



PARMARTH

June 2016 News Magazine

World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul, Turkey



-Highlights-



**Pujya Swamiji's
Green Birthday**



**International
Yoga Day**



**Ganga Dussehra
Celebrations**



**World Environment
Day in Delhi**

and so much more...



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Visit our Websites

www.parmarth.org (Parmarth Niketan Rishikesh), www.gangaaction.org (Ganga Action Parivar),

www.washalliance.org (Global Interfaith WASH Alliance),

www.projecthope-india.org (Project Hope),

www.divineshaktifoundation.org (Divine Shakti Foundation)

World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul, Turkey

Pujya Swamiji and Sadhvi Bhagawatiji at the historic WHS speaking about Faith in Humanitarian Action.



Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswati and Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati were specially invited to the first ever United Nations World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul, Turkey, from May 23rd to 24th, 2016.

They were involved in several important sessions, including a special major session on religious engagement in humanitarian work with many revered religious leaders, heads of major international faith-based organizations, heads of state and heads of governmental agencies, including the US Department of State, which was beautifully moderated by Azza Karam.

They also took part in a major session on Global Health with the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF, and several heads of state from across the world in attendance.

Another program was organized by Jean Duff and the Joint Learning Initiative on the evidence of faith-based engagement. A third session was offered by Kailash Satyarthi, Save the Children, UNICEF, and other organizations on the very crucial topic of protecting the rights of children.

In the evening, a gathering of all participants from India took place, in the presence of His Excellency, Rahul Kulshreshth, the Ambassador of India to Turkey. *





During the summit, Pujya Swamiji met with UNESCO's Director General, Irina Bokova to discuss the urgent need to work together to prevent the global water crisis.

Pujya Swamiji shared *"that the National River Ganga to me is an Ambassador of all Rivers and of our environment. It is truly a world heritage site, one with great natural, cultural and spiritual relevance for all."*

They both also discussed the urgent need to protect the many sacred fresh water sources of the world from pollution and over-extraction, especially the rivers' systems upon whose banks civilizations have thrived.



International Conference on Yoga Body and Beyond

Inaugurated by Hon'ble Vice President of India, Hon'ble AYUSH Minister, Pujya Swamiji, Baba Ramdevji and India's Most Revered Yoga Masters



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The two day International Conference on “Yoga for Body & Beyond” was inaugurated by the Hon'ble Vice President of India Shri Mohammad Hamid Ansariji, Hon'ble Minister of AYUSH, Shripad Yesso Naikji, Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, Pujya Baba Ramdevji, Pujya Dr Pranav Pandyaji, Pujya Swami Amrita Suryanandaji, Dr H R Nagendraji, Chancellor of VYASA, Shri Ajit Mohan Sharanji, Secretary AYUSH, Shri Jitendra Sharmaji, Joint Secretary AYUSH.

Shri Ajit Mohan Sharanji welcomed all the respected Yoga masters, saints, and dignitaries from all across India and the world to the historic second International Yoga Day Conference. A beautiful lamp-lighting ceremony was included with all of the dignitaries participating.

Hon'ble Vice President Shri Hamid Ansariji gave the opening speech on Yoga, its implications and significance to public health. He shared his exploration of the Patanjali Yog Sutras and explained that poverty, hunger, and good health are the needs of the hour. He stated that it is estimated that 4.8 trillion dollars will be sent globally by 2030 due to non-communicable diseases, hypertension, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, etc. He indicated that for developing countries who are not able to combat these diseases, for them the quest for complementary health approaches is vital. Yoga provides a viable and dynamic preventative and complementary health approach to meet these needs.

Pujya Swami Ramdevji shared that Sanskrit is the soul of Yoga. Yoga must be practiced and

shared with all. Yoga is Health, Happiness and Harmony. He committed to personally investing 10 crore in the spreading and sharing of Yoga, to train 1 lakh (one hundred thousand) Yoga Teachers and to annually inspire one crore (100 million) people to live a Yogic life. He encouraged all to map out our contribution to Yoga on the auspicious occasion of the second YogaDay.

Dr Pranav Pandyaji, Vice Chancellor of Dev Sanskriti Vishwa Vidyala, shared that maintaining and sustaining equilibrium in our lives and in our world is Yoga. By doing so, we will create a violence and stress-free world. He concluded by adding that when large populations of people practice Yoga the whole environment is purified and sanc-

tified. That encourages us to look at Yoga as more than asana--as a way of life.

Pujya Swamiji gave an inspiring speech sharing that He was so deeply pleased to see, under the Hon'ble Prime Minister's visionary leadership, that the whole world was coming together in Yoga--in Union. He said, “Today, this is not just a Make in India programme but a Make India programme. Yoga has to make the journey from the United Nations to Uniting all of Creation.”

Dr. HR Nagendraji said that disease is caused when there is dis-ease. Therefore, bringing back the ease is Yoga. Yoga is a multi-dimensional solution to both inner and outer challenges that we face as individuals, as communities and as nations. *

International Conference on Yoga Body and Beyond

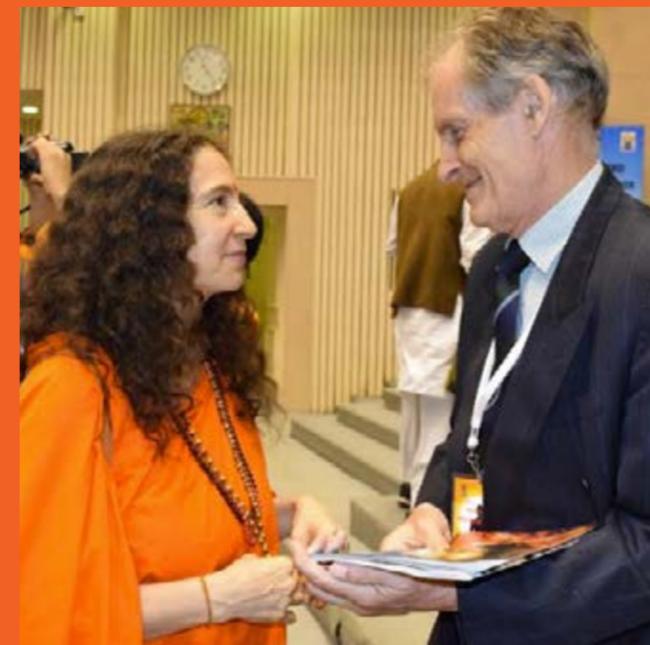
Sadhvi Bhagawatiji gives an inspiring talk about the significance of the eight limbs of Yoga



Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati was the Co-Chairperson for the plenary session on the second day of the Yoga Body and Beyond two day conference in Delhi, organized by the Ministry of AYUSH, Government of India, along with Hon'ble Member of Parliament, Shri Satyapal Singhji. She was on a panel with the following esteemed panelists: Dr. HR Nagesandraji, Vice-Chancellor of SVASYA, Prof. Chen Luyan, Yunnan Minzu University, China, Shri Sanjay Bhatia, IAS, Dr Shirley Telles and representative of the Brahmakumaris.

She shared so beautifully, "As every architect knows, one cannot build a structure beginning with the third floor! Regardless of the beauty and elegance of the building, if there is not a

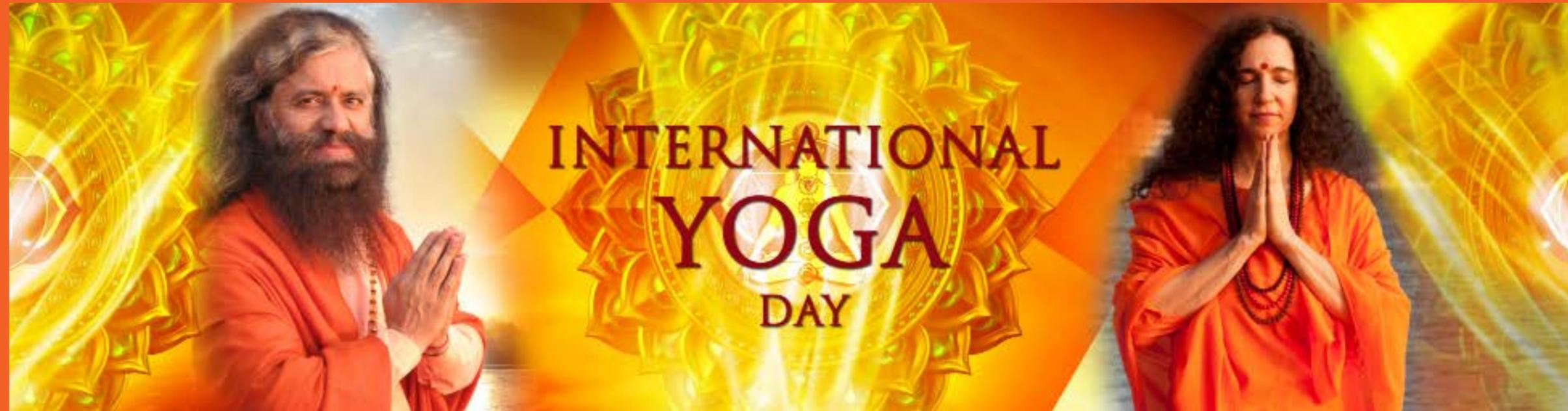
strong foundation, that building will collapse in the slightest storm. Similarly, we cannot disregard the foundation and base our yoga practice exclusively on limb 3, asana. We may become strong, limber and flexible but the moment the winds of change begin to blow in our lives, the best asana cannot keep us grounded if we have no foundation. The yamas and niyamas are crucial aspects of any true yoga practice. Without them, our asanas become mere acrobatics or aerobics... The asanas are windows into the possibility of what yoga holds. It is said, sthira sukham asanam. That which is stable, that which brings true joy; that is asana. Yes. And that is a window into not just stability and joy in the asana but in every moment and every breath of our life." *



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Yoga Day Summit

A Global Family celebrates Yoga on Intl Yoga Day 2016



**Register Online to Watch the
Special Videos for Free:
www.yogadaysummit.com**

A beautiful Yoga Day Summit by Uplift, the Shift Network and Unify offered a free full day online event, on the second International Yoga Day, which included inspiring teachers — including H.H. Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, Seane Corn, HH Sri Mooji, Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati, Shiva Rea, Michael A. Singer, Janet Stone, Ana Forrest, Tommy Rosen, Kia Miller and many others.

The film was shot in large part at Parmarth Niketan and shared deep wisdom on a vast array of fascinating subjects that empowered everyone to take their yoga practice to the next level and make their best contribution to our world. People from across 100 countries joined a global community of yogis — sages, musicians, scientists and beloved teachers from around the globe — to discover yoga practices, guided meditations and healing breath work for restoring, balancing and invigorating your body, mind and soul.

Pujya Swamiji's Green Birthday

New Traditions Emerge on Pujya Swamiji's Birthday



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Let us break free from the walls and break through towards a new era," said H.H. Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji President of Parmarth Niketan (Rishikesh), Co-Founder of the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance and Founder of the Ganga Action Parivar.

At a gathering of some of India's most revered faith leaders, in celebration of Pujya Swamiji's 64th birthday, a sweeping consensus was reached that new traditions must be forged to compensate for the growing threats of climate change, population growth and pollution.

The saints included: H.H. M.M. Pujya Swami Gurusharanandji Maharaj of Sri Udasin Karshni Ashram, H.H. M.M. Pujya Swami

Asanganand Saraswatiji Maharaj, H.H. M.M. Swami Avdheshanand Giri Ji Maharaj, H.H. M.M. Pujya Swami Harichetanandji Maharaj, H.H. Pujya Acharya Bal Krishna ji, H.H. Pujya Brahmachari Brahmaswarupji Maharaj, H.H. Pujya Swami Shri Govind Dev Giriji Maharaj Pujya Mahant Mohandasji, Pujya Baba Hath Yogiji, Pujya Mahant Rishishwaranandji, Pujya Mahant Durgadasji, Pujya Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati and many others gathered for the occasion of Pujya Swamiji's green birthday.

Said Pujya Swamiji, "No longer can we follow the ways of even 50 years ago. Our world is becoming hotter, dryer and more and more polluted. Traditions, such as even my own birthday celebration, must change if we as humanity are to survive."

With a steadily-growing population, 54% of India is already facing extreme water stress, which is aggravated by the growing burdens of pollution, rising temperatures and increasing incidents of disaster. The saints unanimously agreed that celebrations and rituals, which play a crucial role in the fabric of society, can become dynamic forces for change.

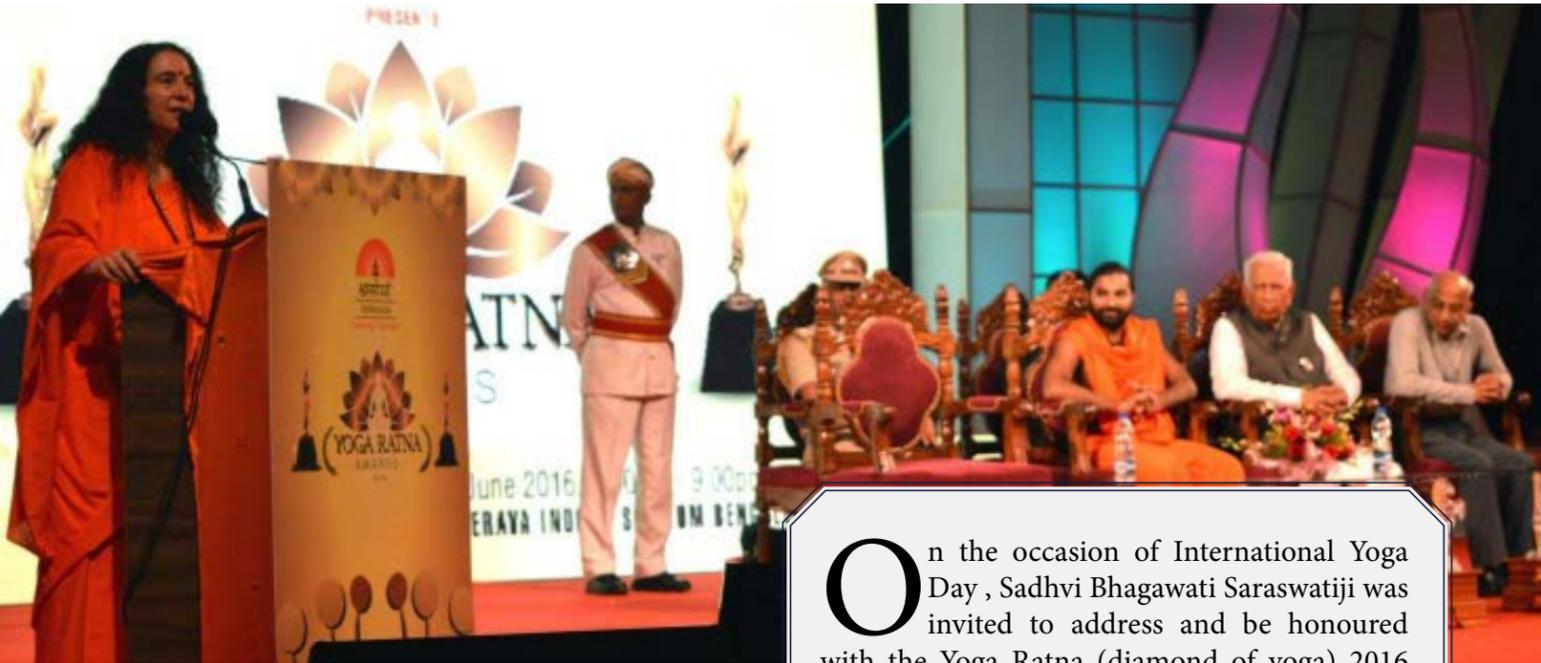
To demonstrate the point, a tree plantation drive was inaugurated as part of the celebration event. "In Vedic times, trees and water were revered as sacred. Today, we've turned our backs on them, becoming far too insulated within our temples and homes," said Pujya Swamiji. He added, "Let us break free from these walls and break through towards a new era. Rather than plucking flowers for my birthday let us plant trees, so that all

may benefit from their cooling shelter. Instead of performing Abhishek to just one idol, let the world become our idol, which we can all clean and beautify. In such a way, a single ritual, or a single celebration, can become a boon for all."

They concluded by performing the world-famous and divine Ganga Aarti, at the end of which, the assembled seers raised their hands in a rousing pledge for a Swachhta Kranti: a Clean Revolution for Mother India. They were joined by hundreds of people from around the world, who vowed to plant trees, keep our waterways clean and ensuring sanitation. They illustrated so beautifully that through existing spiritual and religious rituals new traditions could be born and new messages for the welfare and well-being of all of humanity can be propagated and shared. *

International Yoga Day-Yoga Ratna Awards

Sadhvi Bhagawatiji is awarded the prestigious Yoga Ratna Award by Union Minister Shri DV Sadananda Gowdaji & Shwaas Guru and inaugurates the programme with HE Governor of Karnataka and Chairman of ISRO in Bangalore.



On the occasion of International Yoga Day, Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji was invited to address and be honoured with the Yoga Ratna (diamond of yoga) 2016 Award in Bengaluru. The event was organized by the Shwaasa Trust, in association with the Government Of Karnataka, Olympic Association of Karnataka & AWGP - All World Gayatri Pariwar.

The special event was inaugurated by the watering of a beautiful tree by the Hon'ble Governor of Karnataka Shri Vachubhai Rudabhai Valaji, Shwaasa Guru Pujya Swami Vachananandji, Respected Chairman of Indian Space Research Organization - ISRO Dr Kiran Kumarji and Sadhvi Bhagawatiji. Sadhviji also gifted a sacred Rudraksha plant to the Hon'ble Governor, on behalf of HH Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, for being a 'Yogi Governor' of the green, garden city of Bangalore.

Thereafter, they each spoke in the opening ceremony of the importance and significance of Yoga for everyone, everywhere.



The Hon'ble Governor shared, "If just by chanting OM one can start healing their whole body and all of their major energy centres, then imagine what practicing more Yoga can bring to our lives." He continued, "Yoga is key to leading a disease free, healthy and happy life." Giving the example of the Hon'ble Chairman of ISRO and lauding the launching of the satellite in next two days, he mentioned the critical importance that the practice of Yoga holds in forming the foundation in which we are able to do and fulfill all of our roles and responsibilities and to be of great service to our nation. He urged everyone to practice Yoga in their everyday lives.

Sadhvi Bhagawatiji inspired the audience by sharing, "I come from Rishikesh, the land of spirituality, to Bangalore, the land of science, and today what the world truly needs is the sangam (confluence) of science and spirituality to address our most pressing global challenges. The key to bridging this gap is Yoga. Yoga is Union, of not just our physical bodies but of our external and internal worlds. It's the bridge between sarkar (government), science and spirituality. It's beautiful to see how so many organizations have come here today, together with the government to honour and celebrate Yoga." She added that while we are conquering more and more of our outer space through science yet still we are not in peace or balanced within ourselves or in our families and communities or nations. Yoga gives us the key to knowing, exploring and conquering our inner space. She emphasized that Yoga is not just asanas but a way of life and a state of being that brings great peace, harmony, health and joy to our lives.

Pujya Shwaasa Guruji and Hon'ble Devaragunda Venkappa Sadananda Gowda, the Union Minister of Law and Justice in the Government of India and the 20th Chief Minister of Karnataka, honoured Sadhvi Bhagawatiji with the honour of Yoga Ratna (Jewel of Yoga) award for her tireless contributions to spreading the art and science of Yoga all across India and around the world. The Hon'ble Minister shared beautifully about Sadhviji's great dedication, devotion and commitment to sharing and living the values of Indian spiritual-cultural tradition and being a true Yogi. *



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IYD Celebrations in Dehradun

Uttarakhand, better known as the birthplace of Yoga, celebrates International Yoga Day 2016. Parmarth Niketan is honoured for its great contributions towards promoting and preserving Yoga in India and all over the world.

The Second International Yoga Day was beautifully celebrated in Dehradun as thousands of citizens from all walks of life came together to practice Yoga. The Hon'ble Chief Minister of Uttarakhand, Shri Harish Rawatji was present, along with his Cabinet of Ministers, Yoga instructors from the State, people of all age-groups, including children, along with the Indo-Tibet Border Police team. Everyone came together enthusiastically to embrace and learn Yoga, with a pledge to implement it into their daily lives.

"I appeal to each of you to also ignite interest of at least 10 individuals (in yoga) in your neighborhood," Rawatji said.

International guests of Parmarth Niketan from England, South Africa, Australia and different parts of India, along with the Parmarth Rishikumars and members of the Parmarth family also participated in the event as everyone stood united in the true spirit of Yoga.

Parmarth Niketan's Yogacharya Dr. Indu Sharmaji, who holds a doctorate in the study of Surya Namaskar, was honored with a commendation

certificate by the Hon'ble Chief Minister Rawatji for her efforts and contribution to the field of Yoga.

Shri Harish Rawatji said AYUSH centers had already been set up at district hospitals in all 13 districts of the State and it was a matter of pride for everyone that Uttarakhand had been recognised for Yoga. The Hon'ble Chief Minister also said that all efforts would be made to develop Rishikesh as an Arogya Kendra (wellness center).

About 100 yoga teachers, he said, would be honored at the International Yoga Day function in Dehradun next year.

Rawatji also lauded the officials for their continuous efforts in implementing the various state government schemes relating to AYUSH (wellness).

Uttarakhand Chief Secretary Shatrughan Singhji, State Tourism Secretary Shri Umakant Pawarji, Dr Bhupinder Kaur Aulakhji, Secretary, Health and Family Welfare, DGP Shri A. Ganpatiji, IG Shri G.S Martoliyaji, AYUSH Director Dr. Arun Kumar Tripathiiji also graced the occasion with their presence and participation.*



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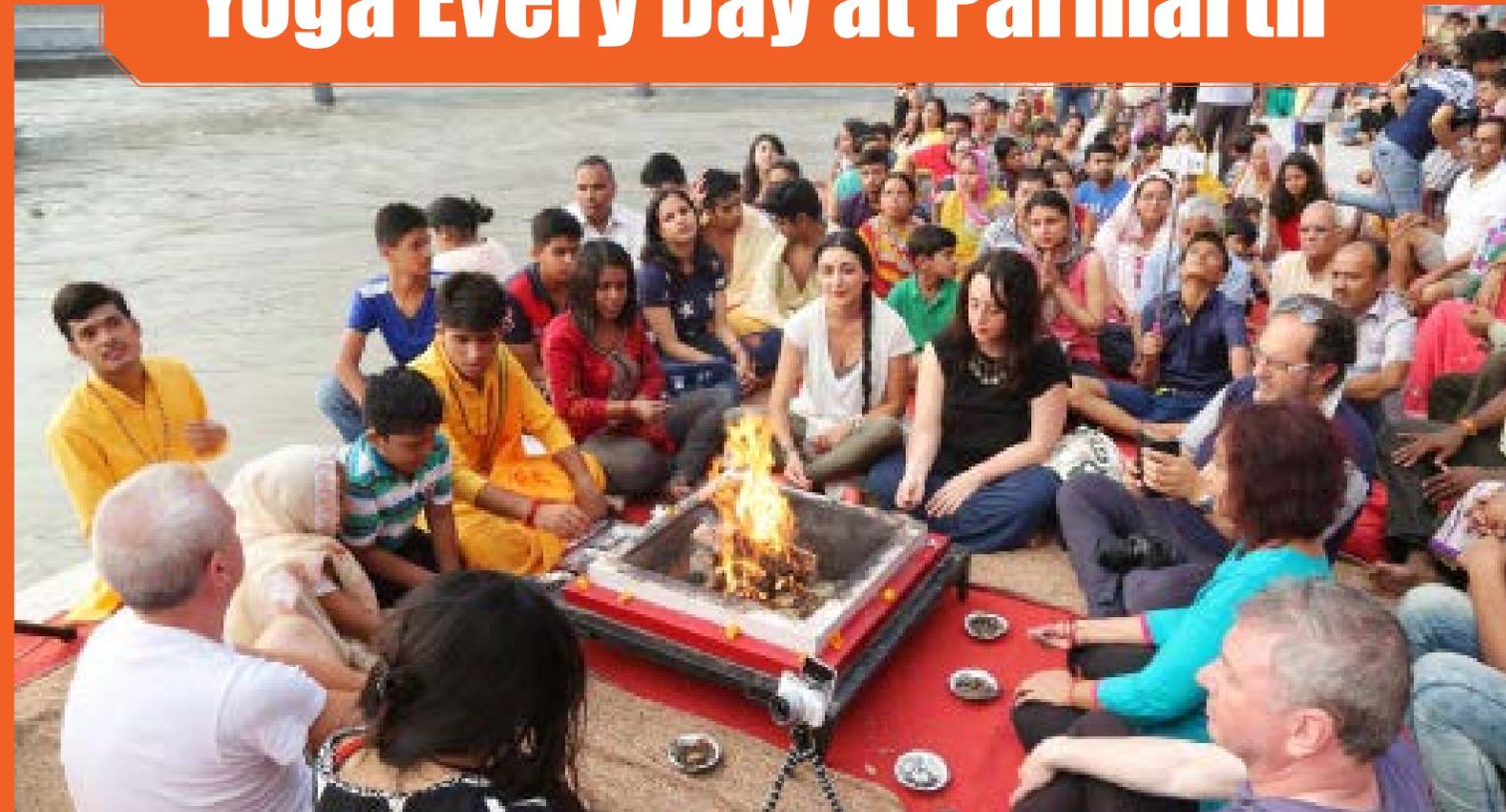


International delegates from 19 countries, which included: Taiwan, Japan, Korea, Singapore, Myanmar, Mexico, USA, China, Greece, Italy, New Zealand, Australia, Malaysia, United Kingdom, Germany, Kazakhstan, Hungary, Ukraine and the Netherlands, came on a Yoga Tour to Parmarth Niketan Ashram. They practiced Yoga Asanas in the morning with Sadhvi Abha Saraswatiji and Yogacharya Dr. Indu Sharmaji. They also were blessed to participate in divine Ganga Aarti and Satsang (Question & Answer session) with Pujya Swamiji and Sadhviji.

The tour was organized by the Hospitality Department of the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India and included nine days of travel to learn, practice and partake in Yoga, in its birthplace.

The participants had started their journey with participation in the International Yoga Day in Chandigarh and Delhi. From Rishikesh they planned to travel to south India to Trivandrum, Cochin and many other cities, learning not only Yoga but more about the spiritual-cultural heritage which it originates from. *

Yoga Every Day at Parmarth



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World Environment Day

Our Environment: Challenges and Responsibilities



On the occasion of World Environment Day, the India Eye, International Human Rights Observer (IHRO), the United Nations' Information Centre and numerous media houses and other organizations came together for a major event on "Our Environment: Challenges & Responsibilities" in Delhi at the prestigious India Islamic Center. Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati ji was the Keynote Speaker for the event and Pujya Swamiji, blessed the occasion and inspired the panel discussion.

Shri Rakesh Gargji, Chairman of India Eye IHRO and Shri Rakesh Sharma ji, Managing Director of the India Eye IHRO organized the meaningful discussion on protecting and preserving our environment and our

planet on World Environment Day in collaboration with Shri Rajiv Chandran, Director of the UNIC and Shri Virendra Mishra ji.

The event brought together Hon'ble Railway Minister, Shri Suresh Prabhuji, Waterman Rajendra Singh Ji (Jalpurush), Director General of Centre for Science and Environment Ms Sunita Narain, President of PHD Chamber of Commerce & Industry Shri Mahesh Gupta, Film Director Shri Madhur Bhandarkar and many other leading environmentalists, media personalities and leaders.

On the occasion Pujya Swamiji and Sadhvi Bhagawati ji lauded and blessed the honourable dignitaries with a beautiful rudraksha sapling. *



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Bollywood Actor Govinda's Visit

for World Environment Day



Famous and beloved Bollywood Star Govinda, showed his support to preserve and protect our sacred rivers, end the practice of open defecation, build and use toilets and plant trees during the divine Ganga Aarti ceremony.

Pujya Swamiji said, *"It is so wonderful to see the great love people have for Govinda, this is why I shared yesterday in Delhi on World Environment Day that celebrities and those in the film industry have a Film Industry Social Responsibility to channel their fans tremendous love for them towards social causes, such as protection of the environment. As Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati and I discussed yesterday with Suresh Prabhu, Sunita Narain, Waterman Rajendra Singhji, Madhur Bhandarkar and many other leading environmentalists, media personalities and leaders that there can not only be one day for the environment but every day is for the environment and in fact the only way is our environment."*

Pujya Swamiji and Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati blessed Govinda with a sacred Rudraksha sapling, Rudraksha mala and special Swachhta Kranti umbrella. Together they performed a special water blessing ceremony as a prayer and pledge that children all around the world should have access to safe and sufficient water sanitation and hygiene (WASH). *



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Pujya Bhaishriji Visits Parmarth

Wishes Pujya Swamiji a Green Birthday and Leads Swachhta Kranti Pledge

Pujya Bhaishri Rameshbhai Ozaji, Head Priest of Jagannath Temple and Pujya Dilipdasji joined Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswati and Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati during the GangaAarti ceremony and lead a pledge for Green Kathas & Green Kumbha Melas- free from open defecation, pollution, plastic and other forms of solid and chemical contamination of our

sacred rivers and life-giving water bodies. They reflected on the success of the Simhasth Kumbh Mahaparv - 2016, they shared about their plans for the Ganga Sagar Mela scheduled for early next year and encouraged everyone not only to take the Swachhta Pledge back with them but to plant at least one tree in memory of their sacred green pilgrimage to the holy banks of Mother Ganga. *



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Ganga Dussehra:

River Ganga should be a World Heritage Site



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“Let the River Ganga be not only a National Heritage but also a World Heritage. She not only brings life and livelihoods to the people living directly on Her banks but also brings great inspiration and liberation to those who come from all across India and all around the world to bathe, breathe and bask on her glorious banks, in the lap of the Himalayas in the Simply Heaven state of Uttarakhand. Let this declaration be a motivating message to the other four states she flows through to join together to preserve and protect her as our spiritual, cultural, natural, national and world heritage.”

- HH Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, President of Parmarth Niketan (Rishikesh), Co-Founder of the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance and Founder of the Ganga Action Parivar

At a unique gathering of some of India’s most revered faith and interfaith leaders, a sweeping consensus, on the auspicious occasion of Ganga Dussehra, was reached to declare the Upper Ganga Region as a World Heritage Site.

Ganga Dussehra is renowned as the day the Goddess Ganga came down to Earth to liberate the souls of King Sagar’s sons, also referred to as “Gangaji’s birthday,” and is celebrated with great love and enthusiasm. It is a day when millions come from all

across India and across the world to bathe in Her holy waters. The faith leaders gathered together at Parmarth Niketan (Rishikesh) to inspire pilgrims and devotees to pledge and commit to protecting and preserving Her waters and Her tributaries.

Said Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, “Each day, 2.9 billion liters of waste water from sewage, domestic and industrial sources are dumped directly into Mother Ganga, of which over 80% is sewage discharge of 50 cities located along the river. It is not enough to worship Her but to also put our worship into action to prevent pollution, over-exploitation and over-extraction of Her waters.”

The faith leaders suggested immediate actions should be taken by all state government’s ensuring:

1. Restored ecological flows at every point along the Ganga’s course.

2. Preventing and curtailing all waste water, starting with sewage and industrial waste, from mixing with the river. This especially needs to be prevented along the heavily polluted Kanpur and Varanasi stretches of Ganga.

3. Promoting massive water conservation and water resource management, inclusive of rain water harvesting schemes, at both centralized and decentralized levels within the Ganga River Basin.

By giving each other a sacred green Rudraksha sapling, the faith leaders pledged and encouraged massive tree plantation on both sides of the river. Lauding the Ministry of Water Resource and Ganga Rejuvenations DPR Release with the Forest Research Institute as a great step in the right direction, they urged for the plantation to be a people’s effort with multi-stakeholder and faith based organizations involvement.



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Added Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati, Secretary-General of the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance, "On this joyous occasion, let us also take a moment to pray and offer our respectful homage to all those who lost their lives in the 2013

tragic floods of Uttarakhand where the rushing waters of Mother Ganga rose to heights unseen in over 100 years, at this very time of Ganga Dusshera three years ago. We are reminded of the message that Mother Ganga and Mother Nature taught us during that tragedy. On Ganga's birthday in 2013, she gave us an ultimatum: 'Care for me, care for my mountains, my trees and my tributaries and I will bring you life and liberation. Deforest my mountainsides, pollute the air such that the warmth melts the glaciers, dam and divert me, and you will reap the consequences.' Let us remember this message and pledge ourselves to protect and preserve her for our future generations."



Dr. Poonam Khetrpal Singhji, Regional Director of World Health Organisation South-East Asia Region, who was also present on the occasion stated, "I have learned so much today from being here and I assure Pujya Swamiji that WHO stands

with the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance and the work that is being done to ensure pollution

Attending the celebration were:

- Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, President of Parmarth Niketan (Rishikesh).
- Pujya Swami Satyamitranandji of Bharat Mata Mandir, Former Shankaracharya.
- Pujya MM Swami Asanganand Saraswatiji, Parmarth Niketan.
- Dr. Poonam Khetrpal Singhji the Regional Director of World Health Organisation South-East Asia Region.
- Hon'ble Environment Minister of the State of Uttarakhand, Shri Dinesh Aggarwalji.
- Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji, President of the Divine Shakti Foundation, Secretary-General of the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance.
- Pujya Jai Krishna Prabhuji, Yamuna Rakshak Dal.

free rivers that are protected and preserved for the health of our planet and our future generations."

There was a beautiful Ganga Dusshera puja with the chanting of stotras, prayers and hymns for Mother Ganga. Afterward, faith leaders performed the world-famous Ganga Aarti, and at the conclusion, the assembled seers raised their hands in a rousing pledge for a Swachhta Kranti: a Clean Revolution for Mother Ganga. They were joined by thousands of people from around the world, who vowed to plant trees and to keep our sacred rivers clean and green. *

Nadi Narayani Dance

There was a special Nadi Narayani: Dance for Rivers by Oddisi Natya Sala and young students dressed as sacred rivers performed for pilgrims, devotees and yatri from many countries and from all across India. They inspired those assembled on the banks of Ganga for the auspicious occasion of Ganga Dussehra to pledge to preserve and protect all rivers and water bodies. Shri Dinesh Agarwalji the Hon'ble Minister of Environment and Forest, Government of Uttarakhand, was inspired by Pujya Swamiji, to also lead a pledge that we must all do our part to protect and preserve our sacred rivers so that they may dance again, providing life and liberation to all.



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Saints and Safai Karamcharis Bhandara

Pledge to End Untouchability

Hundreds of saints, faith leaders and safaikaryakartas (sanitation workers) gathered to take a dramatic stand towards ending all forms of discrimination and untouchability.

The historic event, led under the inspiration of H.H. Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji was a first of its kind in which a pointed statement of unity was made through the very act of dining side-by-side.

Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji commented: *“The very concept of untouchability should be considered an abomination. We all bleed red. We all live under the same sheltering sky and we all have been created by the same loving God. Let it be made clear today and forever more that we are all one family. Let us never again sin against our brothers and sisters through the delusions of untouchability. Instead, let us dine together and let us embrace one-another as true and graceful reflections of divinity.”*

Attending the event were many faith leaders including Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, Vishwa Bharti Founder-President of Ahimsa, Acharya Dr. Lokesh Muniji the Head of Gurudwara Bangla Sahib New Delhi, Paramjit Singh Chandok, Shri Sushil Goswamiji from Sarva Dharma Sansad, and President of Divine Shakti Foundation, Dr. Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji.

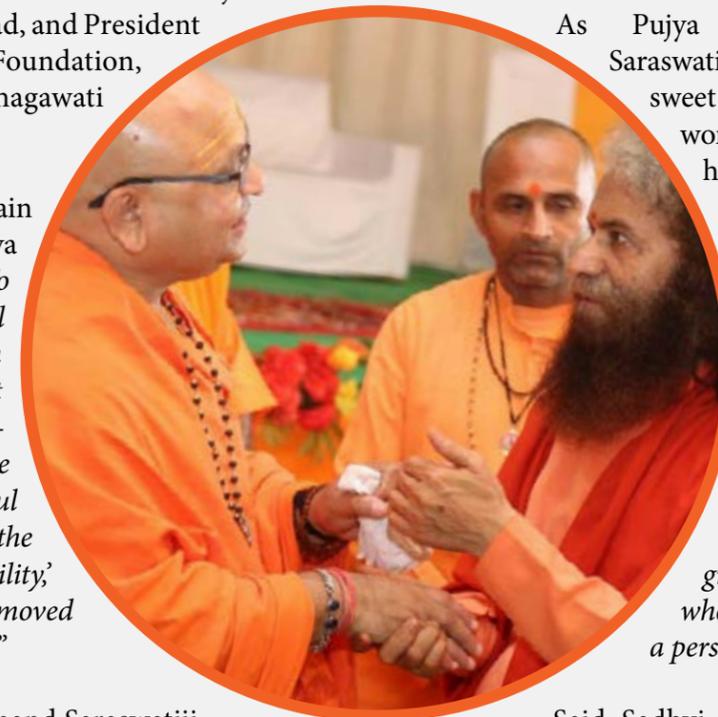
Said eminent Jain leader, Acharya Lokesh Muniji, *“To consider one soul more valuable than another is an act against ahimsa (non-violence). If we are to realize a peaceful world, then even the word, ‘untouchability,’ must be forever removed from our vocabulary.”*

Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji also added, *“Today on the banks of Mother Ganga, in honour of Ganga Dussehra, we are celebrating the confluence of mediation and sanitation. Saints help us clean our internal world and safaikaryakartas help us clean our outside*

world, both are vital for the progress of our self and our society. ‘Manav, Manav Ek Samaan, Sabke Beethar Hai Bhagawan’ we all are one family... is the theme of this sahabojbhandara (feast) of oneness and unity today.”

As Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji lovingly placed a sweet on the plate of one woman sanitation worker, her eyes filled with tears. *“All my life, I have been avoided as if I am less than human,”* she later said. *“Yet today, I feel such great hope. Never in my wildest dreams could I have thought that I would ever have the opportunity to dine with great saints such as these, who see me for who I am: as a person of value.”*

Said Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji, *“It is my prayer that all people embrace the beautiful spirit of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam by opening our hearts, opening our arms and opening our doors to all. It can begin with a simple meal like this, and can end with great and tangible peace.” **



Remembrance of the Floods

Prayers and Green Tribute on 3rd Anniversary of the 2013 Uttarakhand Floods



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In remembrance of the tragic floods that ravaged Uttarakhand in 2013, three years ago, a special prayer took place in Parmarth Niketan. The prayer ceremony also marked the completion of the three day, on-going Ganga Dussehra celebrations, in which HH Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, President of Parmarth Niketan (Rishikesh), consistently emphasized the critical importance of protecting and preserving our environment and our sacred rivers.

During the ceremony, a beautiful lamp was lit and tree saplings were bestowed to all participants, who held them in loving memory of the lives taken by the tragedy. Concluding the event was a moment of silence followed by chanting for peace.

Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji said, "On this very day three years ago, we saw the waters of River Ganga rise to heights unseen in the last 100 years. It was a time in which Mother Nature was calling out to us and giving us an ultimatum. Today, we must remember that message and continue to work tirelessly and quickly to preserve and protect our rivers and water bodies from pollution as well as conduct massive tree plantation drives, making and restoring Green

Corridors along both sides of the river bed. The planting of trees along the river bed will be the true tribute to our brothers and sisters who tragically lost their lives."

Added Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati, Secretary-General of the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance, "Let us also take a moment to pray and offer our respectful homage to all those who lost their lives in 2013 tragic floods of Uttarakhand. On Ganga's birthday in 2013, she gave us a warning: 'Care for me, care for my mountains, my trees and my tributaries and I will bring you life and liberation. Deforest my mountainsides, pollute the air such that the warmth melts the glaciers, dam and divert me, and you will reap the consequences.' Let us remember this message and pledge ourselves to protect and preserve all rivers for our future generations."

Joining the prayer ceremony were faith leaders including Pujya MM Arjun Puriji, Juna Akhara, Founder-President of Ahimsa Vishwa Bharti, Acharya Lokesh Muniji, Head of Delhi Bangla Sahib, Paramjit Singh Chandok, Shri Sushil Goswami of Sarva Dharma Sansad, Yamuna Rakshak Dal's Jai Krishna Prabhu and people from many countries and from all across India. *

CM Chhattisgarh at Ganga Aarti

Inspired to pledge to plant 100 million trees in Chhattisgarh

The Hon'ble Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh, Dr Raman Singh, came to Parmarth Niketan with his family to participate in the divine Ganga Aarti and also to meet with Pujya Swamiji.

During the beautiful Aarti ceremony, they honoured several local NGOs, organizations and individuals working for environmental protection and Ganga rejuvenation.

Pujya Swamiji shared with Dr. Singhji about the ongoing three day Ganga Dussehra celebrations and they joined together to lead the pledge for ending pollution to our rivers, ending open defecation and planting trees during the Ganga Aarti.



Inspired by the ceremony, Dr. Raman Singhji shared that the state of Chhattisgarh planned to plant 100 million trees during this monsoon season. Pujya Swamiji lauded the efforts of the state to also make villages open defecation free (ODF) and encouraged the whole state to become completely ODF.

Pujya Swamiji also blessed Dr Singhji's daughter in law, Aishwariya, whose birthday was on the same day and presented her with a green plant for a Green Birthday celebration. Sadhvi Bhagawati later gave her some organic quinoa from the Parmarth organic farm as a symbol to the family's commitment and dedication to leading sustainable lives and for being dedicated to the welfare of all.

Thereafter, they held a discussion about how to make the state of Chhattisgarh a model state and an inspiration for the nation. *

Yamuna Action Parivar

Working Together for Restoring and Rejuvenating the River Yamuna

Serving Together to Restore the River Yamuna

Acharya Sri Pundrik Goswamiji came home yesterday to meet with Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji. Pujya Swamiji warmly welcomed him to the holy banks of Mother Ganga, in Rishikesh (Himalayas), Uttarakhand. They discussed the success of the Simhasth Kumbh Mahaparv - 2016 as well as the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, ShriShivraj Singh Chouhan's great leadership and commitment to restore and rejuvenate the River Kshipra and the River Narmada.

They also discussed ways in which they could engage and involve all stakeholders for the River Yamuna, led and guided by Vrindavan's Revered Saints and em-

inent Kathakars, to release, restore and revive the river's waters.

They discussed a multi-pronged approach to not only release ecological flow into the river but provide alternative water-smart farming methods for farmers to plant in the Haryana and UP region, the two states that use most of the river's waters for irrigation, as well as massive tree plantation and water conservation plans to improve the rivers ability to store rain water, amongst other interventions. Achrya Sri Pundrik Goswamiji was very impressed by Pujya Swamiji's great dedication and commitment to this cause and offered his full support to the initiative.



Pledge to Restore and Revive Our Sacred Rivers

Deeply inspired by Pujya Swamiji, Respected Bhagwatinkar Shri Anurag Krishna Shastri "Shri Kanhaiyaji" led a pledge during the divine Ganga Aarti at the end of his week-long katha at his Himalayan home, in Parmarth Niketan Ashram, to join forces in ending the practice of open defecation and pollution along and in our sacred rivers. He encouraged everyone to build and use a toilet as a simple, effective and vital way of personally ensuring the sanctity of our soil, our environment and our water bodies, as well as preventing a host of water-borne illnesses that take so many lives every year.

He also encouraged massive tree plantation drives which restore groundwater, thereby ensuring adequate water levels in our fresh water sources. He shared that we should all find any and every occasion to plant a tree, especially during the upcoming monsoon season.

Pujya Swamiji and Pujya Kanhaiyaji had a discussion on utilizing Kathas as a time to reach out to the masses, engaging them in efforts to support and contribute to Swachh Bharat and Namami Gange as well as other initiatives that serve the nation. Pujya Swamiji also shared His vision for Kathakar Social Responsibility and Green Kathas to promote the message of a Cleaner and Greener world for all.



Yamuna Action Parivar in Vrindavan



Meetings discussing the restoration and rejuvenation of the River Yamuna took place at Parmarth Niketan (Rishikesh). Pujya Jai Krishna Das Prabhuji and disciples of Pujya Swami Parmadvaitiji from South America met with Pujya Swamiji to plan His upcoming visit to Vrindavan, in late October.

The Yamuna Action Parivar, in association with Ganga Action Paivar and the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance, will

bring together over 300 devotees from many parts of India and many parts of the world in a major rally along the Parikrama Marg as a call to action for a clean and green Vrindavan and a River Yamuna that is free from open defecation and pollution. There will also be a beautiful event bringing together some of the most revered saints, interfaith leaders and various groups and eminent Kathakars, inspiring action to rejuvenate and restore the River Yamuna.

Interfaith Iftar with US Ambassador

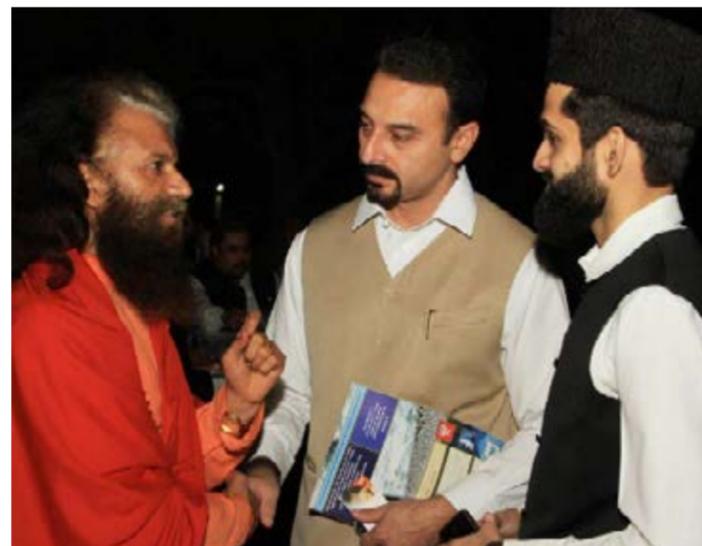
Interfaith Leaders come together for peace and plantation of trees



Pujya Swamiji and Sadhviji were recently with many interfaith leaders at a special Iftar dinner, hosted by the Hon'ble US Ambassador, Shri Richard Verma at Roosevelt House in Delhi.

The dinner was a union of interfaith leaders from India coming together in honour of the special occasion and to show their deep commitment to interfaith harmony by celebrating together and pledging to work together for a peaceful and prosperous future for all.

During the event, Pujya Swamiji and Sadhviji also gave a special Rudraksha plant to Ambassador Verma and the respected interfaith leaders as a symbol of working together for the welfare and the well-being of all. *



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World Toilet College Course Completion



A World Toilet College Training of Trainers Class on “Washroom Cleaning and Basic Maintenance” was completed from the 21-25th June, 2016, at Parmarth Niketan Ashram. It was inaugurated and blessed by Pujya Swamiji. The World Toilet College is a joint project of Reckitt Benckiser, World Toilet Organization and the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance (GIWA).

More than 25 specially selected participants from various fields of social work, environmental conservation and science participated in the five day training. Ramli Mehmood and Sarika Saluja,, instructors from the World Toilet Organization in Singapore, conducted the workshop.

Pujya Swamiji stated: *“There can be no meditation, no spiritual, religious practice without sanitation. Sanitation is the very foundation upon which we build our lives. The World Toilet College in Rishikesh, Uttarakhand, illustrates that meditation and sanitation must go hand in hand and that we need to collectively work to ensure there are enough toilets and sanitation facilities, even if that means that there are no more new temples and places of worship for a few years until this basic goal is met. Simply by building, using and then maintaining a clean toilet we can prevent a host of illness/disease as well as contribute significantly to a Swachhaur Swaasth Bharat (Clean and Healthy India).”*

Sadhviji inspired the participants to become Swachhta (Cleanliness) Ambassadors after completion of this much-needed and critical training. She added: *“Just as a doctor protects a patient’s life, our Swachhta Ambassadors will protect their health by spreading awareness on the right and effective ways to maintain cleanliness in their toilets, homes and communities”.*

Program’s Director, Swami Adityananda Saraswatiji said the motive of the World Toilet



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College and Training is to make citizens alert and aware of the essential basic need for cleanliness so that our coming generations also understand the new, smart ways to clean with precision.

A Water Blessing Ceremony closed the week long training along with a pledge to keep India Clean & Green. It was joined by CBSE Board’s Assistant Commissioner Dr. M. M Swami, Haryana’s Sports Teacher Shri Dhanveer Singhji and Shri Rajeev Sharmaji. Mala Kund iSamiti, a local NGO, representatives Bhagat Singh, Sohan Singh, Sunil, Vikas, Vishal Bhatt and Vikas Bhatnagar also joined in the ceremony. *

UN Peacekeeper's Day

Inspiring Youth to be Today's Peacekeeper's and Peace Ambassadors



On UN Peacekeepers Day, HH Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji and Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji blessed Vision 2021's mission "One Million Youth for Peace," conceived and led by Ms. Rachna Sharma. They led the lighting of the symbolic lanterns of peace on the holy banks of Mother Ganga during the evening sacred Ganga Aarti ceremony.

UN Peacekeepers Day pays tribute to all who have lost their lives in the cause of peace. The largest number of individuals who have sacrificed their lives for these efforts are from India. It also honours those who have and continue to serve in the UN peacekeeping operations around the world for their dedication, commitment and courage. Our world continues to strive and maintain peace in areas of severe crisis and conflict as a result of their service.

The Vision 2021: One Million Youth for Peace is an educational and humanitarian movement engaged in initiatives to raise awareness about peace and purpose amongst youth in India and abroad. By giving 100 volunteer hours to these efforts, the world's budding leaders and volunteers are connected to the world's best mentors and established leaders. Vision 2021 hopes to nurture Ambassadors of Peace and herald a brighter, more beautiful and more peaceful world for all through this initiative.

On the occasion, Pujya Swamiji said: "India is not only a piece of land but truly a land of peace... If we are in pieces then what will we exude and/or manifest? Only pieces. But when we are in peace then we exude peace and we manifest peace around us. Therefore, it's crucial that India's young generation gets engaged and excited about connecting and contributing with

Read more on Pujya Swamiji's life and message on Peace, visit: www.parmarth.org/pujyaswamiji/publications

our ancient and timeless heritage of peace. It is vital that we connect these efforts to a broader definition of peace which includes the crucial importance of protecting our environment and sacred water sources from over-exploitation and over-extraction, often the lack of these basic natural resources is the foundation upon which conflict and violence arises in the world."

Sadhvi Bhagawatiiji said, "We should not only PRAY for peace but as faith based organizations partnering with networks across the globe and the UN, we must also come together to PROVIDE the fertile grounds upon which peaceful communities can thrive. Today we bring our prayer for peace into action and light the lamp of hope and healing so that youth of this country and youth of the world are encouraged to truly be leaders of peace, this will then not only Make in India, as India will be a more welcoming place for investors and individuals alike, but it will also Make India, thereby making and contributing to a stronger, healthier and more peaceful world."

Rachna Sharma expressed her gratitude by saying, "Together with my Guru, Pujya Swamiji, and Sadhvi Bhagawatiiji's blessings and tireless work of peace, I am certain that we can engage and inspire every youth of this country to join these vital efforts. I could not have imagined a more auspicious and beautiful way of starting this journey then on this day and on the banks of the River Ganga, the river of peace and love, in the lap of the sacred Himalayas."

The beautiful lantern lighting ceremony on the holy banks of Mother Ganga coincided with similar ceremonies taking place simultaneously on the South Delhi Campus of the Delhi University. HRH Lakshyaraj Singh Mewar, the Prince of Royal House of Mewar hosted a ceremony in Udaipur plus Sam Beard with the Gift Foundation hosted in Delaware, USA and Jawad Nabulsi hosted at the Stanford Business School in California, USA. *



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To learn more about Vision 2021 and dedicate your volunteer hours, contact: www.rachnasharma.in



Times of India Corporate Retreat

Self Management for Success

Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji inspired leaders of excellence at The Times of India annual corporate visioning and planning retreat held at the J.W Marriot, Mussoorie, as the keynote speaker. Sadhviji highlighted the need to be *“leaders for inspiration and innovation, not just information.”*

Sadhviji’s speech highlighted the essential need for the development of M.S.R (Media Social Responsibility), just like C.S.R. (Corporate Social Responsibility) with beautiful insight on how service is just an extension of the self, a giving from the self to the self, in the spirit of one-ness.

Explaining the four sublime states given by the Buddha, Metta/Maitri (Love), Karuna (Compassion), Mudita (Sympathetic joy) and Upekkha/Upeksha (Equanimity), Sadhviji gave an inspired explanation on how to work on one’s inner balance more than the bank balance. Sadhviji’s

thoughts resonated with many of those who were present at the event and the lecture was followed by a question and answer round in which Sadhviji talked about the well-being and unity of the mind, body and soul.

She also emphasized, *“You, as the corporate heads of the The Times of India, are not only reporting the news; you are making the news! By deciding what to cover, what to highlight and what to ignore, by determining the guidelines of what is newsworthy, you determine the information and inspiration of all readers. It is the time for India and the Times of India can play a great role.”*

The event wrapped up with Sadhviji gifting a beautiful Rudraksh sapling to Shri Shrijeet Mishraji, COO of TOI group, symbolizing the critical responsibility of making India Green and Clean, something that we all need to take care of together. *



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Sankirtan and Swachhta Come Together

on the banks of Mother Ganga

The Bhagwan Naama Prachara Mandali from Chennai, Tamil Nadu, held several days of beautiful devotional and musical programs, entitled the Kalyan Mahostav, at Parmarth Ganga Ghat recently. Revered saints, priests and hundreds of devotees offered their deep regards to Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji and the beautiful humanitarian service projects flourishing under His leadership and vision. They offered their respects to Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji for her devotion, dedication and ceaseless service.

While addressing the devotees and pilgrims, Pujya

Swamiji shared, *“The time has come for Sankirtan and Swachhta to work hand in hand. Along with chanting the name of the Lord, we must also simultaneously serve His creation. We must not only ensure that our places of worship are clean and green, as they are direct reflections of the Divine, but we must also ensure that we raise awareness on the crucial need to keep our rivers free from open defecation and the importance of building and using a toilet.”*

Sadhvi Bhagawatiiji shared, *“Every day in the morning prayer at Parmarth, we sing ‘Mukh Mai Ho Ram Naam,*

Ram Seva Hath Mai...’, which reminds us that not only should we sing the name and the glories of the Lord but we must do the work of the Lord. Our scriptures tell us that we are not only made by God but we are actually made OF God. Hence, God’s creation is not ever separate from God. So, when 1200 children have to perish daily due to lack of adequate WASH and millions of women have to wait for the darkness of night to answer nature’s call, simply because they lack access to sanitation facilities, our faith must come into action to also provide and serve the Divine and the Divine’s creation to ensure the provision of safe and sufficient sanitation for all.”

Inspired by Pujya Swamiji and Sadhvi Bhagawatiiji, several youngsters, pilgrims and devotees came forward to pledge that the first thing they will do when they go back from their beautiful spiritual yatra to the banks of Mother Ganga is build a toilet in a nearby village where it is needed.

Everyone also pledged with Pujya Swamiji and Sadhviiji to keep coming back to their Himalayan home and take the mission of keeping their communities, villages and homes Swachh and Swaasth when they return back to Chennai. *



Meeting with earth&us

Working Together to Build a Better Earth



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Kshipra Action Parivar Meeting

Mass Plantation along both sides of the River Kshipra

Additional Principal Chief Forest Conservator Shri PC Dubeyji and Roopantaran's Rajeev Pahwaji met with Pujya Swamiji to discuss implementing the plans to make both sides of the

Kshipra River green and afforested. They spoke in detail about taking the work and the pledge of the Simhashta: Ujjain Kumbha Mela forward in the coming months, especially starting in the monsoon season.

Minhaj Ameen, Founder of earth&us, planted this beautiful Rudraksha sapling, which he and Gunjan Siddha, also of earth&us, were honoured by Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswati and Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati recently during their visit to Parmarth Niketan Ashram, in Maitreye, Auroville. May our partnership and our commitment to protecting, preserving and serving Mother Earth, Mother Ganga and Mother Nature continue to grow and thrive like this sapling into a tree of life, inspiration and nourishment for all. *



Donating Sewing Machines

Divine Shakti Foundation serves and empowers Himalayan Women



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Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati, President of Divine Shakti Foundation (DSF), and Sadhvi Abha Saraswati, Head of the Parmarth Yoga Department, joined by volunteers and members of Divine Shakti Foundation, gifted sewing machines to rural Himalayan women under their initiative of skill development and vocational training.

Sadhviji said on the occasion, “There is such a great opportunity for all of us to empower every woman in every spectrum of their lives. I am so glad that through offering these sewing machines, through planning and giving a variety of skill development and vocational training courses and classes, ranging from sewing, knitting to

toilet and water filter building, the Global Inter-faith WASH Alliance and Divine Shakti Foundation are working to put the power back into the hands of our shakti- our women.”

Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswati provided His blessings for the project by saying, “These sewing machines are not merely just a one time contribution but I believe they are truly a gift that keeps on giving. The sewing machine will not only sew cloth and fabric, earning livelihoods for these women and their families, but will sew the whole family and the whole community together with the threads of empowerment, hope and with the spirit of entrepreneurship and that is truly the need of the hour.” *



Medical Camps

Project Give Back provides hope and healing to all



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The lack of availability of proper medical facilities, health practitioners and health education in the Himalayan regions fuels and motivates Divine Shakti Foundation volunteers to serve tirelessly in improving the overall well-being of the Himalayan people, as well as serving the under-served and needy population.

Unfortunately for many, quality medical care is simply not available. People living in Himalayan villages often have to walk kilometres just to reach the main road, then must travel by shared jeep long distances to visit doctors or get medicine. All this why suffering from illness, wounds or even broken bones.

As a part of an ongoing “Project Give Back” Initiative, Divine Shakti Foundation and Parmarth

Niketan host free medical camps weekly in the surrounding villages where they travel for diagnosis, treatment and preventative care. Dedicated doctors provide primary healthcare services and distribute much-needed medicines to those who would otherwise not have access and/or availability of these services. These teams of doctors are often joined by other health professionals, such as physiotherapists, Ayurvedic practitioners, and more.

Here are some highlights from June’s medical services as well as the special visit of Dr. Bharat Bhagatji, Chairman & Managing Trustee of Polio Foundation, along with Mr. Vinod Bagrodiaji to plan for expanding DSF-Parmarth Niketan’s medical services to include serving children with Cerebral Palsy and special needs. *



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CHIDANAND SARASWATIJI
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SADHVI BHAGAWATI
SARASWATIJI
*PRESIDENT, DIVINE SHAKTI
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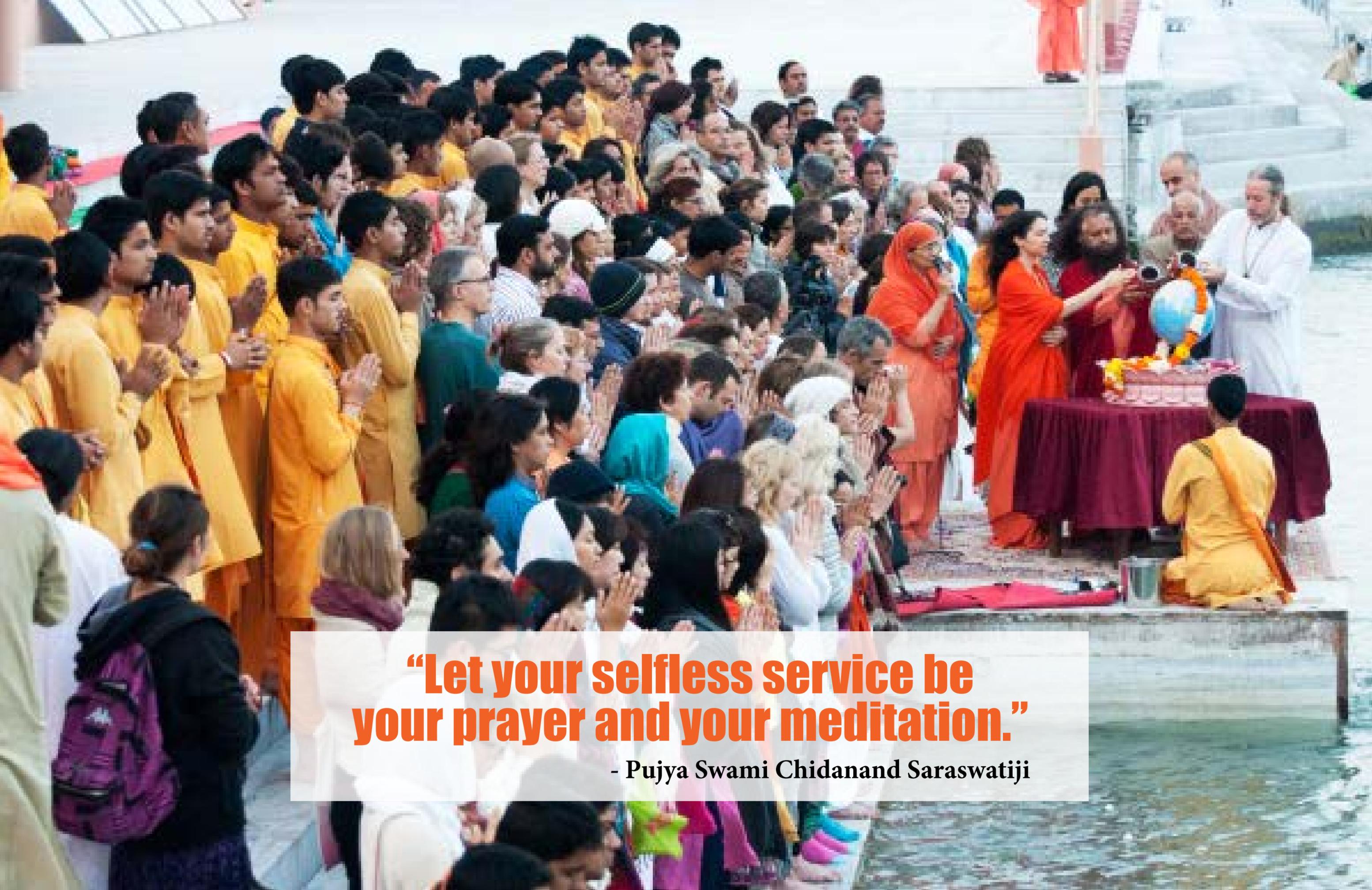


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**“Let your selfless service be
your prayer and your meditation.”**

- Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji