

2011 Janmatshmi Teenage Skit: Why do we pray to statues?

Nitya - Sasha, Pooja - Namita, Sanjay - Dhruv, Mother - Dipti

Scene 1

Nitya : Oh. There's just so much work to do. I really don't know if I can finish all of it by today.

(closes her books)

Pooja : Why not? Aren't you free today Nitya?

Nitya : Unfortunately not. Mom is having a pooja and bhajan session later at night. She needs my help with the preparations. She wants me to help her clean and arrange the God statues in the altar.

Sanjay : (laughs) Seriously Nitya! Bhajans! Pooja! And all of it is just for a couple of nicely decorated statues. Statues! How can you take all these hocus pocus seriously?

Pooja : Yeah, Nitya. Please tell me you don't believe in all of this rubbish. (Hand gestures)

Nitya : (says defensively) Well...Of Course I believe in it. I believe in God. Don't you?

Pooja : Well sure. I believe in God. But all of this singing and worshiping a bunch of statues and paintings, that's just rubbish. That is not God! I mean who here thinks that God is a statue?

Sanjay : (cheekily says) I don't . Pooja does have a point Nitya. Why are you bothering to show your devotion to a statue? (sarcastically says) Come, lets all catch a flight to New York so that we can pray to the Statue of Liberty.

Pooja : (laughs at Sanjay's joke) It is completely useless to pray to a statue Nitya. I can think of a hundred better ways to waste your time.

Nitya : Hey guys that's really not true!And it's not funny so stop making jokes. I am sure there is a reason why we pray to God in the form of a statue. There is a reason for everything.

Pooja : Oh C'mon Nitya. Stop being ridiculous. There is no logical explanation as to why some people would perform such a meaningless action of praying to a statue. Can you give me at least one reason? No, I don't think so!

Sanjay : Nitya, we live in the age of science. You have to be realistic. Praying to statues, well that's just mental. (picks up a stone from the floor) Hey look its God. (Drops it and laughs) Oops I guess I just dropped God. Pfft so much for being indestructible!

Pooja : So true Sanjay. How can anyone be so shallow to think that God resides in a statue.

I have to say, these Hindus have a wild imagination. Anyways, I've got to go now.

I have more important things to do than to sing and light a lamp for a statue. Bye guys.

Sanjay : See you tomorrow Nitya. (walks off with Pooja)

Why do We Pray to Statues?

Scene 2

Nitya walks into the house. Her mother is doing Aarti. Nitya gets frustrated when she sees this. She throws her bag down and sits down. Her mom comes over to offer prashad.

Mom : Here Nitya, take this prashad.

Nitya : No thanks Mom. I don't feel so good. I just want to rest.

Mom : Nitya, you have never declined prashad before. Something must be wrong. Why are you looking so upset?

Nitya : It is really nothing Ma. Lets just forget it.

Mom : No! Don't give me this nothing, nothing. What is wrong? Come tell me what happened?

Nitya : (sighs)Ok Mom. I was talking to Sanjay and Pooja just now about how we Hindus pray to God and it really got me thinking. Why do we pray to statues? Doesn't that just make us look really silly. I just don't understand anything.

Mom : (smiles) Come here beti. Let me explain to you. Do you remember the first verse in Chapter 12 of the Bhagavad Geeta.

Nitya : (Recites verse 1 of Chap 12 **monotonously**.)

**evam satatayukta ye
bhaktas tvam paryupasate
ye ca py aksaram avyaktam
tesam ke yogavittamah**

Yes Mom, I remember. (Rolls eyes)What about it?

Mom : Well, what about it Nitya? In the verse which you have just recited with absolutely no interest at all, Arjuna the great Kshatriya warrior seems just as confused as you!

In his case, having just seen Bhagwan's Viswa Roopa - the all encompassing cosmic form, Arjuna asks, "Oh Lord shall I worship thee in the Infinite Unmanifest form or the divine visible form?". I am sure you remember Bhagwan's reply in the 5th verse of Chapter 12.

**kleso dhikataras tesam
avyaktasaktacetasam
avyakta hi gatih hi duhkam
dehavadbhir avapyete**

In this verse, Bhagwan says it is very difficult for an embodied being like you and me to worship him in his unmanifest form.

Nitya : Why is that mom?

Mom : The realized person, the *sthitaprajna* sees Divinity - God-in every being, human or animal- the animate or the inanimate. But for ordinary people like you and me, it is easier to focus our thoughts and devotion on something visible-be it a stone, wood or clay. The shape and size of the statue does not matter Nitya. Even a picture if you look at day after day with love and devotion, you will build an unseen bond with the object of your devotion and that regular Abhyasa will finally make you aware of The Divinity within you.

Nitya : Sounds like a really long and difficult process Mom.

Mom : Indeed it is beti. But if you worship your little Krishna statue with love and devotion, I have no doubt that you will gradually feel his presence within you.

Nitya : Well I really understand it all now. It does make sense. But what do I tell my friends?

Mom : (laughs)(Recites v.31,Chap 9-last two lines)

kaunteya pratijanihi

na me bhaktah pranasyati

Here Bhagwan assures us that his devotee will never perish. Nitya, just tell your friends if they are lucky enough to have devotion to Bhagwan, their hopes and dreams will all come true. (Mother and daughter hug each other.)