

Advaita Bharati Retreat Report

Advaita Bharati conducted a retreat at Swami Dayananda Ashram, Rishikesh from May 11th, 2024 to May 18th, 2024. Founder and Acharya of Advaita Bharati, Smt. Suryapriyaji taught Mandukya Upanishad – Agama Prakaranam to 82 vidyarthees who had come to Rishikesh from all around the world, many from Chennai.

The retreat was blessed and inaugurated by Swami Satsvarupananda ji, Swami Brahmayogananda ji, Swamini Satyavratana ji, Swami Shivasvarupananda ji, Acharya Shri. Rangaji and many Swamijis of the Ashram. The event started with lighting the lamp by our Swamijis. Swami Satsvarupananda ji, Swami Brahmayogananda ji, Swamini ji and Swami Shivasvarupananda ji blessed us with their Anugraha bhashanam. This was followed by an Invocation class by Swami Brahmayogananda ji as an introduction to the Upanishad.

The second day of the camp was the auspicious day of Shri Sankara Jayanthi. The day started with yoga session by Swami Brahmayogananda ji and special puja at the temple for Shri Sankaracharya. Advaita Bharati Acharya ji and her students were blessed to arrange for Sadhu Bandara for about 200 sadhus on this auspicious day. In the evening the students had a special satsang by Acharya Shri Ranga ji about our Guru parampara and how Shri Shankaracharyas Bashyam, Stotrams, Prakaranams are the most important texts for a vedanta student. The day ended with a special satsang by Swami Brahmayogananda ji which took them through the entire life of Shri Sankara. It was the most blessed way to celebrate Shri Sankara jayanti in the abode of Pujya Swamiji.

As told by Acharya ji on the first day of camp, the Mandukya upanishad felt like a puzzle waiting to be put into a frame and the last day put it all together. The class on Omkara vichara, with a glimpse into the bashyam made us understand why Sri Ramar said "Mandukyam, Ekam eva alam". With the blessings of The Guru parampara, our Acharya ji and Ganga Mata, we completed Mandukya Upanishad - Agama Prakaranam and it was followed by the Samarop function. At the start of the Samarop function the students had the Anugraha Bhashanam of Swamiji Sakshatkrtananda ji on Shri Sankara's Upodhgatha Bashyam of Bhagawad Gita. Its profundity cannot be expressed in words and Swamiji took us through it with so much ease that we were blessed to get a small drop of the big ocean that day. Acharya ji and her students performed puja to Arsha Guru parampara and went on with the samarop function as a gesture to thank the sampradaya for giving them this greatest knowledge. The Upanishad was summarised by the students with parts being assigned to each group. The students performed puja to their Guru and received her blessings for continued sastra patanam.

The next day the Advaita Bharati team went for Badrinath yatra where with blessings of Ishwara and Guru Anugraham we had a good darshan. After the yatra there was a special class by Acharya ji for her students on Kamalajadaitashtakam. The last day of camp was celebrated with a grand Ganga Puja and the retreat ended well with blessings of Ganga Mata.

- Report by Radhika Karthik, Advaita Bharati