

August 2009

Following the Footsteps...

Volume 2, Issue 8

Upcoming festivals:

- Navratri: Sept 19 to Sept 27
- Dusshera: Sept 28

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Prabhu Premi Sangh Newsletter



Reflections from Pujya Swamiji's Diary...



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

Dear Prabhu Premi,

Prabhu bless you.

Perennial joy cannot be gained from worldly objects. Those objects from which we seek to attain pleasure can bestow only short-lived happiness.

When the seeker understands the transient nature of these objects, he begins to detach himself from the world, and develops love for God. To thus live a life with discrimination is commendable.

*With blessings,
Swami Avdhesanand Giri*

Newsletter Summary

Hari Om!

Navratri which literally means 'Nine nights' is the festival of prayer, fasting and self purification. During this auspicious period, we celebrate and worship the nine different forms of the Divine Mother.

The focus of our current issue is mental, physical and environmental

health. A great saint once said, 'Nature is the best healer and God is the best physician'. The message of this issue is to seek one's true Self, nurture the physical self, and preserve our environment for a holistic well-being.

During the month of August, Pujya Swamiji visited Malaysia, UK, and USA. He visited the Himalayan Institute in

Honesdale, where He met with Pandit Rajmani Tigunait, and interacted with around 150 yoga teachers from all over the US. He delivered a spiritual discourse followed by a question and answer session. He also spent some time in silence, reading, writing and nature walks.

Swamiji will be in various places this month.

Self Introspection

Every individual has some positive and some negative traits. One generally learns about his shortcomings through advice and feedback from others. But it is the individual himself, who knows best about his or her inadequacies. It is only through soul searching i.e. exploring one's heart and mind that one can discover who he really is, and what kind of person should he aspire to be in the future such that he may live with happiness.

It is a good practice to reflect on our activity and deeds at the end of each day. We should contemplate our mistakes, and if anything we did during the day was inappropriate. Having realized and accepted our mistakes, we must resolve never to repeat them. This is the best method for self development and enhancing one's life. It is known as introspection or self analysis. A person who desires self improvement should learn to view himself impartially. While it is good to develop a lot of good

qualities, one should be careful not to be proud of them. Knowledge of one's merits boosts a person's self confidence, which is a necessary element for success in life. But when one becomes proud of these qualities, it can create obstacles in the path of man's requisite improvement.

Man attains knowledge of his true identity through action, not just through contemplation alone. A person who is constantly engaged in fulfilling his prescribed duty is admired and respected by others. Sometimes he himself maybe unaware of his own qualities, making him a humble and qualified seeker.

An intelligent seeker makes spiritual progress by genuinely appreciating the merits of other people, and ignoring their faults.

Keeping God as His ideal, he strives persistently to attain Him. It is essential to gain knowledge of God and the knowledge of one's Self consciously or inadvertently

draws man towards God. And as the seeker gains knowledge of God, it in turn enhances his knowledge of his Self, and he becomes enlightened. The meaning of this Self knowledge is – to be true to one's own self. One who is not honest with himself, can he really be honest with others?

When a person's knowledge facilitates his personal growth, and he becomes acquainted with his own merits, then he has the power to do justice with himself and others. Self knowledge also provides man with the natural ability to understand and respect the feelings of others.

One day, the great thinker Socrates was roaming with a flaming torch in the streets of Athens in broad daylight. People mocked him. When someone questioned him about this, he replied, "The people of Athens have forgotten their identity. In spite of possessing physical eyes, they have become blind, and have lost their inner vision. They are groping in the darkness even during the day. That is why they need light."

'Know yourself' –was the

message of Socrates. The kingdom which was besieged with selfishness greed, ignorance and darkness, could not understand this message of Socrates during his entire lifetime. But there came a time, when the same message, became popular as one of the three Greek divine phrases inscribed in golden letters in the temples of Delphi.

Due to the prevalent materialism, man's primary objective has become material and financial gain, thereby rejecting spiritualism. Because of this heartrending condition of mankind, there is unrest in one's life and in the world.

In order to break free from this condition, one should develop Self-knowledge, and gradually progress from the true vision of one's Self to the vision of the Lord.

(Excerpt from Swami Avdheshanand Ji's 'Atma Darpan')

Be cheerful, stay healthy

Cheerfulness promotes good health and longevity. A cheerful and happy mind strengthens and replenishes the nervous system, supports the vital energies and contributes to better blood circulation. A cheerful and optimistic person is not just healthy, but also looks pleasant and attractive.

For a person with a cheerful heart, life becomes a celebration. Life is a blessing of God; and happiness is his precious gift to each one of us. If we choose to be miserable,

we are rejecting his gift. Indeed our problems, worries and hardships, may seem unbearable such that they prevent us from being happy, but it also prevents us from appreciating and understanding God's great plan for us. Relish each moment of life, savoring and treasuring every person, experience and relationship. Know that no problem is too big to overcome, and learn to discover an opportunity, in every difficulty.

One of the ways of being happy in the midst of all

adversity is by being grateful. "Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend. Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow." (Melody Beattie).

Says Marcel Proust, "Thank God for all the people who make us happy, they are the charming gardeners who



make our souls blossom".

Promise yourself to look at the sunny side of everything, and pray to be so strong that you maybe undisturbed by fear, anger and worry.

Health and Wellness

Colors of Health

Fruits and vegetables are nature's gift to us. Nutritionists suggest a 'rainbow of fruits and vegetables' for maintaining better health. Here's how introducing a spectrum of bright colors to your daily diet not only adds variety and taste, but also has immense health benefits:

Red: Many red fruits and vegetables contain a plant pigment known as lycopene which has been linked by scientists to lower risk of heart diseases and cancer.

Red foods include tomatoes, cranberries, watermelon, Beets, red grapefruits, red



grapes, strawberries.

Yellow: Orange and yellow colored foods contain carotenoids and research shows that a diet rich in caotenoids boosts the immune system and reduces the risk of many diseases. Examples include oranges, apricots, carrots, papayas, squash, and mangoes. Citrus fruits are a rich source of Vitamin C, too!

Green: Green vegetables such

as spinach, cabbage, beans, broccoli, and turnip greens are concentrated sources of chlorophyll which is a natural defense against many illnesses.

They also contain lutein which is essential for maintaining proper vision. Cruciferous vegetables (belonging to the cabbage family) are known to have amazing disease fighting properties.

Purple and Blue: Blue foods such as blueberries contain flavonoids and anthocyanins which act as powerful anti-oxidants.

THOUGHT OF THE MONTH



"Human life is obtained by the grace of God. Grace means the bestowal of happiness. Always remain happy."

Green Living: Sustaining the Environment

The healing powers of nature are enormous. A bit of greenery can mitigate stress, rejuvenate and help to think clearly. Indian scriptures stress the protection of the environment through pollution control, water conservation, and ensuring the well-being of the entire flora and fauna.

The Value of trees:

There is a dire need in today's world to safeguard trees. In the Vedas, plants and trees are considered invaluable treasures being handed down from generations. Trees clean and purify the air by producing oxygen and thus help prevent respiratory diseases. They also act as windbreaks, prevent soil erosion and mitigate sound noises. Overall, they provide us with shade and cool

breeze which is a soothing respite in the hot summer months.

Below are some facts about the importance of trees:

- Shade from trees could save up to \$175 per year in air conditioning costs. -Dr. Lowell Ponte
- The net cooling effect of a young, healthy tree is equivalent to ten room-size air conditioners operating 20 hours a day. -U.S. Department of Agriculture
- 60 million street trees have an average value of \$525 per tree. - Management Information Services

Here are 8 practical tips for sustaining the environment:

1. Use eco-friendly and reusable bags.

2. Use energy efficient light bulbs.
3. Conserve electricity by switching off lights during the day. Encourage family members to develop the habit of switching off lights when leaving the room.
4. Minimize the use of disposable cups and plates. Replace paper towels in your home with cloth towels.
5. Conserve water by not letting faucets run when not required.
6. Make use of organic food. It is made without pesticides which is a healthier option and also better for the environment.
7. Donate old household items, shoes and clothing.
8. Minimize the use of paper



by switching to e-bills or online credit card statements and when printing, use recycled paper and on both sides when possible.

Finally, spread the word! Talk to people around you about the importance of trees in saving and healing our planet so that they may be inspired to plant, nurture and love trees.

Divine Joy (Part 2)



Good health encompasses both physical as well mental wellbeing. Mental wellness includes being free from negative thoughts and worldly desires. Sometimes a person maybe physically fit, but if he harbors negative feelings such as anger, greed, hatred, violence, pride, jealousy, then he cannot be regarded as being truly healthy. The state of his mind will eventually impact his body, and his physical health will also deteriorate.

Peace and happiness cannot come to a person who is not mentally healthy. We should learn to discipline the mind by seeking freedom from desires. Identify and eliminate your weaknesses one by one, and preserve the virtues. A truly beautiful person is one who has a pure heart. When a person is filled with such noble qualities, he becomes truly divine.

In the Shrimad Bhagwad Gita, Lord Shri Krishna has spoken about "Brahmadarshan", the vision of God. He says that a person, who sees God ubiquitously, leads a divine life and such a devotee is very dear to Him.

God is all powerful, Almighty, the Creator of the universe. He is the master of everyone's soul and the well wisher of all (Suhridaya). When the seeker believes this, he is automatically drawn to Him. Our holy sages have said that when we begin to perceive God as incommensurable, such that nothing else compares to His glory, God then begins to reside in our hearts. When a person is overwhelmed with feelings of God and drenched in divine love, he attains happiness and success.

But if the mind if constantly filled with petty thoughts and desires, and is devoid of the love for God, then our lives are futile. We should seek inner purification, rid ourselves of desires and negativity, and fill our hearts with the love of the Almighty. Surrender yourself to the Lord for nothing is difficult without His grace. Keep the faith, and success will follow.

Prabhu Premi Sangh

Swamiji's Upcoming schedule

- September 1st to September 30th 2009: Various places



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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.

"Always look for virtues in others and try to adopt them."