Being and many incarnations.

The Hindu Delegation visited the Central Synagogue in New York City, which happens to be the oldest Jewish House of Worship in continuous use in NYC. The Washington DC trip saw our *sants* being welcomed at the Shiva-

Vishnu temple with 'Purankumbham Swagatam'.

Swamiji spoke about the feeling of completeness, the *prasadic* feeling which one experiences on entering a temple can derive strength and stability in times of failure, and humility and tolerance in times of success. "In this time of distress, fear, insecurity and restlessness, we have come to sow some seeds of peace, harmony and happiness which will bear fruits someday," assured Swamiji.

In the meeting at the Rayburn House Office Building, Capitol Hill attended by many prominent dignitaries, Swamiji expressed his concern for the materialistic approach of today, when all that people crave for is wealth, position and power. "The world needs happiness and brotherhood today, which one will not find in the passage of materialism but in the path of spirituality, that Judaism and Hinduism are rich in,"



said Swamiji. The Second Summit Report was also released at the press conference, followed by a Hindu-Jewish Luncheon at the AJC DC office.

Addressing the gathering, Puja Swamiji said that we should never trouble the feelings and existence of others; this is true '*sadhana*.' Quoting Swamiji, "Hindus have contributed a lot in the fields of science and medicine; the country is full of learned men and intellectuals who gave us Zero, the percentage, amongst other things. Similarly, the Jews have also contributed a lot to technology, science, economics and business. Working together, we could do a lot for the world."

Surrender: the essence of Spiritual Life

In a recent satsang held in New Jersey, Puja Swamiji explained the significance of 'absolute surrender' to God. He cited the example of a kitten who is always carefree because it depends on the mother cat to carry it from place to place.

On the other hand a monkey's baby needs to make an extra effort to cling to its mother and when the mother jumps from one branch of a tree to another it experiences a slight fear.

Although in both instances the offspring is carried by the mother, in the case of the kitten, the mother assumes full responsibility of the baby, and the baby in turn doesn't move a bit because it has surrendered completely to its mother.

Swamiji then spoke to the devotees about the importance of developing bhakti (divine love) and performing selfless service (seva). He said that God is beyond all form, and cannot be understood by the

human mind or intellect, but by a pure heart. 'Dharma' is not a subject of argument; it is a matter of one's belief.

Explaining the importance of seva (selfless service), Swamiji said, "Seva is not a means or a spiritual practice, but seva itself is the result of great penance. An opportunity to render service is rare, for it is only through selfless service that one's ego gets dissolved. Work therefore, is itself the reward.

THOUGHT OF THE MONTH



"Why are you worried? Be carefree by leaving everything to God."

The Guru- Disciple relationship (Part 2)

(Continued from the last issue)

“Dhyaana Moolam Guru Moorti

Pooja moolam Guru padam

Mantra moolam Guru Vaakyam

Moksha moolam Guru Kripa”



-Shri Guru Gita

(The root of meditation (Dhyana) is the form of the Guru, the root of worship (Puja) is the feet of the Guru, the root of mantra (sacred sound) is the word of the Guru, the root of liberation (Moksha) is the grace of the Guru)

Just as the showers of the monsoon rain soothe away the dry parched earth bringing vibrancy and vitality, similarly, when our hearts and mind have dried up due to the lack of faith and ignorance, the Guru showers his grace upon us quenching our thirst for knowledge. All great ones have studied and served under the loving guidance of a spiritual Master. Even Lord Krishna sat at the feet of His Guru Sandipani and Lord Rama had Guru Vasishtha to guide Him.

Ramana Maharishi said, “God and Guru are in truth not different. Just as the prey that has fallen into the jaws of a tiger cannot escape, so those who have come under the glance of the Guru’s grace will surely be saved and will never be forsaken; yet one should follow without fail the path shown by the Guru.”

Faith is the key which can open the door to the Guru. Faith alone can work miracles, but when there is a lack of faith, there is very little that a Guru can do for the disciple.

Guru Seva

‘Seva’ means ‘selfless service without the expectation of any reward or benefit’. Hanuman Ji who was an apostle of service and devotion to Lord Ram, says that it is not sufficient to express one’s devotion through spiritual practices like Japa, dhyana, bhajan, etc. One must serve God and participate in activities which will be of help to others or assist in the spread of His mission. Says Guru Arjan, the fifth Nanak, "I beg to serve those who serve you" and "I, Your servant, beg for seva of your people, which is available through good fortune alone." (Guru Granth Sahib).

Seva can be of two types: internal or external. External seva includes physical seva like volunteering or extending one’s services for some physical work. Material seva means offering one’s material resources for the benefit of society. Internal seva or mental seva is service through one’s mind, which means contributing via one’s talents and creative abilities. Seva can be performed either out of a sense of duty or out of love. What a mother does for her child is out of pure love. When one develops such a spirit of service encompassing love towards all, then all acts of service become worship.

The true meaning of Guru seva is to live in a manner such that your conduct and behavior can bring a good name to the Guru. To become an embodiment of kindness, filled with compassion, and continually engaged in the welfare of others is the greatest guru seva.

Just as a tree is known by its fruits, and flower by its fragrance, a teacher is known by His students. A true disciple is one who always remembers his identity with the Guru. He understands the unvoiced wishes of the Guru, and obeys his instruction to the very letter. To follow his teaching diligently and sincerely is indeed the most precious gift that a student can give his teacher.

Prabhu Premi Sangh

Swamiji's Upcoming schedule



- June 23rd to July 4th 2009: Various places
- July 5th to July 7th 2009: Ambala



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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.

"There maybe several roads in the spiritual path, but they all lead to the same destination."