

# *Interfaith Harmony and Positive Development for India & the World*

## **Parliament of World Religions**

From the 4th - 9th December, Pujya Swamiji was a speaker in the Parliament of World Religions, a huge inter-religious gathering of the top leaders of all the world's religions.

The first Parliament took place in Chicago in 1893 and it was there that Swami Vivekananda gave his famous speech, beginning with "My sisters and brothers of America." One hundred years later, they decided to have a centenary Parliament, also in Chicago to which a few of the top leaders were invited. Pujya Swamiji was one of the select invitees. However, the event was such a great success and its need in today's world was recognized so significantly, that the organizers decided to have these Parliaments every 5 years in different cities throughout the world. In 1999 it was in Cape Town, in 2004 in Spain and now in 2009 in Melbourne.



Pujya Swamiji giving a lecture on Living in Peace not Pieces



Pujya Swamiji with Pujya Dada J.P. Vaswani



Pujya Swamiji with Pujya Dadi Janaki, head of the Brahmakumaris & Pujya Acharya Palaniswamiji of Hinduism Today



Over the last 15 years the Parliament has grown enormously and this year there were nearly 1500 religious leaders gathered together, in the Melbourne Exhibition Centre. It was truly a divine Festival of Spirituality!

Pujya Swamiji delivered a speech on living in peace and He participated in several inter-religious panels. He was also a major speaker at the Conclave of Hindu Leaders.

Click on <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5RnljE9lhKw> to listen to Pujya Swamiji's talks at the Parliament.



Pujya Swamiji in an interfaith dialogue of top leaders of all the world's major traditions, regarding the role of religious leadership



Pujya Swamiji in a panel on Hindu-Jewish Dialogue



Pujya Swamiji with Andrew Cohen





Pujya Swamiji with Rabbi Moshe Garelik, founder of Rabbinical Center of Europe, from Brussels



While there Pujya Swamiji had beautiful interactions with so many different leaders of so many religious traditions. It was so inspiring to see the love that flowed endlessly and instantly between all of the leaders.



Pujya Swamiji with the team of Pujya Saints from Hinduism Today Magazine



Pujya Swamiji with Samdhong Rimpocheji, the Prime Minister of the Tibetans in Exile



At the Parliament there was a lot of time for interactions and discussions with various leaders.

Pujya Swamiji spent time discussing so many aspects of world peace programs, programs for different humanitarian and charitable causes, and the upcoming launch of the Encyclopedia of Hinduism with many different world leaders, including:

- H.H. the Dalai Lama (see details next page)
- Pujya Dada Vaswani
- All of the Saints from Hinduism Today
- Rabbi David Rosen
- Rabbi Moshe
- Respected Samdhong Rimpocheji
- Dadi Janaki
- Mother Maya
- Andrew Cohen
- Bhai Sahib Mohinder Singh

and many more

Also, He graced the occasion of YogAid event with His presence. YogAid is a charitable organization dedicated to using the growing global interest in yoga to help various charitable programs in third world countries. Each year they have an event at Parmarth Niketan during our International Yoga Festival, and they also have numerous other international events throughout the year. He gave a beautiful talk on the true meaning of yoga and how to bring its principles into our daily lives.

To hear Pujya Swamiji's message at the Conclave go to: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5RnljE9lhKw>

At the YogaAid Challenge Event



At the Conclave of Hindu Leaders



With Rabbi David Rosen, Bawa Jain & Hindu Leaders



With Mother Maya





At the Parliament one of the great highlights was meeting with H.H. the Dalai Lama. When His Holiness arrived at the venue from the airport, coincidentally Pujya Swamiji was exiting at the same time. As soon as they saw each other, they embraced in such a warm and loved filled way.

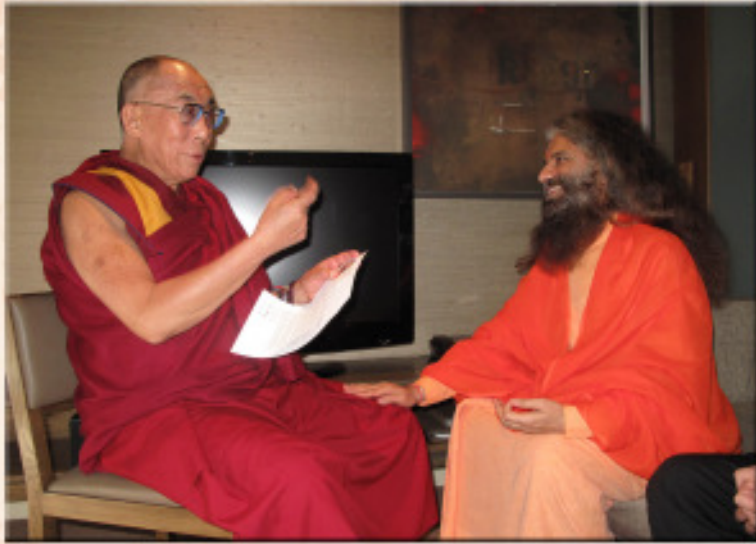


Hugging the Dalai Lama as they meet at the entrance

After embracing, His Holiness told Pujya Swamiji that “I have recently learned that the way the Maoris greet each other is by rubbing noses.” He then ever so lovingly pulled Pujya Swamiji close to his face and rubbed noses!!

His Holiness spent several days in Melbourne, during which he gave a beautiful, inspiring and uplifting speech at the concluding ceremony of the Parliament and also hosted a special breakfast to which Pujya Swamiji was specially invited. His Holiness spoke about the dire importance of having compassion for one’s brothers and sisters on the planet and the importance of people thinking about the entire planet, not just about themselves.





During His Holiness' stay in Melbourne, he and Pujya Swamiji also had a private meeting in His Holiness' room where they discussed numerous projects for the benefit of humanity. At this time, Pujya Swamiji also told him about the upcoming launch of the Encyclopedia of Hinduism during the Kumbha Mela, and His Holiness graciously agreed to be present for the occasion.

Further, in addition to the launch of the Encyclopedia, Pujya Swamiji requested him to grace an interfaith dialogue of religious leaders from the world's religions and also the divine Ganga Aarti with his presence. His Holiness agreed to both!



H.H. the Dalai Lama LOVES Pujya Swamiji's beard. He always touches it whenever they're together.





## *Pujya Swamiji's Travels*

### Australia

While Pujya Swamiji was in Melbourne for the Parliament of World's Religions, there was also a public program for the Melbourne community. Pujya Swamiji, Pujya Sri Sri Ravi Shankarji, Pujya Swami Avdheshanandji, Pujya Swami Agniveshji and Pujya Swami Parmatmanandji all gave a beautiful and inspiring program at Melbourne University on Sunday the 6th December.



left to right: Swami Parmatmanandji, Swami Avdheshanandji, Swami Chidanandji, Sri Sri Ravi Shankarji, Swami Agniveshji, Sadhvi Bhagawati



Pujya Swamiji and Pujya Sri Sri Ravi Shankarji



Pujya Swami Avdheshanandji, Pujya Swami Chidanandji and Pujya Swami Agniveshji



The saints gave inspiring lectures on a variety of topics pertaining to India, Indian culture, spirituality and more. to see the video of Pujya Swamiji's lecture please click here or go to: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IOcbmMSU4Y8>

The program was beautifully organized by Amit Laxman and his family.



left to right: Swami Parmatmanandji, Swami Avdheshanandji, Swami Chidanandji, Sri Sri Ravi Shankarji, Swami Agniveshji, Sadhvi Bhagawatiji

## Brisbane, Australia

While in Australia, Pujya Swamiji also traveled to Brisbane where He spent 2 days. He gave a large, beautiful pravachan program at the home of Sailesh and Marina Chand who live on the premises of a sacred Sai Baba temple. They personally care for the temple, perform all the seva and the puja with great devotion.

They organized for Pujya Swamiji to give a satsang there at the temple for the Sai community as well as for the entire local Brisbane community, Hindus and non-Hindus, for Pujya Swamiji's teachings are applicable and beneficial for everyone. The program began with Pujya Swamiji's sacred charan-puja, followed by bhajans/kirtans, inspiring discourse and it concluded with aarti.





When He arrived at the Brisbane airport, there were SO many people there from the community to receive Him -- with flowers, love and song. In the middle of the Brisbane airport, they sang with such love and devotion to Him....

Pujya Swamiji was so impressed to see their beautiful devotion and also the piety of all the devotees of the temple.

Also on the premises, outside in the garden, is a sacred Shiv Linga and Pujya Swamiji offered His prayers there prior to leaving the next morning.

To hear His talk on how to use our human birth to fulfill our Divine potential and attain God realization, please click here.....







Pujya Swamiji also visited the Goldcoast and stayed at the home of Divine Souls Bina and Chris Stevenson. Bina has dedicated her life to the service of the needy in India.

While Pujya Swamiji was there she also organized a beautiful, private and cozy aarti in her home, which Pujya Swamiji lovingly performed.







# Sydney, Australia



Pujya Swamiji also visited Sydney, Australia where He had spent a great deal of time over many years in the early 1990s as the founder and spiritual head of the first underground temple in the world, a beautiful Shiv temple in Mintoo, Sydney.

There was a beautiful program at the Mintoo temple in which He gave a discourse followed by aarti and Maha prasad. Pujya Swamiji even served the Maha prasad with His own hands!





While Pujya Swamiji was in Sydney, He was also requested to visit the home of Clive and Eriko Meyhew, beautiful souls who are the founder of YogAid, an organization that uses yoga, and people's love of it, to raise funds for charitable organizations. They organize YogaAid events at many places, in many cities around the world, in which participants perform 108 sun salutation (or variations thereof) taught by different teachers.

They come to Parmarth every year during the International Yoga Festival and they had requested Pujya Swamiji to come to their home. So, graciously and lovingly He agreed.

They have a beautiful home, right on the ocean, and they organized the darshan and meditation in a room that was fully open to the sea breeze. There was a meditation as well as His blessings and question-answer time. The participants, most of whom were not Indians and had never been to India, were truly touched, inspired and awakened by His words and teachings.





## Pittsburgh, PA

In October, Pujya Swamiji visited USA -- Pittsburgh, Harrisburgh, Louisville, KY and New York/New Jersey -- on a short trip coinciding with the divine holidays of Diwali and \_\_\_\_\_ (the day after Diwali). He celebrated Diwali with all the devotees and community of the Hindu Jain Temple and graced the Annakut function the following day with His presence as well, in which a special puja was performed for the Encyclopedia of Hinduism, the landmark historic project of IHRF.

Pittsburgh is the birthplace of the Encyclopedia of Hinduism project which Pujya Swamiji conceived of in 1987 and which actually began in 1993 (after spending 5 years traveling



around the world identifying the top scholars). Pujya Swamiji is the Founder and Spiritual Head of the Hindu-Jain Temple in Pittsburgh and it was while He was there that the inspiration for this project came. Immediately after making the official decision to embark on the project, they all went to the SV temple (the South Indian Balaji temple) of Pittsburgh to seek blessings of Lord Venkateshwara. Hence, now that the work is completed and the Encyclopedia will be launched, Pujya Swamiji again went back to the SV temple on His trip to Pittsburgh in order to seek Lord Venkateshwara's blessings on the first volume.



A beautiful puja was conducted there by the priests.







# Harrisburgh, PA

Pujya Swamiji also gave a program in Harrisburgh, Pennsylvania (the capital of Pennsylvania), USA. Pujya Sri Shankaracharyaji, Swami Divyanand Teerthji also graced the occasion with his presence at Pujya Swamiji's request.

The function was in honor of the completion of the manuscript of the Encyclopedia, and was organized by IHRF President, Shri Hasubhai Shah and his divine wife, Smt. Harshaben.

Pujya Swamiji and Pujya Sri Shankaracharyaji also honored Shri Hasubhai and Smt. Harshaben, Drs. Navalbhai and Nilaben Kant and several others for their commitment and dedication to the divine project.







## Louisville, KY

Pujya Swamiji and Pujya Sri Shankaracharyaji also traveled to Louisville, KY where they gave a beautiful program at the Hindu Temple of Kentucky. The program was organized by Smt. Rekhaben & Shri Atulbhai Mashruwala, Smt. Jayshreeben & Dr. Rajanbhai Amin, and Drs. Taranginiben and Chandrakantbhai Patel

As puja was performed for the 1st volume of EH, and after receiving the blessings from the saints, the volume was carried around to receive the blessings of all the devotees also.







## *In the Service of God & Humanity*

### **New School**

We spent Christmas morning inaugurating a new school we've adopted, in a small village outside of Rishikesh. Several hundred children, of the "backward" classes (which tragically and ironically refers to the lower classes), many of the "untouchable" caste, and all of whom are impoverished, attend this school which was no longer able to sustain itself.







We've adopted the whole school and will be building brand new facilities, a computer center, playground etc. as well as, of course, providing the basics which are so desperately needed. We gave them the choice of which day to choose for the inauguration and, perhaps purposely, perhaps coincidentally, they chose Christmas day. So, during the inauguration function, Pujya Swamiji told them all that even Jesus -- whose birthday the world celebrates on this day -- who was one of the greatest messengers of peace and one of the greatest saints of all time, came not from a royal family, but rather was the son of a carpenter.

"You can become anything" He told them all....and with His grace, I'm sure they will.





## Ganga Clean-Up

As always the New Year was spent by cleaning up the banks of Mother Ganga! Pujya Swamiji has embarked upon a new "Gau, Ganga and Gandiggi" program to begin first in Rishikesh, then throughout Uttarakhand then throughout India. The mission is to remove the stray cows (Gau) from the road, to clean up the waters of Mother Ganga, and to remove trash (Gandiggi) and solid waste from the roads and the canals that feed into Ganga. The project is off to a great start and we have finally been allotted land by the government on which to keep the stray cows.



## Free Medical Camp

In November, a divine team of doctors came from Australia to conduct a free eye camp. Led by Dr. Purnima Roy and Drs. Jay and Shail Chandra, the team saw, diagnosed and treated hundreds of patients for free. Numerous free cataract operations were also conducted for the impoverished, ailing people of the Himalayas





# Encyclopedia of Hinduism

In 1987, Pujya Swamiji conceived of the idea to bring forth the first Encyclopedia of Hinduism in history. All other major religions have long since had authentic, compendiums of their heritage and teachings, but Hinduism, the world's oldest living spiritual tradition had not yet been encapsulated in an authentic, encyclopedic form.

In 1993, after Pujya Swamiji spent 5 years traveling around the world with eminent scholar, professor emeritus from the University of Virginia, USA, Dr. K.L. Seshagiri Rao and choosing a team of hundreds of the world's top scholars, the work began in earnest.

Finally, with Pujya Swamiji's blessings and inspiration, nearly two decades later, a team of approximately 1000 scholars from around the world have brought forth the world's first, complete Encyclopedia of Hinduism. It will be 11 volumes and approximately 7000 entries! Further, the entire Encyclopedia is full color with beautiful illustrations on nearly every page.

In October, 2009, Pujya Sant Shri Rameshbhai Oza was giving divine Katha at Parmarth Niketan and one of the days of katha was graced by the presence of Pujya Swami Ramdevji. On this day, volume 1 was presented by the publisher to Pujya Swamiji, Pujya Bhaishri and Pujya Swami Ramdevji for their blessings before going for print.

In the evening, the volume was presented also to the Chief Minister of Uttarakhand. The Encyclopedia will be launched in April by the hands of H.H. the Dalai Lama at Parmarth Niketan.





# Parmarth Niketan



## *Special Guests & Programs at Parmarth*

### Divine Bhagawat Katha

From October 23 - 31, Pujya Sant Shri Rameshbhai Oza gave divine Shri Rama Katha at Parmarth. The days were filled with the divine sounds of the reading of the Ramayana, along with song, dance and inspiring commentary. For 9 days Parmarth's ghat on the banks of Ganga verily became the land of Ayodhya, the forests in which Shri Rama, Lakshmana and Sita Ma lived, and Lanka where the war of righteousness over unrighteousness was fought and won.





The katha was also graced by the presence of numerous saints including Pujya Swami Gurusharananandji, Pujya Swami Ramdevji, Pujya Swami Satyamitranandji, Pujya Swami Hansdasji and of course Pujya Swami Chidanandji, each of whom shared uplifting, inspiring and enlightening words.

Evenings were spent being led by Pujya Swami Chidanandji in the divine Ganga Aarti.....late in the evening there were also various cultural programs, garba dancing and more!





## Sanskrit Conference

In early October a Sanskrit Conference was held at Parmarth....



## Kundalini Yoga Training

For a month in November, Gurmukh Kaur Khalsa and her husband Gurushbd Khalsa led a Kundalini Yoga Teachers Training program. For one month, more than 100 students spent their days studying Kundalini yoga from the Yogi Bhajan tradition, on the banks of Mother Ganga.

Everyone said it was the best teacher's training program ever - because not only did they get the beautiful, inspiring and transformative teachings of the Kundalini yoga tradition, but they also got the divine touch of Mother Ganga and the Himalayas, not to mention Pujya Swamiji's divine darshan and satsang.

They've already made plans to return for Level 2 training next year, same time!





## Sacred Mundan Ceremony

Tapan and Anita Kant, who had been married here at Parmarth, on the banks of Mother Ganga in 2004 brought their beautiful daughter Simran here for her sacred mundan ceremony (the chudakarana sanskara or first hair cut). This sanskara is performed typically during the first or third year of age when the child's original, first hair growth is shaved. According to the sages, the hair from birth is associated with undesirable traits from past lives. Thus at the time of the mundan, the child is freshly shaven to signify freedom from the past and moving into It is also said that the shaving of the hair stimulates proper growth of the brain and nerves. The chudakarana sanskara is also said to bring long life to the recipient and it is performed as a special ceremony in most homes.

Here at Parmarth, sacred Vedic mantras are chanted and puja is performed for the child. The barber then gently cuts his/her hair while our young rishikumars sing and clap loudly to try to keep the child engaged and happy!

After the ceremony, Tapan and Anita brought Simrin to Pujya Swamiji for His blessings.





## Pujya Jaggi Vasudev

Pujya Jaggi Vasudevji came to Parmarth to meet with Pujya Swamiji and discuss various ideas and plans for bringing upliftment and positive change in India, particularly in the poorer regions. It was a wonderful and fruitful meeting of two like-minded, divinely oriented souls who are both committed to serving, serving and serving the planet. From Parmarth they went and spent time with Pujya Swamiji Ramdevji.



## Shri Rajat Sharma

Shri Rajat Sharmaji, founder and owner of India TV, came to Parmarth in November. He was so impressed and overjoyed to take part in the divine Ganga Aarti, to have Pujya Swamiji's darshan and blessings and also to see the beautiful rishikumars of the Parmarth Gurukul.



## Mohanbhai Patel



Divine and pious devotees from Mumbai, Mohanbhai and Vasantbhai Patel came to Parmarth with their families to have Pujya Swamiji's darshan and perform Shiv abhishek puja on Mother Ganga



## Brandon Bayes (Janaki)



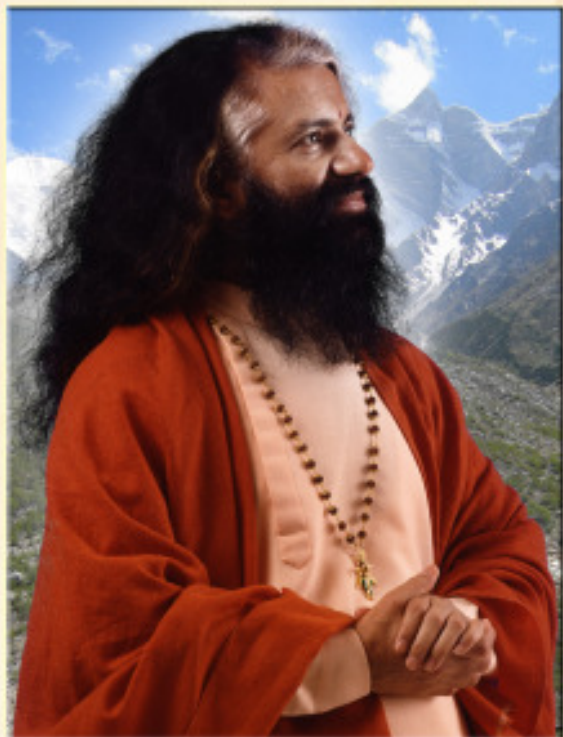
In December, for three days, internationally renowned self-help teacher, and founder of the "Journey", Brandon Bayes (Janakiji) led a retreat at Parmarth Niketan. Based on her own personal, incredible healing journey, she founded a program through which participants can delve deeply into themselves and heal whatever is ailing them - physically or emotionally. A group of approximately 100 certified Journey facilitators came to Parmarth for their own, divine retreat.

Pujya Swamiji gave a beautiful, inspiring talk about the true journey of life, how to walk it, and what the true destination is.





# Divine Message



## NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE 2010

Dear Divine Souls,

Happy New Year! As a new year dawns upon us, it is a good time to reflect upon our lives, our paths and our progress toward the ultimate destination of divine awakening and realization. So much in our lives, at times, feels overwhelming, frustrating, unmanageable....but at these times it is most important to remember that we are not alone. God is always with us.

*There is a beautiful story of a young toddler playing in a sandbox. As the young boy shoveled and dug and built in the box, he came upon a large rock in the sand. No matter how much he tried to dig around it, the rock would not dislodge. Thus, he began to try push it with all his might, trying to move it at least to the edge of the sandbox. Yet still the rock was too heavy for his small body and undeveloped muscles. Finally his eyes be-*

*came red, and he began to cry out of frustration. A large shadow suddenly appeared across the sandbox and the little boy looked up at his father. "I can't move the rock," the boy exclaimed. "And it's right in the middle of my hole." His father replied, "My child, you have not yet used all your strength." "Oh yes, Papa, I have. I have tried and tried to move it but it is too heavy. I cannot do it."*

*The father leaned down into the sandbox and easily removed the large rock, laying it carefully on the ground outside the box. "My child, you may have used all the strength in your arms, but I am also your strength. You just had to ask for help and I would have come immediately to remove the rock from your hole."*

In our lives also, we forget that we have another source of strength, outside of our own bodies. We feel the weight of all problems upon our own shoulders and imagine that they are up to us to solve. We feel alone, tired, frustrated and helpless, for the rocks are sometimes too heavy for us to lift out of the way.

Yet, we must never forget our other source of strength - God. No rock is too big or heavy for Him. No hurdle or challenge or obstacle is insurmountable by Him. We must simply ask Him, with sincerity, purity and love, to come and help us remove the obstacles on our path. God has not created us to suffer. Rather He has given us intellect, intuition, purity, piety and faith that we may overcome suffering. He is here, at every moment of every day, to help us along the path, to relieve us of our burdens no matter how heavy they may seem. We must never give up, we must never lose hope and we must never fear from forging a new, righteous, divine path in life. Those paths will, of course, be difficult at times. However, by maintaining our deep connection to God (by whatever name, whatever form, whatever religion you may be) we become able to tap into the boundless well of courage, fearlessness, steadfastness and creativity. A mobile phone, or any electronic device, loses its power and charge after some time. However, simply by plugging it back into the socket, all of the power is recharged. Similarly, when we reconnect with God it is like plugging ourselves into the Divine



Powerhouse....all of the energy and strength of the universe becomes available to us.

In this world, it is easy to lose hope, easy to lose faith, easy to look around at the desperation and to conclude that God does not exist. *However, there is a wonderful story of a man who is sitting in the barber's chair one day for a haircut. The barber begins to say, "I do not believe God exists. There is too much evil in the world, too much is negative and bad. If there were a God, then evil would not exist." The man, although a great believer, remained quiet, so as not to cause a fight with the barber who had scissors in his hand. Yet, as he walked out of the barber shop, he turned around to the barber and said, "I do not believe that barbers exist. I see all these men with long, untamed, straggly hair and unruly beards. If there were barbers, all men would be neatly groomed." The barber replied: "Of course barbers exist. I am one. However, I can only groom those who come to me. The straggly, unruly hair and beards you see are on those who have not come to me." The man looked gently at the barber and said, "Yes, it is the same with God. Evil exists because people do not go to Him. If everyone surrendered to Him there would not be evil and wrongdoing. These things stem from ignorance and illusion. When we connect with Him our ignorance and illusion are dispelled."*

However, we must realize that God will do whatever is best for us and the world, not necessarily whatever we want. If the young boy in my story at the beginning had been trying unsuccessfully to light his sandbox on fire, or to bury his younger sister in the sand, his father certainly would not have assisted in the task. So, we must realize that all which we strive for is not necessarily in our own or in the planet's best interest, and the lack of Divine assistance does not mean that God is not there or doesn't care or has abandoned us. It simply means He is giving us what we need, rather than what we think we want. It means there is a bigger picture which we are not able to see clearly. When we feel like we are rowing our boat uphill, against a raging current....when it feels that no matter how hard we row, the boat goes nowhere....when we have prayed and prayed, tried and tried, persevered and persevered all to no avail, it means that it is time to reevaluate the path and direction. Is uphill really the direction we need to go? Are we sure that this path or project or goal is truly God's will? Might there not be another direction in which we could row the boat where the current helps us rather than hinders us? Is there another path we could take which is not so completely overgrown with thorns? Mahatma Gandhiji said it beautifully, "What is the point of trying to increase our speed when we are moving in the wrong direction?"

So, in this new year, let us take a two-fold path to our spiritual development and life fulfillment. Path one is faith - let us realize that God is always there for us, always ready to remove the heavy and stuck rocks on our path. Let us never despair or become overwhelmed by frustration or tension. Let us live with the mantra which we sing every morning in our morning prayers at Parmarth Niketan, "Tu akele nahiy pyare. Rama tere saath mein." It means, "Never despair, my child. God is always with you." And secondly, let us pray not that our will may be fulfilled, but that our will may be in alignment with the divine will, that we may be able to align our lives with the flow of the universe, such that the flow of the current helps rather than hinders us. Despite the prevalence of violence, crime, illusions and ignorance in the world, the actual universal and divine flow is toward goodness, toward light, toward peace, toward equality and toward enlightenment. Hence, let us align our lives and our work with that universal, divine flow so that our lives and our work may be fulfilling, successful, peaceful and joyful.

With love and blessings to you all and all your loved ones.

In the service of God and humanity,  
**Swami Chidanand Saraswati**



# Pujya Swamiji's Itinerary

## *Pujya Swamiji's Itinerary* *March - April 2010*

### March

**1-31 Rishikesh**

### April

**1-30 Rishikesh**

*Pujya Swamiji's itinerary is always subject to change. For any itinerary questions please email to [bhagawati@parmarth.com](mailto:bhagawati@parmarth.com)*

