

July and August 2012

Following the Footsteps...

Prabhu Premi Sangh Newsletter



Volume 5, Issue 3

Reflections from Pujya Swamiji's Diary...



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Dear Prabhu Premi,

Prabhu bless you.

The holy period of Chaturmas is well suited for 'shravan' (imbibing spiritual knowledge through listening) and 'manan' (contemplation upon spiritual teachings).

The proximity of a Realized spiritual Master, who is forever established in Brahman, can help the seeker to understand the beauty and sacredness of this human life. Try to remain constantly engaged in the divine acts of 'seva', 'satsang' and 'swadhyay'.

With best wishes,
Swami Avdhesanand Giri



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

News in a Nutshell

Hari Om!

In the month of July, various events such as Guru Purnima festival, Shrimad Bhagavad Katha, and spiritual discourses by H.H. Swamiji in various cities were conducted.

The occasion of Guru Purnima marked the onset

of the holy Chaturmas - a time for dedicated worship, austerities and spiritual practice. Chaturmas is also a time for festivals as several important Hindu festivals occur including Rakshabandhan, Krishna Janamashtami, Ganesh Chaturthi, Navratri, Diwali

and Kartik Purnima.

'Adhik Maas', the thirteenth month of the Hindu lunar calendar commenced this year on August 18. His Holiness Swamiji will be following Adhikmaas Anushtaan at Haridwar until September 16, 2012.

Development of Mental Faculties

The *Sankhya Darshan* describes 'dhyaan' or 'meditation' as the state of the mind which is free from all thoughts. However, right from the time we wake up in the morning till the time we retire at night, our mind is engaged in continuous external activities. As a result, we find it difficult to remain peaceful or happy, because our external problems cause us worry and mental stress. But if we can set aside some time each day for the regular and proper practice of mediation, then we will be able to lead a simple and happy life even in the midst of mental pressures, physical ills, and innumerable problems.

Suppose we analyze sorrow or the nature of our problems and try to find out that when we become unhappy, then who is it within us that becomes stressed or unhappy? The clear answer to this is that it is the mind which becomes unhappy. It is the mind which gets anxious, tense or worried. Meditation is a scientific technique with the help of which we can develop our mind's potential, i.e. increase the faculties of our mind. These faculties are – the ability to remain calm, the ability to remain free of worry and the ability to overcome sorrow.



During meditation, we experience freedom from all the problems, attachments and attractions of the world. We experience the delightful presence of our own Self. Social status, name, intelligence, thoughts and ego, all belong to this physical body, and not to the Self.

In order to practice meditation, we need to select a quiet spot preferably away from all disturbances. We should make an attempt to quieten the mind and sit with our eyes closed, spine, head and neck straight. Keeping the body still, we should allow the pace of breath to be normal, and try to observe the center of the forehead like a witness. Do not make any attempt to visualize anything.

The center of the forehead is known as 'Agya Chakra'. The third eye of Lord Shiva is believed to be at this spot. Clearly, a person cannot see this spot of his own forehead with open eyes. That is why in order to meditate one has to close one's eyes and imagine looking there or try to focus

one's thoughts at that spot.

In the beginning one may see a faint light or complete darkness at this spot. Whatever we see, we should continue to observe like a witness. After some time, we might experience that the thoughts are beginning to decrease in our mind which could normally never be clear of thoughts. Gradually, through constant practice one reaches the stage when the mind becomes totally void of thoughts. This state is known as meditation.

In this state, we are free from happiness–unhappiness, gain–loss, success–failure, or joy–sorrow. We only experience peace and bliss. The senses get absorbed in the mind, the mind gets absorbed in the intellect, and the intellect gets absorbed in the Self, eventually attaining Supreme Joy. This attainment automatically destroys the existence of greed, attachment, ego, etc. It is in this state that we begin the inner journey. In this state, waves of bliss begin to arise in the mind and our dormant energies begin to awaken. We become full of enthusiasm, zest and joy.

There are five kinds of *vrittis* i.e. tendencies or thought patterns which the

mind remains preoccupied with – *Pramana* (right notion), *Viparyay* (misconception), *Vikalpa* (imagined), *Nidra* (sleep), and *Smriti* (memory). Through the practice of meditation, we can move our mind away from these tendencies and make it quiet. Then neither does the existence of the senses remain, nor the mind.

For an ordinary person, it is a very difficult task to disengage the mind from subjects, tendencies, imaginations or thoughts. But meditation is a science which can make the mind tranquil. In this situation we begin to get attached with the Supreme Being, the great Lord who dwells within us.

(Excerpt from H.H. Swami Avdheshanand Giri Ji's 'Savarein Apna Jeevan')

THOUGHT OF THE MONTH



"The core wealth of a seeker is God. God is happiness, bliss, piousness and peace."

Spiritual discourse by His Holiness at Chandigarh

His Holiness Swami Avdheshanand Giri ji Maharaj was invited by the Rotary Club of Chandigarh to deliver a lecture at Chandigarh on 16th July 2012. The theme of the talk was 'Role of spirituality in Stress Management'. In His address, He granted a completely new dimension to the concept of stress.

Tracing the history of stress to the times of the Mahabharata, H.H. Swamiji stated that the *Shrimad Bhagwad Geeta* was written keeping in mind the problem of stress that Arjun, the great warrior prince, was experiencing at the beginning of the war.

Stress was also discussed by Swamiji from the point of view of suffering. Referring to the Buddhist philosophy, H.H. Swamiji called suffering

as 'basic to' and 'coterminous with' life. All religions and philosophies have attempted to find a way out of this suffering, which is stressful. There is nothing new about stress ever since the beginning of the time, but the methods of dealing with stress have gradually been lost.

Giving a new interpretation to spirituality, Swamiji said that spirituality is the basic nature of man. "If you are established in the Self, you have overcome stress. In that stage you feel no fear, experience no tension and anxiety. The meaning of being spiritual is to be your natural self."

He further explained that anger and sorrow are not natural to man and no matter how strong, are ephemeral.

Joy and happiness, on the other hand, are natural and long-lasting. Swamiji pointed out that we do not really know what happiness is. What we perceive as happiness is just an illusion – a subjective impression of happiness. We think we are happy but we really are not. Spirituality shows us the path to reality, not to an impression of reality.

Giving a unique interpretation to the word *Bhagvan*, He explained that the letters Bh, G, V, A & N represent *Bhumi (earth)*, *Gagan (sky)*, *Vayu (wind)*, *Agni (fire)* and *Neer (water)*, respectively.

The best way to worship God is thus to respect the basic components of our environment and not to insult and pollute these life giving elements.

Guru Purnima Celebrations

Guru Puja, the sacred festival of the Guru was celebrated on July 3, 2012 at Ambala Ashram and Harihar Ashram, Haridwar.

On this day, *Naam Sankirtan, Guru Paduka Pujan* and spiritual discourse by H.H. Swami Avdheshanand Giri ji Maharaj was conducted. Devotees from around the world had gathered to pay their obeisance to Pujya Gurudev.

Guru Purnima satsang, prayers and festivities were also conducted by various Prabhu Premi Sangh centers worldwide.

Significance of Adhik Maas

The literal meaning of the term '*adhik*' is 'extra'. Approximately every third year, the Hindu lunar calendar adds an extra month, and this thirteenth month of the lunar calendar is known as '*Adhik maas*'.

Adhik Maas is considered extremely beneficial for religious and spiritual activities. It is believed that prayer, worship, charity, fasting (*vrat*) and spiritual practices performed during

Adhik maas can bestow great spiritual merit and is capable of washing away innumerable sins. Reading of scriptural texts such as Ramayana, Bhagavad Gita, and Shrimad Bhagavatam is also highly recommended.

In an interesting legend, it is said that while each of the 12 months of the calendar were assigned certain gods, the thirteenth or extra month was not assigned to any god. Feeling dejected,



Adhik maas approached Lord Vishnu saying that he was called '*Mal Maas*' (inauspicious month) and no god was assigned to him. Having pity on him, the Lord then assigned *Adhik Maas* to His own self. Thereby, it came to be known as

'*Purushottam Maas*'.

In the Devi Bhagavatam, it has been mentioned that charitable deeds performed in *Adhik maas* produce great divine results. Just like the tiny contents enclosed within a seed is capable of producing a giant Banyan tree, in a similar manner, even a small amount of noble deeds done during *Adhik Maas* are capable of producing huge results.

True Identity



Once an affluent businessman from a certain town reached the doorstep of a simple sage and began to request him to visit his house for a meal. He said, "Maharaj, if you will be kind enough to come, then we will be able to engage in discussion about religion and my knowledge will increase."

Hearing this, the sage thought, that if by visiting the home of this man, he will be benefitted, then it is best that I should accept his invitation.

He agreed and at the fixed time, the sage arrived at the home of the businessman. The businessman served him a variety of appetizing dishes and then began to speak about his various attainments.

He said, "Maharaj, I own several acres of land in this town, and my business is spread through the length and breadth of the country. I have performed several charitable deeds as well engaged in many kinds of social work. I have constructed numerous *dharamshalaas* (resting houses for pilgrims), and made arrangements for the distribution of free food to travelers. My sons are also engaged in both business endeavors and charitable activities."

The sage politely appreciated the efforts of the businessman. But he soon observed that the face of the businessman was becoming swollen with more and more pride. He was becoming extremely excited while mentioning his every achievement.

Pointing towards a map hung on a nearby wall, the sage then said, "Son, this is a map of the world. Can you look at it carefully and tell me where our country is?"

Immediately the businessman pointed towards India. The sage continued, "Now locate for me your state and town." The businessman was able to successfully find his state but could not find the name of his town anywhere.

The sage said, "Son, when there is no mention of your town in the world sphere, then can there be any mention of the land that you take so much pride in? Know that all this wealth that you are delighting in and identify yourself with, is temporary. In the dazzle of transient glories, you have forgotten the true Self. Get a hold on yourself. Try to know who you really are."

The businessman realized his mistake. He humbly asked for forgiveness from the sage, who then blessed him.

Prabhu Premi Sangh

H.H. Swamiji's Upcoming schedule

- September 1 to September 17 : Haridwar (*Adhik Maas Anushthan*)

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About the Organization...

'Prabhu Premi Sangh' is founded, directed and led by His Holiness Param Pujya Acharya Swami Avdheshanand Giriji Maharaj. H.H. Swamiji is the spiritual head of the JunaAkhada, the biggest and the oldest order of the Sanatan Vedic Dharma, which has millions of saints. H.H. Acharya Sri is playing a vital role as a board member of the '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. Please email us at prabhupremisanghnews@gmail.com.

"Human life is a divine gift from God. Hence, one should always remain cheerful."