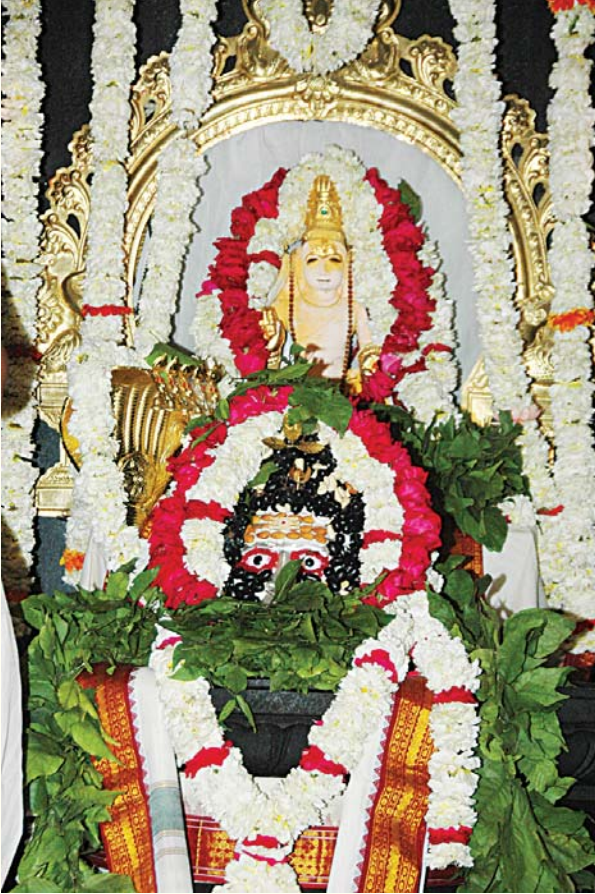


Mahasivaratri Celebrations at Dayananda Ashram, Rishikesh (Uttarakhand)



Maha Sivaratri celebrations at Dayananda Ashram, Rishikesh started with Akhanda Nama sankirtan of "Om Nama Sivaya".at the temple of Lord Gangadhareswara at 6.30 a.m. on the 12th of February, 2010 and continued up to 4.30 p.m

Nine groups were formed for chanting akhanda nama. Each group had seven persons with one leader. Br. Rama was the leader of all the nine group. Each group was given time of one hour for the chant.

Pujya Swamiji joined the chant for more than two hours and this added great enthusiasm and devotional fervour to the chant.

When Pujya Swamiji was chanting 'Om Nama Sivaya' to the accompaniment of harmonium, tabla and mrudangam, the entire atmosphere of the Ashram reverberated. Pujya Swamiji chanted in different ragas, and it enhanced the effect of the nama japa.

Darshanaji and Somyaji, two eminent Karnataka singers from Chennai joined the chant. Their melodious voice and classical manner of chant added further fervour to the Akhanda Japa.

Maha Sivaratri Puja started at 4-30 p.m. at the end of Akhanda Japa. Swami Paravidyanandji from Coimbatore led the eleven times chanting of Sri Rudram and other suktas. When chanting was completed for the fifth time, Pujya Swamiji joined the chant and remained at the temple till the end of Puja at about 9-00 p.m. As many as 150 persons were present at the temple.

