

# PARMARTH

*H.H. Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji*

SUMMER 2014 NEWS MAGAZINE



*Historic  
Presentation of the  
Encyclopedia of Hinduism to H.E.  
the President of India*

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# HISTORIC PRESENTATION OF THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF HINDUISM To H.E. President Shri Pranab Mukherjee

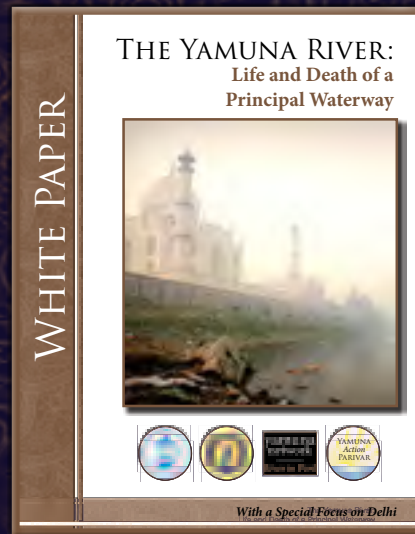
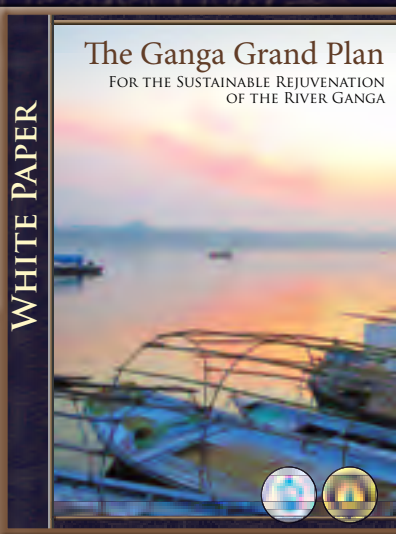


Marking a historic moment in the cultural history of India, the official presentation of the International Edition of the Encyclopedia of Hinduism by Pujya Swamiji and several revered dignitaries to the Honourable President Shri Pranab Mukherjee took place at Rashtrapati Bhavan (President House) on the 23rd June, 2014. The Encyclopedia of Hinduism is a project of India Heritage Research Foundation, founded, guided and led by Pujya Swamiji, President of Parmarth Niketan, Rishikesh. It is a colossal product of more than 1,000 esteemed scholars from around the world with over 7,000 entries, eleven-volume compendium of the depth and breadth of the Indian spiritual and cultural tradition.

To see the full newsletter and coverage of the event, [click here](#).

To watch the highlights of the event, [click here](#).

# MINISTERIAL MEETINGS FOR MOTHER GANGA



Over the summer, Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, Co-Founder of the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance and Founder of Ganga Action Parivar, had extensive and detailed meetings with Shri Nitin Gadakri, Union Minister for Drinking Water and Sanitation, Rural Development and Road Transport, Highways and Shipping, as well as Sadhvi Uma Bharti, Union Minister for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, and Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad, Union Minister of Law and Justice.

During the meetings, they discussed GAP's and GIWA's detailed White Papers regarding India's Ganga and Yamuna Rivers, which provide water to some 500 million people, as well as our White Paper on the Sustainable Redevelopment of Uttarakhand, which was co-drafted with Nobel Laureate, Dr. RK Pachauri.

**Download the White Papers. Click:**  
[www.washalliance.org](http://www.washalliance.org). or [www.gangaaction.org](http://www.gangaaction.org)



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## गंगा प्रदूषण पर गडकरी से मिले स्वामी चिदानंद



दिल्ली में गंगा की गंदगी को दूर करने के लिए स्वामी चिदानंद का गंगा नदी के किनारे पर्यावरण सचिव गडकरी से मिलना।

दिल्ली, 24 जून: गंगा नदी के प्रदूषण को रोकने के लिए स्वामी चिदानंद का गंगा नदी के किनारे पर्यावरण सचिव गडकरी से मिलना। गडकरी ने स्वामी चिदानंद को गंगा नदी के किनारे पर्यावरण सचिव के रूप में नियुक्त किया।

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# हिन्दुस्तान

आज का समाचार

हिन्दुस्तान • दिल्ली • रायचूर • 24 जून 2014 • 04



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## गंगा की निर्मलता को उमा भारती से मिले स्वामी चिदानंद

दिल्ली | दिल्ली संवाददाता

गंगा की स्वच्छता, निर्मलता एवं अधिरक्षक को पर्यावरण सचिव गडकरी से मिलने के बाद स्वामी चिदानंद का गंगा नदी के किनारे पर्यावरण सचिव के रूप में नियुक्त किया।



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अधिकेश



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## कानून मंत्री से गंगा लोकपाल लाने का आग्रह

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## गंगा किनारे आयोजित हो गंगा पार्लियामेंट : चिदानन्द

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

*- HH Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji*

**7 राज्य 13 संस्करण**

# अमर उजाला

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**अमर उजाला ऋषिकेश** वाराणसी 13 जुल 2014

## ‘तीर्थनगरी में हो गंगा पार्लियामेंट आयोजन’ गडकरी से मुलाकात में बोले स्वामी चिदानंद

ऋषिकेश (न्यूज): उत्तराखण्ड स्वामी चिदानंद मुनि ने दिल्ली में गंगा पार्लियामेंट आयोजन के शुभारंभ में भाग लिया। उन्होंने कहा कि गंगा नदी का पानी हमारे जीवन का अविभाज्य हिस्सा है। हमें इसे संभालने की ज़रूरत है।

स्वामी चिदानंद मुनि ने गंगा पार्लियामेंट के अध्यक्ष डॉ. जयशंकर प्रसाद से मुलाकात की। उन्होंने कहा कि गंगा नदी का पानी हमारे जीवन का अविभाज्य हिस्सा है। हमें इसे संभालने की ज़रूरत है।

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**अमर उजाला ऋषिकेश** वाराणसी 13 जुल 2014

## न्यूज ताज़ा

### उमा भारती से मिले चिदानंद मुनि

ऋषिकेश: उत्तराखण्ड स्वामी चिदानंद मुनि ने दिल्ली में गंगा पार्लियामेंट आयोजन के शुभारंभ में भाग लिया। उन्होंने कहा कि गंगा नदी का पानी हमारे जीवन का अविभाज्य हिस्सा है। हमें इसे संभालने की ज़रूरत है।

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**अमर उजाला ऋषिकेश** वाराणसी 13 जुल 2014

## कानून मंत्री से गंगा लोकपाल की मांग

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# *Policy Makers Join Forces for a* **HIGH-LEVEL MEETING ON GANGA**



Dignitaries including Shri Nitin Gadkari, Union Minister for Drinking Water, Rural Development, Road Transport, Highways and Shipping, Sadhvi Uma Bharti, Union Minister for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Shri Shripada Yasso Naik, Union Minister of Tourism and Culture and Shri Prakash Javadekar, Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, came together for a large-scale, inter-ministerial and multi-stakeholder meeting at the Vigyan Bhawan in Delhi.

The day-long meeting was organized by the National Mission for Clean Ganga and was attended by members of Ganga Action Parivar, the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance, as well as a large number of delegates from different parts of the country and abroad. The conference was divided into four different sessions, namely: “Ganga & Sanskriti” (for Spiritual Leaders), “Public Participation for Ganga” (for Public Representatives & Administrators), “Aviral & Nirmal Ganga” (for NGOs & Environmentalists) and “Comprehensive & Sustainable Solutions” (for Academicians & Technocrats).

Ganga Action Parivar and Global Intefaith WASH Alliance representatives brought and shared their high level White Papers, prepared under Pujya Swamiji’s leadership and guidance, for Ganga, Yamuna and a Green Uttarakhand and India. Several plans for developing the Ganga, engaging various stakeholders and preserving as well as protecting our National River were shared. As an outcome, the ministries pledged to work with the people to implement these plans and share their progress.

# HISTORIC MOU SIGNING WITH UNICEF INDIA AND GIWA



Representative of UNICEF in India, Louis-Georges Arsenault, UNICEF India WASH Director, Sue Coates and Pujya Swamiji perform a heart-felt GIWA Water Blessing Ceremony at the MoU Signing event.

India's Global Interfaith WASH Alliance (GIWA) and UNICEF India signed a historic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) this July, which was formalized by the Representative of UNICEF in India, Louis-Georges Arsenault and H.H. Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswati, Co-Founder of the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance and President of Parmarth Niketan, Rishikesh.

The agreement, which was signed at the UNICEF Country Office in New Delhi, followed the launch of GIWA on 25th September 2013, at UNICEF Headquarters in New York, under sponsorship of USAID and the Government of the Netherlands.

At the signing ceremony, H.H. Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji called for an increased focus on improving the situation of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in India.





“We have worshipped the creator for long, now it is time we take care of His creations, so that life may be improved for all” said the spiritual leader, while adding that changing mindsets is crucial if we are to address the sanitation crisis in India.

Pujya Swamiji highlighted the role of children as active agents of change. “Children are the ones who can really make the difference. They can change the views of their families and, thus, help to bring about a positive change for all,” He stated.

“Working together - in a strong partnership, we will drive positive change” pointed out Louis-Georges Arsenault, Representative of UNICEF in India.



Representative of UNICEF in India, Louis-Georges Arsenault, presents the gift of a beautiful plant to Pujya Swamiji at the MoU Signing and Water Blessing Ceremony

GIWA and UNICEF aim to engage different faiths as allies in the efforts to create a world where every human being has access to safe drinking water, improved sanitation and proper hygiene.

As a first step, GIWA India with technical support from UNICEF, plans a “Worship to WASH” summit at Parmarth Niketan, Rishikesh, later this year. The Summit will bring together India’s most eminent faith leaders to identify what each can do to accelerate the pace of change.



“Like” GIWA’s Facebook by [Clicking Here](#)

Visit GIWA’s Website. Click [www.washalliance.org](http://www.washalliance.org)



# WATER BLESSING CEREMONY AT THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

*Pujya Swamiji and political and faith leaders perform an unprecedented ceremony for WASH for all*



For the first time in British history, an interfaith Water Blessing Ceremony was performed on the lap of River Thames to give thanks for the ancient, life-giving river and to pray that all people, all over the world should have access to safe, sufficient water. The event also was organised to raise awareness of water scarcity across the globe, which has reached unprecedented dangerous levels.

When Their Royal Highnesses Prince Charles and Duchess Camilla, came to India in November 2013, they visited the Parmarth Niketan ashram in Rishikesh (Himalayas), presided over by Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji and performed this

sacred Water Blessings Ceremony on the banks of the River Ganga, offering blessings to the river which is the lifeline for more than 500 million Indians and praying for improved access to water across the world.

Organised by the Ganga Action Parivar, Gurukul Parivar and the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance, representatives of nine faiths addressed a distinguished gathering of 300 people including royalty, lords, Members of Parliament and prominent leaders, who had gathered in this historic city for a common purpose to have access to pure and fresh water globally.

The faith leaders gave inspiring, uplifting and compelling discourses on the importance of protection and preservation of water. They highlighted the fact that water is truly the giver of life, and therefore considered sacred in all the world's religious traditions.

The event was hosted by Rt. Hon. Keith Vaz, MP, and graced by the presence of the following leaders:

- **Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji** - Founder of Ganga Action Parivar, Co-founder of the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance, and President of Parmarth Niketan Ashram, Rishikesh (India)
- **Pujya Shastri Madhavpriyadas Swamiji** - Head of the Gurukul Parivar and of the Swaminarayan Gurukul, Ahmedabad & Rajkot, Gujarat
- **Reverend Rose Hudson** - Chaplain to the Speaker of the House of Commons
- **Bhai Mohinder Singh Ahluwalia** - Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha Birmingham
- **Dr. Rusi K Dalal** - Zoroastrian Leader
- **Dr. Natubhai Shah** - Jain Leader
- **Reverend Mark Poulson** - Christian Leader
- **Venerable Dr Handupelpola Mahinda Nayaka** - Buddhist Leader
- **Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati** - President of Divine Shakti Foundation
- **Smt. Kiran Bali** - Chairman of the global United Religions Initiative

Additionally, **Debbie Leach**, the head of Thames21 and **Kevin Reid**, the Environmental Representative for the London Assembly as well as numerous other dignitaries and eminent guests.

**Rt. Hon. Keith Vaz, MP**, the host for the event said, "The time for preservation of one of the most essential commodities of life is now. Pure water is the birth right of every human being. God gave water to human beings in abundance, and He provided equal accessibility of it to everyone. Today, tragically, due to so many reasons, people are being deprived of their birth right. It is wonderful that this ceremony is taking place here today, I am so glad to be part of it. The next ceremony should be all together on the banks of the Ganga in Rishikesh, India, as it is so crucial to preserve and protect that national river, and I am so glad to know that the current government in India is so committed to that work of protecting the River Ganga. I look forward to coming there and being part of that movement."

Explaining the essentials of intermingles of life and water, **Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji**, Founder of Ganga Action Parivar and Co-founder of the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance, emphasized "Water is life and therefore it is sacred. Water not only irrigates our farms but also our lives and our hearts. In our culture and religion water is considered a devta, a Divine One



(aapo devta). Therefore, wasting water or polluting water is an insult both to the Creator and also to the creation. I deeply appreciate the wonderful work done by the people and governmental organisations of Great Britain to restore the Thames river to a state of such cleanliness and health. As I perform this ceremony on the banks of the Thames I remember having TRH Prince Charles and Duchess Camilla with us in Rishikesh, India and I feel such a great connection to the people of England. I pray that we may achieve for our sacred river Ganga what you have achieved for the Thames. We pledge to work together to bring the vision of a clean and green Ganga to reality.”

**Pujya Shastri Madhavpriyadas Swamiji**, the head of Gurukul Parivar and the Swaminarayan Gurukul, Ahmedabad, shared: “Today, is the 18th of July. One plus eight (1+8) equals nine which, in our tradition, is a symbol of wholeness and completeness. We have 9 faith leaders here to perform the sacred Water Blessing Ceremony, to bless the Royal River Thames and to pray for the other rivers around the world. Water is a

symbol of life, purity and love. Launching this great campaign of work and prayers for the rivers of our world, from the House of Commons, the seat of the Mother of democracy, will certainly ensure that our message is spread worldwide. I am confident that this campaign of cleaning the rivers, recharging our water and protecting/preserving our water bodies will blossom, flourish and grow, and I am committed to serving in whatever capacity I can. By the grace of Lord Swaminarayan and with the blessings of Swami Chidanand ji, we are able to fulfill this objective today. May God grace us with strength to continue and broaden the aims of this ceremony and to perform it worldwide every year.”

**Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji**, President of Divine Shakti Foundation appealed, “Throughout history, religious leaders have implored their congregations and followers to ‘love thy neighbour’ and to refrain from acts of violence. In our world today, however, that is no longer enough. Today, here on the banks of the Thames River, our religious leaders have come



together to say that permitting our brothers and sisters across the world to suffer and perish due to lack of safe, clean, sufficient water is also violence, and it is our duty to work together to ensure access to water and sanitation for all people, of all religions and all cultures.”

**Prince Mohsin Ali Khan**, a member of the erstwhile ruling family of the princely state of Hyderabad, paid his tribute by stating, “Today we can understand that there is not a different God for different faiths but rather there is One God of all, even though the names and methods of worship may vary. Similarly, water may flow through different cities, in different countries, be used in different ways, accessed in different manners by people across the world, but water itself is the same for every society and every individual. Water, therefore, is both the symbol of life and also the symbol of unity.”

**Mr. Shashikant Vekaria**, businessman and philanthropist, inspired by the presence of the faith leaders, said, “Today even more than yesterday, as the world sees the adverse impact of the water crisis, it needs a guiding light from events like the Water Blessing Ceremony to sustain and give a purposeful direction to humanity.”

**Mr. Govind Patel**, Trustee, Gurukul Parivar, said, “I have always respected water since I was a little boy. After the series of events that took place on the bank of Ganges River last year, I thought, why not replicate something similar in the River Thames which is equally important to UK. It should be regarded in the same light as the mighty river Ganges. So why not “Bless” the River Thames as was done to the River Ganges.”



**View the Water Blessing Ceremony! [Click Here](#)**



# CLEAN-UP OF THE THAMES RIVER AND MOU SIGNING WITH THAMES-21

*Pujya Swamiji leads a coming together for two rivers*



On Friday, 18 July in Central London, the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance (GIWA) and Ganga Action Parivar (GAP) joined forces with Thames21, London's, a leading Thames waterway charity to clean up the rubbish strewn banks of the River Thames.

This unique collaboration saw Pujya Swamiji mobilising dozens of volunteers of all ages who, in searing heat, donned wellies and gloves to dig up countless discarded plastic bags and other waste that had sunk below the muddy surface at the Isle of Dogs. In the shadow of the O2 Arena Pujya Swamiji modelled yoga in action by immediately and dedicatedly giving his hands to the massive task at hand.

Pujya Swamiji has made the restoration and protection of the Ganges a major priority along with environmental projects to provide clean water, Eco-friendly toilets and tree planting for the benefit of the people and the habitats along the river. Through the work of Ganga Action Parivar (GAP) and the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance (GIWA) Pujya Swamiji's organizations are bringing clean water, toilets, sanitation, waste management programs as well as innumerable other facilities to the more than 500 million people who live on the banks of the Ganges River. Pujya Swamiji initiated this Thames clean up to raise awareness that all rivers are sacred as they bring life. "We should all work to keep our rivers clean and revere them as we revere the Ganga, for water is truly life and therefore holy," said Pujya

Swamiji as he helped the children dig into the muddy banks to retrieve some of the seemingly endless plastic bags.

At the end of the session, Pujya Swamiji, Sadhvi Bhagawatiji and Debbie Matkin, CEO of Thames21 together signed a Memorandum of Understanding of GAP, GIWA and Thames21 on the bank of the Thames committing to a future collaborative relationship that would mutually support the goals of both charities to save the Thames and Ganga. “This has been a very good day” said Debbie Matkin “ and we are looking forward to working together with GAP and GIWA to raise awareness in the community that there are plenty of opportunities for people to get involved in

preserving their rivers”.

Pujya Swamiji and Debbie Matkin also emphasised the importance of not using single use plastic bags which are an environmental disaster in both the UK and India. Pujya Swamiji has led the anti plastic bag campaign in India, resulting in many cities now banning them and Debbie is also leading the same campaign in the UK.

The Thames clean up ended with all the volunteers celebrating both the Thames and Ganga and making a commitment to continue to hold regular community clean ups on the banks of the Thames, England’s most iconic river.



*“Prayer is the broom which sweeps out  
our heart, making it clean and divine for God.”*

*- HH Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji*





# Indian saints 'bless' Thames

TWO of India's most revered saints - His Holiness (HH) Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji (HH Pujya Muniji) and Pujya Shastri Madhavpriyadas Swamiji - joined more than 300 guests at the House of Commons last week at a unique ceremony to 'bless' the Thames and raise awareness about water preservation.

HH Pujya Muniji, president of the Parmarth Niketan Ashram in Rishikesh, north India, and Pujya Shastri Madhavpriyadas Swamiji, head of the Gurukul Parivar and the Swaminarayan Gurukul in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, led a 'water blessing ceremony' at the Houses of Parliament last Friday (18). They were joined by Leicester East MP and chairman of the powerful Home Affairs Select Committee, Keith Vaz at the ceremony last Friday (18).

As well as giving thanks for the river and to pray that everyone has access to safe, sufficient water, the event was also aimed at raising awareness of water scarcity around the world.

Representatives of nine faiths joined a distinguished gathering of 300 people including royalty, peers, members of parliament and prominent community leaders at the event which was organised by the Ganga Action Parivar, Gurukul Parivar and Global Interfaith WASH Alliance.

MP Vaz, the host for the event said, 'Pure water is the



*Unique ceremony: HH Pujya Muniji, Keith Vaz, MP and Pujya Shastri Swami Madhavpriyadasji join other faith leaders at the House of Commons in London last Friday (July 18) and (below) HH Pujya Muniji and Sadhvi Bhagawatiji visited the Shree Jalaram Mandir Greenford in west London last Saturday (18). Devotees at the temple, which was packed to capacity, met and heard from HH Pujya Muniji who gave a short speech and recited the Hanuman chalisa. There was a kirtan, followed by aarti.*



birth right of every human being. Today, tragically, due to so many reasons, people are being deprived of their birth right.

'The next ceremony should be all together on the banks of

the Ganga in Rishikesh, India, as it is so crucial to preserve and protect that national river, and I am so glad to know that the current government in India is so committed to that work of

protecting the River Ganga. I look forward to coming there and being part of that movement.'

In his remarks, HH Pujya Muniji, founder of the Ganga Action Parivar and co-founder of the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance, said: 'In our culture and religion, water is considered a devta, a Divine One (aapo devta). Therefore, wasting water or polluting water is an insult both to the Creator and also to the creation.

'I deeply appreciate the wonderful work done by the people and governmental organisations of Great Britain to restore the Thames river to a state of such cleanliness and health. As I perform this ceremony on the banks of the Thames I remember having Their Royal Highnesses Prince Charles and the Duchess of Cornwall with us in Rishikesh, India and I feel such a great connection to the people of England.

'I pray that we may achieve for our sacred river Ganga what you have achieved for the Thames. We pledge to work together to bring the vision of a clean and green Ganga to reality.'

Among those present at the event were Reverend Rose Hudson, chaplain to the speaker of the House of Commons; Bhai Mohinder Singh Ahluwalia of the Guru Nanak Nishkam Sewak Jatha Birmingham; Zoroastrian leader Dr Rusi K Dalal; Jain leader Dr Natubhai Shah; Reverend Mark Poulson; Dr Handupelpola Mahinda Nayaka, a Buddhist leader and Kiran Bali, chairman of the global United Religions Initiative; Debbie Leach, the head of Thames21 and Kevin Reid, the Environmental Representative for the London Assembly and Bharat Shah, founder of Sigma Pharmaceuticals.

Pujya Shastri Madhavpriyadas Swamiji explained the significance of the date to the audience. He said: 'Today, is the 18th of July. One plus eight (1+8) equals nine which, in our tradition, is a symbol of wholeness and completeness. We have nine faith leaders here to perform the sacred Water Blessing Ceremony, to bless the River Thames and to pray for the other rivers around the world.'

He added: 'Launching this campaign of work and prayers for the rivers of our world from the House of Commons will certainly ensure that our message is spread worldwide.

## Volunteers help river clean-up

IT WAS one of the hottest days of the year but the heat did little to deter dozens of volunteers who joined a revered Indian saint as he launched an initiative to clean rubbish along the Thames in London.

His Holiness (HH) Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji (HH Pujya Muniji) is the president of Parmarth Niketan Ashram, Rishikesh (India) as well as the founder of the Ganga Action Parivar in India and a co-founder of the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance. The clean-up last Friday (18) was a joint initiative of the Ganga Action Parivar (GAP) and Thames21, a charitable organisation.

Led by HH Pujya Muniji, volunteers in wellies and gloves dug up countless discarded plastic bags and other waste that had sunk below the muddy surface at the Isle of Dogs in east London.

'We should all work to keep our rivers clean and revere them as we



*Collaboration: HH Pujya Muniji led the campaign at the Isle of Dogs in east London, along with Thames21, a charity*

revere the Ganga, for water is truly life and therefore holy,' said HH Pujya Muniji.

At the end of the session, Pujya Swamiji and Debbie Matkin, CEO of Thames21, both signed an agreement on the bank of the river committing to a collaborative relationship that would mutually support the goals of both charities to save the Thames and Ganga.

'This has been a very good day,' said Matkin, adding, 'we are looking forward to working together with

GAP and GIWA to raise awareness in the community that there are plenty of opportunities for people to get involved in preserving their rivers.'

HH Pujya Muniji and Matkin also stressed the importance of not using single-use plastic bags which pose an environmental threat in both the UK and India. He has led an anti-plastic bag campaign in India, resulting in many cities now banning them. Matkin is leading a similar drive in the UK.



## Saint leads volunteers in river cleaning exercise

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INSPIRATION: HH Pujya Muniji (centre) and volunteers at the Isle of Dogs



# Thames 'blessed' in faith ceremony

## WATER AWARENESS PLAN LAUNCHED IN COMMONS

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As well as giving thanks for the river and to pray for universal access to safe, sufficient water, the event was also aimed at raising awareness of water scarcity around the world.

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Vaz, who hosted the event, said, "Pure water is the birthright of every human being. Today, tragically, due to so many reasons, people are being deprived of their birthright."

"The next ceremony should be all together on the banks of the Ganga in Rishikesh, India, as it is so crucial to preserve and protect that national river. I am so glad to know that the government in India is so committed to that work of protecting the Ganga. I look forward to coming there and being part of that movement."

In his remarks, HH Pujya Muniji, founder of the Ganga Action Parivar and co-founder of the Global



His Holiness Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji (HH Pujya Muniji) and Sadhvi Bhagawati (centre, back row) visited the Shree Jalaram Mandir Greenford in west London last Saturday (18). Devotees packed the temple to meet and hear from HH Pujya Muniji (left, back row) who gave a short speech and recited the Hanuman Chalisa. There was a kirtan, followed by aarti.

Interfaith WASH Alliance, said: "In our culture and religion, water is considered a *devta*, a Divine One (*aapo devta*). Therefore, wasting or polluting water is an insult both to the Creator and to creation.

"I appreciate the wonderful work done by the people and government organisations of Great Britain to restore the Thames to a state of such cleanliness and health. As I perform this ceremony on the banks of the Thames, I remember having Prince Charles and the Duchess of Cornwall with us in Rishikesh. I feel such a great connection to the people of England.

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Ganga what you have achieved for the Thames. We pledge to work together to bring the vision of a clean and green Ganga to reality."

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Read More Articles at [www.gangaaction.org](http://www.gangaaction.org)

# PUJYA SWAMIJI AND SADHVI BHAGAWATIJI GRACE THE BERLIN YOGA FESTIVAL



Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji and Sadhvi Bhagawati Sarawatiji were chief guests for the opening keynote lectures at the 10th annual Berlin Yoga Festival, celebrated and hosted by Lernen in Bewegung e.V. at Cultural Park Kladow of Berlin, Germany from July 4th - 6th, bringing together more than 5,000 yoga seekers. Pujya Swamiji and Sadhvi Bhagawatiiji gave a special satsang, shared discourses and hosted question and answer sessions on living yoga, both on and off the mat. They are deeply committed to spreading the message and practice of living yoga in every day and every moment of life and being in peace and harmony with the Divine.

In honor of this great event, two of Pujya Swamiji's books - Peace and Drops of Nectar - were translated lovingly into German by three of His German devotees and yoga teachers, Ivana Ostrowski, Barbara Julia Dybe and Gabriela Bozic. These books were released at the Berlin Yoga Festival and provided for free to all of the participants at the festival. Download the books at ([http://parmarth.com/ps\\_updates.php](http://parmarth.com/ps_updates.php))

Pujya Swamiji and Sadhvi Bhagawatiiji invited all the participants to come and join at the upcoming International



Yoga Festival at Parmarth in 1-7th March, 2015. Many of them have made plans to attend.

The annual International Yoga Festival (IYF) at Parmarth Niketan (Rishikesh) every year during the first week of March has attracted and inspired the international community worldwide. Since its humble beginnings in 1999, the IYF has grown into an annual celebrations attended by hundreds of people from more than 50 countries, drawing together some of the greatest and most devoted instructors and yogis from every corner of the world. The light and love of this special Yoga celebration held in the lap of the Himalayas on the holy banks of Mother Ganga, with the blessings of Pujya Swamiji and the leadership of Sadhvi Bhagawatiji, has inspired people all over the world.



In addition to celebrating yoga in all forms at the Berlin Yoga Festival, Pujya Swamiji led a very special Ganga Aarti ceremony on the banks of the Havel River with all the participants of the Festival. Surrounded by the sounds of Parmarth Ganga Aarti, all the participants worshiped with beautiful lamps and aarti thalis. Pujya Swamiji has been the inspiration behind Ganga Aartis ceremony across India and around the world. ([http://parmarth.com/lap\\_aarti.php](http://parmarth.com/lap_aarti.php))

Following the Aarti, Sadhvi Bhagawatiji led a pledge for all the people to protect and preserve their water bodies wherever they live, and to help serve for Mother Ganga whenever their schedules permit for them to come to India. They pledged to come together and work for these and all rivers worldwide.



The French Emperor Napoleon is said to have called the Danube River the Queen of Europe and a lifeline for Germany. Similarly to the Ganga, the Danube River has been facing the same problems of lessened flow and increased pollution. Today, 19 countries are working together to save and protect the Danube River. Due to the treaty between 14 countries, the pollution has been significantly lessened. The Havel River, where Pujya Swamiji led the aarti, merges into the Danube much like the Yamuna flows into Mother Ganga. Following the model that saved the Danube River, people from all over India should come together in an agreement to work for a clean Ganga.



[“Like” the International Yoga Festival On Facebook! Click Here](#)

[Join us today for next year’s International Yoga Festival. Click: www.internationalyogafestival.com](http://www.internationalyogafestival.com)

# GURU PURNIMA

## *A Celebration Across Continents*

A grand and beautiful Guru Purnima function was held in London on the 13th July, with the theme of "Living in the Light." The function began with a beautiful show by the young children, speaking on all the ways that Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswati has touched, taught and transformed their lives and the lives of so many.

Pujya Sadhvi Bhagawatiiji shared about the meaning and significance of the Guru. She explained that the light of the Guru was ever-flowing and unconditional and that we merely needed to be open and receptive to capture and connect to the grace.

Pujya Swamiji gave a deeply inspiring speech and shared how deeply touched He had been with the devotion and dedication of all the little children. He



explained the role of the Guru in His own life and shared several ways in which one could remain connected with the grace of the Guru, especially through daily multi-vitamins of meditation, no reaction and introspection.

The prasad (blessed gift) from the occasion were seeds of tulsi (holy basil), coriander and chili that devotees could plant in their own homes. It was also a beautiful symbol of the green teachings of Pujya Swamiji which each one could simply incorporate into our daily lives. It also represented the channeling of the unconditional love and care of the Guru to make each moment of our lives greener, bringing life and light to our hearts, our homes and our communities.



**Please be sure to watch the beautiful video from Pujya Swamiji's divine Guru Purnima Event.**

**[Click Here.](#)**





Just after the Guru Purnima program in London, Pujya Swamiji flew immediately back to India and was able to be at Parmarth in Rishikesh for the puja and bhandara in honor of Pujya Swami Shukdevanandji Maharaj. This beautiful annual celebration of Guru Purnima began in Rishikesh with sacred aarti, bhajan and kirtan, blessed by Pujya M.M. Swami Asanganandji. Rishikumars (students of Parmarth Gurukul) along with members of the Parmarth family joined for the sacred week-long Ramacharitmanas path, in honor of Brahmleen Pujya Swami Shukdevanandji Maharaj, the founder of Parmarth Niketan, and bathed in the grace and the light of their Guru on the holy banks of Mother Ganga.





## *A Heavenly Retreat*

# MEDITATION IN THE SWISS ALPS



Pujya Swamiji and Sadhvi Bhagawatiji led a retreat in the Swiss Alps, in a beautiful location called Waldhaus Sils, near St. Moritz. The retreat was organized by divine soul, Lily Bafandi, and devotees came from Switzerland, London, Portugal and other parts of Europe as well as from the USA for three days of satsang, discourses, meditation, question-answer and silent meditative mantra walks in the Alps.

The theme of the retreat was “Come to Nature, Be with Nature, Change your Nature” and focused on ways to truly see why we act the way we do and how to change our detrimental, negative habits into lives of true awareness, mindfulness and positivity. Pujya Swamiji referred to the area as the Swiss Gangotri and He made plans for bringing the same level of sustainable protection and development to the Himalayas of Uttarakhand, India.



# RAISING CONSCIOUSNESS IN BEAUTIFUL LONDON



Sadhvi Bhagawatiji gave a talk in London City entitled 'Spirituality for Success' to an audience of business leaders and professionals at the Hub Westminster in Central London. The event was organised by Conscious Lab, an organisation for working to raise consciousness in business.

In a discourse for a wide range of city professionals, entrepreneurs and business leaders, Sadhvi explained how conscious awareness of our true selves can bring about real success in both our personal and business lives. She explained how ancient eternal spiritual principles can be integrated into our modern and complex lives and how aligning ourselves with these principles would bring about greater success both within and without ourselves.

The event ended with a guided meditation and a Q&A session which reflected how engaged the audience was. Claudia Roth, a co-founder of Conscious Lab said the event was, "truly inspiring," and she is organising the first retreat for British and European business leaders to Parmarth Niketan next spring.

## Teachings at Schumacher College

Sadhvi Bhagawatiji next traveled to Schumacher College in Cornwall, Britain to teach for two days at the College's course on the "Earth Pilgrim." Founded by renowned environmentalist, author, and peace activist, Dr. Satish Kumar, Schumacher College offers accredited advanced degrees in programs bridging ecology and spirituality. Sadhvi taught about the true meaning of pilgrimage and what it means to be a "pilgrim" on Earth. She and Satishji also led a special yagna/fire ceremony with sacred chanting and a meditation about letting go and releasing all the negative energy.



See Sadhvi's Conscious Lab  
Speech. [Click Here](#)

# TWO KATHAS FOR KEDARNATH

## *A Sacred Week in Memory of Those Who Lost their Lives in Last Year's Flooding Disaster*



Two special kathas were held in memory of those who lost their lives during last year's devastating floods in Uttarakhand, and in honour of their families who struggle to rebuild their lives from the tragic loss. It was Pujya Swamiji's inspiring vision that the kathas would be both a sacred occasion to bathe in the divine stories of the Creator as well as an opportunity to honour the divine Creation, filling the listeners with renewed peace and hope.

One katha was delivered in Augustmuni, Rudraparayang, near the center of last year's disaster, by Respected Acharya Vishnu Prasad Mamgaiji and the other was delivered at Parmarth Niketan (Rishikesh) by Respected Sarasji Maharaj. During both of the week-long kathas, Pujya Swamiji reminded and encouraged everyone to take the message of the katha within and to pledge

themselves to bring about a green vision in their own lives. He inspired everyone to not only nurture the roots of devotion within their hearts, but to also pledge to nurture and tenaciously protect the sacred soil of Uttarakhand by planting more trees.

On the one year anniversary of the disaster and throughout the duration of the kathas, many of the plans and activities being led and inspired by Pujya Swamiji through Ganga Action Parivar, Divine Shakti Foundation and Global Interfaith WASH Alliance were unveiled. Some of these projects include:

- Kedarnath and Uttarakashi Smriti Van: International Memorial Gardens- Planting thousands of indigenous trees as a symbol of the resilient spirit of the innocent lives lost.



- Sustainable Livelihoods: from handicrafts to organic farming in order to empower and reignite the spirit of entrepreneurship in the hearts and minds of the Himalayan people, especially the youth. Three livelihoods centers -- at Triyugarayan, Guptakashi and Rudraprayag -- will be opened in the first phase.
- A New Beginning and Divine Union: sponsorship of sacred marriage ceremonies for the widows who lost their husbands at a very young age.
- School Rehabilitation and Reconstruction: Plans are already underway for two schools in Uttarakashi and Guptakashi as well as to incorporate green technologies and programmes into every school in Uttarakhand so that children are proud of their traditional heritage, equipped with the basic necessities and green values to lead

their future as green ambassadors of change.

- Biosand Filter and Clean Water For All: providing every gram panchayat and school with clean water to drink
- Mid-Day Fruit Programme: planting fruit trees in every school so children are nourished and nurtured into strong and thriving adults

To learn more about our efforts to bring relief and rehabilitation to those affected by the Uttarakhand floods, click: [www.gangaaction.org](http://www.gangaaction.org), [www.divineshaktifoundation.org](http://www.divineshaktifoundation.org), [www.washalliance.org](http://www.washalliance.org) and [www.projecthope-india.org](http://www.projecthope-india.org).

# HOLY UNIONS

*To celebrate a blessed golden wedding anniversary, a mass wedding for the poor is held and blessed by the saints*



Pujya Swamiji blessed the Golden Wedding Anniversary of Shri RS Goenkaji and Shri Saroj Goenkaji with a green message. He lauded the Emami Foundation's great efforts to serve humanity, including their tireless support to provide access to water, sanitation and hygiene to the less advantaged.

The event, which was also graced by Pujya Sri Sri Raghaveshwara Bharathiji, included a beautiful community wedding ceremony that brought together 65 couples from poor families who would otherwise not have been able to afford a proper wedding. Such community weddings not only help families enjoy the festivities of a traditional marriage, but also are eco-friendly and green solutions that preserve resources by combining the many into one.



# A BEAUTIFUL BEGINNING

*Trees planted for a beautiful, green future:  
My Tree Programme Launched.*



The start of the monsoons began another green year filled with inspiring and supporting schools to organize tree plantations in their premises. The Divine Shakti Foundation and Ganga Action Parivar work with each school to encourage the students to understand that tree plantation and care is the single most powerful act we can all engage in to abate climate change, purify our air, protect Mother Ganga and safeguard against soil erosion of our fertile and precious land.

This year the efforts were linked to GAP's Mid Day Fruit Programme that seeks to not only provide the above benefits of trees but also to nourish children with nutrients needed to stay health and thrive, often





which they are deprived of simply because their families cannot afford it.

Just as the tree is nurtured by the students on school grounds, they learn valuable lessons about the wonders of nature. Later, they will experience the joys of harvesting their own fruits, which they can enjoy fresh from the tree. In addition, their mothers will be empowered to add to their household incomes through the creation of Women's Empowerment Cooperatives, which will enable them to produce, package and market wonderful products

This year, the Divine Shakti Foundation and GAP planted more than 2000 trees in 25 schools, and will continue plantation until September. GAP and DSF continue to inspire everyone that comes to the banks of Mother Ganga to plant a tree in memory of their green pilgrimage. Works to start a Rudraksh Van (Forest of sacred Rudraksh trees) in Uttarakashi are also underway, as well as for the beautification and greening of the Rishikesh Train station in August.

*To learn more about this programme, click:*  
[www.divineshaktifoundation.org](http://www.divineshaktifoundation.org) or  
[www.gangaaction.org/actions/mytree/](http://www.gangaaction.org/actions/mytree/)





# THE JOYS OF YOGA AND VOLUNTEERING AT PARMARTH NIKETAN



Yoga at Parmarth Niketan Ashram is holistic, spiritually oriented and focused on the deep and sublime traditional ancient yogic discipline as taught by the rishis and sages.

The Yoga programme at Parmarth attracts people from all parts of the world to come and explore this ancient and authentic art. Students are reminded that mastery of yoga is attained with devotion, patience and sincere, uninterrupted and regular practice.

Each month numerous courses, ranging from Beginner to Instructor Courses as well as Spiritual Retreats, are humbly offered here on the banks of Mother Ganga in the sacred land of Rishikesh. This monsoon over 50 students were touched from over 15 different countries. Within just days, students felt healthier, stronger and more confident to commit to the yogic way of life and practice Yoga both on and off the mat.

**To see our upcoming Yoga Courses, [click here.](#)**

## **Volunteering at Parmarth Niketan**

Living a life dedicated to the welfare of all, Pujya Swamiji's divine example inspires people from all over the world to volunteer with their time, talent, technology and tenacity to serve His numerous inspired initiatives, ranging from healthcare to education, from ecological preservation to disaster rehabilitation.

This season, **Ms. Susan Blew** inspired three bright students, **Ms. Emiley Brande**, **Ms. Jessica Oakley**, and **Ms. Marta Schneider**, from Knox University, Galesburg, Illinois, to volunteer at Parmarth Niketan (Rishikesh), as part of the first year of our summer internship programme. We were also joined by **Ms. Smita Balani**, an advertising executive from Bombay who brightened the office with her charisma and drive, **Mr. Adam McDonald**, an architect from California who dedicated his time and technical expertise to the service of others, **Ms. Natalie Chetveryk**, a brilliant economist from Ukraine who worked lovingly on several GIWA projects, **Ms. Daisy Cross**, an ecologist from Australia with a contagious drive for making the world brighter,



as well as **Mr. Amal Chabra**, freshman student at the University of North Carolina, and **Ms. Kaavisha Prajapati**, a high school student from California.

Volunteers shared that their time here is not just a normal internship but rather a spiritually refreshing and cultural rich experience in which they leave with a deep sense of connection and understanding for India, its people, its cultural traditional heritage and its sacred rivers, such as Mother Ganga. They also leave with a unforgettable memory of their journey as well as an eagerness to come back to their Himalayan home.



# HOPE AND HEALING

*Regular Medical Camps Offer Loving Care to People in Need*

Project Give Back and the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance continued serving under-served and needy populations in the slums of Rishikesh and other impoverished areas with our dedicated team of doctors and volunteers. In many of these places, children had not been to a hospital in years and were suffering from malnutrition and other maladies. Nutritional supplements, water purification tablets, health and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) education was provided along with basic care. The devoted medical and educational team promised to continue their rotations and to do follow-ups in the locations that they were serving each month.



OUR HEART-FELT THANKS TO  
DR. INDER & SEEMA SINGHAL  
OF LOUISVILLE, USA  
*for their great generosity in  
sponsoring these free medical camps.*



MAKE A LASTING  
DIFFERENCE

*If you are a healthcare professional,  
the people of the sacred Himalayas  
need you! To volunteer, email  
[ganga@gangaaction.org](mailto:ganga@gangaaction.org).*

# POETIC ADORATION

*Over 400 Poets Express their Love for Mother Ganga at a Very Special Parmarth Niketan Event*



Nearly 425 poets of the Rashtriya Kavi Sangam (National Poets Confluence) from over 20 states of India came together on the banks of Mother Ganga at Parmarth Niketan (Rishikesh) for a very special gathering dedicated to preserving and protecting Mother Ganga, which is not only a lifeline to 500 million people but also a vital source of inspiration for billions. Many of the poets dedicated their poetry and prose to the critical need for conserving the actual river body as the key to protecting the sacred culture and heritage of India. They emphasized that in the form of a flowing river Ganga represents the very soul and identity of India. They pledged their Poets Social Responsibility to utilizing their time, talent and tenacity to raise awareness and prevent pollution and degradation of Mother Ganga. Women poets and young poets were especially honoured on the occasion for their great dedication and role to this green change.

They also shared their inspiring words on safeguarding our sacred sites of pilgrimage, like Rishikesh and the entire Himalayan state, as a precious national heritage.

On the occasion Shri Jagdish Mittal, Chairman of Rashtriya Kavi Sammelan, expressed his deepest gratitude and commitment to the work that was being led by Pujya Swamiji for protecting Mother Ganga as well as the Himalayas.



# HOLY TEMPLE INAUGURATION

*Saints gather for the stone laying of a beautiful new temple for Lord Shiva*



Pujya Swamiji graced and blessed the foundation stone laying ceremony of a grand Shiva Dham being planned in Saharanpur by the family of Shri Ajay Gupta, eminent businessmen and owners of Sahara Corp from South Africa. The temple was being planned in their hometown in memory of their father, Late Shri Shiv Kumar Guptaji.

During His inspiring speech, Pujya Swamiji invited the family to come home to Mother Ganga for sacred Ganga Aarti the next evening. During the special Ganga Aarti ceremony, Pujya Swamiji lauded the unity and values of the family that had united them even amidst their great material prosperity and progress. He also encouraged them that alongside the beautiful temple planned in Saharanpur, there was a great need to restore the Kedarnath Dham in Uttarakhand and to honour Lord Shiva with a green temple. They pledged to support the noble initiative and to plant and create a green forest in Kedarnath in honour of last year's floods and also to protect the spiritual and cultural heritage that their father had believed so strongly in.

Afterwards, Pujya Swamiji inspired the respected Gupta family to plant Rudraksh and Bhel trees all around the new temple in Saharanpur and develop it as a green mandir and a green pilgrimage place.



# UNITED RELIGIONS INITIATIVE GLOBAL COUNCIL MEETINGS

*The World's Largest Interfaith Organization Comes Together*



Kiran Bali, URI Global Council Chair, The Most Rev. John Baptist Odama, Catholic Archbishop of Gulu, Uganda and Swamini Adityananda take inspiration from the Pacific Ocean for WASH for all

United Religions Initiative (URI), the world's largest interfaith organization, with presence in some 83 nations, held an inspirational Global Council meeting in San Francisco, USA this June. Attending were URI Trustees from around the world, who shared fascinating inputs about the state of interfaith relations in their nations, whilst they also worked diligently to formulate plans and programmes for URI's years ahead. During the meeting, Swamini Adityananda was formally inducted as a Trustee. "It is an honour and blessing," she said. "The work URI is doing to create a better world through mutual understanding and interfaith togetherness is crucially important for our beautiful world."





# IN LOVING MEMORY

*A heart-felt immersion of ashes in Mother Ganga*



A loving Aasti Visarajan ceremony took place at Parmarth Niketan in honour of Shri Naranjibhai Patel. Pujya Swamiji blessed his family from San Jose, California who had come to perform the sacred puja on the holy banks of Mother Ganga. Naranjibhai was a great, dedicated, committed leader in the Hindu and Indian community of California and particularly of the Sunnyvale Temple, for which he had just procured new, divine murtis from India.

Pujya Swamiji honoured the spirit of Shri Naranjibhai as one that was and is always with his family and just like Mother Ganga, continues to connect them to their Indian roots. In his memory, the family also hosted a special bhandara (sacred feast).



# SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS



# HOPE IS IN YOUR HANDS

*Sign the Petition for the  
National Ganga River Rights Act Today!*



Shri Anna Hazare and Muslim leaders stand with Pujya Swamiji to declare, "Ganga's Rights are Our Rights."



The National Ganga Rights Act draft brought proudly by Pujya Swamiji, then Governor HE Shri B.L. Joshi of Uttar Pradesh and the Honourable CM of Uttarakhand, Shri Harish Rawat

Founded by **Pujya Swamiji**, the National Ganga River Rights Movement is a coalition of concerned citizens and organizations that are taking a stand on behalf of the Ganga River and its tributaries—while there is still time.

For far too long, people have said there is nothing that can be done. But all the while, the water that nourishes us has become so polluted that it has become a hot-spot for cancers and other deadly diseases, such as typhoid and cholera. The beautiful river that has inspired poets and sages has sadly become one of the most endangered rivers in the world.

As a coalition, we bring a new and strong voice. Together, we stand for the National Ganga River Rights Act, which will help protect Mother Ganga and the 500 million people who rely on Her for life itself.

**Mother Ganga Needs You. Sign the petition for the National Ganga Rights at [www.gangarights.org](http://www.gangarights.org), and help ensure Her clean and green future.**



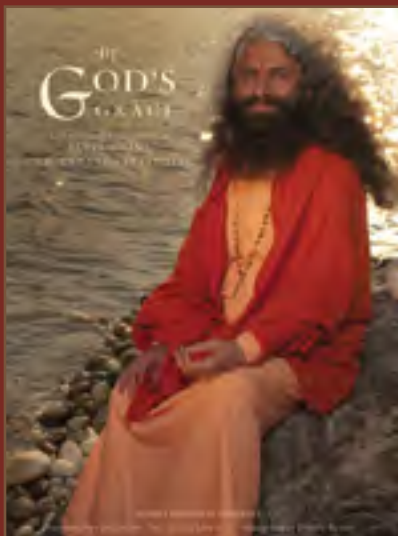
Emraan Hashmi, Huma Qureshi and Ekta Kapoor say "Ganga's Rights are Our Rights!"



The cast of C.I.D. stands for Ganga's Rights

# BY GOD'S GRACE

## *The Life & Teachings of Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswati*



In this compelling biography, **Pujya Swamiji's** divine life is beautifully detailed chronologically. Upon its release, this book held the **NUMBER ONE** position as the best-seller in Amazon.com's Hindusim section, out of a total of over 17,000 books!

Illustrated with exquisite photos of Ganga, the Himalayas, and all of the saints and world leaders with who Pujya Swamiji has spent the first 60 years of His life, it 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 of 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.

Pujya Swamiji's very life is His message; the book also includes special "teaching" sections. 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.

Published by Mandala Earth Publications of California, USA, 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.

For more information including ordering information for this beautiful book, please click: [www.bygodsgracebook.org](http://www.bygodsgracebook.org).



# VOLUNTEER WITH US

*Join hands in a global interfaith mission of peace*



We are always looking for caring, hard-working volunteers to join us here at Parmarth Niketan, Rishikesh.

As our projects grow, so has our need for professional, inspiring, and productive individuals who wish to dedicate their time, talent, technology and tenacity for 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 application.



# VISIT US ONLINE



## VISIT OUR WEBSITES BY CLICKING:

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[WWW.GANGAACTION.ORG](http://WWW.GANGAACTION.ORG) (GANGA ACTION PARIVAR)  
[WWW.WASHALLIANCE.ORG](http://WWW.WASHALLIANCE.ORG) (GLOBAL INTERFAITH WASH ALLIANCE)  
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