



International Society for Krishna Consciousness
Founder Acharya: His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

HARE KRISHNA NEWS

March - April 2014



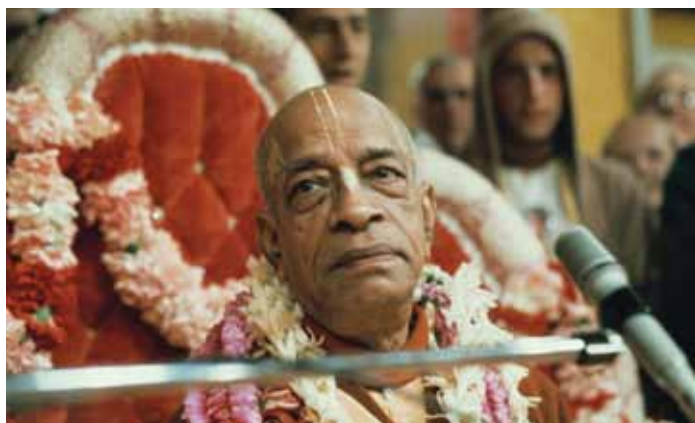
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 Festival of
Chariots

OLD DURBAN DRIVE-IN
18 - 21 APRIL
11am - 11pm

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ISKCON Founder Acharya
His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

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In this issue...

Editor's Note

You know it's Easter when you walk into a supermarket and smell freshly baked hot cross buns or see animal-shaped chocolates at every gondola end. I love the build up to the long Easter weekend most synonymous with religious festivities. For the Christians, Easter is the oldest and most important festival celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ. For ISKCON, the four day weekend is celebrated in grandeur with the annual Festival of Chariots. I cannot guarantee hot cross buns and chocolate but I can definitely promise waffles, ice cream, pizza, and the most delectable *breyani* to be found. In this issue we bring you some of the exciting, not to be missed highlights.

In keeping with the theme of Lord Jagannath's chariot festival, our story-telling column "Happily Ever After," describes the beautiful pastime of Lord Chaitanya dancing at the Ratha-yatra, which took place over five hundred years ago.

Have you ever asked yourself the question, "How do I become a devotee and still fit in the world?" One of our writers recently interviewed the multi-million dollar businessman Alfred Ford on his recent tour of South Africa. Being the great grandson of Henry Ford would seemingly make it difficult to balance spiritual and material life. Initiated as Ambarish Das by Srla Prabhupada, he shares his journey with us. The youth column solidifies this desire for balance by describing a practical guide for young spiritualists titled, "Becoming A Devotee - For Dummies." Look out for tips on how to create balance and simplicity in your spiritual practices.

One of our local missionaries, Laxminath Das was called to Haiti to offer his expert food relief skills for earthquake victims. His heroic efforts fed over three thousand plates of food every day. He tells us his story.

Meanwhile, in the coming weeks South Africa is going to be flooded with posters, adverts and media coverage of Elections 2014. "I vote South Africa...but why?" is the question our Vedic observer explores, giving it a much needed spiritual perspective.

See you at the Festival of Chariots!

Haripriya Devi Dasi



Letters to the Editor

If you would like to share your temple experience, spiritual or service related realisations then write to Haripriya Devi Dasi: haripriya@nitai.co.za or Rasasthali Dasi: rasasthali@iskcondurban.net

Design and Layout by Lashika Ravjee - 082 309 2396

Srila Prabhupada's Design

Message from the Co-President

By Swarup Damodar Das

Without any adulteration, Srila Prabhupada methodically tailored the process of *bhakti* making it most relevant for us in this day and age. Essentially the process is to chant the holy names and to somehow or the other induce others to chant the holy names. This chanting of the Hare Krishna *maha-mantra* is repeatedly encouraged in the *sastras* and by great devotees as the only process to attain an eternal, blissful existence.

For devotees, consistent chanting of the Hare Krishna *maha-mantra* is supported by a process of purity, regulation and guidance. The early morning programme, the association and deity worship in the temples, the study of scripture- are all integral to successful chanting. Inducing others to chant Hare Krishna depends on a mood of compassion or an understanding that without Krishna consciousness people are suffering, just as one was before experiencing Krishna consciousness. Actually compassion is an inseparable component of developing love of Krishna and comes from chanting Krishna's holy names. In one sense, if we have not developed compassion and an impetus to share Krishna's mercy with others, it is questionable whether one has tangibly tasted Krishna consciousness or properly chanted Hare Krishna. Still, Srila Prabhupada is so merciful that even if we have not developed the desire to share Krishna's mercy, simply by engaging in spreading the holy names, one will spiritually advance and compassion will naturally develop in the heart.

Historically, Srila Prabhupada is clearly the most compassionate distributor of Krishna's holy names. Experiencing acute sacrifices and risks, taking advantage whatever opportunities arose, and creating his own opportunities, Srila Prabhupada established many programmes to facilitate the liberal sharing of Krishna's mercy. In South Africa, a few of these programmes of Srila Prabhupada have stood out for many years and more are successfully developing-- the Radha Radhanath Temple which was recently honoured by the Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Food for Life *prasad* distribution, the university student development and the Durban Festival of Chariots.

Last year Lord Chaitanya presented His Holiness Indradyumna Swami, on behalf of Srila Prabhupada, with another ground-breaking opportunity to establish ISKCON more firmly in South Africa. This opportunity was moulded into the social cohesion-themed Festival of Chariots - Culturally Many Spiritually One. Appreciating the successful impact of last year's social cohesion festival, various municipal,

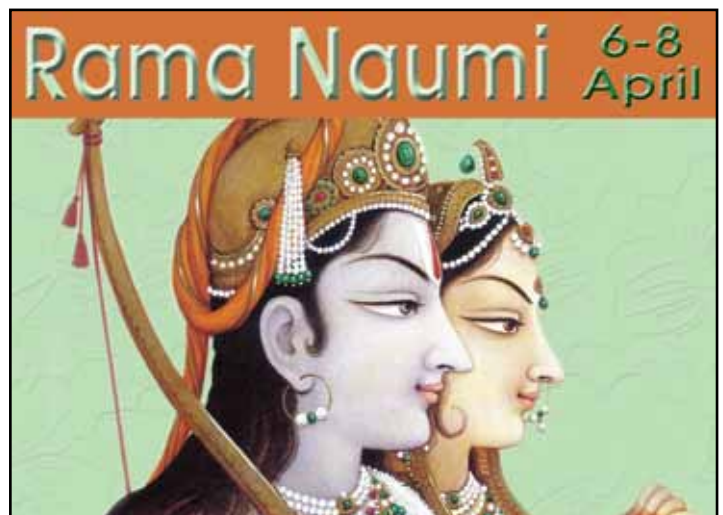
governmental and business sectors recognize that ISKCON has the wisdom and vision to effect positive and lasting change in a South Africa fraught with disharmony. Now all we have to do is to cooperatively take advantage of that goodwill; all we have to do is to enlist ourselves in the variety of services available to us all.

The 26th annual Durban Festival of Chariots is upon us and all followers of Srila Prabhupada in South Africa are urged to see this as a vast opportunity to express our compassion, our love. While Ratha-yatra is an occasion for devotees all over South Africa to become spiritually nourished in each other's association, it is primarily one of those stand out programmes Srila Prabhupada designed to share Krishna consciousness. Ratha-yatra in Durban carries an abundance of openings or services to engage all of us the entire day. That's what Krishna consciousness is all about. Let us seize one of these opportunities and be fully engaged.

This year the annual Phoenix Ratha-yatra will be merged into the Durban Festival of Chariots - there will be one major Festival of Chariots over the Easter weekend (18-21 April 2014) and will be held at the Old Durban Drive-In site. Although there will no longer be a separate Phoenix Ratha-yatra, the organizers of both festivals are excited to consolidate their efforts to make a bigger impact in spreading the mercy of Lord Jagannath. But your participation is vital.

We are just a days away from the start of the four-day Durban Festival of Chariots, one of the largest spiritual gatherings in South Africa. Please share in the important service of hosting the Durban Festival of Chariots. It is not too late. In this issue of Hare Krishna News, you will find general festival information. Please contact the organizers and they will engage you.

We look forward to your inspired and compassionate participation in the Durban Festival of Chariots.



The Love Essence

Happily Ever After

By Nikunja Vilasini Dasi

Love is integral to our lives. How often are we miserable when our relationships fail, or when we cannot connect with loved ones. To feel love even if it is perverted or sometimes tinged with selfishness, is something we all crave. But imagine if we were able to relate with others in pure love, free from false ego or pride, free from envy, selfishness, or maliciousness. Imagine if that love was returned to us in the same pure form. Life would be blissful regardless of other pains and torments we may encounter. And what if we had to see pure love face to face—would we recognise it, appreciate it, and imbibe it?

God comes to this world to show us pure love. After all, He loves us unconditionally. He is the personification of the highest kind of love and He desires to awaken our love for Him. When this love develops, it naturally conquers our enemies, connects us with our children, bridges the gap between nations, heals the wounds of abuse and treachery, and forgives the countless wrongs that life may throw at us.

In the sixteenth century, God's merciful incarnation, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu taught this love essence. He lived as a young mendicant in Jagannath Puri (Orissa, India) for most of his life where he exhibited his love for Jagannath, the Lord of the Universe. With tears streaming down his golden face, he would run to the temple of Lord Jagannath everyday eager to see Him. What he would see would cause him to faint

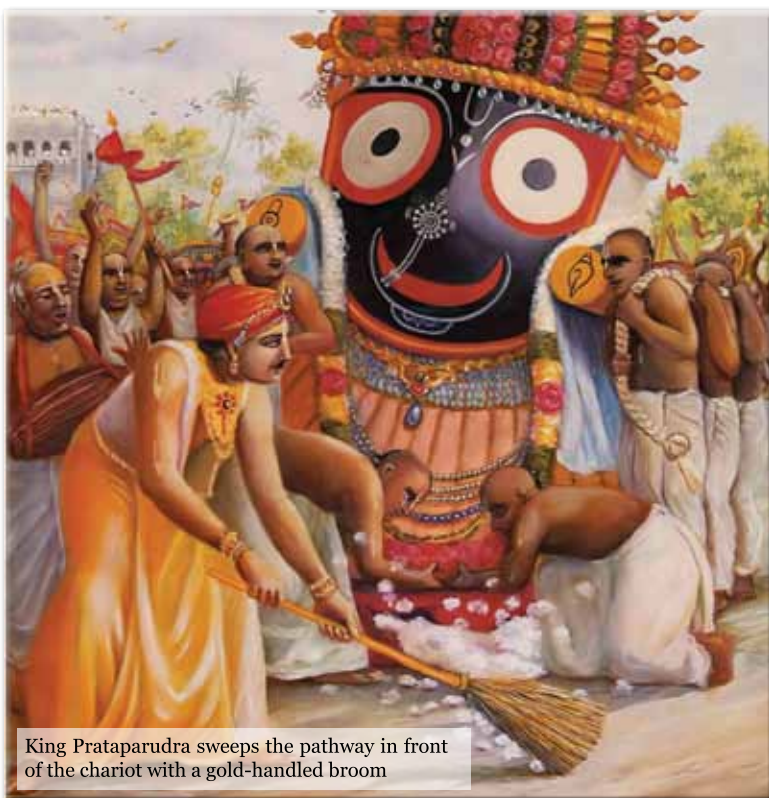
or cry in bliss. The gigantic form of Lord Jagannath, carved from wood and painted with a blackish face beaming with a broad smile and saucer-like eyes, captivated Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Jagannath was Lord Krishna, the Lord of his life, and Chaitanya was in the loving mood of Radha, Krishna's topmost devotee. When they would meet, it was as if meeting thousands of years ago in Vrindavan, the place where everyone and everything had radiated supreme love for Krishna. But why was Krishna in this unusual form, and why was He standing in this temple centuries afterwards together with similar forms of His brother, Balaram, and sister, Subhadra?

And what if we had to see pure love face to face—would we recognise it, appreciate it, and imbibe it?

It is a long story but Chaitanya Mahaprabhu had much to do with it. He had come to this world in the mood of Sri Radha, tasting the sweet love that she possessed for Krishna. Radharani's pure love had caused Krishna to assume the radiant jubilant form of Lord Jagannath. Once, when Krishna was away from Vrindavan, He missed Radharani and His other devotees so much that He would simply weep. During this time, He overheard about their glories and acts of love for Him and became entranced with love. His arms and legs retracted within His body, His eyes widened in bliss, and His smile seemed to reach the corners of His broadened eyes. Stunned, Krishna was absorbed in thoughts of Radharani.

Seeing Radharani again in the form of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Lord Jagannath's bliss increased. Divine love had exposed a kind of compassion in Lord Chaitanya similar to Sri Radha's benevolence and kindness. He drew people to Krishna by freely giving them the love He possessed. The fortunate recipients became truly happy and satisfied with their desires for love fulfilled by this superlative love. But this love is not just a sentiment, he taught. One demonstrates one's love and affection through obedience to God's laws, cultivating spiritual values, and engaging in spiritual activities and service.

The Festival of Chariots was an occasion to witness the unparalleled love that Sri Chaitanya cherished for Lord Jagannath, and how he distributed it. Once a year, Lord Chaitanya and his devotees would pull Lord Jagannath, along with Balaram and Subhadra, on three magnificent chariots on the streets of Jagannath Puri. It was an opportunity for Lord Jagannath to give His audience to everyone, even to those who had turned their backs to Him. Lord Chaitanya, in his love-maddened state,



King Prataparudra sweeps the pathway in front of the chariot with a gold-handled broom

would move the onlookers—and melt even hearts of stone—with his dancing and chanting of God’s names. Like a golden column of fire, he would twirl high in the air and make the ground tremble with his exultant dancing. His golden limbs and resplendent form had given him the name of Gauranga. No one had seen anything like this before. Even Lord Jagannath’s cart came to a standstill as Lord Jagannath watched him with unblinking eyes. It seemed like Lord Jagannath was displaying his stunned appearance just as when He was overwhelmed by Radharani’s love thousands of years ago.

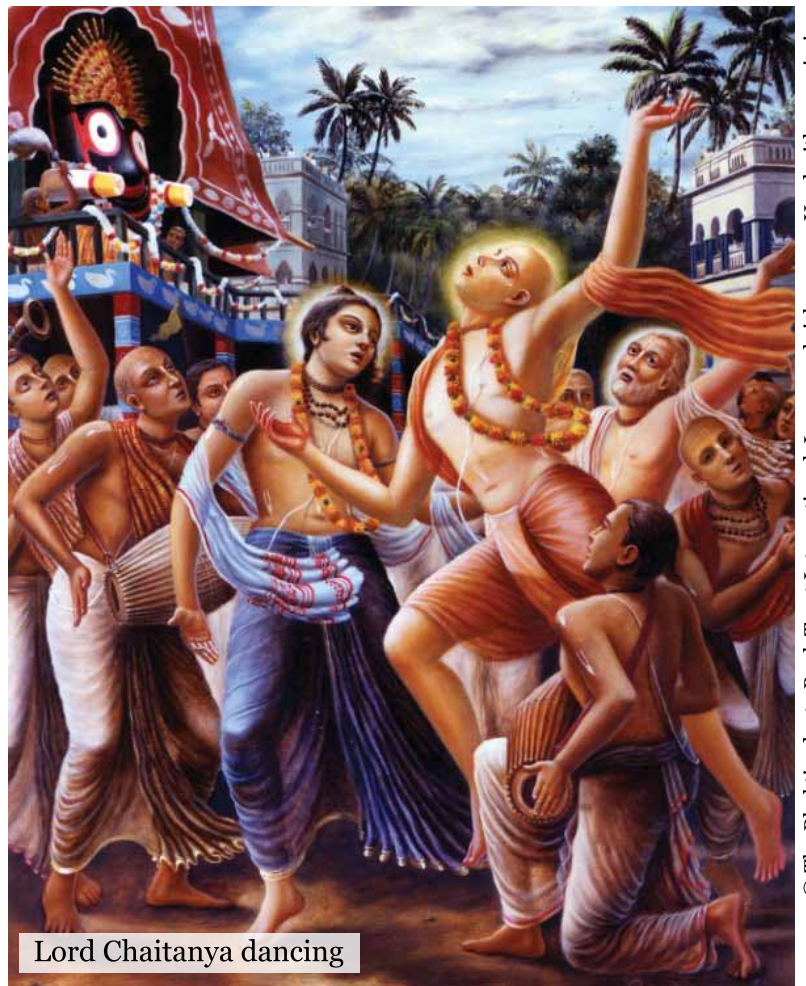
Who could fathom Lord Gauranga’s bliss? He personally garlanded his devotees and smeared them with sandalwood pulp. He divided them into seven chanting parties, where four chanted and danced in front of Lord Jagannath’s cart, one on either side and one at the rear. Each party had two drum players, thus fourteen drums made a thunderous sound altogether. Like an assembly of clouds, the devotees gathered and chanted the Lord’s holy names. Lord Chaitanya danced through all the seven groups chanting the holy names and shouting, “Jaya Jagannath! All glories to Lord Jagannath!”

The devotees in each group thought that Lord Chaitanya was present only in their group, elated to be the objects of his favour. Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya, Lord Chaitanya’s intimate associate, witnessed Lord Chaitanya expand himself in each of the chanting parties and dance with his devotees simultaneously in each group. There was only one other person who could see the Lord’s divine miracle. King Prataparudra, the king of Orissa, was blessed by Lord Chaitanya for his humble and menial service. As Lord Jagannath’s chariot had clattered along the dusty streets, the king had swept the pathway in front of the chariot with a gold-handled broom and sprinkled the road with sandalwood scented water. Now beholding the Lord’s sublime performance, King Prataparudra’s face soaked with tears. He remembered how Lord Krishna had expanded Himself into countless forms to dance with each of His *gopis*. Lord Chaitanya as the same Lord Krishna

***...the king had swept
the pathway in front of
the chariot with a gold-
handled broom...***

revealed His supreme position.

Lord Jagannath was also astounded by Gauranga’s dancing, and His cart moved slowly and then suddenly stopped. Despite the devotees’ efforts to



Lord Chaitanya dancing

pull the cart, it did not move. Maharaja Prataparudra arranged for elephants and the strongest of men to push the cart, but it would not budge. Lord Gauranga then circumambulated Lord Jagannath and began pushing the back of the cart with his head. The strength of his love began to move the cart and it proceeded with a loud rattling noise.

The devotees and onlookers were convinced that God’s covered incarnation, as predicted in the scriptures, was right before them. He had come as a devotee to exemplify the pure love that existed in their hearts, and attracted them to follow him. With his identity concealed, he was able to reach out to people like us who are hankering for love. Through his life and teachings, he revealed that the fountainhead of our thirst for love is something far greater than simply our desire to enjoy that love. It is a result of our spiritual essence, our connection to God, which makes us feel incomplete if we do not experience love. Lord Chaitanya modelled how to replace tainted love with spiritual love.

God would do anything for us, anything to make us turn to Him with the flame of divine love and faith once again ignited in our hearts. When our love for Him blazes brightly, the sparks of those flames extinguish the darkness within and spread to all those around us. We then realise that the love essence has worked its magic.



Take Your Child to the Blue Mountain

By Jahnavi Dasi

The Blue Mountain is the place for children to be at the 2014 Durban Festival of Chariots. Blue Mountain is dedicated to offer children the rich Vedic culture through play, drama, music, games, arts and crafts, and so forth. All activities are aimed to be spiritually stimulating.

For hand-eye co-ordination we have archery, an ancient skill practised by Vedic warriors. Children will be able to safely shoot arrows at various targets from an actual chariot just like Arjuna, one of the Pandava heroes did in battle. Your child can explore his natural talents in the arts and crafts section by decorating flutes and pots, building chariots, and other woodwork crafts, including carving.

The Vedic Kitchen will be a blast from the past as children get to churn butter as the *gopis* did over 5000 years ago. A new feature is the herb and vegetable garden, where children can pick their own veggies and herbs and bring back to the kitchen to prepare their own wraps.

Our planet is our home and in Vedic culture the Earth is accepted as one of the seven mothers. In ancient times there was deep respect and honour for the Earth. With industry, the Earth has suffered and many natural resources have become depleted.

In recent years we have seen the world focus on a healthier planet, and there is a movement where people are going green. As you know planting trees is a good way to help the planet. At Blue Mountain, children will get their hands dirty by planting seedlings in a mini pot of their choice. They will be able to take that seedling home and nurture and grow it. The cow is also accepted as a mother in Vedic culture. Kids can learn about her importance and why she should be protected and they will be able to pet and feed the cows too.

At the centre of everything will be a blue hill with their Lordships Jagannath, Baladev and Subhadra Devi on top. The hill will be decorated with various gems and flowers creating a magical and mystical ambience. All activities will be centred around this hill helping children understand that God is at the centre of all our activities.

There will also be a takeaway especially for the young, with tasty treats from cheese rolls to dipped marshmallows. These are only some of the activities that will be featured at the Blue Mountain Children's Theme Park. All activities are child safe and child friendly. Children *must* be accompanied by an adult at all times.

Falooda Pudding

Vaishnava Kitchen

By Aradhana Devi Dasi

1 litre milk
2 tsp china grass powder
2 tbsp milk powder
2 tbsp custard powder
1 can condensed milk
1 small tin of dessert cream
1 can of pear slices
Optional, add food colouring



Mix the milk, china grass powder, milk powder and custard powder in a pot and bring to a boil. Then pour this mixture through a strainer to remove any lumps. Allow the mixture to cool. Beat the condensed milk

and cream together and add to the cooled mixture. Mix well. Add 1/2 can of pears to the mixture. Place the mixture into a suitably sized shallow casserole and decorate the remaining pears. Chill until set.

Srila Prabhupada's Beloved Cart Festival

By Nashvin Gangaram

I love to have fun. Don't you? Everything we do is aimed at increasing our pleasure. However, in our endeavours, are we really experiencing the enjoyment that we crave? Our enjoyment seems to be accompanied by some sort of misery. For example, we may like to eat tasty food, but if we overeat, even just a little bit, we will be uncomfortable. There are so many types of entertainment available, but they only last for a limited time, and leave us feeling unfulfilled or hankering for more.

Srila Prabhupada understood this and made it his life's purpose to give us sustaining and ever-increasing enjoyment. While he introduced a variety of spiritual engagements, he held the Ratha-yatra festival in special regard. Srila Prabhupada wrote in a letter, "In my childhood I used to take my *ratha* with my little friends, about 60 years ago... my disciples will carry on this festival yearly, and so it will be remembered forever our eternal relationship with Sri Sri Jagannathaji and Sri Sri Radha-Govindaji." He popularised the Ratha-yatra throughout the world affording us an opportunity to experience spiritual joy, beyond the temporary and unsatisfying material pleasure. Srila Prabhupada revealed that the inner meaning of the Ratha-yatra festival is Radharani, Krishna's dearest devotee, meeting



Him and trying to bring Him back to Vrindavan. Celebrating this ecstatic, loving exchange can give us some appreciation, and enable our hearts to be transformed as well. We can get a glimpse of the spiritual world, where there is no anxiety, and where the pure devotees are always engaged in glorifying and serving the Lord.

In the Vedic scriptures, it is mentioned that a person who stands up to receive the Lord in His Ratha-yatra cart can be freed of all kinds of sinful reactions. Moreover, those who render some type of devotional service in these festivals are unlimitedly benefited, being engaged in activities that reawaken their dormant love of God.

A Good Story

By Rasa-sthali Dasi

I love a good story—told well. In fact, I haven't met a person who doesn't like a good story; something that keeps us on the edge of our seat—to cheer the hero, champion the heroine, wait for the bad guy to fall...to behold romance, deception, superhero feats, music, humour, dance, and the mystical. Remember the stories we grew up with? They become etched in our minds. Traditional fairytales make little girls believe that she has to wait for her "Prince Charming" to save her and then they live happily ever after. But the stories from the beginning of time—from the ancient Vedic epics—are not as simplistic as that.

They involve the history of the universe and how God and His devotees pass their time. These stories are filled with powerful and fearful villains where even gods "shook in their boots," and the lionhearted heroes, endowed with virtue and respect for Divinity, were also divine. The heroine was not a damsel in distress but was wise, capable, powerful, and breathtakingly beautiful. The lessons are timeless, thought-

provoking, enriching, and connects us to the Divine, and therefore fills the heart with wonder and peace. Fortunately, these stories have survived the passage of time through recitation, music, dance, and drama.

The Sanskrit word for drama is *natakam*. *Natakam* is poetry in motion...something we do not see enough of nowadays. But you can at the Durban Festival of Chariots. Immortal stories dramatically told, of bygone heroes and of the old soul. This year the festival brings the brand new drama, Little Big Ramayana, an action-packed, fast-paced, thirty-minute-telling of the beloved story of Prince Rama. And for a modern twist, Big Fish Little Fish will take us on a roller coaster journey with a lonely soul. Prepare to be captivated by the spectacular spiritual ocean dance and local flavour humour. These dramas will be staged every evening over the festival. So come by, grab a chair, and enjoy the show.



Photo Courtesy of Jeffrey Govender



Festival of Chariots

Chariot Parade

Lord Jagannath on His Chariot with a red canopy, Lord Baladev on His chariot with a blue canopy and Subhadra Devi on her chariot with a yellow canopy

Day Parade

Friday, 18 April from 10:30am - 1:00pm

Night Parade

Monday, 21 April from 5:00pm - 6:00pm from festival grounds

Bhajans & Kirtans

With local and international singers
BB Govinda Swami
& his troupe from Kazakstan
Kadamba Kanana Swami
Bada Hari Das
Madhava Das



Body Art

Gopi Dots
Creative Face Painting
Traditional Henna Tattoos
Contemporary Airbrush Tattoos

Multimedia & Seminars

Adding value & quality to our lives

Gift Shop

Devotional apparel
Clothing
Jewellery
Décor
Art
Audio & visual items
Books & fancy stationery



Youth Lounge

Focussing on topical issues
Fun & Relaxed
Spiritual Networking

Dramas

Every evening
Directed by Bhaktimarg Swami
Little Big Ramayana
Big Fish Little Fish

Soul Discussions

For the thinking mind...



Chant & Be Happy Meditation

108 Mantra Chants to a blissful mind

Look out for details of the cultural programme
shuttle service available. Right of access

OLD DURBAN DRIVE-IN

18 - 21 APRIL
11am - 11pm

Free Food

Wood-fired briyani, dhal & salad.
Halava & juice



Food Court

From take away hot dogs & pizzas, to coffee shops with waffles, ice-cream & milkshakes, to Indian street food & fine dining with multi-course thalis, there will be something for everyone.

Jagannath Temple

Offer prayers
Offer fruit, flowers & incense
Observe aratis & look upon the smiling face of Lord Jagannath
Sing & dance in the kirtans for Lord Jagannath's pleasure

Cultural Entertainment

Local & International Performers
Traditional & Fusion Dance
World Class Live Entertainment

Blue Mountain Children's Theme Park

Archery
Churning Butter
Arts & Crafts
Gardening
Kids Kitchen



Music Store

Traditional & modern
Devotional music to soothe the mind & heart

Vedic Lifestyle

Ayurveda
Vastu
Yoga & Astrology
Presented by well-known & respected practitioners.



Ancient Wisdom Book Shop

Classic Scripture available in English
Modern Devotional Works
Sanskrit & Bengali Devotional Poetry
Children's Literature

programme in local media and on local ISKCON websites. Entrance is free. Ample free parking and admission reserved. 082 728 5154 | anuradhadasa.bcs@gmail.com | www.festivalofchariots.net

Dance with Destiny – A Ford Story

By Rukmini Devi Dasi

Does being a devotee of Krishna mean poverty, lack of ambition or a loss of individuality? Can one pursue a spiritual path and still be materially successful? These are the common fears that plagued me and many others who have curiously eyed the path of *bhakti*. Mr. Alfred Ford (Ambarish Das) is a living anomaly of those fears.

As the American equivalent to British royalty, the Ford family is synonymous with immense wealth and legendary success. At the helm was Henry Ford, father of the automobile. Although widely celebrated for his ingenious invention, few know that good old Henry was an avowed vegetarian. He also ensured that each person who toured the famous Ford factory received a pamphlet on reincarnation.

His open-mindedness was the prime inheritance of his great grandson, Alfred Ford. After graduation, Alfred retreated to the mountains in Wyoming in search of a higher truth. He found it in the form of the *Bhagavad-gita*, the Hare Krishna *maha-mantra*, and eventually in personal encounters with Srila Prabhupada that left life-long impressions. He became an initiated disciple.

Was this the end of Alfred Ford? Did he cast aside the Ford family name as illusory? Did he trek to forests to subsist on roots and dress in tree bark to rebuke the curse of his wealth? Did he throw away his passport and merge into the temple room wall in a monotone Hare Krishna identity? Actually, he did not. He could have been spotted, however, smartly clad in a black suit and tie, conversing with some of Durban's elite

businessmen and women, at a breakfast hosted by the Durban Chamber of Commerce and Industry. It was one of many such engagements during the South African leg of his world tour. Yet, had you perchance met Mr. Alfred Ford, you would have inevitably been charmed by his down to earth nature and warm humour. It doesn't take long to see that behind the multi-million-dollar-businessman is a simple-hearted devotee whose mature faith is as impressive as his illustrious bloodline.



At a breakfast hosted by the Durban Chamber of Commerce.

Rather than losing all sense of drive, Mr. Ford is currently engrossed in a project with the potential to revolutionise the world as much as, if not more, than his familial predecessors. The Temple of the Vedic Planetarium, under construction in Mayapur, Bengal, is like no other edifice created in the last two hundred years. Taller than the Taj Mahal and rivalling even St. Paul's Cathedral in London, it attempts to show the synergy between science and religion in true Vedic style. It is ambition at its best and will indeed be part of the Alfred Ford legacy.

Now one may argue that this is a spiritual ambition, and right they would be. However, achieving such a feat will require the professionalism of many. From design to décor, this project will call for proficiency and specialisation that's nothing short of top notch. And Mr. Alfred Ford, heading up the finance procurement, will indeed be tapping into the fame and fortune that come with a Ford name to help make the 80 million dollar project a reality.

This is his true glory. Although raised in luxury, he didn't fail to see cracks in painting that the world calls happiness. Having seen them, he wholeheartedly embraced the practice of a devotee but he didn't reject the fame or wealth that his karma accrued. Neither did he deny his nature or identity. Seeing all this opulence as part of Krishna, such a gifted devotee makes the world an altar and all his attributes become an offering to the Supreme Lord.



Triumphs and Typhoons

By Sharadiya Rasa Dasi

Laxminath's suitcase needs repair after going through numerous airports. He appears relaxed attempting a DIY on it. Nothing else suggests that he has returned from a dynamic two months in Haiti. After coordinating the Food For Life (FFL) effort in Durban for the past fifteen years, he is now part of the Global Food For Life. He has since responded to the aftermath of droughts in Lesotho, floods in Mozambique, earthquake in Haiti and the tsunami in Sri Lanka.

These natural disasters leave people devastated and vulnerable. While there is help by various NGOs, military and other sectors, Laxminath says there is a universal appreciation of hot sanctified food that is offered by the Food For Life team. The FFL relief efforts are planned and executed with due consideration to the local culture and where possible the preferred vegetables are prepared. In Sri Lanka, three bases were set up, where over 10 000 plates of food were served with the help of the Sinhalese Military, before sunset, as it is customary not to eat after sunset.

Laxminath sees the extended hand of Krishna in the extraordinary ways that FFL receives help in the course of their service. He recounts a time during the floods in Mozambique when there seemed to be no way of getting food to people stranded in what he describes as "the jungle", a gentleman offered to take them in his speedboats. Service can be an adventure. I asked him about the language barrier in the different countries, and he responds, "Hare Krishna", a smile and a plate of food breaks down all barriers." FFL often work closely with organisations and volunteers of other faiths and they share supplies and facilities - it becomes a space for inter-religious dialogue and understanding.

These areas have many dangers like aftershocks of an earthquake or flood, the criminal element, etc. In Sri Lanka, a volunteer had to be rescued from landmines. When 1.5 million were left homeless after the earthquake in Haiti, Laxminath travelled with UN convoys. "We had the unstable mountain on one side and raging waters on the other and a narrow strip of road to take us into Port Au Prince." He and his team forsake personal comfort, set up a tent and got cooking immediately. They distributed over 3000 plates a day. The FFL team maintain their spiritual practices of rising at 3.30am and chanting the Hare Krishna *maha-mantra* amidst

all challenges. Once, in Durban when the FFL team were feeding the poor, the van was hijacked: in these natural disaster areas there is the threat of hijacking of supplies. While it's easier to steal dry products (a common form of international help), FFL have an advantage as they distribute cooked food, a vital service in the face of impaired power supply and infrastructure.

The work continues after the initial disaster response. In Sri Lanka, for example, medical care, shelter and education are provided for orphaned children, at the Gokulam-Bhaktivedanta Children's Home. Laxminath returned two months ago to Haiti to facilitate the daily food distribution at a school that caters to over two hundred students. While some try to understand the *Bhagavad-gita* by armchair reading or on mountain tops, Laxminath perceives the temporary nature of material existence in his service, thereby experiencing one of the key teachings.



Food For Life was established in 1974 after Srila Prabhupada declared that no one within ten miles of a temple should go hungry and has now become a global phenomenon. Every six seconds someone is receiving a plate of sanctified food. Laxminath's suitcase is now repaired and he is on standby for his next port of call - the Philippines where a typhoon hit. May everyone there receive Lord Krishna's blessings in the form of food and sound, which will simultaneously relieve their hunger and revive their spirit.

Becoming A Devotee – For Dummies

Youth Column

By Rukmini Devi Dasi

In the age of fast food, instant coffee, and SMS lingo we seldom can find the time to do anything more than brush our teeth, down a bowl of cereal, and rush out into the concrete wilderness. Be you a struggling student or a corporate slave, survival is the name of the game. Most of us want at least a little bit of spirituality in our lives. It seems attractive, and boy some sanity in the crazy rat race would be welcome. Alas, we're just too busy. Those who got a spiritual boost in the holidays begin to feel drained as everyday life takes over. That awesome *kirtan* that got your blood pumping and heart soaring seems to fade like an old pair of denim jeans. And you wonder where it all went. We know spiritual life should be more of a priority. The big question is how to actually do it?

Don't stress folks. Fortunately, those sages who lived hundreds of years ago under trees were quite clued-up with the struggle that our twenty-first century spiritual aspirant would face. Together with commenting on books that were eighteen thousand verses long, they also catered for those who probably never read more than their daily horoscope. It's almost small enough to fit in your pocket with just eleven texts and the best part is, it's *all* there; everything you need to kick start your spiritual life or fix it if it's showing teething problems. The sage's called it the *Upadeshamrita*. Srila Prabhupada translated it as the *Nectar of Instruction*. And if you allow me to humour you with

a personal contribution, I'd like to call it, 'Becoming A Devotee – For Dummies.'

The 'For Dummies' series is a popular concept conjured in the 1990's. On the contrary to what you may think, it doesn't imply that people reading the book are in anyway intellectually challenged. Rather, it takes subjects that are complicated and crammed with technical jargon and makes them digestible to the ordinary person on the street. It transforms the complex to common knowledge.

That is exactly what the *Nectar of Instruction* does. It takes the esoteric science of *bhakti* and brings it down to an incredibly easy-to-understand self-help guide. It chalks out the devotional path from beginner to 'big-timer' in such a way that you easily see where you fit in and what your next step is. 'How do I be a devotee and still fit in the world?

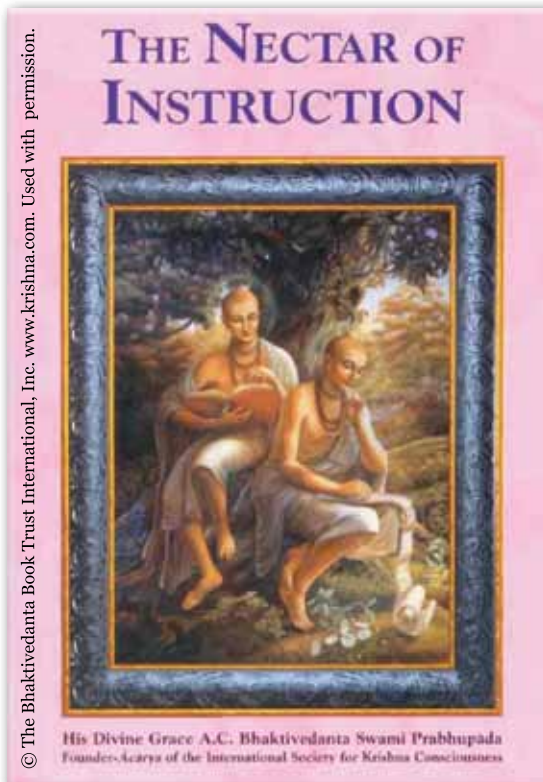
How do I handle all the rules that

sometimes feel like a noose around the neck? Does being a devotee mean that I lose all my old friends? How can I ensure that spiritual life remains tasty? How do I express care and affection for others? How

...fortunately those sages who lived hundreds of years ago under trees where quite clued-up with the struggle that our twenty-first century spiritual aspirant would face.

can I be a devotee and still be human?' All these questions, and tons more are answered in the *Nectar of Instruction*.

So get it and get it now. Download it on your e-reader, bluetooth it on your phone or just do it the old fashioned way and buy one from our book store. It costs half the price of the on-special movie ticket. Don't be surprised if you discover it in hibernation on your book shelves. Whichever way, make sure you have a copy. However, even self-help books, are more fun when studied in good company. For that reason we're hosting a *Nectar of Instruction* study group that's tailor-made for the young in body, mind or spirit. Catch us on the last Saturday of every month at ten in the morning at the Hare Krishna temple. Give me a call (at the temple) so I can keep your chair comfy. Bring your book and I'll bring the *mangal* sweets.



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I vote South Africa...but why?

Vedic Observer

By Venu Gopal Das

Rising from the dust of a past once torched by discrimination, inequality and oppression...for most South Africans the words “democracy” and “ensuring free and fair elections”, sound tantalising. Although our marvellous legislation is filled with policy and processes that are considered the most accommodating and diverse in the world, somewhere between the procedure and delivery, these ideals mysteriously vanish into thin air — along with the taxpayers’ hard earned money.

This trend is not only exclusive to South Africa or the third world; in all government spheres we see that politicians are becoming bold and embracing corruption. *Srimad Bhagavatam* refers to this as *dasyu dharmabhiu*, ‘governments of plunderers’. This has been described as a symptom of Kali-yuga, the age of quarrel. It also predicts that as the Kali-yuga progresses; the only people who will be eligible to enter political circles are the deceitful and devious. These leaders’ main objective is to find ways to take away assets from the common man. (SB 12.2.8)

Recently, following a series of riots, the people of the Ukraine ousted their State President, Viktor Yanukovich. Shortly after, a warrant for his arrest was issued, and he fled his country. Whilst on the run, hordes of Ukrainians visited his estate and found themselves in a fairy-tale palace: a man-made lake with a full size pirate ship, a private zoo, a golf course and a garage of seventy classic automobiles whose value cannot be accurately estimated. Please note that the Ukraine is the second poorest country in Europe. However its leader, who was put into power by the people, chose to use the opportunity to steal as much as he could from his already impoverished supporters.



Ukrainian ousted State President, Viktor Yanukovich's Palace

Closer to home, officially Statistics SA is unable to ascertain how many immigrants and asylum seekers we have in our nation. Unofficially it is estimated that there are over eight-million. Imagine what state of life they have experienced to take shelter here, a country where the government spends R250 million on security upgrades to a presidential homestead, in the very same district where citizens have no access to primary health care.

...the only people who will be eligible to enter political circles are the deceitful and devious.

Srila Prabhupada long told us to expect such hypocrisy and assured us that things are not going to improve. He advised us to become independent and learn to be self-sufficient. Taking these instructions to heart, ISKCON has thus far established sixty-one self-sufficient communities and eco-villages around the world. Some of these are completely self-sufficient or ‘off-the-grid’ whilst others are partly reliant on government infrastructure, but are aspiring to be fully independent in the future. These communities use alternative energy sources and environmentally sustainable methods to perform daily life. Many of these communities exist in the most progressive first world countries such as Australia, Canada, Germany, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. The residents of these communities have abandoned the so-called highest quality of life and social systems to do so, structures that South Africa will only dream of achieving in the next fifty years...optimistically speaking. That being said, what is the purpose of having so much faith in our governments?

The government provides for its people only as an obligation; it does not have our real interests at heart. We, the common folk, are just an obstacle to our corrupt leaders’ pursuit of wealth. The current government systems are based on exploitation in every sector, whereas the independent living that Srila Prabhupada recommended creates societies based on service where nobody is undermined. Alternative living may seem idealistic, but within ISKCON it has been achieved since the 70s and numerous other organisations have since followed suit.

You have been given the right to vote, every vote counts, but what does it count for exactly? Instead of arbitrarily voting for change, be a part of it.

For ISKCON rural communities: <http://www.iskconcenters.com/farm-and-rural-communities/>

Happy Marriage = Happy Family

God Conscious Parenting

By Krishangi Radhe Dasi

Sarah is 12 years old and has been a strong B level student. She is consistent in her academic studies, displays all-round ability by being selected for the school's hockey and debating teams, and her teachers commend Sarah as being a polite and respectful lass. Recently, Sarah's parents have noticed that her grades have been dropping, she is now having friendship problems, and is showing a general disinterest in activities that she once enjoyed. Upon closer introspection and a meeting with the school counsellor, Sarah's parents realised that most of her issues actually lie in their hands. Talking to an independent party, revealed that their marital problems and hostile home environment had a negative impact on Sarah.

Many religions affirm that when a man and a woman marry with the right spirit, they become one body.

But Sarah is one of many children who suffer as a result of unhappy parents. When parents bring difficulties to the forefront of the home and argue before their children it creates feelings of insecurity and emotional turmoil in a child's mind. From the view-point of parents, their problems seem insurmountable with no recourse available. The home is turned into a battle of words, actions and deeds. Recently, the local media has been inundated with reports of callous murders of passion.

Physical and emotional abuse amongst parents opens doors to life-long scars leading to emotional and behavioural problems. Bullying, disinterest in life, and depression can result from parents who show disrespect to each other and thereby towards their children. These factors mould unhappy and unbalanced children into fragile human beings who continue the cycle of abuse as they enter into their own marital relations.

It must be noted that all material relationships are never trouble free, but parents need to give up their egos and preference for the welfare of their children. Many religions affirm that when a man and a woman marry with the right spirit, they become one body. Therefore, when husband and wife keep the service to God, Lord Krishna as their focus and live by the principle of pleasing Krishna, the two become one spirit. The duty of the husband is to protect his wife emotionally, spiritually and physically through kindness and love. The wife understands the position of the husband as a servant and representative of the

spiritual master and offers due respect.

In most religions and societies, parents are given the honourable status as representatives of God within the family. The Koran states, "He who wishes to enter Paradise through its best door must please his parents." The Bible expands, "Train up a child on the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." (Proverbs 22:60) The Sanskrit adage *matha pitha guru devam* translates "mother, father, teacher, God" - forms the greatest truth in Hindu households. Therefore, if parents open themselves to wrongful behaviour, children will certainly imitate this.

Parents, through their practice of loving, joint service to Krishna set true examples and create a joyful experience in the home. Srimad Bhagavatam (5.5.18), even goes so far as to say: "One who cannot deliver his dependents from the path of repeated birth and

death should never become a spiritual master, a father, a husband, a mother, or a worshipable demigod." Vedic scripture describes twenty-six qualities of a person devoted to God, some of which are: kindness to everyone, does not make

anyone his enemy, truthfulness, magnanimous, peaceful, always surrendered to Krishna, has no material desires, and controls his senses.

If we adopt these qualities in the household, our marriages and attempts to raise God conscious children will be successful. Imagine a child seeing her parents joyfully worshipping Krishna, serving and associating with devotees, chanting the *maha-mantra* and reading from the Vedas? She will automatically imbibe the mood and love into her own.

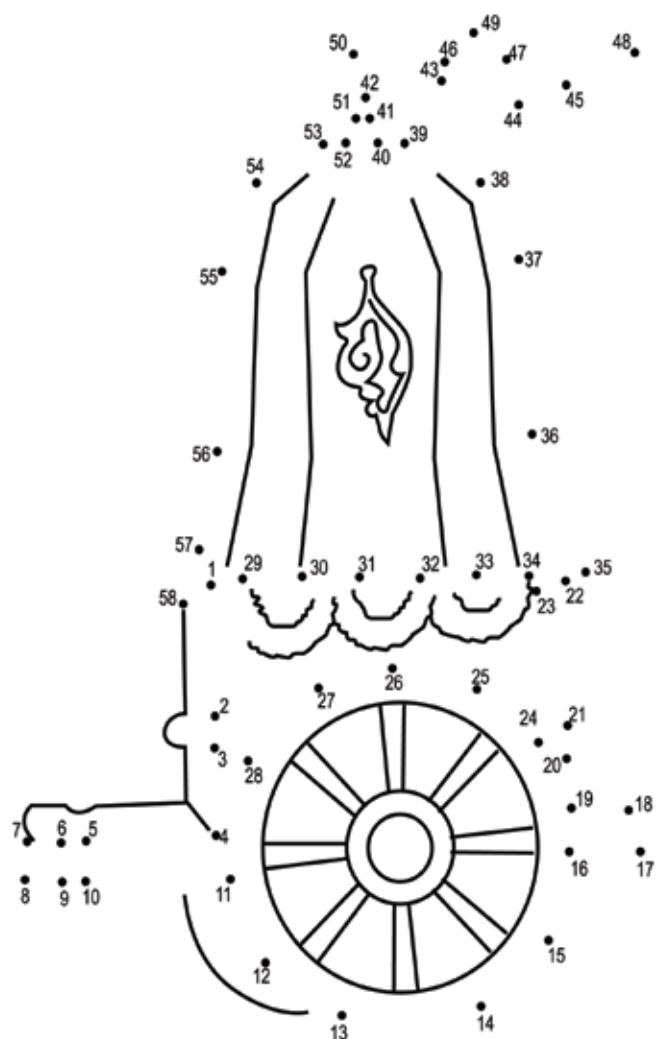
We must always keep in mind that the mood and vibrations that penetrate the child's mind and heart stay with them through the years. Therefore, parents should strive to offer their children a loving home wherein the ideal marriage of both husband and wife are living with Krishna in the spirit of service. After all, children learn what they live.





Join the dots

Young Vaishnavas Column



www.iskcondesiretree.com

Vaishnava Calendar

8 Apr Tu	Rama Naumi: Appearance of Lord Sri Ramacandra (Fast till sunset)
11 Apr Fr	Ekadasi
12 Apr Sa	Break fast 06:12 - 08:08
15 Apr Tu	Sri Balaram Rasayatra Sri Krsna Vasanta Rasa
25 Apr Fr	Ekadasi
26 Apr Sa	Break fast 06:21 - 10:02
29 Apr Tu	Sri Gadadhar Pandit - Appearance
8 May Th	Srimati Sita Devi - Appearance (consort of Lord Sri Rama) - Srimati Jahnava Devi - Appearance
10 May Sa	Ekadasi
11 May Su	Break fast 06:30 - 10:05
12 May Mo	Sri Jayananda Prabhu - Disappearance
13 May Tu	Nrsimha Caturdasi: Appearance of Lord Nrsimhadeva (Fast till dusk)
14 May We	Sri Madhavendra Puri - Appearance Sri Srinivas Acharya - Appearance
24 May Sa	Ekadasi
25 May Su	Break fast 06:39 - 10:08
8 Jun Su	Sri Baladeva Vidyabhusana - Disappearance Ganga Puja
9 Jun Mo	Fasting for Pandava Nirjala Ekadasi
10 Jun Tu	Break fast 06:47 - 10:12

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For general queries call the temple at 031-4033328 between 9.30am-5pm.

For programme updates, Daily Darshan, and general information:

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ISKCON Durban Child Protection Team

durbancpt@gmail.com | 076719 6461

childprotectionoffice.org

Durban Krishna



Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare
Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare

Sri Jagannathashtakam



Composed by Sri Shankaracharya
Lord Chaitanya would sing this song to Lord Jagannath.
You can bring it with you when you come to the Durban
Festival of Chariots and when you see Lord Jagannath
you can sing it or read the translation to Him

(1)

kadachit kalindi-tata-vipina-sangitaka-ravo
mudabhiri-nari-vadana-kamalasvada-madhupaha
rama-shambhu-brahmamara-pati-ganesharchita-pado
jagannathah swami nayana-patha-gami bhavatu me

Sometimes in great happiness Lord Jagannatha makes a
loud concert with His flute in the groves on the banks of
the Yamuna. He is like a bumblebee tasting the beautiful
lotus-like faces of the cowherd damsels of Vraja, and
great personalities such as Lakshmi, Shiva, Brahma,
Indra, and Ganesh worship His lotus feet. May that
Jagannatha Swami be the object of my vision.

(2)

bhuje savye venum shirasi shikhi-puccham kati-tate
dukulam netrante sahachara-kataksham vidadhate
sada shrimad-vrindavana-vasati-lila-paricayo
jagannathah swami nayana-patha-gami bhavatu me

In His left hand Lord Jagannatha holds a flute, on
His head He wears peacock feathers, and on His hips
He wears fine yellow silken cloth. From the corners of
His eyes He bestows sidelong glances upon His loving
devotees, and He always reveals Himself through His
pastimes in His divine abode of Vrindavana. May that
Jagannatha Swami be the object of my vision.

(3)

mahambhodhes tire kanaka-rucire nila-shikhare
vasan prasasantah sahaja-balabhadrena balina
subhadra-madhya-sthah sakala-sura-sevavasara-do
jagannathah swami nayana-patha-gami bhavatu me

On the shore of the great ocean, within a large palace atop
the brilliant, golden Nilachala Hill, Lord Jagannatha
resides with His powerful brother Balabhadra and His
sister Subhadra, who stands between Them. May that
Jagannatha Swami, who bestows the opportunity for
devotional service upon all godly souls, be the object of
my vision.

(4)

kripa-paravarah sajala-jalada-shreni-ruchiro
rama-vani-ramah sphurad-amala-pankeruha-mukhaha
surendrair aradhyah shruti-gana-shikha-gita-charito
jagannathah swami nayana-patha-gami bhavatu me

Lord Jagannatha is an ocean of mercy and is as beautiful
as a row of blackish rain clouds. He is the storehouse of
bliss for Lakshmi and Saraswati, and His face resembles
a spotless, full-blown lotus. The best of demigods and

sages worship Him, and the Upanishads sing His glories.
May that Jagannatha Swami be the object of my vision.

(5)

ratharudho gacchan pathi milita-bhudeva-patalaiha
stuti-pradurbhavam prati-padam upakarnya sa-dayaha
daya-sindhur bandhuh sakala jagatam sindhu-sutaya
jagannathah swami nayana-patha-gami bhavatu me

When Lord Jagannatha moves along the road on
His Rathayatra car, at every step large assemblies of
brahmanas loudly chant prayers and sing songs for
His pleasure. Hearing their hymns, Lord Jagannatha
becomes very favorably disposed toward them. He is
the ocean of mercy and the true friend of all the worlds.
May that Jagannatha Swami, along with His consort
Lakshmi, who was born from the ocean of nectar, be the
object of my vision.

(6)

para-brahmapidah kuvalaya-dalotphulla-nayano
nivasi niladrau nihita-charano 'nanta-shirasi
rasanando radha-sarasa-vapur-alingana-sukho
jagannathah swami nayana-patha-gami bhavatu me

Lord Jagannatha, whose eyes resemble full-blown lotus
petals, is the ornament of Lord Brahma's head. He
resides on Nilachala Hill with His lotus feet placed on
the heads of Anantadeva. Overwhelmed by the mellows
of love, He joyfully embraces Srimati Radharani's body,
which is like a cool pond. May that Jagannatha Swami
be the object of my vision.

(7)

na vai yache rajyam na cha kanaka-manikya-vibhavam
na yache 'ham ramyam sakala jana-kamyam vara-vadhum
sada kale kale pramatha-patina gita-charito
jagannathah swami nayana-patha-gami bhavatu me

I do not pray for a kingdom, nor for gold, rubies, or
wealth. I do not ask for a beautiful wife, as desired by
all men. I simply pray that Jagannatha Swami, whose
glories Lord Shiva always sings, may be the constant
object of my vision.

(8)

hara tvam samsaram druta-taram asaram sura-pate
hara tvam papanam vitatim aparam yadava-pate
aho dine 'nathe nihita-charano nishchitam idam
jagannathah swami nayana-patha-gami bhavatu me

O Lord of the demigods, please quickly remove this
useless material existence I am undergoing. O Lord
of the Yadus, please destroy this vast, shoreless ocean
of sins. Ah, this is certain: Lord Jagannatha bestows
His lotus feet upon those who feel themselves fallen
and have no shelter in this world but Him. May that
Jagannatha Swami be the object of my vision.