

November 2009

Following the Footsteps...

Prabhu Premi Sangh Newsletter



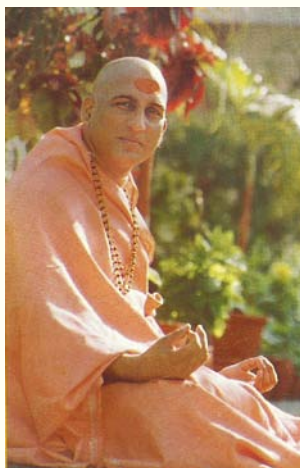
Volume 2, Issue 11

Reflections from Pujya Swamiji's Diary...



Inside this issue...

- Reflections from Pujya Swamiji's diary
- News in a Nutshell
- The Basis of Relationships
- Thought of the Month
- Spiritual Q and A
- Shrimad Bhagavad Katha organized in Kurukshetra
- Pujya Swamiji attends Gita Manthan Seva Sapath
- Story: Small Incident, Great Lesson



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

Dear Prabhu Premi,

Prabhu bless you.

The Self is your true nature. The culmination of all spiritual practices is in the realization of the Self. This is the supreme goal.

You will have to withdraw yourself, go beyond the activities of body, mind and intellect to reach the core of the supreme, fundamental Self. It is only then that life will become truly meaningful.

*With blessings,
Swami Avdheshanand Giri*

News in a Nutshell

Hari Om!

Little drops of water make the mighty ocean. Similarly, our little acts of faith and seemingly minor attributes can lead to perfection if we gradually and patiently work towards assimilating divine qualities.

Our current issue contains an array of articles, spirituality related questions, inspiring thoughts, and important news from the previous

month.

On 2nd November, Prakash Utsav was celebrated with great fervor in Ambala ashram as well as many Prabhu Premi Sangh centers worldwide. Shrimad Bhagavad katha was organized from November 22nd to 28th in the holy city of Kurukshetra where prabhu premis found themselves completely immersed in the 'katha ras' for seven days. Following this, Pujya Swamiji presided over a

volunteer's meeting in Karnal to discuss the upcoming Kumbh Mela in Haridwar in 2010.

Prabhu premis will be delighted to know that in the month of December Pujya Swamiji will be attending the World Parliament of Religions 2009 to be held in Melbourne, Australia, where Pujya Acharya Sri has been invited to be a participant as a Major Speaker and will represent the Hindu community.

Following the Footsteps

The Basis of Relationships

Man is essentially a social being. It is in this world that he is born, lives and dies. As soon as he is born, he finds himself surrounded by many different kinds of relationships. Family and society gradually help him to become aware of the responsibility of building and maintaining relations. They also play an important role in developing his actions and behavior from time to time.

The basis of this social responsibility and overall personality development is 'faith'. Faith alone strengthens relationships, and grants them sweetness and dignity. A healthy relationship between two individuals can exist only when they have full faith in one another. Although some relationships are determined by birth; even

those inherent relationships can crumble and become completely meaningless in the absence of faith.

Faith is thus the life element of all relationships. Whether it is a societal, business, financial, spiritual or familial relationship - it must be rooted in deep faith. Lack of faith brings emptiness in a relationship and one can only expect enmity, not amiability.

The basis of family structure and its happiness is faith. The members of a family have indescribable faith in one another. It is due to faith alone that a husband and wife pledge lifelong sincerity to each other.

Relationships between father and son, mother and daughter, brother and sister, are all bound with the chords of faith. Faith also

plays an important role in the development of divine qualities such as love, sincerity, morality, goodwill, sacrifice and non violence, etc.

Cultivating faith boosts one's self-confidence. It gives the power to make the impossible into possible. Riding the boat of self confidence, a person becomes successful, capable and competent in achieving his goals in every kind of situation.

The first step of devotion is also faith. As our faith towards someone increases, accordingly devotion also increases. In a way, devotion is the fruit of faith, which inspires a person to become knowledgeable and competent.

Faith is the sublime feeling whose power depends upon

the consciousness of both parties and their keenness to sustain the relationship.

(Excerpt from Swami Avdheshanand Ji's 'Muktipath')

THOUGHT OF THE MONTH



"Give respect to others, it pleases God the most. Respecting others is God's worship."

Spiritual Q and A

Are favorable and unfavorable circumstances the result of one's destiny or are they the grace of God?

Favorable and unfavorable circumstances are the consequence of our own actions, but these are sanctioned to us by God. For example, if a person goes to a forest, and spends his time working all day, who will pay him for his hard work? If he works under the supervision of a boss or employer, then it is the boss' responsibility to give him money.

Similarly, what we receive is in accordance to our actions. But the one who gives us the fruit is God, because, an action in itself does not yield any result.



Every act of God is filled with His grace. But when we remain concerned with destiny alone, and do not consider the act as God's grace, then we cannot be benefited by that grace.

Just like a calf's wellbeing and good health lies in drinking its mother's milk, and not just any other milk, similarly, when we perceive and accept our current circumstances as the blessing of God, we will achieve true benefit.

Destiny, which is the result of our actions, has a beginning and an end, but grace is everlasting.

However, we should learn to recognize it. For example, if sugar is mixed with sand, we cannot easily separate the sand from the sugar, but an ant knows how to skillfully pick out the sugar particles from the sand. In the same way, a true devotee also knows how to recognize acts of grace in destiny.

If we deem our circumstances to be the result of our karma, it will cause us to be happy in favorable circumstances and sad in unfavorable ones. But if we consider it to be the grace of God, and willingly accept it, then it will help us to remain contented in both circumstances.

Man can work towards his welfare by making optimal utilization of his present circumstances - this opportunity is available to us only by God's grace. If a sinful person prays sincerely and with humility, God forgives him and dissolves the effect of his impure actions. He also grants him positive discrimination and insight for the future.

Readers can now access current and previous issues of the E-newsletter under the 'News' section of the the Prabhu Premi Sangh website at:

www.prabhupremisangh.org

Shrimad Bhagavad Katha Organized in Kurukshetra

In the holy city of Kurukshetra, on the banks of the serene Brahma Sarovar river and on the sacred occasion of Gita Jayanti Utsav, Puja Swami Avdheshanand Giri Ji conducted Shrimad Bhagavad Katha. This Katha was organized by Shri Jayram Ashram and Vidyapeeth, Kurukshetra and lasted from November 22 to November 28.

Throughout the katha there was an inflow of holy saints, prominent dignitaries and devout disciples. The first day was especially marked with the presence of many revered saints who had gathered from various parts of the country to convey



their best wishes.

During the katha, one of the aspects that Puja Swamiji spoke about was the qualifications of a spiritual aspirant. Citing the Sanskrit verse **"Bhadram Karnebhi Shranuyam devah; Bhadram pashyema-kshabhijatra"**, Swamiji said, that the first and foremost requirement of a

'sadhak' or spiritual aspirant is that he should 'listen'. The scriptures state that one can achieve liberation by merely listening – **"Shravanat Mukti"**. It is very difficult to listen attentively, carefully, in a disciplined manner and with a heart filled with devotion. But if one is able to successfully do so, he achieves freedom from all kinds of anxiety, doubts, worries, and aggression.

In this context, Swamiji also highlighted the importance of 'updesha' or instruction. From the time we are born, until death, throughout our life we are in need of some 'updesha' to guide us that can enable us to attain the



highest levels of success.

On the occasion of Shri Krishan Janam, the 'katha pandaal' wore a celebratory look and was adorned with beautiful decorations. Even the devotees were dressed up in yellow and saffron colored clothes, and became joyously absorbed in the divine and festive environment.

Puja Swamiji attends 'Gita Manthan Seva Saptah'

On November 21st, Puja Swamiji was invited to attend 'Gita Manthan Seva Saptah' organized by Puja Swami Gyanananda Ji Maharaj at Ambala City. Upon his arrival, Puja Swamiji was given a warm welcome on stage and requested to light the traditional lamp.

The entire area was adorned with beautiful pictures of Shri Krishna in various forms. Puja Swamiji spoke a few words on the occasion. Here is a brief abstract from Swamiji's talk:

"News and information technology has united the entire world. This is the age of worldly progress. In the current era of modern technology, one witnesses excessive attachment and craving for material objects. People today are constantly seeking to achieve and acquire, with minimal efforts, and as quickly as possible. They look for the



shortest route, expecting to ascend the ladders of success, without hardwork, spiritual practice or worthiness. This has given rise to a new kind of culture known as the 'Consumerist culture'.

When success is thus sought without giving any thought or consideration to the means, and by disregarding traditions, values, morals, and rules, it eventually leads to 'intellectual despair or despondency'. The state of intellectual despair amongst people is not just a

problem of the present times; it was prevalent even 5,000 years ago.

During the Mahabharata, one sees the height of intellectual despair where wealth was attained through deceit, and at the cost of one's morals. One witnesses lack of courage, disappointment, escapism and sheer helplessness. Disillusioned, and incapable of making the right decision, Arjun kept aside his bow and arrow. It was in these circumstances, that the Shrimad Bhagavad Gita was born. In this state of helplessness, if someone wise and competent takes charge and guides us, then one becomes enlightened.

'Shrimad Bhagavad Gita' represents that aspirant who has strayed away from the path of action. What then came to the rescue was 'Updesha' or 'instruction'. 'Updesha' is an ancient tradition where there are

two entities – the Guru and the disciple. However, for the Updesha to bear fruit, there are two conditions:

1. Firstly, the listener should be filled with steadfast devotion towards the Guru. At times we may not have any flowers, fruits or gifts to offer to the preceptor or Guru, but if we have a pure heart filled with faith, that is sufficient.

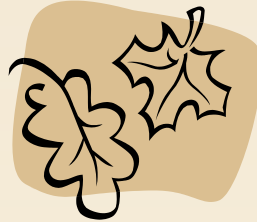
2. Secondly, the Guru, or instructor must be the embodiment of purity and divinity.

When these two conditions are successfully met, the stream of knowledge automatically flows from the Guru to the disciple."

"Those who bring sunshine to the lives of others cannot keep it from themselves".

-J. M. Barrie

Small Incident, Great Lesson



The popular Sufi saint Umar's nature was such that he would often test his disciples and people coming to visit him. He would pose challenging questions to them which they would find difficult to answer and then Umar himself would present a solution to them. Umar's motive behind this was social welfare.

It is said that once when Umar was going towards a forest, he met a shepherd who was grazing some goats and sheep. Umar decided to test him. He went up to the shepherd and said, "From amongst these hundreds of goats, can you give me one small goat?"

Pointing in the direction of his boss, the shepherd expressed his inability to do so.

Umar then said, "There are so many goats, if amongst these, just one becomes less, I don't think your boss will even notice". But the shepherd was firm with his decision.

He replied, "My boss may not notice, but if I give you even one of my goats, the Lord, who is Supreme boss of this entire world will definitely come to know. Then I will no longer be considered trustworthy. Hence, please excuse me, I cannot do this."

This answer pleased Umar; the shepherd was a hundred percent successful in the test. He took the shepherd to his boss and related the entire story to him.

It turned out that the shepherd was actually a slave. Umar told his boss, "You have committed a grave sin by making this divine person a slave. Such a person's honesty should be saluted! I requested him a million times, and yet he did not agree to give up even a single goat.

On Umar's request, the shepherd's boss freed him from the bonds of slavery, and also offered him thousands of goats to keep. For Umar as well, this was a special day, as he not only fulfilled his purpose of social welfare, but also learnt a great lesson from an ordinary man.

Prabhu Premi Sangh

Swamiji's Upcoming schedule

- December 1st to December 2nd 2009 : Banswara (Rajasthan)
- December 3rd to December 23rd 2009 : Foreign Trip
- December 26th to December 30th 2009 : Different Places in India



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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 the board member of World Council of Religious Leaders, 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.

"God does not change people until they attempt to change themselves."