



Parmarth News

H.H. PUJYA SWAMI CHIDANAND SARASWATIJI

Newsletter

January, 2013



Featuring

Bio-Digester Toilet Inauguration, Diwali Celebrations, Pujya Swamiji's Travels to Japan



Life Positive Expo



From October 5-7th, the Life Positive Expo 2012 was hosted at Parmarth, presented by the Life Positive Foundation. An international festival dedicated to holistic living, participants had the opportunity to attend lectures and workshops on yoga, healing, and other methods for holistic living. Pujya Swamiji graced the inauguration of the festival.





A three-day retreat was hosted at Parmarth in the beginning of October which brought hundreds of Jain youth to the ashram and to the banks of Ganga to practice meditation and silence. The group was led by Pujya Rakeshbhai of the Shrimad Rajchandra Mission of Dharampur.



Hon'ble Minister Pritam Panwar Singh

On October 11th, the honorable Minister of Urban Development Shri Pritam Panwar Singhji came to Parmarth. Pujya Swamiji met with him and discussed the many ways that working together, the state of Uttarakhand can be developed to be a model “green” state. Many issues were discussed, and Pujya Swamiji even took Shri Singhji for a tour of the new eco-friendly, bio-digester toilets built at Parmarth.



Bio-Digester Toilet Inauguration

On the 15th October, esteemed government leaders, scientists and sevaks gathered together to officially inaugurate the new eco-friendly, bio-digester toilets built at Parmarth Niketan Ashram, Rishikesh through the cooperation and hard work of DRDO, FICCI and Ganga Action Parivar. These toilets, which provide an environmentally-friendly and sustainable solution to the major sewage crisis India is facing, are the beginning of a partnership between these three entities which will help to bring eco-friendly toilets throughout the Ganga River Basin. In the first stage alone, 5,000 toilet blocks will be built hand-in-hand along the banks of Ganga in Uttarakhand.

To dedicate this historic step towards a clean and green India, many top leaders from both the Uttarakhand state government as well as

the Central government alongside top scientists and directors, including the Hon'ble Governor of Uttarakhand Dr. Aziz Qureshiji, the Hon'ble Minister of Rural Development of UK Shri Pritam Singh, the Hon'ble Minister of Social Welfare of UK Shri Surendra Rakesh, the Hon'ble Member of Lok Sabha Shri Satpal Maharaj, the Hon'ble Union Minister of Water Shri Harish Rawat, the Senior Director of FICCI Shri Nirankar Saxena, Director of Life Sciences of DRDO Dr. Lokendra Singh, Director of DI2TM of DRDO Shri S. Radhakrishnan, Director of HR, BHEL Shri R. Krishnan, and Chief Controller R&D of DRDO Shri S. Sundaresh.

The Hon'ble Governor of Uttarakhand praised the resolve of DRDO, FICCI, GAP and the Parmarth family in its dedication to environmental protection and the betterment



Bio-Digester Toilet Inauguration



Hon'ble Governor of UK Dr. Aziz Qureshiji unveiling the plaque commemorating the first eco-friendly toilets built



Esteemed leaders gathered for the inauguration of the ground-breaking toilet initiative



Hon'ble Governor Dr. Aziz Qureshiji



Hon'ble Minister of Water Resources Shri Harish Rawatji

of India's homes, villages, towns and cities. He recognized how building toilets in public places and girls' schools will not only help the state in remaining clean but will also be a great facility for tourists and pilgrims. In addition, it will help save women's dignity and promote women's education, thus toilets are a must across villages and cities.

Pujya Swamiji spoke about how building toilets is necessary for maintaining Gangaji's purity and cleanliness, as well as protecting the health and safety of people, especially women, and that by building eco-friendly toilets within the Ganga Basin will not only help keep the environment clean, but will help our culture shine everywhere.



Sadhvi Bhagawati, Inga Canfield, Jack Canfield, Sister Joan Chittister, Silvio Daneo, Barbara Fields, Prof. Hyun-kyung Chung, and Quinttavious Williams

From October 13-18 Sadhvi Bhagawati traveled to Rome to serve as a core-group leader in the “Awakened World” conference organized by the Association for Global New Thought (*see <http://www.agnt.org/charter/leaders.html> and <http://www.agnt.org/awakened2012.html> for more details*). Leaders from many countries and religions came together to discuss four key aspects of leading the world to inner and outer awakening -- Reconciling with Each Other, Transforming Society, Embracing the Earth Family and Rediscovering the Sacred. Other leaders included: Rev. Michael Bernard Beckwith, Barbara Fields, Jim Kenny, Jack Canfield, Joan Borysenko, Rinaldo Brutuco, Sr. Joan Chittister, Ela Gandhi, Dr. A.T. Ariyaratne, Ven. Samdhong Rinpoche, Tenzin Tethong, Rev. Marcus Braybrooke, Dr. Kamran Mofid, Azim Khamisa and Yuka Saionji.



Sadhvi Bhagawati with Rev. Michael Beckwith and Inga Canfield

Pujya Swamiji was supposed to be one of the main leaders at the conference but unfortunately was unable to attend. Among the leaders present, there was great enthusiasm for the work of preserving and protecting Mother Ganga and great programs are being planned.

Hon'ble Governor of UK Dr. Aziz Qureshiji



Pujya Swamiji with Hon'ble Governor of Uttarakhand Dr. Aziz Qureshiji

On the 21st, Pujya Swamiji traveled to Dehradun for a series of meetings with top political leaders to discuss step forwards to protect and preserve Mother Ganga and the environment.

Pujya Swamiji met with Dr. Aziz Qureshiji, the Hon'ble Governor of Uttarakhand, to discuss how by everyone working together we can develop Uttarakhand in an ecologically sustainable way that benefits all, making it truly a model state. Plans are focused on bringing the bio-digester toilet technology to areas throughout Uttarakhand in the Ganga Basin, as well as developing the Char Dham, and the pilgrimage routes which lead to these holy centers, into "green" pilgrimage places.



Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Vijay Bahuguna



Later that day, Pujya Swamiji met with the honorable Chief Minister of Uttarakhand, Shri Vijay Bahugunaji. Together they discussed the positive, green future of the state of Uttarakhand, developing it in ecologically-sustainable ways that will protect Uttarakhand's cultural, social and natural heritage.

Minister of Finance Smt. Indira Hridayesh



Pujya Swamiji also met with the honorable Minister of Finance of Uttarakhand Smt. Indira Hridayesh. She was deeply impressed to learn about all the work Pujya Swamiji is doing for Mother Ganga and all the rivers of India.



Acharya Lokesh Muniji Ashram Inauguration



Smt. Sushma Swarajji cutting the inaugural ribbon alongside Puja Acharya Lokesh Muniji and Puja Swamiji



On the 24th, Pujya Swamiji graced the opening of the Acharya Lokesh Ashram and Ahimsa Wellness Centre . of Pujya Acharya Lokesh Muniji.

Many important political and interfaith religious leaders were present at the opening, including Senior BJP leader and Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Smt. Sushma Swarajji, head of the All India Imams Organization Pujya Imam Umar Ahmed Ilyasiji, Rabbi Isaac Malekar of the Judah Hyam Synagogue, New Delhi, and others.





Pujya Swamiji's 60th Jayanti Celebration



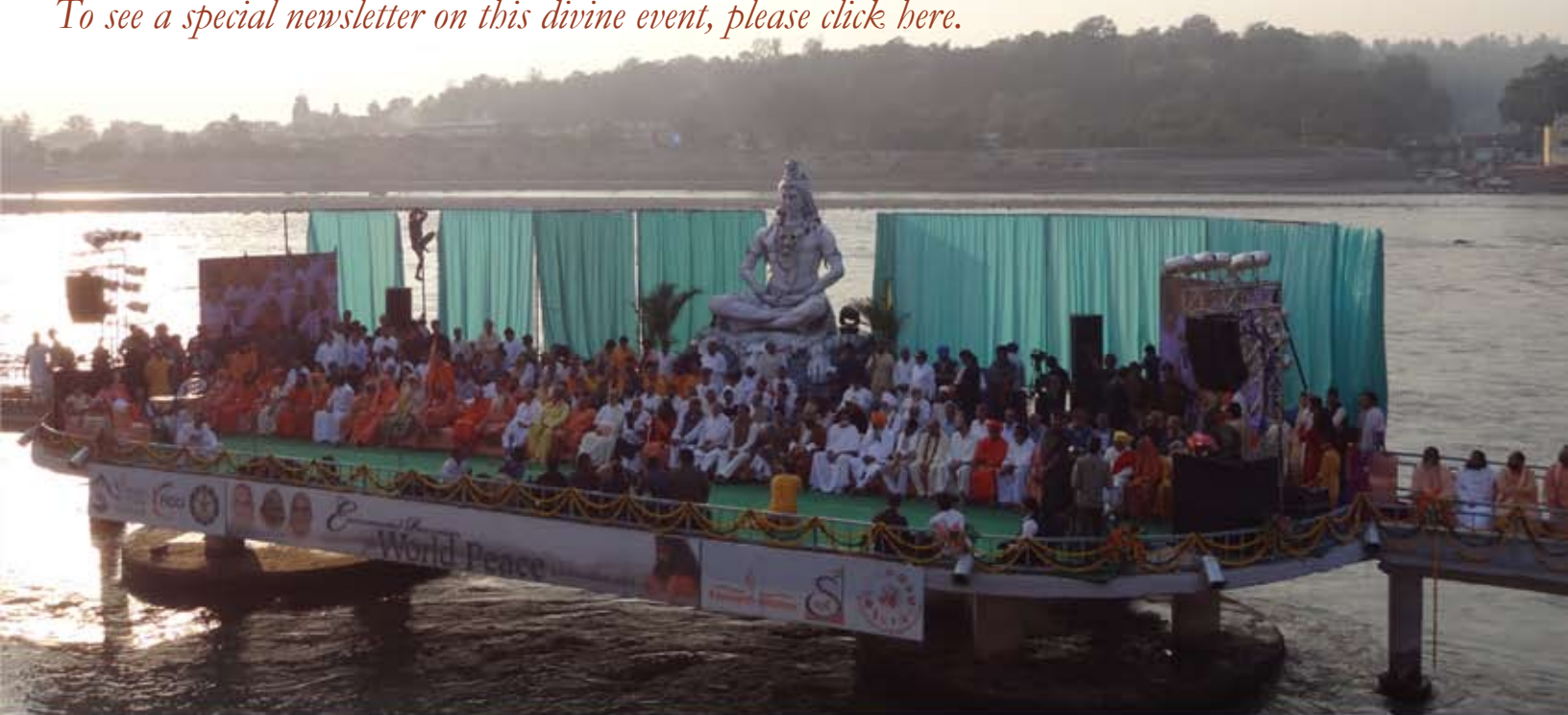
On November 3rd, 2012, Parmarth Niketan Ashram hosted a huge interfaith gathering in honor of Pujya Swamiji's 60th Janam Utsav, with the top leaders of the world's religions coming together in the name of Environmental Protection for World Peace.

There were leaders of Hinduism, Jainism, Sikhism, Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Judaism and Baha'i from India and from across the world, joining together to discuss the crucial role that religious/ spiritual leaders need to play in protecting and preserving our environment.

Revered religious/spiritual leaders, distinguished dignitaries and industrialists, politicians from both major parties and Bollywood celebrities came together, on this momentous occasion, to join hands on the banks of Mother Ganga, and pledge themselves to the cause of Environmental Protection and Preservation.

This was the largest event ever held in the Rishikesh/Haridwar area, and according to many people, it was the largest event ever held in Uttarakhand.

To see a special newsletter on this divine event, please [click here](#).



Seva & Sanskaras

Each month, numerous activities take place at Parmarth Niketan demonstrating the meaning of Parmarth: “An Abode Dedicated to the Welfare of All.” Health care camps, conferences, environmental projects and other seva activities are ongoing.

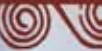
Individuals and families also regularly come to Parmarth to perform sacred rites ceremonies (sanskaras), such as mundan (first hair cut), sacred weddings, and the final ash immersion puja. To see how these events are performed at Parmarth, please *[click here](#)*.

So many people come to Parmarth to perform these sanskaras or to perform seva (selfless service) for the rishikumars of our gurukul or the wandering sadhus or the children in our free schools and other projects, it is impossible to list them all. On the following pages are some of those who have come during this recent time period.





Eye Camp



A free eye camp was held at the Parmarth hospital in early November, organized and conducted by VBA, led by Dr. Poornima Roy.



VBA and Dr. Roy organize free eye camps at Parmarth once or twice every year. This particular camp was organized in honor of Pujya Swamiji's 60th Jayanti celebrations, as He always says "serving humanity is the greatest sadhana", and "giving is living."



Diwali

Parmarth celebrated Diwali this year with a sacred abhishekham ceremony in the morning, followed by a snan in Ganga's water. In the evening, special divine havan and puja were performed along the banks of Mother Ganga, followed by a beautiful Aarti ceremony.

[Click here to read a special Diwali message from Pujya Swamiji.](#)





Annakoot Puja



The day after Diwali on the 14th, the special Annakoot puja was performed in the Parmarth temple. Each of the murtis were reclothed and offered flowers, fruits, and sweets, and a special aarti was performed in the temple by residents and pilgrims of the ashram.



Gau Puja



On the 14th a special Gau Puja was performed also to the cows and bulls of the Parmarth Gaushala. All the cows were fed treats and a special puja was performed.



Nadi Sammelan



On the 19th, Pujya Swamiji travelled to Delhi for a Nadi Sammelan (“River Conference”) organized by Tarun Bharat Sangha of Rajasthan and Rashtriya Jal Biradari as part of a River Rejuvenation Awareness campaign. The sammelan was inaugurated by the Hon’ble Minister of Water Resources Shri Harish Rawatji, Other chief guests included Jalpurush (“Waterman”) Shri Rajendra Singhji.

On this occasion the Ministry of Water Resources declared the 19th of November as the national ‘River Day’, showing their support for the NGOs and the citizens of India who are working to raise more awareness on this vital issue.

Ganga Event in Delhi



On the 21st of October, Pujya Swamiji attended a large “Save Ganga” event organized in Delhi. Many important political and interfaith spiritual leaders were present including Pujya Swami Hansdevacharyaji, Pujya Acharya Lokesh Muniji, and Justice Giridhar Malaviyaji, as well as many top scientists and experts.



DRDO Meeting

While in Delhi, Pujya Swamiji also visited the DRDO headquarters upon the request of Dr. W. Selvamurthyji, eminent scientist and Chief Controller of Research & Development, DRDO. DRDO had requested Pujya Swamiji to come and grace their place and share His blessings and inspiration.



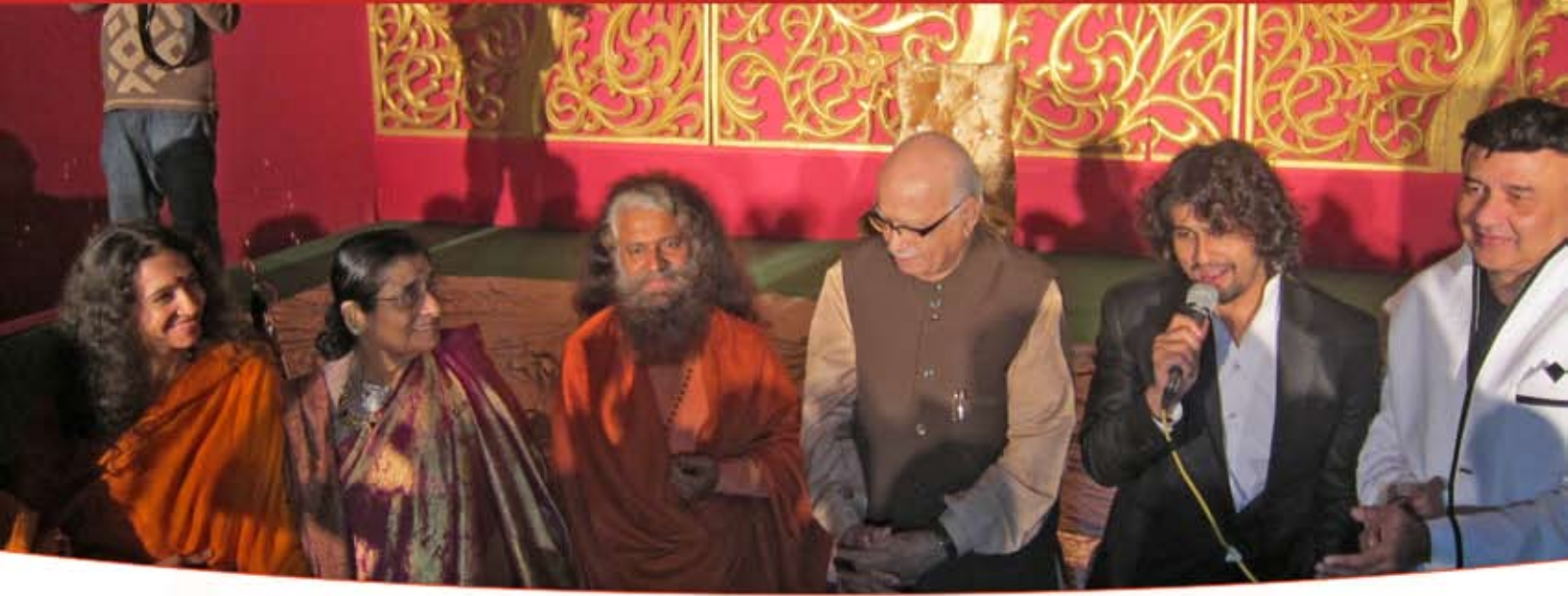
Pujya Swamiji with Dr. W. Selvamurthyji

DRDO, FICCI and Ganga Action Parivar have joined together to build eco-friendly toilets based on the DRDO-developed bio-digester technology throughout the Ganga River Basin, thus providing proper sanitation - and therefore environmental protection and health and safety of the people - where there is currently none.





Shri LK Advaniji



Pujya Swamiji also graced a special birthday event held in honor of the 85th birthday of Shri L.K. Advaniji and the 80th birthday of his beloved and respected wife Smt. Kamala Advaniji.



Pujya Swamiji blessing Shri L.K. Advaniji and Smt. Kamala Advaniji

Respected leaders of the BJP were present and as the cake was being cut, famous singer Sonu Nigam sang special happy birthday songs!





Pujya Swamiji also attended in Delhi a meeting of the Trustees of the Sarva Dharma Sansad, which included Pujya Swami Agniveshji, Father Emmanuel Dominicji, Pujya Goswami Sushilji, Padmini Kumarji, Manu Singhji, Syed Anjum Rashidji, and Sadhvi Bhagawatiji.



Green Pilgrimage Network Conference



A Green Pilgrimage Network (India) meeting was held at Parmarth from November 23rd to 24th. The meeting was hosted by the Bhumi Project, ARC and the Ganga Action Parivar. Pujya Swamiji opened the meeting of religious representatives, conservationists and civil authorities, including the mayor of Varanasi and Chairman of Rishikesh, by calling on all participants to take action to green their holy sites during times of pilgrimage.

The Green Pilgrimage Network is a network of religious leaders, administrative officials, and environmentalists working to green not only the sacred sites themselves, but also the routes to reach these temples, ashrams and other sacred places. As the Divine is everywhere, we must work not only to protect the temple in which we bow our heads to the Divine, but also work to protect all of Creation.

Waste, pollution, traffic, high energy use and large crowds of people inside nature reserves are some of the threats posed by pilgrimage areas that were addressed at the meeting. Delegates pledged to develop green pilgrimage action plans for their holy cities and towns, and Pujya Swamiji declared that Parmarth would become a model green ashram.

After the workshop, the city of Rishikesh, under the able leadership of Municipal Commissioner, Shri Deep Sharmaji, joined the eco-network. By planting a tree outside the civic centre the workshop participants along with city members declared that they committed to a cleaner and greener Rishikesh.





Japan



In December, on His return to India from USA, Pujya Swamiji stopped in Tokyo where He graced the yoga center of Hikaru Hashimoto. Hikaru is a renowned yoga teacher in Japan who combines the traditional teaching of yoga with the Japanese tradition of Shintoism, who comes annually to Parmarth's International Yoga Festival.

They also held a special celebration of Pujya Swamiji's 60th birthday (called "Kanreki" in Japanese, as seen in the banner in the photo below), and gifted Him with a traditional Japanese vest (see pictures on next page)!





1st World Parliament on Spirituality



On December 17-19, Sadhvi Bhagawati traveled to Hyderabad to speak at the 1st World Parliament on Spirituality. She gave several talks and participated in panels with Brahmakumari Shivaniji, Brandon Bays and other renowned speakers/leaders of spiritual transformation.





Global Consciousness Event



On January 2-3, Dr. Bhupendra Kumar Modi organized a two-day event dedicated to Global Consciousness, Global Dharma and the beginning of a Global Citizens Forum. Bringing together religious leaders, social leaders, national leaders, thought-leaders, and Bollywood celebrities (including Anil Kapoor and Kailash Kher) the beautiful and inspiring 2 day event took place at Buddha Mansion, New Delhi.





Global Consciousness Event



Special Announcements | Ganga Action Parivar

“Clean Ganga, Green Ganga. Serve Ganga, Save Ganga.”



Officially launched in April of 2010 by the hands of Pujya Swamiji, H.H. the Dalai Lama and numerous other saints and dignitaries, Ganga Action Parivar is a global family of professionals, environmental engineers, scientists, activists, government leaders and devoted volunteers from all across the world dedicated to serving Mother Ganga. It is a sincere effort to provide effective and sustainable solutions for the millions of people whose lives depends on the purity of the river.

GAP is working in numerous areas - from “Grand Plan” scale to “Ground Plan” scale - to address the many issues that face Ganga and her tributaries, such as creating solid waste and wastewater management programs, building toilets, planting trees, cleaning and beautifying holy pilgrimage sites, spreading awareness on how to be eco-friendly, creating alternative environmentally-friendly energy plans, and so much more. GAP’s projects have been blessed and supported by saints, scholars, yogis, economists, scientists, environmentalists and agriculturalists, among many others.

Log-on to **www.gangaaction.org** to learn more about Ganga, about the issues, and about the programs and projects GAP is working on. Interact and share your ideas, and find out how you can truly help no matter where you are in the world! Together as a family, we can restore, protect and maintain a free-flowing and unpolluted Ganga!

Special Announcements | Volunteer with us!

Parmarth Niketan is happy to announce a 3-month (minimum) residential service program for those interested in engaging themselves in seva (selfless service)!

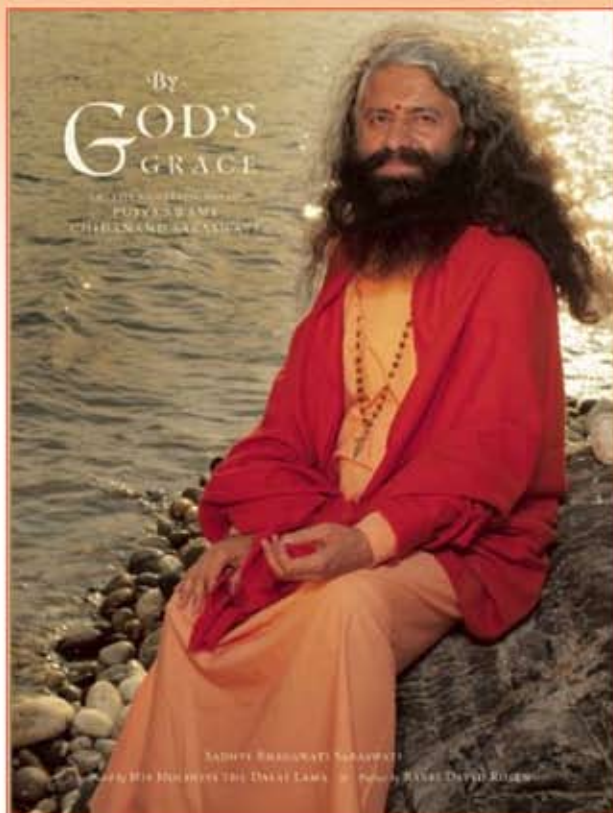
Volunteer in Parmarth and Ganga Action Parivar's numerous projects to restore and protect Ma Ganga, save the girl child, help animals, and much more. As our projects grow, so has our need for professional, inspiring, and productive volunteers who can work with us in our mission to achieve a greener, cleaner, and safer tomorrow for all humanity.

If you would like to get involved and volunteer in any one of our projects, please download our Volunteer Application Packet and send us your application.

[Click here to download the Volunteer Application Packet.](#)



Special Announcements | Release of *By God's Grace*



A gorgeous coffee table biography of Pujya Swamiji has been published entitled *By God's Grace*. Upon its release, this book held the **NUMBER ONE** position as a best-seller in Amazon.com's **Hinduism** section, out of a total of over 17,000 books!

It is a nearly 300 page coffee table book filled with exquisite photos of Ganga, the Himalayas, and all of the saints and world leaders with whom Pujya Swamiji has spent the first 60 years of His life. However, it is more than just a beautiful beautiful book. It also tells the inspiring, uplifting and transformative stories of Pujya Swamiji's whole life — from meeting His Guru at the tender age of eight, to His youth filled with intense sadhana in the Himalayan forests and jungles, including standing on one leg for 11 hours a day.

By God's Grace then goes on to beautifully describe Pujya Swamiji's arrival into Rishikesh and choice to stay there, followed by the history of His life at Parmarth Niketan, first as a young student and then as head of one of India's largest spiritual institutions. You will read about His travels around the world, touching and teaching people of all religions, all cultures and all walks of life. The book further details Pujya Swamiji's unparalleled projects and achievements

including the eleven volume Encyclopedia of Hinduism, the construction of three ashrams in the sacred land of Lake Mansarovar and Mt. Kailash in Tibet, widespread tsunami relief work and now an unprecedented project to clean, preserve and protect the 2500 kilometer divine Ganga.

Lastly, even though for those blessed to know Him, we all understand that His life is His message, the book also includes special “teaching” sections in between the chronological chapters. Each special teaching spread takes one of Pujya Swamiji's most fundamental teachings and shares it, in His own words, through His own voice, on gorgeously illustrated pages.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama has written the foreword and shares His own thoughts and experiences with Pujya Swamiji.

This book is perfect for personal reading and for gracing the top of your coffee table, and it is also the perfect gift for any friend or loved one who, whether they know Pujya Swamiji personally or not, is looking for a glimpse into the life of one of history's truest, wisest, deepest, funniest and most down-to-earth spiritual leaders.

Laugh, cry, look at yourself and your life in a brand new way.



Please visit www.bygodsgracebook.org for more information about the book and information on how to order.

Links

Please visit us on the web for videos and music from Parmarth Niketan, as well as information on upcoming programs and seva opportunities.



Links

Thanks to Eros Entertainment,
you can now watch videos of Pujya Swamiji online!
Click on the videos below to watch...



A Divine Life - Pujya Swamiji's
60th Birthday Film



Pujya Swamiji at
Shree Ram Mandir



Guru Purnima 2011



Peace Through
Nonviolence



Sadhvi Bhagawati:
Power of Thought



Power of Prayer &
Divine Connection

...and click [here](#) to see even more videos online!

