



# *Annual Report 2018-2019*



**DIVINE SHAKTI**  
FOUNDATION



# *Our Mission*

The Divine Shakti Foundation is dedicated to providing for the holistic well-being of women, their children, orphaned and abandoned children, and all of Mother Earth. DSF is working to identify needs and design and implement programs to support women and children (especially orphaned and abandoned children) to be socially and financially self-sustaining, as well as raise awareness of the problems facing women and children through education and mass communication. DSF is also engaged in activities for the preservation of Mother Earth, especially protecting the Holy Ganga River and providing a safe and natural environment for India's revered cows. Further, DSF supports and promotes cooperation and association among the people who are interested in these divine goals.

## *Our Purpose*



### PROVIDING BASIC NEEDS

- Provide comprehensive needs of poor and widowed women and orphaned/abandoned children.
- Establish programs and infrastructure to meet the physical, psychological, and spiritual needs of expectant mothers who have little or no family or social support.
- Establish homes for unwanted children.
- Provide immediate and long term needs of women and children affected by natural disasters.
- Support other organizations involved with similar goals and objectives as this Trust.



### SPIRITUAL AND CULTURAL

- Plan activities and instructional programs designed for spiritual development and growth.
- Design programs to preserve cultural and family values.
- Teach and promote effective parenting skills. Establish parenting training centers for mothers and expectant mothers.



### SKILLS & VOCATIONAL TRAINING

- Promote vocational training and provide equipment for general training centers, cottage industry training, day care centers, etc.
- Promote and support rural developmental training for women.





## EDUCATION & DEVELOPMENT

- Provide and promote educational advancement with children's schools, adult educational services, computer training, scholarship funds, etc.
- Sponsoring the renovation and the rebuilding of schools and education centers that have been devastated or destroyed by natural disasters
- Running and supporting schools in Uttarakhand to provide basic necessities to their students so that children can not only survive but truly thrive.
- Enhancing educational curricula to include messages of wellness, green living and improved water, sanitation and hygiene.
- Sponsor over 20 poor children to get quality education.



## HEALTH

- Provide programs for holistic healthcare.
- Support research intended for advancement of women and children's healthcare concerns, particularly debilitating diseases such as HIV, AIDS, breast cancer, etc.
- Support other organizations involved with holistic healthcare and research designed primarily for women and children.
- Support programs for public health maintenance including preventative holistic health, basic hygiene instruction, nutritional counseling, Ayurvedic cooking instruction, etc.



## ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS & PROTECTION

- Raising mass awareness, especially among women and children, so that they can be the Green Ambassadors in their communities
- Promoting green and eco-friendly mass pledges and commitments to reduce our individual and collective carbon and water footprint.
- Advocating about the significant and prominent environmental impact of living a Vegetarian lifestyle.



## ANIMAL CARE

- Protection and preservation of all life including animals with a commitment to prevent animal killing and cruelty wherever possible.
- Promoting a Vegetarian lifestyle as the single greatest and most powerful choice one can make to protect all animals.











# *Contents*

- 06. MINISTERIAL FOR INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM
- 07. INAUGURATION OF THE WOMEN ECONOMIC FORUM
- 08. DSF & GIWA WELCOME TGELF TO HOST LIFE 2018 IN RISHIKESH
  - 10. HARIYALI TEEJ CELEBRATED IN RISHIKESH
  - 11. CLEAN INDIA DAY CONCLAVE & AWARDS
  - 12. SAVING AND SERVING THE HIMALAYAS
- 14. MEDITATION AND SANITATION COME TOGETHER
- 15. ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE: TIMES OF INDIA RETREAT IN GOA
  - 16. HIMALAYAN YATRA TO DEVPRAYAG
- 17. NOURISHMENT, SANITATION & INTERFAITH HARMONY SUMMIT IN BIJNOR
- 18. LAUNCH OF THE RIPPLE ACADEMY AT PARMARTH NIKETAN
  - 19. SADHVIJI AT THE UNITED NATIONS
- 20. REGIONAL INTERFAITH DIALOGUE ON CHILD DIGNITY ONLINE
- 21. SADHVIJI AWARDED VASUNDHARA RATAN INT’L AWARD OF EXCELLENCE
  - 22. WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY 2019
  - 23. INTERFAITH RAKSHA BANDHAN
- 24. OPERATION GIVEBACK: TREATING PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUES WITH EDUCATION
  - 25. WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP IN THE WORLD OF INTERFAITH
- 26. MAKING FRIENDS ACROSS RELIGIONS – LEADERS TESTIMONY AND COUNSEL
  - 27. AWAKENING THE DIVINE FEMININE
- 28. UNITED NATIONS ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS GLOBAL SUMMIT
  - 29. ANNUAL EYE CAMP AT PARMARTH
- 30. DSF, PARMARTH NIKETAN & ACCION PLANETARIA TEAM-UP AGAIN
  - 31. INTERFAITH LEADERS TRAINING COMPLETION





32. PRESIDENT OF INDIA INAUGURATES GANDHIAN RESURGENCE SUMMIT
34. PARMARTH NIKETAN WELCOMES THE DARD ARYANS OF LADAKH
36. "SHE IS THE SOLUTION: SUMMIT OF GRACE" – EMPOWERING WOMEN
38. INAUGURAL SANGAM SAMVAD CONCLAVE AT KUMBH MELA
39. INAUGURATION OF SANSKRITIK VIDWAT KUMBH
40. TEHRI LAKE FESTIVAL 2019
41. SHAKTI: POWER OF THE DIVINE FEMININE IN A YOGIC LIFE
42. AIIMS RISHIKESH SYMPOSIUM ON MEDITATION & CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASES
43. CELEBRATING A LIFE IN SERVICE: SADHVIJI'S DIVINE BIRTHDAY
44. SADHVIJI AT THE UN COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN
45. SADHVI BHAGAWATIJI JOINS WALK FOR WATER ON WORLDWATER DAY IN WEST HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA
46. EARTH DAY CELEBRATED: BEAUTIFICATION OF THE RISHIKESH RAIL STATION
48. 2019 PARD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MEMBERS
49. MOTHERS DAY CELEBRATES SHAKTI AT PARMARTH
50. OPENING OF GREEN SHRI RAM KATHA
52. INAUGURATION OF UPGRADED COMPUTER CENTRE AT PARMARTH
53. IT'S TIME FOR ACTION TOWARDS MENSTRUAL HYGIENE MANAGEMENT
54. WORLD NO TOBACCO DAY
56. SADHVI BHAGAWATIJI GRACES THE G20 INTERFAITH SUMMIT
57. RELEASE OF MOTHER GANGA: THE HOLY RIVER
58. ACCELERATE PEACE CONFERENCE AT STANFORD UNIVERSITY
59. KOFI ANNAN UNGA FAITH BRIEFING IN NEW YORK
60. GURU PURNIMA RETREAT 2019



# MINISTERIAL FOR INTERNATIONAL *Religious Freedom*



**AUGUST 2018 WASHINGTON DC:** Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati, President, Divine Shakti Foundation and Secretary-General, Global Interfaith WASH Alliance, Parmarth Niketan, Rishikesh, India was invited to the U.S. State Department's first ever ministerial for International Religious Freedom. The Ministerial was hosted by Secretary Pompeo and Ambassador Sam Brownback and was also attended by Vice President of the United States, Mike Pence, the external affairs ministries of more than 80 nations, nearly 200 civil society organizations and approximately 100 international religious leaders.

Sadhviji shared in the main session that her strongest suggestion for US State Department international policy is that they should ensure that no American dollars or support go to any development organization that is giving care, whether healthcare or education or other, only to people of one religion, or that is compelling or urging

people to change their religion in order to receive care.

Additionally, Sadviji suggested that We must be equally diligent about preventing hate speech which leads to atrocity crimes as we are about protecting freedom of speech. Responding to Ambassador Brownbeck's concerns about religious violence in India, Sadviji explained that when people are being forced or coerced to change their religion to obtain education or healthcare or other necessities, it creates great underlying tension in these communities; women and children bear the brunt of this. Additionally, she shared some of the work that the Divine Shakti Foundation and its sister organization the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance are doing in bringing together leaders of different religions for interfaith peace-building through working together for clean water, tree plantations, building of toilets, rights of women, etc.





## INAUGURATION OF THE *Women Economic Forum*

**AUGUST 2018 NEW DELHI:** Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji, President of the Divine Shakti Foundation, was invited to grace and bless the Gala Inaugural of the WEF (Women Economic Forum) 2018. The theme this year was “The Economics of Goodness: Empowering Potential, Engineering Change.” It was held at the Taj Dwarka, New Delhi, and was organized by Dr. Harbeen Arora and brought together women leaders from diverse backgrounds. Sadhvi Bhagawati presented Dr. Aroraji, her husband Vinay Raiji and the other guests with a sacred Rudraksh sapling as symbol of DSF’s invitation for WEF to emphasize clean, green & sustainable development.

Other guests included Vivek Anand Oberoi, Actor, Entrepreneur & Philanthropist; RC Bhargava, Chairman, Maruti Suzuki – Way of Life Limited; Ira Singhal, S.D.M., Govt of NCT of Delhi – is the first person with a disability to top the prestigious CSE; Arjun Munda, Former CM of Jharkhand; Mrs. Ouided Bouchamaoui, Nobel Peace Laureate; Dr. Maya Morsy, Pres, The National Council for Women in Egypt; Princess Asharaje Gaekwad Deputy Mayor Tjasa Ficko, City of Ljubljana, Slovenia; Tanja Wehsely, Member of Vienna City Council and State Parliament, Austria.





## DSF & GIWA WELCOME *TGELF to Host Life 2018 in Rishikesh*

### **10 AUGUST 2018 RISHIKESH INDIA:**

The Global InterFaith Wash Alliance, Divine Shakti Foundation, Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji and Pujya Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji took great pride in welcoming and hosting Founder Shiv Khemka, Syed Salman Chishty and 200 youth leaders from The Global Education and Leadership Foundation (TGELF) for their most-prized conference, LIFE, on the banks of the Holy Maa Ganga. Participants, which included youth and their mentors from over 20 countries around the world, were treated to special Ganga Aarti ceremonies, as well as a special meditation held at the famed Beatles Ashram.

TGELF focuses on cultivating ethical,

altruistic leadership aimed at improving the overall standard of the world by mobilizing youth around the world to take "actions" through digital platforms calling on government, faith leaders, business icons and celebrities to be more accountable on issues ranging from education and gender equality to water and sanitation.

During the conference, TGELF – in cooperation with Global Citizen India – unveiled its WASHUP program, an outreach to communities throughout India promoting sanitation, hygiene and water conservation measures. Trivendra Singh Rawat, the Honorable CM of Uttarakhand, offered his support towards the implementation of this program.







## HARIYALI TEEJ CELEBRATED *In Rishikesh*



### **14 AUGUST 2018 RISHIKESH INDIA:**

Marking the auspicious occasion of the Hariyali Teej festival and following the hugely successful completion of the tGELF two-day LIFE 2018 at Parmarth Niketan conference, youth leaders from across 20 countries participated in a massive tree plantation at Veerpur village near Rishikesh. They planted fruit and medicinal trees and enthusiastically displayed their commitment to bringing their newly-announced WASHUP campaign into action. The trees they planted were the same trees with which they had pledged during the closing ceremony of LIFE 2018, on International Youth Day, along with the Hon'ble Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawatji.

On the occasion, Pujya Swamiji said, "There can be a plan A and plan B but there isn't a planet B. There is only one planet and we must protect and preserve that planet. I cannot think of a better way to do that than by bringing our youth leaders and interfaith

leaders together as one family, serving green Mother Earth. This is the spirit that is needed today to encourage our inherent oneness - harmony whilst simultaneously cultivating values in the younger generation."

President of the Divine Shakti Foundation, Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati, one of the hosts for the tGELF gathering, also shared, "When we come together to plant these trees, we are not only planting a cleaner generation but cultivating hope and healing for an ailing planet. With climate change and the water crisis looming as real challenges for our future generations, we illustrate that small actions - such as planting and caring for trees, saving water, being conscious of our consumption, choosing to be vegetarian - really do make a lasting impact on our planet. This is the message that our youth need to learn - that the actions they take impact our world."





# CLEAN INDIA DAY *Conclave & Awards*

**15 AUGUST 2018 NEW DELHI:** The 8th Annual Clean India Day Conclave and Awards, sponsored by the ONGC and organized by the World Dignity Forum, The ImaginIndia Institute, The Peace Gong and many other organizations, were held at the Constitutional Club, and Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji and Pujya Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji were on-hand to offer blessings and assistance in presenting awards to organisations and people working towards a cleaner, greener and better India for all.

Pujya Swamiji emphasized the importance of a Clean India for a sustainable, secure and resilient India. He inspired everyone to pledge and do their part to support Hon'ble Shri Narendra Modi's vision in our individual and collective capacities.

Sadhvi Bhagawatiji, President of the Divine Shakti Foundation, meanwhile emphasized the importance of inculcating the values of cleanliness in youth and children so that Clean India becomes innate in our way of living and our way of existence. “When we consider something ours,” she stated, “we take care of it. If, in the same way, we can consider our neighborhoods and our streets to be ours, then taking care of them and keeping them clean would only be natural. We need for our values, our sanskaras and our education to reflect these basic, fundamental and vital needs. And, what we’ve found at Divine Shakti Foundation is that women and children, especially, are critical in this effort - not only in spreading the message, but also in actually becoming the caretakers.”



## SAVING AND SERVING *The Himalayas*

**19 AUGUST 2018 LADAKH, INDIA:** A vital three-day International Conference with the theme of “Saving the Himalayas through Science and Spirituality” in Leh, Ladakh was organised by the Save the Himalayas Foundation (SHF), in association with the Divine Shakti Foundation, the LAHDC Leh, Mahabodhi International Meditation Centre – MIMC, Global Interfaith WASH Alliance, DLF Foundation, HESCO and Integrated Mountain Initiative. The inaugural programme took place at the beautiful CIBS Auditorium, Choglamsar. The conference was an effort to bring organisations and individuals together, across government, CSO, faith-based organisations, scholars, experts and various other stakeholders, to find and implement solutions that can help preserve and protect ecologically-biodiverse Himalayan regions like Ladakh, and especially to empower women and youth to be the caretakers and guardians of these eco-sensitive regions.

Said HH Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji – Muniji, President of Parmarth Niketan, Founder Chairman, Global Interfaith WASH Alliance (GIWA), the Chief Guest of the programme, “Himalayas doesn’t need us, we need the Himalayas. Hence, it’s not really about saving the Himalayas as it’s about saving ourselves and our future generations. If we consume and degrade the planet at the rate we are, our future generations will ask us what have we done. Therefore, we must remember this

one simple mantra Himalaya Hai to Hum Hai! (If Himalayas thrive then we thrive)”

He led an energetic pledge bringing everyone’s hands together and repeating after him, “We will work together, walk together, save together, serve together & be together. Bharat Mata Ki Jai (Hail to Mother India).”

Afterwards, Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji, President of the Divine Shakti Foundation and Secretary General, GIWA, shared that “three essential paths must come together to protect the Himalayas: Sena (Army), Sangha (Community) and Sarkar (Government). The culture of the Himalayas is where the secret/the key to healthy and happy living -real life- for the world lies. The Himalayas also gives us sacred life in our bodies, through plentiful clean air, water and soil. When we pledge it means that we commit to make changes in our lives. Himalayan culture is not a culture of use, abuse and discard or consume and throw. When we save this culture, our roots, the Himalayas will automatically be saved. Lastly, let us really ask ourselves every minute and every moment of our day; through what we eat, what we buy and how we live; by these little, little things in our lives; how are we being part of the problem or how are we being part of the solution?”









## MEDITATION AND SANITATION *Come Together*

**24 AUGUST 2018 LADAKH INDIA:** A joyous inauguration of a new toilet complex took place in Leh-Ladakh at the Mahabodhi International Meditation Centre (MIMC) near the campus' large meditation and prayer hall. Led by Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, President of Parmarth Niketan, Co-Founder of Global Interfaith WASH Alliance (GIWA) and Pujya Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati, President of the Divine Shakti Foundation – who were both in Ladakh for the Saving the Himalayas conference – the event was organized and hosted by Ven Bhikkhu Sanghasena, Founder of Mahabodhi International Meditation Centre and graced by Imam Umer Ilyasi, President of the All India Imam Organisation, Dr Vandana Shiva, Founder of Nadanya, Sulekha Kumbhare, Hon'ble Member, Minority Commission,

GoI, Nagpur and Maj Gen Yash Mor, General Officer Commanding, Leh Sub Area and many other eminent dignitaries.

The visit was also a chance for Sadhviji to spend time with the Buddhist nuns of the Meditation Centre, who receive their monastic training - which includes the study of Buddhist philosophy, Buddhist history and the Ladakhi, Tibetan, English and Pali languages - at the centre. The nuns are representative of a sea-change in thinking surrounding female ordination, and the Divine Shakti Foundation plays an important part in the development of their spiritual life. In fact, the nuns spend two months each winter in an exchange program with Parmarth Niketan, living and participating in the life of the ashram.



# ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE: *Times of India Retreat in Goa*



**28 AUGUST 2018 GOA INDIA:** Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji and Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati were invited to give a spiritually- motivational talk at a special, high-level two-day retreat, dubbed Games of Throne: Achieving Excellence, for executives of The Times of India in Goa. Pujya Swamiji offered several sutras and mantras for excellence, and advised the executives to “create the news, make news, no problem. This is great and it’s your job. But also make sure you are checking your own news! Go on Facebook, no problem. But, remember at the end of the day, you have to face your own book. The multivitamin every day that you must take is meditation - no reaction with a dose of introspection. This multivitamin is the key to spiritual excellence. Life and excellence are not just about connecting to the internet and getting the fastest speed but we must remember to connect with the innernet and get the right direction.”

Sadhvi Bhagawatiji, President of the Divine Shakti Foundation, shared, “At Times of India we need excellence in sharing, spreading and disseminating inspiration as well as information; we need excellence in not just reporting news but in making the news! To achieve this vision of excellence, we must melt the thick borders between work, spirituality and life. Otherwise, if what you do is drudgery and you’re counting the hours till the end of the day or the weekend, then we will never achieve excellence.”

She also emphasized the importance of a spiritual connection in order to achieve true excellence in life, and detailed the progress being made in the programs and initiatives of both DSF and the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance (GIWA), both of which have been lauded for excellence in their spiritual approach to ongoing societal challenges.





# HIMALAYAN YATRA *To Devprayag*

**7 SEPTEMBER 2018 DEVPRAYAG, INDIA:** Just ahead of Himalaya Diwas, a beautiful, experiential yatra was organised by DSF to Devprayag from Rishikesh with Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji and Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji, bringing together Parmarth Rishikumars, devotees representing the Indian Diaspora from the United Kingdom, along with many sevaks and pilgrims. During their visit, they interacted with the locals, listened to their challenges, took part in a cleanliness drive, did a sanitation survey of the local toilets and sanitation facilities, visited the National Sanskrit Institute, and shared the numerous gifts of the Himalayas which make Himalayan women and children the ambassadors of their sacred, ancient and timeless culture. They

visited some ancient temples in the region and planned for the temples' beautification, greenery and cleanliness.

President of the Divine Shakti Foundation, Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji said, "Childhood is the most precious time of life. At this time, children learn and absorb the values and the example we set for them. Therefore, as parents, caretakers and teachers I invite you to lead the future generation of the Himalayas by your example. By instilling in them the values of cleanliness, environmental conservation and water conservation you are creating the leaders of tomorrow."



# NOURISHMENT, SANITATION & INTERFAITH HARMONY *Summit in Bijnor*



## 12 SEPTEMBER 2018 BIJNOR INDIA:

A summit organized by the Divine Shakti Foundation, Global Interfaith WASH Alliance and Parmarth Niketan in Najibabad, Bijnor at the Gurukul International Academy addressed ending malnourishment; empowering women to be sanitation champions; inspiring Swachh Bharat as a people's movement; protecting the environment; and, working together, across all faiths, to realize these goals. With the support of the District Magistrate Shri Atal Kumar Raoji and the SDM Dr Pankaj Kumar Vermaji the programme brought together all of the gram pradhans of the district who have been pivotal in making Bijnor the first district to become ODF in Uttar Pradesh. It also brought

together hundreds of Asha and Aganwadi workers - all female community leaders - to raise awareness and inspire them to take up the mission of ending malnourishment and take swachhta (cleanliness) deeper into every household and family.

HH Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji was the Chief Guest, whilst DSF's President and Secretary General of GIWA, Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji, gave a powerful and riveting speech in Hindi to deeply inspire the women, a majority of the audience, to come forward, work together and lead this movement.



# LAUNCH OF THE RIPPLE ACADEMY *At Parmarth Niketan*



**18 SEPTEMBER 2018 RISHIKESH INDIA:** Thirty women from India and Nepal gathered together to launch The Ripple Academy, a holistic training program for women to work together to protect the environment and unite for peace and justice. This initiative is a partnership between United Religions Initiative and the Women's Earth Alliance. Divine Shakti Foundation, Parmarth Niketan, and the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance are also co-partners and co-sponsors.

With climate change, environmental destruction, and oppressive governments, women are often the most impacted within their communities. However, they are often cut off from the solutions, resources, and networks that they need to address these issues. The aim of the Ripple Academy is to connect grassroots women leaders in these communities in a network that strives for environmental protection, women's empowerment, and peacebuilding. By giving them the tools they need to create change in

their local communities - such as improved access to WASH, protection of women and girls, environmental projects, improved access to education and livelihoods, and more - they will be able to focus more of their efforts on improving their families and communities, rather than just on survival.

Pujya Swamiji, Pujya Sadhvi Bhagawatiji, and Swamini Adityanandaji welcomed the group and shared the work that Parmarth, GIWA, and DSF are doing for interfaith unity, women's empowerment, improved WASH and more. Said Pujya Swamiji, "All over the world, people are wandering around looking for peace. All are looking for peace for themselves, but it seems to me that now the whole work must come together to create happiness and peace for all. It is essential to focus first on the interest of the environment for the benefit of human society. Women will play a vital and important part in this process, as they always have done."





## SADHVIJI AT THE *United Nations*

**21 SEPTEMBER 2018 NEW YORK CITY:** Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati, President of Divine Shakti Foundation & Secretary-General of Global Interfaith WASH Alliance, Parmarth Niketan, Rishikesh, has been elected to be a Co-Chair of the Faith-Based Advisory Council to the United Nations. Approximately 40 faith leaders and leaders of international faith-based organizations have been nominated to serve on this Advisory Council. While in New York, Pujya Sadhvi also participated in the first face-to-face meeting of the Advisory Council to which she was nominated by the United Nations. During the meeting, she was elected to serve as Vice-Chair of the Council.

The Advisory Council of Faith-Based Organizations to the UN Inter Agency Task Force on Religion is composed of the UN system's faith-based partners,

reflecting the diversity of religions, regional and national presence, and covering thematic areas which mirror the UN's mandate. This is the first time in the history of the United Nations that a diverse group of UN system entities, nominate their faith-based development, humanitarian and policy advocacy partners, and then convene them in an Advisory Capacity, to the whole of the UN system. Sadhvi Bhagawati hopes to utilize the platform to share the work that GIWA and DSF are doing in the field, namely improving WASH and especially empowering women to be agents of change in their communities. She also hopes to highlight the interfaith efforts being made, and to bring female leadership together within the faith community to address the issues of ending child marriage and improving menstrual hygiene.





## REGIONAL INTERFAITH DIALOGUE ON *Child Dignity Online*

**27 SEPTEMBER 2018 NEW DELHI:**

Sadhvi Bhagawatiiji was part of the Regional Interfaith Dialogue on Child Dignity Online, which was organized by UNICEF, Arigatou International, Shanti Ashram, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti, Sarvodaya-Focolare family, Gandhigram Rural University, GNRC India Partners, and the UAE, and was held at Gandhi Smriti, Rajghat, New Delhi.

Around the world, millions of children live with violence in their lives on a daily basis. According to the organizers of this event, "In 2015 more than half of the world's children have experienced some form of violence. Violence is pervasive, largely invisible, socially accepted and very often fails to be investigated and addressed." Additionally,

children now must also contend with violence that comes online, through forms such as cyber bullying, webcam exploitation, sexting, harmful and inappropriate web content, and more.

The objective of the gathering was to better understand the impact of violence against children, and to come up with strategies to end the violence on both the individual and societal level. Focusing on the power interfaith religious leaders have to promote change, they discussed religious viewpoints on the growth of technology and how religious leaders through their organizations and foundations can motivate and inspire their communities to protect children online and prevent further violence.



# SADHVIJI AWARDED VASUNDHARA RATAN INT'L *Award of Excellence*



**6 OCTOBER 2018 NEW DELHI:** Sadhvi Bhagawati Ji was awarded the Vasundhara Ratan International Award of Excellence at the 56th RAI International Awards at the India International Center in New Delhi for her exceptional service as the President of Divine Shakti Foundation to women and children in our society. The award was given by Jagadguru Shree Nimbarkacharya Peethadheeshvar HH Shree Shyamsharan Devacharya Shreeji Maharaj.

The event was graced by the presence of revered spiritual leaders, Dr. Bhupendrabhai Pandiyaji, Dr. Manoj Mohan Shastriji, Dr. Yogendra Narain, former Secretary-General Rajya Sabha and Defense Secretary, Govt of India, HE Jagdishwar Goburdhan, High Commissioner of Mauritius, Shri Ghanshyam Guptaji, Chairman Maharaja Agrasen 500-bed Charitable Hospital, and several other dignitaries. The event was organized by Respect Age International.





## WORLD MENTAL HEALTH *Day 2019*

### **10 OCTOBER 2018 NEW DELHI:**

Sadhvi Bhagawati joined together with revered faith leaders, Delhi Health Minister Shri Satyendra Jain, and distinguished dignitaries on World Mental Health Day for the “Consultation with Faith Based Organizations for Developing Comprehensive Health & Rights Based Response to Drug Use.” This panel was organized by URI, the United Nations, India HIV/AIDS Alliance, the Global Fund, HRAsia, and the Government of Delhi.

Sadhviji spoke on the role of faith and faith leaders in preventing and addressing drug addiction. She expressed her commitment to spread awareness on Mental Health issues and to inspire people to seek help and have access to resources they require to take care of themselves, their families and their communities. She also invited the organisations present to host the next event on the holy banks of Mother Ganga, in the lap of the Himalayas.



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# INTERFAITH

## *Raksha Bandan*



**26 OCTOBER 2018 RISHIKESH, INDIA:** A very special Raksha Bandhan ceremony took place at Parmarth Niketan, in association with Divine Shakti Foundation, in the divine presence of Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji and Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati. On this day, sisters of all ages tie a talisman, or amulet, called the rakhi, around the wrists of their brothers, symbolically protecting them, receiving a gift in return, and traditionally investing the brothers with a share of the responsibility of their potential care. The Rishikumars (students of the Parmarth Gurukul) underwent a yagno pavit (sacred thread) ceremony in the morning. The three sacred strings of the yagno pavit denote, as Pujya Swamiji explains, the three gunas – sattva (reality), rajas (passion), and tamas (darkness) which are tied together in a knot.

The knot is called brahmagranthi which symbolizes the united trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh (Shiva). This yagno pavit ceremony is a very important sanskara- a 'rite of passage'-symbolizing the transition of a child from the infantile stage of play to their next more serious, contemplative stage.

Sadhvi Bhagawati emphasized to all the Rishikumars who had completed their Janu Sanskar (Yagy Pavit) that the true Rakhi is not just one that we physically tie on our hands but the sutra (thread) that the Guru Mantra weaves in our lives. She reminds us how deeply blessed we are to be sitting at the feet of the Master and to be blessed by His aashirwaad upon us all, reminding us to reflect upon His words, His teachings, His message and most of all...His divine example.





## OPERATION GIVEBACK: *Treating Public Health Issues with Education*

**30 OCTOBER 2018 RISHIKESH INDIA:** Divine Shakti Foundation recently hosted at Parmarth Niketan, Rishikesh, a special initiative, Operation Giveback, the goal of which is to combat common public health issues with education in the hopes of providing the public with long-term practices that will enhance their overall well-being. Nine medical professionals visiting from around the globe dedicated their time and talent, treating over 1,100 patients at 3 health camps in Rishikesh, Deuli and Gumaniwala.

“This was a great opportunity to work with the poor and address

some all too common public health issues,” said Dr. Tung Nguyen, an emergency and critical care practitioner from Philadelphia, PA, USA. “The education we provide them should ensure a long-term and sustainable health impact that will continue long after our departure.” “Coming here and seeing the need and how we can make an impact in the lives and health of these people has been the most rewarding part,” added Jeff Holoman, a family and emergency medicine practitioner from Philadelphia, PA, USA. “The opportunity to give back and be hands-on is one I always value and hope to do as often as I can.”



# WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP IN THE *World of Interfaith*



**4 NOVEMBER 2018 TORONTO:** Women play vital roles in development and peace-building. As governmental, non-governmental and faith-based organizations agree and commit to Sustainable Development Goals, the importance of engaging women is obvious. Yet despite intellectual and theoretical agreement, glass ceilings are not breaking quickly and completely enough — particularly in religious leadership. When world religious bodies and multilateral organizations invite religious leadership, they include too few women. This panel convened top women leaders to consider honestly how, together, they are challenging and breaking that stained-glass ceiling.

Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji, President of the Divine Shakti Foundation and a trailblazer in the emergence of women in

faith leadership, shared the many challenges that come within her own tradition about often being the only woman on the stage for major faith based gatherings and how it is a source of great resilience and joy for her to be the example that can inspire other women to break the stained glass ceiling.

She explained, “It is important for us to realize that as we worship the Goddess, so there must be respect for and a place for women in the world of religions. And in situations that are not currently changeable, that are so deeply ingrained in the culture as to be currently intractable, my spiritual path is to make space for these moments and utilise them to connect deeply to the ‘I’ that does not need someone else’s appreciation or recognition or approval to occupy my space on planet Earth. The challenge and the gift is knowing when each is the appropriate response.”



# MAKING FRIENDS ACROSS RELIGIONS

## *Leaders Testimony and Counsel*



**5 NOVEMBER 2018 TORONTO:** A special series of panels entitled “Making Friends Across Religions – Leaders Testimony and Counsel” were held throughout the Parliament of the World’s Religions. These discussions required each Presenter to share a story of a friendship across religions and offer practical advice for practicing friendships between people of different faiths. Discussions also were followed by a brief interaction between the presenters and the audience. The Divine Shakti Foundation is emblematic of the type of pan-religious cooperation that is essential to cope with the challenges facing the planet and its people. With DSF, women and children of all faiths and creeds are not only assisted by the efforts of the foundation, but are encouraged to be vital participants in the evolution of change in their families and communities.

The eminent panelists included Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, President of Parmarth Niketan, Co-Founder of Global Interfaith WASH Alliance, Rabbi David Rosen, International Director of Interreligious Affairs of the American Jewish Committee, Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswati, President of the Divine Shakti Foundation, Secretary General of Global Interfaith WASH Alliance, Bhaisahib Mohinder Singh Ahluwalia, Chairman and visionary for the Nishkam Group of Charitable Organisations, United Kingdom, Rev. Susan Johnson is the first female National Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and beautifully moderated by Rabbi Alon Goshen-Gottstein, Founder and Director of Elijah Interfaith Institute and a leader in interfaith dialogue.





## AWAKENING *The Divine Feminine*

**6 NOVEMBER 2018 TORONTO:** This motivational session, held at the Parliament of World Religions, shared the secrets of divine-feminine-energy with attendees, and inspired them to believe they can tap into this energy and empower themselves to connect with the Goddess within.

Sadhvi Bhagawatiji spoke about how she was personally touched by the Goddess Ganga when she first came to Rishikesh and how that experience changed her life. “What distracts women from truly understanding their power,” she stated, “is the core misconception that

they are not enough- not thin enough, not pretty enough etc. This sense of inner lack inhibits them from accessing the source of abundance within. Today we need to no longer be distracted from the truth or fight the truth but rather women must live the truth that they are more than enough. After their connection with their inner abundance they can then be truly empowered to accomplish anything and everything they dream.” Sadhvi Bhagawatiji shared how her experiences and observation helped inspire her to serve as the President of the Divine Shakti Foundation.





## UNITED NATIONS ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS *Global Summit*

### **20 NOVEMBER 2018 NEW YORK CITY:**

President of the Divine Shakti Foundation Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji, addressed the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations Global Summit at UN World Headquarters during the historic Summit on 19-20 November. Her speeches, delivered before an audience from across the world, focused on the crucial importance of women's leadership and sustainable development in a time of increasing global strife and insecurity as well as the importance of the role of religion and religious leaders in fostering peaceful and inclusive societies.

In her address on that panel, Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji said, "It is crucial to uplift the women and girls of our world today, so that they may lead the way towards a more peaceful tomorrow. Now is the time to promote the building of skills so that women can especially play key roles at negotiation tables. We also must look for the causes of violence and insecurity in the first place, and call for unified actions towards a more sustainable world, including ensuring access to safe water and improved WASH."



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# ANNUAL EYE CAMP *At Parmarth*



## **20 NOVEMBER 2018 RISHIKESH**

**INDIA:** The Divine Shakti Foundation (DSF) hosted an annual, free Eye Camp at Parmarth Niketan Ashram in Rishikesh from the 20th- 30th of November, 2018. An international team of doctors and other medical professionals from six different countries provided eye care treatment, including eye surgery, for numerous persons who would not normally be able to afford these services. The team included eleven doctors and thirteen para-medical staff from Australia, USA, Malaysia, United Kingdom, Nepal, and India.

This special camp has been organised for the last sixteen years with the devoted leadership of Dr. Purnima Roy, an Ophthalmologist from Australia, who specializes in the treatment of cataracts, glaucoma and general ophthalmology. The eye camp is now a well-known and well appreciated medical service event for Rishikesh and the surrounding Himalayan villages and patients who come to the Ashram months in advance to ensure that their names are on the list to receive the required treatment. Doctors examine and treat between 800-1000 patients during the ten day period of the camp.





## DSF, PARMARTH NIKETAN & ACCION *Planetaria* *Team-up Again*

**29 NOVEMBER 2018 RISHIKESH INDIA:** A team of dentists from Spain again offered dental treatment to people from villages and schools around Rishikesh. The service project was organized by The Divine Shakti Foundation and Parmarth Niketan Ashram with the blessings of Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji and in association with Acción Planetaria DSR, an NGO from Spain that works to improve the environment of the Earth and the quality of life of its people, with the belief that a better world is possible. Christian Vargas, the surgeon who founded

the NGO in 2004, stated that “everyone is able to do a small action, even once, to improve the planet. We love to be here, people are very polite, even when they are afraid of the treatments. And besides the Ashram is very organized and provides us all the structure and logistical assistance that we need to make things easy for us to work.” There was also an educational component to communicate the importance of tooth-brushing to the nearly 1000 children, parents and teachers treated during the group’s visit at six sites in ten days.



# INTERFAITH LEADERS

## *Training Completion*



### **10 DECEMBER 2018 RISHIKESH INDIA:**

Youth leaders from more than 12 countries, belonging to diverse faith traditions and organisations, gathered at Parmarth Niketan for a two-day Youth Leader Workshop and Training during which they were shown ways - through interactive, engaging and fun activities designed to illustrate the art and skills of interfaith dialogue - to be champions of peaceful and inclusive societies.

Jointly organized by the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance, the Divine Shakti Foundation and KAICIID, the training was led with great commitment and compassion by Mohamed Safiullah Munsoor, KAICIID Programme's Director, Anders Frantzen, Senior Programme Manager and Renata Nelson, KAICIID Coordination Officer. It included representatives from organisations such as United Religions Initiative Asia, Art of Living, India Mauritius Foundation, University of Dhaka, Interfaith Colombo,

Religious Freedom Initiative, Our Volx, Steps Organisation, Purwaramaya Battarmulla, Euphrates Institute, Save and Serve Foundation, Shia Degree College, Jamiatul Islamia Banat, Madrassa, Mangaldai, Darrang, Assam and Parmarth Niketan.

Those in the training also enjoyed special interactions with Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji – Muniji & Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji and a unique opportunity to share their experiences and learnings as well as reaffirm their commitment to be Ambassadors of Peace. They joined Pujya Swamiji, Sadhvi Bhagawati, Mohamed Safiullah Munsoor, Anders and Renata in a special water blessing ceremony, as they learned about how committed the Divine Shakti Foundation is in empowering women and children around the world by providing them with voices and the tools they need to be effective change that they seek in both their families and their communities.



# PRESIDENT OF INDIA INAUGURATES GANDHIAN *Resurgence Summit*

## **17 JANUARY 2019 PRAYAGRAJ INDIA:**

The Hon'ble President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, visited the eco-friendly Parmarth Niketan camp at the Kumbh Mela in Prayag Raj to pay tribute to the founder of modern India, Mahatma Gandhi, in honor of the 150th anniversary of his birth. He did so by inaugurating the Gandhian Resurgence Summit, which was organized by Parmarth Niketan, the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance, the Divine Shakti Foundation and the Harijan Sevak Sangh, India's oldest Gandhian organization founded by Gandhiji in 1932.

The importance of President Kovindji's visit after the first shaji snan served to highlight the timelessness of Gandhiji's teachings and his message for not just the tens of millions of pilgrims visiting the Kumbh, but also for all of India and all the world watching this event - a message of unity, of peace, of cleanliness, of environmental protection and of upliftment for all.

Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, President of Parmarth Niketan and Co-Founder of the Divine Shakti Foundation, spoke emphatically about the importance of Gandhian thought and principles for today's world. "Gandhiji," Pujya Swamiji declared, "said, 'sanitation is more important than independence.' Today is a historic day because, for the first time since our first president after independence, Hon'ble Shri Rajendra Prasad, an Indian president has come to the Kumbh Mela! In fact, today, we have a triveni sangam of our Hon'ble President, Hon'ble Prime Minister and Hon'ble Chief Minister working for a clean India, green India, healthy, united,

peaceful and prosperous India together! This is what Gandhiji fought for...this is what he believed."

Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji, President of the Divine Shakti Foundation - who led a seminar that day sharing her foundation's efforts to empower women and children to take up the mantle of Gandhiji's call for a clean and serene India - similarly highlighted the historic significance of the President's visit. "He is a leader who models Gandhian principles of simplicity, integrity, nobility of thought AND action. Gandhiji said 'without action we are not going anywhere' and our Hon'ble President is a man of great action and great direction. His life and work are a sangam (confluence) of dedication to culture, nature and future."

The three-day gathering was an important one, not just for what it commemorated and who attended, but for the depth and breadth of the outreach efforts orchestrated by both Pujya Swamiji and Sadhviji, as well as the Harijan Sevak Sangh, Divine Shakti Foundation and Global Interfaith WASH Alliance, to include Gandhian Women Leaders and Youth in the celebration and continuation of Gandhi's philosophy and practices. Several discussion and work panels geared towards the development of current practices and initiatives in the Gandhian mien were hosted by Pujya Swamiji and Sadhviji, and afforded those that attended a glimpse into the past and the hoped-for future of India.





## PARMARH NIKETAN WELCOMES

# *The Dard Aryans of Ladakh*

22 JANUARY 2019 RISHIKESH INDIA:

Vibrant colours, the beauty of nature, and uplifting waves of sound enveloped the ashram as the Dard Aryans of Ladakh made a spontaneous visit to the ashram, offering a glorious illustration of the beautiful diversity of our India. Dard Aryans are custodians of India's ancient heritage and the ashram celebrated their unique traditions and culture with a puja featuring water brought from the Indus by the Dard Aryans that was mixed with water from the sangam for a sacred water blessing ceremony emblematic of the Indian tradition of co-existence and tolerance.. In addition, Pujya Swamiji and Sadhviji were presented with traditional garlands and scarves and adorned with beautiful flowers representative of the Dard Aryans homeland in Jammu and Kashmir. The relationship with the group is particularly meaningful because one of the chief goals of the Divine Shakti Foundation is the development of programs to preserve India's cultural and family values - something it is continuing to facilitate especially with our friends from Ladakh.

Pujya Swamiji agreed, stating "So long as these connections, these relationships survive, no matter where we live, the tree of diversity will flourish and bear rich fruits. And this is what we must do. On the banks of the sangam, we stood together, resolved to live together. We are one and shall always be one. This is the message of the sangam."

Smiles abounded as Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji and Sadhviji Bhagawatiji greeted the group with open arms and open hearts. The Dard Aryans brought water from the Indus which was mixed with the water from the sangam for a sacred world water blessing ceremony at the camp, an act emblematic of the Indian tradition of co-existence and tolerance. The visit inside the ashram was concluded with the sharing of sweets and tea. Everyone then marched together to the Arail Ghat for sacred Sangam Aarti filled with more colours, the beauty of the sangam, and invigorating waves of music.





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**PRAYAGRAJ:** A group of Dard Aryans—a tribe of Jammu and Kashmir's Ladakh region known for their liberal customs and ornate costumes and believed to be the original descendants of the "pure Aryan race"—have come calling at Kumbh-2019.

This small group of Dard Aryans offered prayers, performed sacred prayers, presented a Sangam Aarti, presented a folk dance of their community and interacted with other visitors while celebrating their unique traditions and culture—all at the Kumbh mela camp of Pramarth Niketan located at Arail.

The Dard Aryans also presented traditional garlands and scarves to Swami Chidanand Saraswatiiji and Chidanand Bhagwatiiji. They also presented water of the River Indus brought by them. This water was later mixed with the water of Sangam and poured over a globe during a sacred world water blessing ceremony at the camp in an act emblematic of the Indian tradition of coexistence and tolerance. Swami Chidanand said: "So long as these connections, these relationships

survive, no matter where we live, the tree of diversity will flourish and bear rich fruits. And this is what we must do. On the banks of the Sangam, we stood together, resolved to live together. We are one and shall always be one. This is the message of Sangam."

The small group of Dard Aryans represents a community inhabiting the Dha, Hanu, Besma, Darchik and Garkone villages in Leh and Garkone districts. The villages are together called the Arayan valley, said Virendra Bangroo, documentation officer, Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) accompanying the delegation.

The tribe is considered "threatened" due to their depleting numbers, which, at present, is around 4,000. They are mainly dependent on agriculture and are "educationally and economically backward", he said. He said that the people of this region were completely different from those in other parts of Ladakh. They have unique physical features, social life, ethnic culture, and language. They consume milk and meat of goat and sheep only and follow the solar calendar for festivals and agricultural activities.







## “SHE IS THE SOLUTION: SUMMIT OF GRACE”

# *Empowering Women*

### **30 JANUARY 2019 PRAYAGRAJ INDIA:**

“She is the Solution: Summit of Grace” was a two-day conference bringing together thousands of women, men, and children, prominent female faith and political leaders to Empower Women, through an emphasis on increased access, the end of child marriage, and safe and proper resources for menstrual hygiene management. The Summit was organized by the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance, in partnership with the Divine Shakti Foundation, supported by the WSSCC and technically supported by UNICEF at the Prayagraj Kumbh Mela.

The Summit also featured the kickoff of a historic signature campaign by GIWA and UNICEF to break the Guinness Book of World Records in generating mass awareness for the cause of “Ending Child Marriage”. The campaign is for the most signatures on a flag for the message: ‘YES to Education, NO to Child Marriage’. DSF was proud to support its sister organization in the campaign. Other events during the summit included roundtable discussions, where the leaders shared the work they were presently doing in the areas of education, cultural change relative to child marriage, and

menstrual hygiene management, and further solutions; musical presentations; inspiring speeches; prayers at the Sangam; a free Bhandara for participants and area residents; and an energizing march from Parmarth Niketan Shivar to the Arail Ghat followed by a huge, enthusiastic rally.

During the inaugural session, Hon’ble Sumitra Mahajan, Speaker of the Lok Sabha, declared that child marriage is a dangerous burden: “A girl who is not physically or mentally ready, is not mature and does not understand the world must not be burdened with marriage. I come from a humble background, but I was inculcated with values that we must not do unto others what we would not like to be done unto us. Hence, let us ensure proper nutrition, education and sanitation of all women and girls. Our Shakti doesn’t need empowerment from someone else; they need to recognize that they themselves are the power.”

Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji followed that thought with a call for all to recognize the value of the divine female, saying “We are so fortunate to be here on the banks of the Sangam for Shakti – for the Divine Feminine. Today I cite the





example of the young women from Bengal who has topped IAS examinations, whose father is a rickshaw driver and mother has passed away. She and many young girls in this nation are an example for all of us of the pain and the struggles of the women in our country. To me there is no use for spirituality or religion that doesn't actively work to extinguish child marriage. I salute all the mothers and fathers who spend their every ounce of energy and money to educate their daughters. I also call on everyone to re-channel the money we spend in having grand marriages just to show off our status and wealth and invest that in educating our girls. Until we realize that our girls and women are the power we can never truly prosper as a nation."

Pujya Sadhvi Bhagawatiji, President of the Divine Shakti Foundation, said: "The solutions today come from the Self and the Samaj (community). You are the Shakti. No one will give you Shakti or empower you from outside. The greatest shakti lies within yourself. That is the shakti (the power) of your sanskaras (values/ethics) and your sanskriti (culture). Do not think less of yourselves. The Mother Goddess is within you! But there is also the responsibility of Samaj (community)

to protect you from child marriages, from the stigma around menstruation, from lack of education. Today, we come together as a Sangam with the sankalp (pledge) that no Shaadi (marriage) before Shiksha (education) and no more days of missed school due to lack of access to menstrual hygiene management!"

In a rousing speech to the gathered crowd, Pujya Swami Ramdevji said, "Don't wait for someone else to protect you, you should become strong enough physically, mentally and spiritually so that you can defend yourself. Don't let anyone tell you your monthly periods are dirty because without menstruation there can be no creation." He led everyone in a pledge against child marriage and adamantly advocated for education for our girl children. He shared that every young girl should be so educated and established in any profession that she chooses such that she, herself, is an inspiration and example to others.

# INAUGURAL SANGAM SAMVAD *Conclave at Kumbh Mela*



**1 FEBRUARY 2019 ALLAHABAD, INDIA:** The grand inauguration of a series of Sangam Samvad dialogues took place at the Parmarth Niketan Camp, Sector 18, Kumbh Mela, and brought spiritual leaders, academicians, scholars, policy experts, and Think Tank researchers, together to discuss India culture, economics, public policy and governance. Organised by the Kumbh India Think Council, in association with the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance and the Divine Shakti Foundation, it began with a traditional lamp lighting and concluded with a pledge and a vote of thanks. The theme for the samvad (dialogue) - set on the sacred banks of the Sangam of the Yamuna, Ganga, and Saraswati - was Hindu dharma or Sanatana dharma.

The Chief Guest for the conference was Sh. K. Rajasekharan, Hon. Governor (Mizoram), Chair of the Sangam Samvad Inaugural, and he was joined by an esteemed group of leaders including Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, President, Parmarth Niketan and Pujya Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji, President, Divine Shakti Foundation and Secretary General, of Global Interfaith WASH Alliance.

Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji said: "What should be the nectar that comes from this Kumbh. This is what this Sangam Samvad - our dialogue and

discourse is about. Today we have everything set: TV set, sofa set, diamond set but we are still upset. Here at the Kumbh Mela we have nothing set but still millions of people are joyful and peaceful. This is what we need today. We need a revolution in our way of thinking and our way of being which is more in line with our planet and with humanity. This is a way of life; this divine inspiration is the nectar that emerges from the Kumbh."

Sh. K. Rajasekharan said: "There is life in Triveni. There is rejuvenation in Triveni. There is hope in Triveni. If there is one place on earth where dreams have found a home, it is India. India has many things to teach; the world has many things to learn. The message of Kumbh Mela is rejuvenate, rekindle, reform, and resubmit. The message of Sanatana Dharma is transforming the world into a better place. This Kumbh Samvad carves out a niche which bridges the ancient and the modern, the best which has been known and thought in the world."

Sadhvi Bhagawati said: "Kumbh Darshan is Bharat Darshan. What draws 150 million people here from all over the world is faith, spirituality and culture. That is truly the greatness of India. India is truly the Vishwaguru, the one bringing the true light to the world."





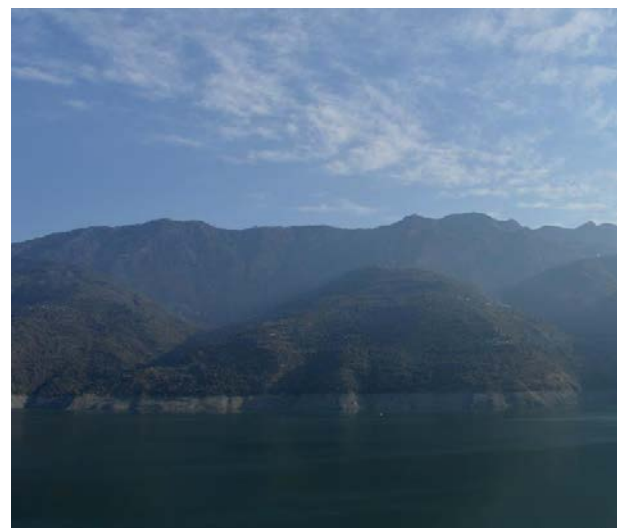
## INAUGURATION OF *Sanskritik Vidwat Kumbh*

**16 FEBRUARY 2019 PRAYAGRAJ INDIA:** The Hon'ble Governor of West Bengal, Shri Keshari Nath Tripathiji & former Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, Hon'ble Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan, inaugurated the first day of the Sanskritik Vidwat Kumbh at Parmarth Niketan with the blessings of Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, President of Parmarth Niketan, and Pujya Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji, President of the Divine Shakti Foundation. The three-day event was organized by Sanskar Bharti and Parmarth Niketan and brought together scholars, artists, filmmakers and writers for a Kumbh of Thoughts and Human Values centered on the importance of Indian culture, ideas and traditions. Attendees spent the opening session brainstorming ways to rekindle, reinvigorate and uphold Indian culture by focusing on the world of music and the role of cinema in society; the media; and, the rich literary traditions of India. There was also a special panel devoted to women's

empowerment, led by Pujya Sadhviji of the Divine Shakti Foundation, which provides women and children worldwide with the voices and the tools necessary to be a source of effective change that they want to see in the world.

In that panel, Sadhviji shared with the enthusiastic participants just how important women are in the preservation of our histories, and in the assurance that the important parts of those histories are protected, nurtured and cherished for future generations. "It is women," she declared, "that protect Nature. Women that guarantee our Future. And, women that protect our Culture. And, that culture, that tradition that they're protecting is vitally important to us as a nation, and as a people. That's why this Kumbh is so amazing..."





## TEHRI LAKE *Festival 2019*

### **27 FEBRUARY 2019 TEHRI INDIA:**

HH Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji and Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji, President of DSF, were warmly invited to inaugurate the 2019 Tehri Lake Festival - the largest lake festival in Asia.

DSF was critical in organising this trip along with the State Government, keeping the focus of the festival on protecting and preserving the natural

environment while empowering Himalayan women and children to be active agents of change for that cause in their families and communities. It helped organize a beautiful dance drama by its Environmental Preservation team, led the Ganga Aart on the beautiful lake, and pledged with women and Tribal Elders to protect all of India's sacred rivers and the divine feminine in all its forms.



# SHAKTI: POWER OF THE DIVINE FEMININE

## *In a Yogic life*



**3 MARCH 2019 RISHIKESH INDIA:** The power of women and Divine Shakti took center stage at Day 3 of the International Yoga festival for a workshop organized by the Divine Shakti Foundation that included words of ancient and modern wisdom from International Yoga Festival Director and President of the Divine Shakti Foundation, Pujya Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji; Dr Vandana Shiva; Gurmukh Kaur Khalsa; Seane Corn; Laura Plumb; Abuela Tonalmiti; Cheryl Angel; Martina Mamani, and a host of Indigenous Elders, Renowned Yogacharyas and others, all of whom shared their take on the power of Shakti, the challenges facing women in the Yogic world and the ways women can use their gifts as tools to embody and channel Shakti, the uniquely feminine energy.

Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji, Director of the International Yoga Festival, when asked how to channel Shakti in one's daily life, said: "The challenge isn't the external pressure to be all. It's the internal pressure to be enough, to be whole, to be complete. The energy of the divine feminine, which is Shakti, is the energy of expansion and connection...both men and women can embody that energy, it is there for both. Mother Ganga invites us to flow from our authentic source, letting go of the false identities and letting in the divine grace that says: I am Shakti."

Renowned Kundalini Yoga Master from the United States, Gurmukh Kaur Khalsa, concurred, stating that "As a woman, you are the first teacher on this earth for your children. Think

about how you become that presence that can change the energy of any situation with the Shakti within you. Meditate to find that Shakti - that energy. Once you roll up your mat and put it in the corner, ask, "How can I serve today?" Later, Dr. Vandana Shiva, Founder of Navdanya, an Indian-based non-governmental organisation which promotes biodiversity conservation, organic farming, the rights of farmers, and the process of seed saving, shared, "Mahatma Gandhi said a daily prayer, 'make me more feminine'- in terms of cultivating the caring, the sharing, the giving, and the loving that the feminine embodies. The enlargement of potential is the divine feminine and to me is most visible in the seed. There are no things in the world there is only potential and expression of this oneness, this potential, this diversity."

Vibrating with the power of Shakti, the series ended with words from Abuela Tonalmiti, a 91-year old Elder from a tribe in Mexico, who said: "To wake up as warriors of Mother Earth, we should never be separated. We must feel the love and procreate, and work together." With a voice of pure energy that erupted from her body, Abuela led the audience in a unifying song about the strength of women. The panel members joined together in community and communion to offer Dr Vandana Shiva and the indigenous elders a sacred rudraksh saplings, the signature green offering of Parmarth Niketan. Together they performed a water blessing ceremony and pledged to work together to be guardians of the divine feminine - of the sacred creation.



## AIIMS RISHIKESH SYMPOSIUM ON MEDITATION & *Cardiovascular Diseases*

### 10 MARCH 2019 RISHIKESH INDIA:

A beautiful conference on the role of Medicine in Prevention and Treatment of Cardiovascular Diseases took place at AIIMS Rishikesh, inaugurated by Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji, Dr HR Nagendraji, Chancellor of SVASYA, Dr Subodh Tiwariji, CEO, Kaivalyadam, and others, presided over by Dr Ravi Kantji, Director of AIIMS Rishikesh, Dr Indranill Basu, Cardiologist from America and Prof Bhanu Dugal, Head of Department, Cardiology, AIIMS Rishikesh. Pujya Swamiji gave a deeply inspiring and touching speech, "You are sitting in the land of science and spirituality. This land teaches us that through yoga and meditation we learn not only why to live but also how and how much to live. When you meditate you don't steal, you

don't hurt. We can manage the Self but we need to talk about the stress. I always say meditation is the best medication for all agitations."

Said Sadhvi Bhagawati, whose Divine Shakti Foundation is deeply-involved in holistic health care for all and particularly for women and children, "I am deeply impressed by such a conference – how we can connect body and mind. That's almost the text-book definition of holistic medicine. There is an entire new field of psycho-neural immunology that illustrates how psychology is connected to neurology and immunology. Science is just beginning to uncover what our rishis, sages and scriptures have told as for so many years – as you think, so you are; as you feel and believe, so we see."



# CELEBRATING A LIFE IN SERVICE: *Sadhviji's Divine Birthday*



## **14 MARCH 2019 VEERPUR INDIA:**

Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji's beautiful birthday celebrations, organised by Divine Shakti Foundation, were blessed by Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, as Parmarth's Rishikumars, Sevaks and our global family came together to celebrate and rejoice. Everybody shared their unique expression of their love and gratitude for Sadhviji, sometimes with flowers, gifts or cards and sometimes just with their experiences.

In honour of her birthday, our divine sevaks and Parmarth Niketan family joined together at the Parmarth Organic Farm and School in Veerpur to wish her a green birthday with a beautiful, organic and green birthday salad and fresh snacks, pakoras and chai from the farm. Everyone planted several saplings along the premises in honor of Pujya Swamiji's message of celebrating birthdays and festivals

as green ones.

During the evening Ganga Aarti, amidst a beautiful sanskrit birthday song, a fragrant elachi mala - for the sweet fragrance of divinity she brings to the people and the environment around her - as well as a beautiful shawl and a sacred Rudraksha sapling were given to her as a symbol, reflecting that just as the tree gives to the world ceaselessly so too does Sadhviji's life of service.

The celebration is a testimony to how intertwined the life of Sadhviji and the work of Divine Shakti Foundation are. Both are committed to service of the common good for humanity and the planet, and both are deeply devoted to empowering women and children across India and around the world. The event was not just a celebration, in fact, it was the sharing of an inspiring life!



## SADHVIJI AT THE UN COMMISSION *On the Status of Women*

**21 MARCH 2019 NEW YORK CITY:** Sadhvi Bhagawatiiji was at the United Nations for the 63rd Convention on the Status of Women and to speak at three events on issues related to women in India. The first was an event organized by WSSCC with the Governments of Spain and Germany on Access to Menstrual Health as Public Service: The Lived Experiences of Women and Girls. The second was an event organized by Islamic Relief World-Wide and Side by Side on Stories Of Faith: Social Protection, Stigma &

Safe Havens. And, the third was organized by UNFPA on Women's Leadership in the world of faith and religion. The event focused on sharing experiences as women in leadership — heartfelt stories, challenges, responses and solutions.

Sadhviiji expressed her great joy and honor to represent the Divine Shakti Foundation and the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance and to share the work being done for women and girls in India.



# SADHVI BHAGAWATIJI JOINS WALK FOR WATER

## *On World Water Day in West Hollywood, California*



### **22 MARCH 2019 WEST HOLLYWOOD:**

On World Water Day, Sadhviji joined a Walk for Water on the famous Hollywood Boulevard in Hollywood, California organized by the Thirst Project, an organization founded by Los Angeles youth to help bring clean water to people around the world. For the walk, all the participants carried large water cans for two miles, demonstrating how so much of the world lives — having to walk many miles to collect water for their daily needs.

Sadhviji had fruitful conversations with Seth Maxwell, the CEO of Thirst Project, and Evan Wesley regarding the work they are doing with youth across the United States and also regarding the projects they are doing in India and Africa. She congratulated them on their vision as youth to use their time, talent and technology to help serve the world and she offered that the Divine Shakti Foundation is always there to help with these efforts and especially to help them expand and deepen their work in India.

## EARTH DAY CELEBRATED:

# *Beautification of the Rishikesh Rail Station*

**23 APRIL 2019 RISHIKESH INDIA:** On Earth Day, the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance came together with Swarovski WaterSchools, Divine Shakti Foundation, Parmarth Niketan Ashram and other local schools and organizations to organize a beautification campaign at the Rishikesh rail station. Hundreds of school students from across the region converged to paint and beautify it in honour of International Mother Earth Day. They were joined and guided by artists from across India and around the world to send a unified message of love for the natural wonders of the Ganga and the Himalayas through the power of art and community.

Blessing the occasion were HH Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, President of Parmarth Niketan and Co-Founder of the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance and Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji, President of the Divine Shakti Foundation and Secretary General of GIWA. Joining to show their support for this inspiring initiative were Mayor of Rishikesh, Smt Anita Mamgain, Chief Reservation Officer, Shri AK Sharmaji,

and other dignitaries.

Said HH Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, "Today, children from across the region have been empowered to share their own dreams and their own themes for a happier, healthier world through their own paint and inspiration. There can be a Plan A and Plan B but there is no Planet B. Let us make this Earth Day a Worth Day by pledging to protect, preserve and serve our home – Mother Earth - for the well-being of all beings and all species."

Sadhvi Bhagawati added, "On Mother Earth Day, let us remember that Mother Earth is our sacred, living, breathing, grace-filled home, and all those with whom we share this glorious planet are our family. Let us pledge to care for them as our own! Art is something we do from the Heart. It is a wonderful example of how we can do our part to make our communities cleaner, greener and more beautiful."









## 2019 PaRD GENERAL *Assembly of Members*

**8 MAY 2019 COPENHAGEN:** Sadhvi Bhagawatiji, President of the Divine Shakti Foundation, attended the annual General Assembly of PaRD, the International Partnership for Religion and Sustainable Development, of which she serves on the Steering Committee.

PaRD is an internationally-renowned organization aimed at affecting a positive impact of the combined-efforts of three pillars of organizational agencies: FBOs (Faith-Based Organizations) offering religious values; national governments and governmental agencies, including development wings such as the United States Agency for International Development, offering civic values; and multilateral organizations, such as the United Nations and World Bank, offering collaborative and associative value. This General Assembly meeting, hosted by the Danish government, was called in the spirit of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and focused on discussions including women

empowerment, education, health and bringing faith based organisations together for sustainable development - all of which are cornerstones of the work being done by the Divine Shakti Foundation, for which Sadhvi Bhagawati serves as President.

“It is wonderful to be in Copenhagen for the General Assembly of the PaRD Secretariat,” stated Pujya Sadvhiji during a break in the proceedings. “I’m honored to serve on PaRD’s Steering committee, and am so proud of the work being done by our partnerships for sustainable development, which include the governments of 12 nations, the United Nations, the World Bank, the African Union and the King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue. And I’m so very grateful to the government of Denmark and the Danish mission for hosting us in this beautiful city. It’s been a very productive session!”



# MOTHERS DAY CELEBRATES *Shakti at Parmarth*



**12 MAY 2019 RISHIKESH INDIA:** On Mother's Day, Divine Shakti Foundation volunteers gathered together in Parmarth Niketan for a beautiful celebration of the Divine Mother Goddess, creating a beautiful bridge between the East and West on the banks of Maa Ganga. In the Indian tradition almost every day is Mother's Day, but nonetheless this celebration gave us yet another special opportunity to emphasize and celebrate the beautiful presence of our Mothers. We began with a special puja of the Divine Mother Goddess Lakshmi, the giver of the true wealth and prosperity in our lives, which is in our spiritual connection and in recognising God's grace and blessings.

DSF brought everyone together for the ceremony, and Pujya Swamiji personally blessed all of the divine Shaktis - the mothers on the Seva team - with tilak and His divine touch. Joining us on this special occasion was Shri Bala Iyerji, Vice President of Jio and his wife Mahalakshmi.

In the evening, at the Ganga Aarti, everyone offered their love, devotion and commitment to serve, preserve and protect our sacred Mother Goddess, Mother Nature and Mother Earth, all of which are the embodiment of the divine feminine...the sacred maternal energy





## INAUGURATION OF *Green Shri Ram Katha*

**15 MAY 2019 RISHIKESH INDIA:**

“This Katha is dedicated to Rashtriya, environmental preservation and protecting the divine feminine and our sacred rivers.” With these words, HH Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji inaugurated a month-long sacred Katha committed to promoting nation-building, sustainable living and making our world pollution-free.

Pujya Swamiji shared, “We have discussed with the Hon’ble Governor the opportunity we have to make the Kumbh Mela a Plastic-Free one. We have discussed the installation of clean water filtration systems, such as the Parmarth PiLo Pani

Systems that are being installed in many pilgrimage sites across India. We would be installing two specifically in Agra to be inaugurated by our Hon’ble Governor who was former Mayor of Agra. We also look forward to working with her to take-up the environmental conservation cause simultaneously with women and girl empowerment and education.”

The inauguration of this divine event began with the Hon’ble Governor of Uttarakhand, Smt Baby Rani Mauryaji, and Pujya Sant Rajendra Dasji gracing the occasion and joining Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji and Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji in a traditional lamp



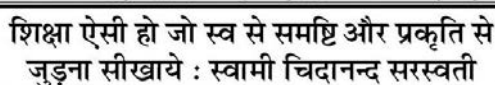


lighting ceremony. Afterward, Smt Baby Rani Mauryaji said, “Maa Ganga might flow as a river amongst us but we must never forget that she is the Divine Mother Herself, granting us the precious gifts of clean water, clean air, clean environment & fresh oxygen. It is therefore our prime duty to preserve and protect her. With this divine month long Shri Ram Katha, inspired by Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji, and recited by Pujya Sant Murlidharji, let us all become the vessels and the instruments through which a New India, a clean, sustainable and resilient India is created. If we take a pledge of this nature from the banks of Mother Ganga, it will not only become true but will play a vital role in establishing India as a world leader for others to follow in its divine example.”

Pujya Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji, President of the Divine Shakti Foundation, gave her speech in Hindi, sharing “It is such a beautiful coincidence that, on the United Nations’ International Day of

Light and the International Day of Living Together in Peace, we have the beginning of the Shri Ram Katha. Bhagawan Shri Ram’s life teaches us to live in the light and to be the light for others. When we can do so then we are not only in peace within but we exude and manifest peace wherever we go.” She added, “It is such a great beginning to have this Katha be inaugurated by the State Governor, whom I see as the Mother of the State - the Divine Shakti. I look forward to working together hand in hand and heart to heart to empower the women and girls in this state and in Uttar Pradesh for Menstrual Hygiene Management and improved WASH. This is the need of the hour where we not only take the lesson from Bhagawan Shri Ram but the divine example of Mata Sita and bring their teachings in our lives. In this way let us purify not only our minds and our hearts but also work together to ensure our bodies and our environment is clean and pure for all.”





मानसिक, शारीरिक, भावनात्मक, जैविक, सत और विद्यालयमध्य विकास से है। शिक्षा के माध्यम से



# INAUGURATION OF UPGRADED *Computer Centre at Parmarth*

“21st-Century children need holistic education,” Pujya Sadhviji stated. “While they need to be rooted in Sanskrit and our spiritual-cultural values they also must be knowledgeable about English as well as computers. This computer centre is a place to provide that understanding and knowledge, and to give the students the tools necessary to engage with people and institutions across the globe.”



# IT'S TIME FOR ACTION TOWARDS *Menstrual Hygiene management*



**28 MAY 2019 RISHIKESH INDIA:** DSF partnered with GIWA to lead and plan a unique Menstrual Hygiene Day filled with inspiring and incredible activities and initiatives when volunteers, pilgrims, devotees and Parmarth Rishikumars joined together to take part in the Red Dot Challenge sharing that Menstruation Matters and that the time to act is now. They also pledged on the Water Supply & Sanitation Collaborative Council's innovative Menstrual Hygiene Wheel, led by Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji and Pujya Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji, to break the stigma and silence associated with menstrual hygiene, offering a special MHM bracelet as a symbol of our commitment to work together towards this vital cause. Thereafter, Pujya Swamiji and Sadhvi Bhagawati graced the month-long Shri Ram Katha and gave a revolutionary talk and led a pledge for menstruation from a stage in which traditionally these topics have never

been brought forward but with the support of Pujya Sant Murlidharji Maharaj the month long Katha is becoming a source of great inspiration.

Later in the evening, Pujya Swamiji and Sadhviji also discussed this issue and the actions DSF and GIWA are committed to taking in a special dinner with the Hon'ble US Ambassador Mr Kenneth Juster at the Roosevelt House. They offered him a hand-made, eco-friendly pad that our women and girls from our vocational training & Women for WASH programmes are going to be learning to make. Pujya Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji set the tone in the LIVE Ganga Aarti ceremony on the eve of MH Day 2019, reminding us to uplift and empower our women & girls, to embrace the divine life-giving creative power in women, which should not be seen as dirty or as a taboo!

# WORLD

## *No Tobacco Day*

**31 MAY 2019 RISHIKESH INDIA:** Students from various schools and institutions in Rishikesh rallied for the cause of saying “No to Tobacco and Yes to Health and Life,” and Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji and Pujya Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji were an integral part of that rally. DSF hosted the eager youth at Parmarth Niketan and offering inspiration, guidance and blessings during a worldwide broadcast of the event. Both Pujya Swamiji and Pujya Sadhviji are active in No Tobacco campaigns around the world in their roles as Founder and President, respectively, of the Divine Shakti Foundation, which acts as the voice and the sponsor for women and children - two of the groups most-impacted by tobacco - across the globe.

Pujya Swamiji shared some terrifying statistics with the assembled group and millions of global listeners: “Worldwide, there are 8 million people tobacco-related deaths annually, with some 1.2 million in India alone. Therefore, remember that Tobacco kills. People understand tobacco’s effects on lungs, but not everyone thinks of its effects on the heart. Did you know that close to 6.5 trillion cigarettes are sold each year...18 billion each day...and, more than 1 billion people are spoiling their health by

consuming them. India produces 10 billion cigarettes, and consumes 50 – 72 million kg of tobacco in various forms!”

Pujya Sadhviji shared, “Why do we eat food? Because it tastes good...it smells good...it makes us feel good. But why do we smoke? What’s the flavor of tobacco? What’s the taste of tobacco? What flavor is it that makes us want to do harm to our body? We must learn that we can no longer harm our body as the body is the first temple. Let us keep the body clean and free from pollution.”

After the children were awarded for the best slogans and paintings, Pujya Swamiji and Pujya Sadhviji distributed Rudraksha saplings to them, and shared that the oxygen generated by the trees adds to the planet’s and our health. Pujya Swamiji concluded by asking each of them to commit to spreading the message about the harmful effects of tobacco and smoking. “One person can motivate ten to eleven other people with a simple resolution to boycott tobacco. With this live broadcast, we are motivating millions around the world. Choose life, not Tobacco.”







# SADHVI BHAGAWATIJI

## *Graces The G20 Interfaith Summit*



**10 JUNE 2019 TOKYO:** Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiiji was a respected speaker at the G20 Interfaith Forum in Tokyo, Japan in a high-level panel entitled “Ending Hunger, Water as Life” on the theme of “Food and Water: Resources for Life.” Setting the context of the panel, it was shared that over 820 million people suffer from hunger, 780 million have no access to an improved water source, and sanitation is poor for some 2.5 billion people. Food and water have especially critical importance to survival in times of crisis. This session built on prior G20 Interfaith exploration of faith in famine emergencies, looking to broader food security insights and highlighting the crucial issues around water and sanitation.

Addressing the leaders Sadhvi Bhagawatiiji shared, “It is estimated that by 2040 the world will have half the water it needs. At the current rate of over-consumption, over-extraction and over-exploitation we are looking at a major water crisis. More than our global water and food shortage, however, there is a global consciousness

shortage. This is the great opportunity and challenge that lies ahead of our faith leaders, faith communities, and faith based organisations to lead the way for a better, more sustainable future.”

“One of the ways that the Divine Shakti Foundation is doing just that,” she continued, “is by enlisting the help of women and children - the two groups most-impacted by the water, food and sanitation crises that we all face - to act as leaders in their communities and to guide those communities towards both a greater understanding of the needed solutions and the development of programs and processes to achieve those solutions.”

Sadhvi Bhagawatiiji also had a beautiful meeting with Rt. Hon. David Cameron, Former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom and thanked him, once again, for hosting the launch of the Encyclopedia of Hinduism at Queen Elizabeth Centre in London in October 2014 during his leadership as the Prime Minister.





## RELEASE OF MOTHER GANGA: *The Holy River*

**12 JUNE 2019 RISHIKESH INDIA:** On the auspicious occasion of Ganga Dusshera – the day that Mother Ganga flowed onto Earth - *Mother Ganga: The Holy River*, a new book by Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji, President of the Divine Shakti Foundation and Secretary-General of the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance, was launched at Parmarth Niketan ashram by HH Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswati, Spiritual Leader and President of Parmarth Niketan, Pujya Shri Muralidharji, renowned kathakar, and other dignitaries. The book shares Pujya Sadhviji's journey to the banks of Mother Ganga and reminds readers the crucial importance of protecting the divine feminine in all her forms, especially in the form of Mother Nature and Mother Ganga, which is at the core of the key objectives of DSF.

The launch took place during a huge Shri Rama katha celebration and was broadcast live across not only India but more than 100 countries around the world. Joining in the launch were Shri Narendra Kumarji and Shri Ashish Gosain, of Haranand books, New Delhi, the publisher of *Mother Ganga*, and Pujya Sadhvi Bhagawati's earlier book, *From Illness to Wellness*. The new book, a compilation of articles that Sadhviji has written during her twenty-three years living in India on the banks of Ganga, was presented to the Honorable

Cabinet Minister of Jal Shakti (Water Resources), Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawatji on the following day, June 13, the auspicious day of Nirjala Ekadashi.

In discussing her work, Pujya Sadhviji stated that "it was 23 years ago, while pursuing a PhD in the United States, that I came to India and sat on the banks of Ma Ganga. I didn't know much about India or about Ganga but, sitting there on the banks of Ganga's rushing waters, I was transformed. Mother Ganga became my life. I stayed in India and found peace, not in the comfort of physical things, but in the lap of Ma Ganga. I have seen how She touches and transforms so many people...It's so very special for me to release this new book on Ganga Dusshera as not only is it the auspicious day that Mother Ganga flowed onto Earth, but it is also the day I took official sanyas diksha, in 2000. I am beyond grateful to Mother Ganga for grabbing my heart and pulling me to Her waters and transforming me with Her darshan when I arrived, and Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji for blessing my life with His presence and grace. My great thanks also go out to Shri Narendra Kumar ji and Shri Ashish Gosain for their vision and their invaluable assistance in seeing that this book was published."



## ACCELERATE PEACE AT *Stanford University*

**29 JUNE 2019 STANFORD, CA USA:** Sadvhiji recently spoke at the Accelerate Peace conference at Stanford University, organized by United Religions Initiative and the Hoover Institute at Stanford. The theme was Women's Empowerment and the Environment. "Women are the Earth!" she declared. "Women's empowerment and environmental protection are not two isolated themes. Women are Mother Earth and Mother nature. . . Interlinked as One. . . The same myth of separation that enables us to rape the earth is the same myth of separation that enables us to rape our mothers, sisters and daughters. Respect for women is respect for the Earth. Justice for women is justice for the Earth."

"Not only does the repression and oppression of women worldwide need to be addressed and rectified," she continued, "but also the oppression and suppression of the Feminine in both women and men needs to be rectified if we are going to truly accelerate peace in our societies. Sadvhiji shared about the inextricably linked oneness of women and the Earth and also the work our Divine Shakti Foundation and the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance is doing for women's empowerment and the environment. Everyone beautifully join together in a pledge at the end, as they raised their arms together, standing together for our mother, our Mother Earth and our Mother Nature."



# KOFI ANNAN UNGA FAITH *Briefing in New York*



**18 JULY 2019 NEW YORK CITY:** Puja Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji, Secretary-General of the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance, with its Secretariat at Parmarth Niketan, Rishikesh, India; President of the Divine Shakti Foundation, who is the voice and support for women and children worldwide; and, Vice-Chair of the United Nations Interfaith Advisory Council on Religion, was one of high-level leaders that spoke at the Kofi Annan UNGA Faith Briefing in New York recently. This year's briefing focused on how FBOs can effectively partner with UN entities to address issues related to women's empowerment, children's rights, and climate change.

During her presentation, Puja Sadhviji explained that the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance (GIWA), along with its sister organisation DSF, is leading a multi-faith partnership that is serving for improved water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), especially

for women and children who are in need for these services the most.

"Through the power of this partnership, we have triggered change in the hearts, minds, and behaviors of hundreds of millions of people. We are here today to celebrate and emphasize the power of these partnerships that not only make each of our organizations individually stronger, but that collectively interweave and interlink our organizations in such a way that we can extend our impact to our sisters and brothers around the world – and leave not only no child behind, but leave no one behind." Puja Sadhviji and the other co-chairs of the Advisory Council had a brief meeting with Ms. Henrietta Fore, the UNICEF Executive Director, in which Ms. Fore expressed her appreciation for the work that is being done in India, and Puja Sadhviji conveyed her thanks for the UNICEF partnership in this efforts.

## RETREAT 2019

# *Guru Purnima*

**28 JULY 2019 DALE HOLLOW LAKE STATE PARK, KY, USA:** Over the course of three peace-filled days, Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji and Sadhvi Bhagawati Saraswatiji led a beautiful Guru Purnima retreat at a stately resort overlooking a gorgeous lake in the Dale Hollow State Park, Kentucky. The weekend included multiple satsangs each day that covered topics as varied as achieving conscious dharmic relations, women's empowerment, the importance of peace in the family, faith versus blind faith, and dealing with stress, depression and anxiety. Participants also had many opportunities to ask questions and to have a one-on-one audience with Swamiji and Sadhviji.

Each satsang began with an inspiring guided meditation led by Sadhviji, and included instructions from Pujya Swamiji on the correct pronunciations of significant mantras and verses from the Bhagavad Gita. The program also included early morning yoga classes and nature

walks in the wooded areas surrounding the retreat center. Particularly special were the daily Ganga Aarti ceremonies that were held at sunset overlooking the Dale Hollow Lake.

The Divine Shakti Foundation, of which Pujya Swamiji is the Chairman and Co-Founder and Pujya Sadhviji is the President, organized the gathering, and shared with the group all of the incredible and purposeful work that the foundation is doing, along with the Global Interfaith WASH Alliance (GIWA) and Ganga Action Parivar (GAP), in providing women, children and communities with the tools and the voice that they need to be the change that is needed in the world.

The site was well chosen because it allowed for meditation and quiet contemplation in proximity to much natural beauty. It allowed those in attendance to act on Pujya Swamiji's words when he says, "Come to Nature, Be with Nature and Change your Nature."









**HH PUJYA SWAMI  
SHUKDEVANAND  
SARASWATIJI**

*Founder of Parmarth Niketan*



*“You have the power to bring  
the song of peace to the world.”*

**- Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswati Ji**



# *Our Inspired Initiatives*



## GLOBAL INTERFAITH WASH ALLIANCE

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**brings together the world's faith**  
as allies in ensuring everyone,  
everywhere has access to safe,  
life-giving **Water, Sanitation and**  
**Hygiene (WASH).**

[www.WashAlliance.org](http://www.WashAlliance.org)



## INTERNATIONAL YOGA FESTIVAL

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**Join us annually from March 1 - 7** for an inspiring  
on the banks of the Ganges River in the lap of the  
Himalayas in Rishikesh, the birthplace of yoga.

[www.InternationalYogaFestival.org](http://www.InternationalYogaFestival.org)



## GANGA ACTION PARIVAR

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is a global family dedicated to the  
**preservation of the river Ganga** and  
Her tributaries in their free-flowing  
and pristine state.

[www.GangaAction.org](http://www.GangaAction.org)



## DIVINE SHAKTI FOUNDATION

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is dedicated to the holistic well being of  
**women, their children, and orphaned/abandoned**  
**children**, and to all of Mother Nature.

[www.DivineShaktiFoundation.org](http://www.DivineShaktiFoundation.org)



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