

## Annual spiritual camp of Arsha Vidya Tirtha, Jaipur

The Annual Arsha Vidya Tirtha, Jaipur spiritual camp was held at Rishikesh Ashrama from June 2-8, 2013 under the auspices of Swami Brahmaparananda Saraswatiji. About 100 devotees from Jaipur, Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Meerut, Ghaziabad, 20 AVT Jaipur Chhatralayam children, some of their parents, Sandhya Gurukulam caretakers from villages of Rajasthan - Makdadev, Nainbara, Manas, participated. The Ashrama on the bank of Ganges added to the grandeur of the environment.

The day commenced at 5.15 a.m. with Rudrabhishekam in the temple. AVT children chanted the Rudram rhythmically and in a melodious voice. It was followed by the dhyanam with *Guru Stotram* conducted by Swamiji. The devotees' went into a transcendental mode with this knowledge of meditation.

Then wisdom from the Third Adhyayam — **Karma Yoga - The Eternal Duties of Human Being**—from Srimad Bhagwad Gita (*all evils like fear and delusion which are responsible for throwing the jiva in to the whirl-pool of birth and death, are offshoots of desire for transitory materials and luxuries. Therefore, O men, abandoning this morbid desire, always work for the welfare of the world. By this way your efforts will be beneficially joyful to all*) and comprehension of Stotrams, which Swamiji elaborated for us in a simplified but explicit manner charged us all up!

**Lord Krishna has given us the precious treasure to ponder on:**

*na hi kashchit kshanamapi jaatu  
tishthatyakarmakrit*

*kaaryate hyavashah karma sarvah  
prakritjair gunaih || 3.5 ||*

Swamiji explained that one cannot remain without engaging in activity at any time, even for a moment; certainly all living entities are helplessly compelled to action by the qualities

endowed by material nature!

Afternoons were kept reserved for games and Ganga snanam for all the children. One class in the evening by *Swamiji on Bhaja Govindam*, was again mesmerizing. After the evening aarti in the temple, the Ganga aarti was Divinely, with Chhatralayam children added to the beauty of it all by the melodious Ganga stotram.

Night Satsang (8.30-10:00 p.m.) saw a fiesta of Bhajans. The Chhatralayam children were the main performers, *Gulab being our lead singer with Divine melodious voice accompanied by the little ones with Devesh on Tabla, Sukhlal on Dholak!* Other devotees' also participated freely. It was great to see so much of talent amongst the youngsters. The highlight of the cultural week was — a dramatization by children on *Krishna-Arjuna samvada from 2<sup>nd</sup> Adhyaya of Srimad Bhagwad Gita* which simply was breathtaking. Pallavi, MBBS student from Ajmer got huge applause for her beautiful efforts. *Rachnaji, Rajasthan Coordinator, Sri Swami Vivekananda Kendra* was appreciated by Swamiji and devotees' for her beautiful efforts to train our children to be active through games, yoga and skit and children performed well under her able guidance.

During night satsang, devotees' were also blessed to have *Swami Satprakashananda Saraswati* from Kuala Lumpur. He blessed the children and talked about the uniqueness of human birth! *Swami Sivatananda Saraswati*, Heading a sub-Math of Sringeri in Karnataka. Interestingly in 1990's, He as a Brahmachari had learnt all the chantings from our Swamiji. He appreciated Swamiji for all the efforts. He beautifully explained the importance and meaning of *Yagnopaveetadhaaram Brahmopadesham and mentioned that after the ceremony, the boy is declared as "Dwijan" or "twice born"*. *Swamiji from Rishikesh* explained the



importance of staying in Gurukulam. *Swami Shuddhanandaji*, was specially felicitated by Swamiji and devotees' for his tireless efforts and dedication for years taking care of Rishikesh Ashrama and serving Pujya Sri Swamiji! *Swami Shuddhanandaji, as a token of appreciation and blessings to our Chhatralayam children, gave veshti and angavastram.*

One of the Devotee's son had **Yagnopaveetadhaaranam** (the sacred thread consists of three strands signifying **Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva**. It also represents, **Jnana, Karma, Bhakti**. Maonji, a gridle made out of Munja grass is bed around the waist of the child to protect his purity and to keep evils away) and **Brahmopadeshm** (The Gayathri Mantra is a Supreme Mantra and protects those who recite it. The boy's father becomes his Guru and whispers into his ears) by Sri Swamiji. *Isn't he fortunate to have had this auspicious occasion of Upanayanam Brahmopadeshm in the Divine Ghat in Swamiji's presence?*

There was *Sadhu Bhandara* almost every other day. Devotees' were very contented that by this way they contribute towards Ashram.

Swamiji helped devotees' do **elaborate pooja of Ma Ganga** on Saturday. It was very special for all of us to sit together in the Ghat and observe abhishekam (with all dravyams) and alankaram (saree, kumkumam, kaajal, bangles, garland, mehandi etc) to our Divine Mother! Adi Guru Shankaracharya's **Ganga Stotram**, the evergreen delight, even as Herself, Meditation upon and salutations to the Mother, as also the Anga-pooja and the 108 names were chanted. The Mother has been purifying mankind ever since Bhageeratha brought her

down, and has been sung, loved and praised by greatest of men then on.

This day was also auspicious as some of our women devotees' observed **Savitri vrata** (upavasa for the welfare of their husbands) and did early morning pooja to vata vriksha with chanting *Om Namoh Bhagawate Vasudevaya*. It was interesting to see them wear ornaments made with the leaves of the tree!

In spite of the hectic busy schedule, Swamiji took out time and arranged for us to visit —Vasishtha Gufa. Devotees' really enjoyed.

The camp was indeed an enthralling experience with *Ganga ki Karuna* —with the mesmerizing and serene flowing eternally by the Ghaat of our Ashrama and *Karuna ki Ganga* flowing from Swamiji in the form of *Srimad Bhagawad Gita* made the mind absolutely thoughtless. Even the "timetable" sank within no time! It was amazing to see so many young children along with their parents and grandparents started their vacation in such a holistic atmosphere.

All the devotees' insisted Swamiji to fix date for the next year camp, as all felt very fortunate to have *Swami Brahmoparanandaji as our Guru, guiding us and taking pains to make sure that everyone takes the Divine Gift along with them!* We are eagerly awaiting for June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2014, when Swamiji will be holding the next camp. *Ganga Ma is in our heart - as the Purifier, \*\$?\$ - \*>5(@ ! One desires to see Her again and yet again, and sit on Her lap - unique Mother to all!*

With Swamiji's KARUNA, we all have returned home with definitely more balanced, mentally as well as physically!

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