

SIGNIFICANCE OF LAKSHMI NARAYANA PUJA - VISIT TO NEW JERSEY / NEW YORK

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HH Sri Swamiji blessing the devotees

His Holiness Sri Sri Sri Jeeyar Swamiji came to New Jersey on July 23rd and spent a couple of days showering His Grace on all the local devotees.

Friday, July 25, marked the birthday of Smt. Vijaya Allakki and HH Sri Jeeyar Swamiji showered his blessings on her. He also blessed 11 devotees with *Sama:sra:yanam*, giving an inspiring lecture on the qualities of a *Sri Vaishnava*, and the sacred connection between an *A:cha:rya* and his disciple. In the evening, HH Sri Swamiji's *Pravachanam* along with *Sri: Lakshmi: Na:ra:yana Pu:ja* was organized at Durga Mandir Hall in South Brunswick.

HH Sri Swamiji was received at the hall by devotees with *Pu:rna Kumbham*, and was offered a rendering of Carnatic music



HH giving Mangalasanams to the Doctors

renditions by students of the JET Learning Center. One of the verses was "Swa:gatham, Swa:gatham, Sri Tridandi Jeeyar Swami, Jayam Jayam Jayambu meeku priyathama Guru De:va'. The students of Telugu language class of JET Learning Center recited *Chithra Gi:tha Slo:kams*, and said a few words in Telugu in praise of HH Sri Swamiji. HH Sri Swamiji presented the certificates to Telugu students who completed the first term.

After the cultural program, HH Sri Swamiji gave a discourse on the Tribal Gurukul School project. HH specifically talked about the importance of education as eradication of ignorance to lead better lives. In the backward areas of Karimnagar and Adilabad districts, there are no functional schools that serve the purpose. HH Sri Swamiji has taken up this project to build more active schools in such areas to uplift the society. He gave special *Mangala:sa:sanams* to Sri Thota family, who are always in the frontline to support the projects in India.

His Holiness started with a *bhajan* and explained how *bhajans* ought to be done. We have accumulated billions of sins over the innumerable births we have taken. Where are all these sins stored? These sins are stored all over our body. These were accumulated by our hands and we can get rid of sins by our hands only. The sins that have been accumulated can be got rid of by doing *bhajan* joining our hands as if clapping in the lotus form.

We never want the Divine Father and Mother separately. Whenever we worship Lord we want our Mother to be there. Whenever we worship Divine Mother we want our Divine Father too. They both will always be together and if we worship them together, we will be doubly blessed. A few people try to separate them and worship only *Lakshmi:* or only *Na:ra:yana*. People who worship only *Lakshmi:* are like demon king *Ra:vana*. *Ra:vana* wanted *Si:tha* only and kidnapped her and took her to Lanka. He was punished and killed. There are a



HH giving Krishna Prathimas to do the Puja
 few others like *Su:rpnanakha* who seek Divine Father alone. She worshipped only *Ra:ma*. She said why do you want *Si:tha*? Let us go to mountains, rivers and enjoy things. Let us dance and eat food and enjoy life. Why do you want others? We know what happened to her. That is the fate of those who separate Divine Father and Mother. We should feel their Divine presence together.

Lets take a small example, of a bulb that is glowing and the light. They are not one. Bulb is on the ceiling, Light is spread across the room. Yet the bulb and light are not different. They are two but one, one but two. Light is different and bulb is different as far as identity is concerned but as far as the reality is concerned they are one. We love the light because we cannot live without it. Without bulb the light will not be there, if the light doesn't come from the bulb then we don't need the light.

If we say we love the bulb and try to hold onto it, it may burn us. But we love the light. If we say we got the light which we love the most and say 'good bye' to dear bulb, we will end up losing the light too! So we need both. Similarly, *Lakshmi*: and *Na:ra:yana* are one. God is like the bulb and Divine Mother is like the light which we are getting through the bulb. What is coming nearer to you, bulb or light? It is the light '*prabha*' that comes near you. The bulb is called '*prabha:vath*' from which we get light.

We want the light - compassion, that should flow always to us. At the same time we cannot ignore the source of compassion - *Na:ra:yana*. Some people say I want Mother's blessings and they say they don't want *Na:ra:yana*. This is impossible. Some say they want *Na:ra:yana* alone and *Lakshmi*: is not required. That is also impossible. We have to see *Lakshmi*: first and Lord *Na:ra:yana* behind her. This is the

importance of *Lakshmi: Na:ra:yana Pu:ja*.

Pu:ja is worship. In Sanskrit, the word is '*A:ra:dhana*'. What does it mean? Doing *Pu:ja* is not laborious process. Just 5-10 minutes is required for it everyday. Can't we spend so much of time, for whom, if we really Love ?

God gave us 24 hours a day. He is always with us. We just need to give 5 minutes or so to recharge ourselves with the realisation of Him every day. It is not a physical process but involves lot of devotion.

Love always demands some sought of service. Love will be there inside. It cannot be shown. As the love comes out, we do certain things that makes the loved one highly pleased. This is '*A:ra:dhana*'. '*Ra:dh*' is 'to please'. '*Ra:dhana*' is an activity to please other one. '*A:ra:dhana*' is to please totally with no selfish motive. This is worship, this is true worship. Let us all spare some time a day in the morning and the evening to do '*A:ra:dhana*' and let us feel the presence of Lord *Lakshmi: na:ra:yana* with us at all times.

Learning Center called "PRAJNA" was started at *Apara:jitha*, by lighting the lamp and unveiling the banner amidst Vedic chants. HH Sri Swamiji gave an enchanting discourse on education (*vidya*), literacy (*akshara:syatha*) and the importance of learning. Literacy may give arrogance, but Vidya gives obedience (*Vinayam*) which in turn provides status in the society, and that leads to wealth and happiness.

HH Sri Jeeyar Swamiji also talked about the *Vika:satarangini*, a service wing of Jeeyar Educational Trust. More than 30 volunteers signed up for the upcoming activities. HH Sri Swamiji gave his blessings to the devotees and instructed to 'Serve all beings as service to God'.

Many devotees followed HH Sri Swamiji to Newark airport. After check-in, HH Sri Swamiji gave final instructions to JET organizers and promised a resident teacher for New Jersey Prajna Centre. HH blessed the devotees and concluded the 2003 USA visit. As HH Sri Swamiji left for the gate, the devotees could not bear the separation and left for their homes with heavy hearts. Though the trip was very short, HH Sri Swamiji left a lasting impression on the hearts of the devotees.
