

## Mahāśivarātri CELEBRATIONS AT DAYANANDA ASHRAM RISHIKESH (UTTRAKHANDA)

The entire atmosphere around Dayananda Ashram, Rishikesh reverberated with the chanting of Om namaḥ śivāya on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of May, 2009, the Mahāśivarātri Day. The melodious chanting at the temple of Lord Gaṅgādhareśvarā started at 6.30 a.m. and continued up to 4.30 p.m.

Nine groups consisting of seven devotees were formed with one leader for this purpose. Br. Rama was made the leader of all the nine groups and each group was given one hour for the chant.

Pujya Swamiji joined the chant for more than two hours. His presence kindled the enthusiasm and devotional fervor of the devotees present. When Pujya Swamiji chanted Om namaḥ śivāya in different ragas to the accompaniment of harmonium, table and mridangam, the entire atmosphere of the Ashram reverberated with the chant.

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

Mahāśivarātri pūjā started after the end of akhaṇḍa japa at 4-30 P.M. Sri Swami Paravidyananda of Coimbatore led eleven times chanting of śrī Rudram and other sūktās. Pujya Swamiji remained in the temple till the end of Puja.

