

## MAHASHIVARATRI 2023 at AVG SAYLORSBURG, USA – REPORT

Mahashivaratri, the great night of Lord Shiva, is celebrated with great fervor and devotion at the Arsha Vidya Gurukulam in Saylorsburg, USA. The celebrations began with the Rudrabhishekam to Lord Dakshina Murthy, followed by Akhanda OM Namah Shivaya Mantra Japa organized by Suddatma chaitanya, which continued from morning to evening. A large gathering of close to 500 devotees assembled for the evening Pooja and celebrations, marking this auspicious day.

The evening began with the Priest Ganesan reading out the sankalapas of all the sponsors for the Pooja, and a Maha Sankalpa was made for the Loka Hita. The Rudrabhishekam was then performed in the evening with Mangala Dravyas. A beautiful flower alankaram was done.

Sri Swami Veditatmananda ji, the President of Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, delivered his anugraha Bhashanam through a pre-recorded video message sent from India, despite his busy schedule. In his message, Swamiji highlighted the significance of Shivaratri and Shivalinga. Swamiji explained that the Shiva Linga is the representation of the flame of knowledge, Lord Shiva is the very embodiment of knowledge, which dispels ignorance and fills the devotee's heart with Ananada. Sri Swamiji also quoted a story from shiva Purana associated with Shivaratri.

Swami Sachidananda ji gave a talk on the significance of Bhava in the worship. He quoted from a poem Emi setura Linga, which Puja Swamiji used to like. He highlighted the limitations of Vidhi Pradhan Bhakti and the importance of Bhava Pradhan Bhakti in one's spiritual path. Swami sachidananda ji highlighted that the attitude with which offering is made is more important than what is offered.

The Mahashivaratri celebrations at Arsha Vidya Gurukulam saylorsburg were grand and a perfect blend of devotion, Vichara and tradition.

OM NAMA SHIVAYA

*#Photos in the cover page #31 and #32*