On the Auspicious Occasion of

Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswati Ji's

60th Jayanti
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.
The festivities began on the 1st November with a 3-day Mahayagna on the banks of Mother Ganga, for world peace and environmental protection.
On the evening of the 1st we had a beautiful Kavi Sammelan (divine poetry reading) as well as the release of Indra Prasad Akelaji’s book “Ganga Ma ki Pukar.”

Sivamani playing during the Ganga Aarti
On November 2nd, the sacred yagnas for world peace and environmental protection continued for the second day in the morning and the afternoon.
In the evening, at the time of divine Ganga Aarti we had the darshan and words of revered saints and spiritual masters, special prayers by Buddhist monks from Dharamsala, an amazing yogasana demonstration, as well as an incredibly beautiful drumming concert by world famous Sivamani, a beautiful devotee of Pujya Swamiji’s who filled the atmosphere with joy and soul-touching music.
November 2nd - Sivamani Concert
The morning of November 3rd began with the purnahuti (final offering) of the Mahayagna in 60 kunds and the divine words of many of the saints who attended. From left to right: Shri K.K. Pittieji, Sivamani, Pujiya Bhaishri, Pujiya Swamiji, Maulana Imam Ilyasiji, Shri A.K. Merchant, Pujiya Swami Agniveshji, Pujiya Goswami Sushilji, Pujiya Acharya Lokesh Muniji, and other saints and devotees, performing the purnahuti of the 3-day Mahayagna.

The morning of November 3rd began with the purnahuti (final offering) of the Mahayagna in 60 kunds and the divine words of many of the saints who attended.
Mahayagnas
After the purnahuti, Pujya Rameshbhai Ozaji (Pujya Bhaishri) and Pujya Madhavpriyadasji bathed Pujya Swamiji with the sacred milk and Ganga water from the sacred yagnas, after which they all had a sacred snan in Mother Ganga to the sound of Vedic mantra chanting.
Then, the main event began 4:00 pm with the national and international leaders of all major religions as well as esteemed political leaders of both the BJP and Congress parties, renowned dignitaries and Bollywood stars coming together in the name of Environmental Protection for World Peace. Great emphasis was placed by all speakers on the crucial need today for all leaders to join together -- breaking barriers of religion, race and politics -- to save Mother Earth. A special emphasis was placed on the dire need to join hands for the protection and preservation of Mother Ganga.

Everyone deeply and sincerely appreciated Pujya Swamiji for His lifetime of work for the poor and the needy and now for His tireless and huge-scale programs to protect Mother Ganga. Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswati was the first one to build ashrams in the holy land of Mansarovar and Mt. Kailash. He was the first one to bring out an Encyclopedia of Hinduism, an 11-volume compendium which was launched by the hands of H.H. the Dalai Lama. Now, in His 60th year, He is giving His life for Mother Ganga. All of the saints and dignitaries were effusive in their praise for Him.

Also, the event included the signing of a historic MOU between Ganga Action Parivar (which Pujya Swamiji founded in 2010) and DRDO and FICCI for the construction of thousands of bio-digester toilets on the banks of Mother Ganga to prevent villagers from having to use the sacred river as their toilet. The event also included the launch of By God's Grace, a beautiful coffee table book biography of Pujya Swamiji's life, published by Mandala Publications of California, USA. The book was launched in USA this summer but this was the first India launch. The foreword has been written by H.H. the Dalai Lama and the preface is by Rabbi David Rosen.

After the Interfaith event, we had a wonderful music program given by MunMun Ratta, Navraj Hans, Parvez Peji and Alam Khan.
November 3rd

Release of Pujya Swamiji’s biography by God’s Grace

Pujya Morari Bapuji

Pujya Sant Seechewalji

Pujya Shivarathri Deshikendra Mahaswami

Pujya Swami Satyanandnanandaji

Hon’ble Dr. Rabbi David Rosen

Sivamani playing during the release of By God’s Grace

November 2012 Special
The event was graced by the presence of the following revered saints:

- Puja Morari Bapuji
- Puja Rameshbhai Oza Bhaishri
- Puja Shri Imam Umar Ahmed Iliyasiji, President of All India Imams Organization
- Puja Kalbe Sadiq Sahib, Vice President, Muslim Law Board
- Puja Swami Satyamitranandji, Bharat Mata Mandir
- Hon’ble Dr. Rabbi Rosen, Former Chief Rabbi of Ireland and Advisor to the Chief Rabbinate of Israel
- Puja Swami Divyanand Teerthji, Shankaracharya Bhanpura Peeth
- Puja Sant Jaggi Vasudevji, Isha Foundation
- Puja Acharya Sudhanshuji Maharaj
- His Grace Archbishop Vincent Concessao, Archbishop of Delhi
- Father Dominic Emmanuel, Spokesman for the Catholic Diocese
- Puja Shri Dewan Sahib Syed Zainul, Ajmer Sharif
- Puja Dr. Pranav Pandya, Shantikunj and Gayatri Parivar
- Puja Chief Jathedar Sahibji of the Golden Temple, Shri Giani Gurubachan Singhji
- Puja Swami Gurusharananandji
- Sri Shivarathri Deshikendra Mahaswami (Suttur Swamiji), Pontiff Suttur Math
- Puja Brahmachari Brahmawarupji
- Puja Swami Harichetnanandji
- Puja Goswami Sushilji
- Puja Sadhvi Ritambharaji
- Puja Swami Agniveshji
- Puja Acharya Lokesh Muniji
- Puja Sant Seechewalji
- Puja Swami Madhavpriyadasji
- Puja Acharya Balkrishanji
- Puja Sumedha Theroji
- Puja Mahant Ravindra Puriji
- Puja Swami Govind Giriji
- Puja Swami Harinarayanandji
- Puja M.M. Swami Asanganandji
- Puja Vivek Muniji
- Dr. AK Merchant, head Baha’i Foundation of India
- Puja Bhai Sahib Satpal Singh Khalsaji
- Puja Swami Rishishwaranandji
- Mahant Lalita Giriji
- Mahant Ramanand Puriji
- Mahant Hari Giriji
- Mahant Prem Puriji
- Mahant Kailashanand Brahmachariji
- Mahant Mohan Dassji
- Mahant Balwant Singhji
- Mahant Mitra Prakashji
- Mahant Bhagat Ramji
- Mahant Shiv Shankar Giriji
- Mahant Satish Giriji...Atal Akhara
- Mahant Bhairav Giriji...Anand Akhara
- Mahant Bhagwan Dass Hathayogiji
- Mahant Balram Dassji
- Mahant Raghuvir Dassji
- Mahant Durgadasji Nirvaniv

Plus:

- Shri Anil Kapoor, Bollywood Actor
- Hon’ble Chief Minister of Uttarakhand Shri Vijay Bahugunaji
- Many respected ministers and secretaries from Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh
In addition to being broadcast all over the world, this major event was covered extensively by local and even national newspapers. To see and read more articles written on this event, please click here.
5,600 clean toilets in Ganga basin soon

IANS

November 2012 Special

Rishikesh (IANS) - For the first time in a decade of years, 'bio-digester' toilets will soon be coming up in villages along the 1,595-km stretch of the Ganga basin, a religion leader associated with the project said here.

The project has been undertaken by the Ganga Action Plan (GAP) under the leadership of Swami Chidanand Saraswati, the Union Environment Minister (MoEF) has said.

The GAP, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), the designer of the toilets.

"Most of the people living in the Ganga river basin have no sanitary facilities. They are forced to use the Ganga as a toilet out of necessity, feeding the water and polluting it in the process," said Swami Chidanand Saraswati, president of Bernath Niketan Ashram, Rishikesh, and founder of the GAP.

The first bio-digester toilet was inaugurated at the village of Udham on October 15 by Uttarakhand Governor Aziz Qureshi.

Suitable for sub-zero temperature of Himalayan region or railway coaches, buses and highways, the toilet converts human waste into a liquid that can be used for cooking, water for irrigation and methane to power vehicles. They are also 100 per cent maintenance free and economically viable.

Apart from the bio-digester toilets, Swami Chidanand announced that he would work towards planting of trees to combat deforestation and encouraging non-conventional energy. He will be reaching out to experts to find sustainable solutions to effectively manage solid waste and around Ganga.

Providing water to all villages in the Ganga basin, cleaning the Ganges and installing bio-digester toilets on trains, protecting and preserving the natural habitat of tigers and other rare animals are the other priorities of Bernath Niketan Ashram.

Several prominent men and spiritual leaders from all walks of life gathered at shraddha sahal of the Ganga Saturday to participate in the inter-faith congregation for environmental preservation.

They discussed the crucial role that religious and spiritual leaders need to play in protecting and preserving the environment.
Uttarakhand CM for constructing eco-friendly toilets on Char Dhaam route

Tags: Vijay Bahuguna | Uttarakhand | FICCI | Anil Kapoor

RISHIKESH: Uttarakhand chief minister Vijay Bahuguna today appealed to DRDO and FICCI to construct eco-friendly toilets for pilgrims on the Char Dhaam yatra route.

Building eco-friendly toilets on the Char Dhaam route would be a step towards keeping the Ganga clean, Bahuguna said, speaking on the last day of the celebrations here to mark the birth anniversary of Parmarth Niketan head Swami Chidananda Saraswati.

The occasion is being celebrated as the ‘World Peace and Environment Conservation Mahotsav’.

Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO), Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industries (FICCI) signed an MoU on conservation of the Ganga and river ecology on the occasion.

A host of distinguished people from different fields, including film actor Anil Kapoor, religious leader Sadhvi Ritambhara and Kander’s close aide Bakhrina attended the celebrations.

Parmarth Niketan hosts socio-spiritual mega events

Dehradun, Nov 1 (ANI)  

The three-day socio-spiritual celebration on 60th birth anniversary of Swami Chidanand Saraswati of Parmarth Niketan commenced this morning with Sun salutation and yoga demonstration followed by the divine ‘mahayagya’ for world peace and environmental preservation.

However, Swami Chidanand Saraswati has appealed to his followers and well-wishers to gift on his 60th birth anniversary year the “commitment to dedicate themselves to the ‘Teerth’ programme” initiated by Parmarth action Panwar, under his leadership.

The ‘Teerth’ includes toilets for poor villages along the banks of the Ganges, tree plantation to improve environment, taps to provide every household with safe drinking water, trash removal and management of solid waste to save the Ganga and its tributaries from toxic pollution, cleaning of water bodies and tiger protection through preserving the natural habitat of wild animals.

The event, to be held in Rishikesh on Parmarth Niketan’s Ganga Ghat, would reach its peak on November 3, with an interfaith samajm and signing of an MoU to build nearly 5,000 bio-toilets as part of the Clean Ganga Initiative between FICCI, DRDO and Ganga Action Foundation.

A Ganga Aarti followed by a special music performance by Bollywood emperor including Muneesh Bhatt, Ram Mi, Pathak, Mr. Param Pandya, Sadh Guru Jaggi Vasudev and Sudamn Mahara would be present on the occasion.

Revered sages including Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, Morari Bapu, Ramneekha Oza, Swami Ramdev, Dr. Sanjoy Pandya, Jaggi Vasudev and Sudamn Mahara would be present on the occasion.

Uttarakhand Governor Ajit Quershi, Chief Minister Vijay Bahuguna and his Cabinet colleagues, Union Tourism Minister Subodh Kanti Shakti, Minister of Welfare Resources Harish Rawat, senior BJP leaders like K. K. Dua, Sushma Swaraj were expected to attend the event.

Bollywood disciples of Swami Chidanand, including Anil Kapoor, Vivek Oberoi and Shilpa Shetty were also expected, according to Sadhvi Bhagwat.
In the Press

दैनिक जागरण
गांग की प्रदूषण मुक्ति के उपाय पर हुई सहमति
हीरे नहीं शाक्त बनकर आए अनिल कपूर

संगठन में उधर आए हैं शिव: शिवराजी

परमार्थ में महोत्सव का आगाज आज
अभिवेदन: परमार्थ महोत्सव में तीन दिवसीय पर्व का संशोधन और विवरण हैं। महोत्सव का आगाज कुमारिवार (आज) होगा। अभिवेदन के प्रशासनिक अधिकारी राम गहलोत ने बताया कि परमार्थ में महोत्सव चिरांद मुगी के साथ-साथ में आयोजित महोत्सव में पहले दिन गंगा गंगा तर पुणे के बच्चों और अभिवेदन द्वारा विद्यालयों मे गरीबों का सुधार राजभवन में बिखर जाएगा, जो पूरा ही तक चलाया जाएगा। इसके अलावा, पुरातात्विक निरीक्षण और पत्रकारिता विभाग में सुरु किया गया।

विश्व कल्याण के लिए डाली गई आहतियां
अभिवेदन: दो हजार विषयों से तय किए गए विश्व कल्याण के लिए कई आहतियां डाली गई। इनके अतिरिक्त, पाकिस्तान और अभिवेदन के उद्देश्य के लिए एक 'विश्व कल्याण शिखर सम्मेलन' का आयोजन किया गया। इसमें, विश्व विरोधी लोगों ने भी हस्तियां डालीं जिनकी अभिवेदन अभिवेदन विभाग में भेजीं गईं।
In celebration of this joyous Diwali occasion, one can see beautifully lit oil lamps and candles glowing in the darkness of night throughout India and wherever Indians have settled in the world. We line our homes, our rooms, our offices and our streets with brightly shining diyas.

However, on this day we must not only light beautiful lamps in our homes and offices, but we must light the lamp in our hearts.

**The Divine Light Within**

Within each of us shines the Divine Light. The Divine Presence is not only everywhere outside of us, it is also within us. In the Bhagavad Gita, Bhagawan Krishna reminds us, over and over, that He resides within our very hearts. When we light the lamp within it is not creating light. No, that Divine Light is already there, always there, the very core of who we are. No matter how dark or how long the night, that Divine Light is present. That Divine Light is inextricable from the Truth of our own existence.

However, in the darkness of ignorance, in the darkness of our own egos, in the darkness of our attachment to external things, in the darkness of our petty jealousies, competitions, complaints and comparisons, we block that Light from our awareness. We identify ourselves with that which is dark rather than with that which is Light. We start to think that the illusion is real. We start to believe our own stories, to believe our own illusions which have been constructed only by our own egos. Thus, we lose sight of the Light and we live in darkness.

Today we have a plague of darkness, a plague of ignorance, a plague of illusions. Each of us is living within our own constructed selfish reality which supports our own egos, our own illusions, our own desires, our own attachments. It is this darkness that leads to crime, war and violence on every level from the individual to the international. If I am able to truly see the Divine Light within then it eclipses everything else with its brightness, its truth and its divinity. That light, then, shows me not only my own divine Truth but the divine Truth of all of existence. When that inner lamp is lit, we are able to see the true nature of ourselves and then of others.

In the temple, we light the diya to better behold the Divine. In much of India, electricity is a relatively recent phenomenon and there are still many areas without it. After sundown, the only way to pray in a temple is to light a lamp. With the light of the diya we can behold the image of the Divine. In the same way, when we light the inner diya we can behold the Divine within. So we must be sure to light not only the lamp outside which gives us darshan of the image of God in our temple, but we must make sure that we light the lamp which gives us darshan of the Divine within ourselves.

**A New Year - A New You:**

At this divine time of Diwali there is a great emphasis on newness. We start a new checkbook. We clean out our homes and offices to make them feel “new”. We celebrate the “new” year. The Divine Light of these sacred diyas of Diwali should burn through the darkness of that which is old, that which is stale, and that which is thwarting our progress, clearing the way for new birth. Like a naturally occurring forest fire turns the old, dry branches and brush into fertile soil for new growth, similarly, the Divine Fire of the Diwali diyas should blaze through us, burning away that which is old and permitting the birth of new thoughts, new visions, new ideas and ideals. When we allow ourselves to be truly renewed in this way day by day, then we become truly forever young.

**The Light of Service**

Just as the divine light burns within our own being, the divine light burns in every being. One of the most beautiful tenets of Indian culture says that
God dwells within all – He dwells within me and He dwells within you. In this way, everyone and everything – whether it be another human being, an animal or Mother Nature – is connected to that same Divine Source. When one is able to see this Divine Light in all, God is seen everywhere, and wherever one sees God, one must try to serve Him. The same light which we light in our lamp in the temple or during Diwali is the same light which shines within all, and thus to light the true lamp of Diwali is to see and serve that light in all.

The message of the light of service can be seen in the lamp itself. The diya always burns for others, with no selfish motivation and no expectation. The sole purpose of an oil lamp’s existence is to bring light to others. They burn FOR others, with every minute, every moment of their lives and every ounce of their existence.

These lamps are meant as symbols as to how we must live our lives. By lighting the lamp within our own hearts, what is the darkness which must be dispelled that keeps us from burning for others? It is the darkness within us, the darkness of ignorance, of selfishness, of duality. It is the illusion which teaches that there is an “us” and a “them”, an “I” and a “you.”

Indian culture says otherwise. Indian culture says we are one. Indian culture says that as our brothers and sisters suffer in darkness, as our animals are abused and their habitats destroyed, as Mother Earth’s air, water and land becomes poisoned and polluted, so we too are suffering, although we may not be aware of it. It is, therefore, our divine duty to help dispel this darkness, to help alleviate this suffering.

The light from the divine diya at Diwali shows us that we are not separate. We are one. That same Divine I worship in the temple resides within my very being, and that same Divine that resides within me also resides within you, and within every creature with whom we share this universe. Just as I perform puja and prayers to the image of the Divine in the temple, so I must extend the same reverence and same care to the divine within all beings upon our planet.

At this beautiful time of time of Diwali when we will line our homes, our offices and our streets with rows and rows of brightly burning diyas, let us ask ourselves whether our lives are filled with light. Let us ask ourselves if we are truly burning for others, seeing that same Divine light which exists within ourselves in others and in our Earth, serving God by serving others. We must ask ourselves how we bring light and life to others.

On this holy day of Diwali, I pray that you will take this opportunity to examine your own lives and take a pledge to fill your lives – every word, every thought and every action -- with light, thereby bringing light and life to others.

May the light of love and devotion shine brightly in your hearts.  
May the light of understanding shine in your minds.

May the light of harmony glow in your home.  
May the light of service shine forth ceaselessly from your hands.

May your presence light the lamps of love wherever you go.

May your smile, your words and your actions be as sweet as the sweets of this festive season.  
May Maha Laxmi bring you the true wealth of health, happiness, peace and prosperity upon you and all your loved ones.

With love and blessings to you all,
In the service of God and humanity,

Swami Chidanand Saraswati