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## **His Divine Holiness Pramukh Swami Maharaj Arrives in North America**

On May 14<sup>th</sup>, His Divine Holiness Pramukh Swami Maharaj began his 95-day spiritual tour of North America when he landed at the JFK airport in New York City. He is gracing the continent for the 12<sup>th</sup> time in 30 years. Since his first visit in 1974, his focus and message have remained the same – to preserve and promote the traditional Indian culture for future generations to enjoy regardless of where they may live. A number of unique programs have been scheduled promoting this primary message starting with New York and New Jersey.

A beautiful red-carpet reception was held within the airport terminal. New York State Senator Michael Balboni (R-Mineola) greeted Pramukh Swami Maharaj to the United States on behalf of the state. Various law enforcement officers, airport officials, Air India representatives and Indian-American community leaders joined BAPS members in greeting Swamishri.

A Swagat Sabha (welcome assembly) will be held at Hofstra Arena in Hempstead, New York on Saturday, May 15<sup>th</sup>. Leaders from various Indian organizations from throughout the northeast region of the US will come together to welcome Swamishri<sup>1</sup>.

From May 22 to June 6, Swamishri will continue his tour in New Jersey. Beginning May 23, a 9-part lecture series on the Shrimad Bhagvad Gita and the Upanishads will be given by Pujya Viveksagar Swami, a Ph.D. and very learned senior saint of BAPS, this series will expound on the relevance and importance of these ancient scriptures in today's society. Swamishri's visit to the Northeast region will feature a once-in-a-lifetime cultural program. This program is entitled "Sanskriti – An Invigorating Experience of Indian Heritage Presented Through Cultural Programs & Multimedia Presentations." The program will be presented in Hindi and English and takes place at 4:00 pm on 5<sup>th</sup> June at the Continental Airlines Arena in East Rutherford, New Jersey.

After his stay in the northeast region, Pramukh Swami Maharaj will be visiting Atlanta and Los Angeles. Both of these tours will be highlighted by a Shilanyas Vidhi – the Foundation Stone Laying Ceremony for a traditional Hindu temple and Cultural Complex. The ceremony will take place in Atlanta on June 13<sup>th</sup> and in LA on June 19<sup>th</sup>.

Pramukh Swami Maharaj will next go to Orlando, Florida. Here, a unique 12-day program from July 1 – July 12 will draw over 5,000 children, youths and young adults who have primarily been raised in the United States. Swamishri will impart the importance of one's self, family, society and spirituality in life, regardless of age and place to these younger generations.

As part of the North American tour, Swamishri will also visit Toronto. On July 18<sup>th</sup>, he will consecrate the Haveli – a unique structure housing the diminishing art of Indian wood craftsmanship.

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<sup>1</sup> His Divine Holiness Pramukh Swami Maharaj is also known as Swamishri

Pramukh Swami Maharaj's last two stops on this historic visit will provide monuments catapulting the Indian and Hindu traditions to new heights in the United States. First, Swamishri will be visiting Houston, Texas. Here, a traditional marble Hindu temple designed using ancient Vedic techniques will be inaugurated when on July 25th Swamishri installs the idols in this sacred monument. Similarly, on the 8<sup>th</sup> of August, another traditional temple will be inaugurated by Pramukh Swami Maharaj in Chicago. Both of these temples will be very similar to the landmark BAPS temple in the London suburb of Neasden.

All of the BAPS events during the 95-day tour of Pramukh Swami Maharaj are open to everyone for participation. We invite the community at large to take advantage of these events and thereby support the diligent efforts of preserving our culture and values.

### **About BAPS**

The Bochasanwasi Shree Aksharapurushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS), a worldwide socio-spiritual organization in Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, is dedicated to community service, peace and harmony. Founded on the pillars of practical spirituality, BAPS strives to care for the world by caring for societies, families and individuals. Through a number of medical, cultural, educational, environmental, social and spiritual activities, BAPS endeavors to produce better citizens of tomorrow, who have very high esteem for their roots - the rich Indian culture. Its 9,000 centers including more than 5,000 youth centers across the world support these activities of character building. Under the guidance and leadership of His Divine Holiness Pramukh Swami Maharaj, BAPS aspires to build a community free of addictions and that is morally, ethically and spiritually strong.

For more information on BAPS and further details of Pramukh Swami Maharaj's North America schedule and program, please visit <http://www.swaminarayan.org>.