

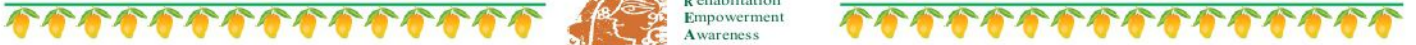


10th Year of ...



DRAUPADI
R ehabilitation
E mpowerment
A wareness
M edi-care
TRUST

...Empowering at Every Level



H.H. Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswati
President, Parmarth Niketan

Blessings from Pujya Swamiji for the Draupadi Trust Foundation

Dear Divine Souls of the Draupadi Trust Foundation,

From the start of this year with the nation being so moved by the Nirabhya case, to the largest human gathering of the world - the Kumbha Mela - which brought increased awareness and focus on the dire state of our sacred rivers, to the recent tragic flooding in Uttarakhand, this year has truly been dedicated to Shakti for Shakti and Shakti for Prakriti. It has been a year that heralds in a decade of Shakti, in which the crucial need is for the Divine Shakti (the Divine Feminine) to come together and join hands in protecting and preserving our environment and our world.

Draupadi is the epitome of Shakti for India. She is not simply a mythological heroine. Rather, but her story is one to which every woman feels connected and inspired by. She is the symbol of the power that women have in transforming their society and bringing light and hope back to humanity even in the darkest and toughest of situations.

The neglect of Prakriti, the unchecked pollution and exploitation of our trees, our mountains, our air, and our sacred rivers is no different from the neglect and abuse of women. This year on Ganga's birthday (Ganga Dusshera - June 18th), She gave us an ultimatum: "Care for me, care for my mountains, my trees and my tributaries and I will bring you life and liberation. Deforest my mountainsides, pollute the air such that the warmth melts the glaciers, dam and divert me, and you will reap the consequences." Is this not the story of Draupadi and her *cheerharan*? Ma Ganga's *aachal* that was supposed to be kept protected by greenery and forests, her river bed left untouched and unpolluted have been for years been deforested, exploited and threatened. The Himalayas have been left bare and the river has been so severely exploited that all that remains in Her river bed is sewage and waste.

Yet just like Draupadi, there was a point when the divine, nurturing shakti had to take Her *rudra roop* and teach a difficult lesson: the seeds that you sow will give their own fruit. For a decade, we have sown seeds of deforesting, damming, polluting, neglecting and abusing Mother Earth and Mother Ganga. We are, therefore, reaping the fruits of environmental catastrophe after catastrophe. Now, Mother Ganga has given us an important message, an ultimatum: Nature is not ours to objectify, use and abuse. Mother Nature brings life when we treat Her with respect, care and love. But nature neglected and abused wreaks Her own havoc upon Her abusers.

Therefore, as we celebrate a decade of the wonderful work that Draupadi Trust has undertaken for the rehabilitation, empowerment, awareness and medi-care of marginalized women and youth as well as the cultural heritage of India. It is time that we come together as one team with one common theme to protect the divine feminine – in all Her forms -- and the true heritage of our land, shaping the future into one of respect, care nourishment and nurturance.

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



Swami Chidanand Saraswati

Parmarth Niketan, P.O. Swargashram, Rishikesh (Himalayas), Uttarakhand -- 249304, India
Phone: 0135-2440088, 2440077 Fax: 0135-2440066, Email: swamiji@parmarth.com

