

Rishikesh Retreat, November 30 - December 4, 2013

On the banks of Ganga, in Rishikesh, PujyaSwamiji unfolded *purnamadahpurnamidam* in a special retreat for invited participants, November 30-December 4, 2013. Testimonials in the valedictory function indicated that many were deeply impacted by PujyaSwamiji's profound unfoldment of this *santi-mantra* of the *IsavasyaUpanisad*.

The participants were also taught chanting of *purnamadahpurnmidam* and other Veda mantras, along with the meanings, by SwaminiSaradananda and SwaminiVedarthananda. Smt. Devi and Sri Sujit Choudhury provided daily classes in yoga, as well their expert personal therapeutic guidance. Smt. SheelaBalaji gave two presentations on AIM for Seva, PujyaSwamiji's far-sighted movement to bring education and basic amenities to the underserved in India. The first presented a macro picture, showing the reach of more than 100 free student homes in 15 states, serving 14,000 students. She also touched on the impact of these students on their families and communities, extending the reach to an estimated 10 million people. In the second, she focused on one village, Manjakkudi, as a model for bringing children through their entire education, from pre-school to post graduation, and into the work force as contributors to society. Participants were warmly invited to join this movement for the betterment of the children and, India.

BrahmacariSivatmaji gave daily presentations on the 'Relevance of Ancient Indian Knowledge in the Contemporary Society'. He spoke about the Indian education system, circumstances under which English education was introduced, disadvantages of western education, and the Indian knowledge base in subjects like mathematics, astronomy, language, phonetics, etc., showing their relevance to the world we live in.

In the satsangs, PujyaSwamiji answered questions and participants introduced themselves, with moving accounts of the impact on PujyaSwamiji on their lives.

Beginning with a *samasti-bandhara* for 2000 sadhus, sponsored by SASTRA University, the retreat participants enthusiastically participated in the unique opportunity of being in Rishikesh, and sponsored a *bandhara* at the ashram every day of the retreat.

The retreat concluded with a valedictory function in which the participants expressed deep appreciation for PujyaSwamiji's teachings.