

## **Mahashivratri Report from Anubhuti Retreat Center, California**

For the first time ever in America, the 12 Jyotirlingam (pillar of light) holy shrines of Lord Shiva from Bharat was replicated under one canopy by the Brahma Kumaris at the Anubhuti Meditation and Retreat Center in Marin County. On Saturday, March 9, 600 people participated in an inauguration of the Mahashivratri video room, spiritual art gallery, Raja Yoga meditation room, and the 12 Jyotirlingam temple shrines by N. Parthsarathi, Consulate General of India and his wife; Pat Eklund, Mayor of Novato; Anand Jha, India Consul Community Affairs; Vipul Sheth, President North Bay Indo-American Association. Performers Anvita Vyas; Revital Carol Dance Troupe; and Tabla sensation Satish Tare and company, entertained the devotees with their delightful performances. The Consul General and Mayor addressed the crowd of 600 with their heartwarming and enlightening speeches. Sister Chandru, West Coast Director of Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual Organization, explained the spiritual significance of 12 Jyotirlingam and the importance of time in our life emphasizing "Why do we go to a temple and light a lamp before God. Is God in darkness that you need to light a lamp? Or is it yourself that needs to be enlightened? Also, does God get dirty that you need to wash His image? Ask yourself the significance of what you do. The time is now to bring about light and peace into your lives. " Mahaprasad (sacred food) was offered to everyone who attended. Everyone was invited for the Aarti of the large Shiv Lingam and Nandigan on stage before viewing the 12 holy shrines of Lord Shiva. The devotees offered their prayers with immense love and devotion to their favorite lingams.

The crowd of 300 people on Sunday, March 10, were welcomed by Karan Riar Dance Troupe; renowned Bansuri musician, Mindia Devi; and Barbara Framm Dance Company. Honored guests; Swami Vedananda, Senior Monk from the Vedanta Society of America and Ash Kalra, Councilmember of San Jose, graced the event with their presence and eloquent speeches. Swamiji suggested that all the rituals and worship has no effect unless you have love for God. Councilmember Kalra shared that spending time at this spiritual place helps him a lot to deal with the issues at council meetings. He wishes to expose everyone to this atmosphere and wisdom so they can work better together to build a good society. Sister Chandru urged the gathering that instead of keeping consuming things from outside to satisfy yourself, go within to create satisfaction and then give it out to the world.