



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

# HARE KRISHNA NEWS

March / April 2011

**Festival of Chariots**

**22 - 25 April 2011**

**Chariot Processions  
Friday 2pm  
& Monday 5pm**

**Official Festival Info**









Sri Sri Radha Radhanath Temple presents  
**Lord Jagannath's  
Kalash Snana Yatra Festival**

**Saturday 9 April 2011 from 1pm**

**First Ever Snana Yatra!**

**Hare Krishna Sri Sri Radha Radhanath Temple  
Chatsworth**



Your opportunity for direct and personal service to the Sacred Deities of  
**Jagannath, Baladev and Subhadra**

On this day you will be engaged in:



Offering a lamp  
to Lord Jagannath



Direct bathing of Lord Jagannath  
Baladev and Subhadra



Offering Jal (water) to  
to Tulasi Devi



Worship of Sri Sri  
Radha Radhanath

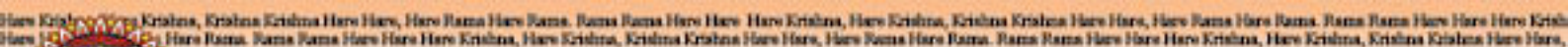


All participants receive a bag of transcendental gifts from Lord Jagannath

Kalashes are limited; secure yours by contacting Rasasthali Dasi on:  
Tel: (031) 403 3328 or E-mail: [rasasthali@nitai.co.za](mailto:rasasthali@nitai.co.za)

All proceeds support the Durban Ratha Yatra Festival of Chariots





By Swarup Damodar Das

By Swarup Damodar Das

At these meetings I encountered many congregational devotees; very responsible in their duties as householders and with demanding occupations, but employing it all in Krishna's service. Their lives are not separate from Krishna's service – whatever else they are doing is meaningful only because it is connected with Krishna. This attitude is starkly different from living one's separated life, endeavouring for results to enjoy, and only when necessary, going to the temple, serving Krishna when we have the time, or when we are in distress or in need of something.

When one sincerely practices Krishna consciousness, this type of commitment and identification will naturally arise. But it takes patience, confidence, determination and inspiration.

Noting the devotees dedicated to serving Srila Prabhupada in South Africa, His Grace Lokabandhu Das stands out with distinction. Always one to try to share Krishna consciousness with others, he recently passed away while preaching to nurses in hospital. I honour Lokabandhu Prabhu for his service and inspiring example he set for all congregational devotees. Although being well established in society as a high school principal and a community leader, he stepped fully into the identity of a devotee surrendered to Krishna.

As Champakalata Dasi remarked to me after we heard of his passing, "He did not have one foot in spiritual life and another in material life. He was fully absorbed in serving Krishna." Material life and spiritual life are like two row boats. Trying to balance oneself with one leg in each boat is impossible, exhausting and one will eventually fall into the water and be drenched.

Lokabandhu Prabhu commanded respect and admiration from all devotees not due to his advanced age, or years of initiation, but especially due to his humble disposition, his taste for hearing *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, his strict adherence to *sadhana-bhakti* or his morning programme, and his strong desire to help people come closer to Krishna - especially the children.

I feel proud to have known such an exalted follower of Srila Prabhupada and pray that we will all be blessed by Lokabandhu Prabhu to also offer our lives entirely in the service of Krishna, keeping both our feet in spiritual life.

On 18th February 2011, His Grace Lokabandhu Das, a dedicated devotee in Srila Prabhupada's ISKCON, passed away. Lokabandhu Prabhu was well known and loved in our community. We will miss him dearly. Two senior devotees share their sentiments:



"His Grace Lokabandhu Das left this world at 4:30 a.m. on Friday. He was one of our best devotees in South Africa—learned, devotional, and fully committed to Srila Prabhupada's and Sri Sri Nitai-Navadvipa-candra's mission. We shall miss him dearly. Please pray that he attains the lotus feet of his Lord without difficulty and that he will bless us all here."

H. H. Giriraj Swami

"You had always been such an exemplary Vaishnava absorbed in Krishna consciousness and never criticizing anyone; always magnifying the good qualities of others and never noticing any fault in anyone; so eloquent in describing the glories of the Lord and His devotees, yet so grave in your meditation of Him. You have undoubtedly been one of the most brilliant preachers of our movement, and thus a priceless asset of Srila Prabhupada's ISKCON."

H.H. Bhakti Charu Swami









# GOD AND DEMIGODS

## Ganesh, The Remover of Obstacles

By Nikunja Vilasini Dasi

*Ganapati bappa moriya, pudhachya varshi laukar ya*, the loud cries of Lord Ganesh's eager devotees fill the air. In amazement, I look at the huge procession thronging the streets of Mumbai. It is Ganesh Chaturthi, the birthday of Lord Ganesh and the celebration is reaching its climax. Thousands of Ganesh deities in every pose and size are carried on beautifully decorated palanquins amidst the chanting of hymns, prayers, dance and music. An ocean of people move like waves towards Juhu beach to witness the Ganesh Visarjan, when all the deities of Lord Ganesh are immersed under water. What a sight to behold! For ten days before the grand procession, I watched the Ganesh *murtis* being worshipped in great opulence and devotion on the streets of India. "What are these people praying for?" I wonder, "And what impels them to worship Ganesh with so much devotion?"

Someone tells me that people approach Lord Ganesh to remove the obstacles on the path of their material prosperity. Reading *Bhagavad-gita As It Is* gives me a clearer understanding of such a mentality. "Men in this world desire success in fruitive activities, and therefore they worship the demigods. Quickly, of course, men get results from fruitive work in this world." (Bg. 4.12) However, they do not realize that these material benedictions are temporary and strengthen one's materialistic tendencies and attachments to the material world.

Recognizing the demigods' exalted positions as representatives of the Supreme Lord, devotees of Lord Krishna honour and worship such great souls as they would any Vaishnava. They never approach the demigods for material prosperity but for blessings to help them in their service to Lord Krishna.

Lord Ganesh has an important role to play in the service of his master. "I adore the primeval Lord Govinda, whose lotus feet are always held by Ganesh upon the pair of *tumuli* protruding from his elephant head in order to obtain power for his function of destroying all the obstacles on the path of progress of the three worlds." (*Sri Brahma-samhita*, text 50) Thus, all his glory and power rests upon the grace of the Supreme Lord.

Goddess Parvati created Ganesh and appointed him the guardian of her quarters. When her husband, Lord Shiva returned home Ganesh refused him entry. Enraged, Lord Shiva beheaded the boy. To appease Parvati's anger and grief, Lord Shiva commanded his attendants to bring the head of the first living being that they saw. They brought back the head of an elephant which Shiva mystically placed on the body of Ganesh and brought him back to life. He became known as Ganapati, the Lord of Shiva's army and Vignaharta, the remover of obstacles.

When a devotee enters the Lord's temple, he seeks Ganesh's blessings by praying, "Oh great Vaishnava devotee of the Lord, as I am coming into this temple to worship the Lord of my life, please remove all internal and external obstacles from my path in my service to Lord Krishna."

Lord Krishna says, "Those who are devotees of other gods and who worship them with faith actually worship only Me, O son of Kunti, but they do so in a wrong way." (Bg.9.23) "By giving water to the root of a tree one satisfies its branches, twigs and leaves, and by supplying food to the stomach one satisfies all the senses of the body. Similarly, by engaging in the transcendental service of the Supreme Lord one automatically satisfies all the demigods and all other living entities." (SB 4.31.14)



Srila Prabhupada further explains that we should not worship the demigods, who are different officers in the government of the Lord independently of the Supreme Lord. Therefore, everyone should directly worship the Supreme Lord as instructed in the *Srimad Bhagavatam* (2.3.10): "Whether one is without desire, or is desirous of all fruitive results, or is after liberation, one should with all efforts try to worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead for complete perfection, culminating in Krishna consciousness."

Thousands of Ganesh deities are immersed in the ocean, symbolizing Ganesh's journey towards his abode in Kailash, taking away his devotees' misfortune. They continue to sing *ganapati bappa moriya...O Lord Ganesh, come speedily again next year.* I think, "O Lord Ganesh, take away our greatest misfortune – forgetfulness of your dear Lord Govinda and always benedict us with remembrance of Him."

Picture courtesy of Indradyumna Swami's facebook page.









# The Festival of Chariots

By Nikunja Vilasini Dasi

Krishna, the sweetheart of Vrindavan (Vraja), was the life of all the Vrajavasis, the residents of Vrindavan. When Krishna left Vraja, their pain knew no bounds – they were constantly weeping in separation from Him and only thoughts of Him kept them alive. In Dwaraka, although surrounded by His loving queens, companions and servants, Krishna too felt insurmountable grief in separation from the Vrajavasis.

After many years of Krishna's absence, the Vrajavasis decided to visit Kurukshetra during a solar eclipse, knowing that Krishna would be there. When the eager Vrajavasis reached Kuruksetra, at first they could not see Him. Finally, they found their beloved Lord, guided by the sweet fragrance from His transcendental body. Instead of seeing their simple cowherd boyfriend with a peacock feather in His hair, they saw Him adorned with the crown of a king. Instead of the Gunjamala and a wild forest flower garland around His neck, He was adorned with costly jewels and the royal garb and armour of a *kshatriya* warrior. Instead of the sweet sounds of Vrindavan and the singing of the peacocks and parrots, there was the rattling of royal chariots and the trumpeting of horns and elephants. Instead of being surrounded by His loving cowherd friends and cows, He was surrounded by a royal army of soldiers and princes offering Him praise and respect and bowing down to His feet. This troubled the Vrajavasis greatly, especially Srimati Radharani who was dear most to Krishna. They wanted their simple cowherd boy Krishna back.

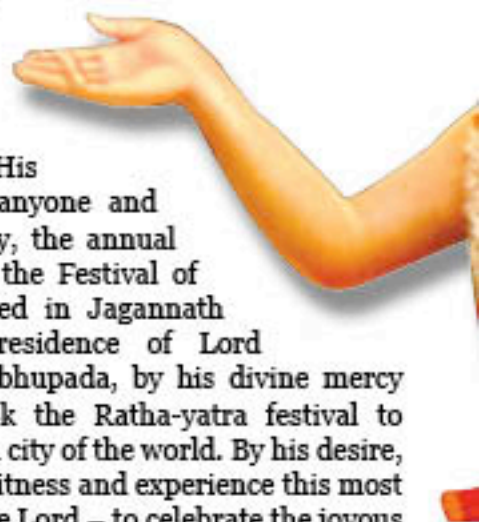
When Krishna saw Radha, He overflowed with unlimited happiness. She begged Him to come back to Vrindavan where He was just a simple cowherd boy. Her prayers melted His heart and He appeared like a madman in ecstatic bliss. Radharani and the *gopis* pulled Krishna, accompanied by Balaram and Subhadra, on His royal chariot towards Vrindavan. As they pulled the chariot in a joyful trance, they remembered the wonderful pastimes of Krishna in Vrindavan. The simple sweetness of Vraja surpasses the opulence of Dwaraka and the love of the residents of Vraja surpasses the love of any other devotee.

Krishna, in this ecstatic form with widened eyes and broad smile, revealed the object of His meditation and hankering – the love of His dearest devotee, Srimati Radharani. This form was a result of the union with His most intimate devotees. Another time in Dwaraka, Krishna became stunned in ecstasy

when He heard Mother Rohini's narrations of His pastimes in Vrindavan. Together with Balaram and Subhadra, Their eyes grew wide in wonder, a huge smile decorated Their faces and Their arms retracted within their bodies.

Centuries afterwards, King Indradyumna, a pure devotee, invoked the appearance of this divine blissful form of Krishna. Lord Krishna, together with His brother and sister, Balaram and Subhadra, appeared to the king in His deity incarnation as Lord Jagannath, Lord of the Universe. King Indradyumna constructed a majestic temple for Lord Jagannath's worship and annually held the Ratha-yatra festival where the deities were pulled in a grand procession on beautiful chariots.

Lord Jagannath is most merciful. He comes out of His temple to cast His merciful glance on anyone and everyone. Until today, the annual Ratha-yatra festival, the Festival of Chariots, is celebrated in Jagannath Puri, the eternal residence of Lord Jagannath. Srila Prabhupada, by his divine mercy and compassion took the Ratha-yatra festival to every major town and city of the world. By his desire, we are fortunate to witness and experience this most intimate festival of the Lord – to celebrate the joyous union of Lord Jagannath with His dearest devotees. We are most fortunate to see Lord Jagannath, serve Him, pull His chariot, remember His pastimes, and take part in spreading His glories. For this, we remain eternally grateful and indebted to ISKCON's founder *acharya*, His Divine Grace Srila Prabhupada.





By Nikunja Vilasini Dasi

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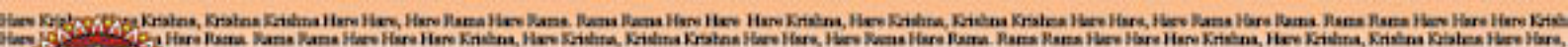
At the grand Rath Lord Caitanya wou

"Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu is the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself. Therefore there is no difference between Him, Lord Jagannath and Lord Nrsimhadeva."  
(Caitanya-caritamṛta, Antya 2.67)

At the grand Ratha-yatra festival in Puri, Lord Caitanya would dance ecstatically in front of Lord Jagannath's chariot. "May the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Sri Krishna

At our Durban Festival of Chariots, in front of the grand procession, you may see a golden deity form of Lord Caitanya, with hands raised and eyes filled with tears of love. As we join Him in His ecstatic dance, let us remember His divine mercy and compassion in the form of his instructions – to constantly chant the holy names of Krishna. This will purify our hearts and give us the treasure of *krishna-prema* (love for Krishna) that Sri Caitanya holds in His hands.





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In those days when people were naturally more pious and God conscious and led a simple life without technological advancement to distract them, it was easier to derive fresh meaning from the *Ramayana* and apply its teachings to their lives. Still, if we today delve in Lord Rama's pastimes we get ever

Rama's adherence to truth, righteousness, nobility and pure goodness exemplified the life of the perfect person. He was a perfect son, a perfect brother, a

perfect friend, a perfect king and master, a perfect hero, a perfect husband and a perfect father. He attracted the devotion of so many. Being the life of His parents, His father died in acute separation when Rama was exiled to the forest. Rama's devoted brothers dedicated their lives in His service – Lakshman insisted on accompanying Him to the forest and Bharath refused to be king and ruled the kingdom on Rama's behalf, placing Rama's sandals on the throne. Rama's dear friend, Sugriva and his army supported Rama and risked their lives in the war against the demon Ravana. Servants

On Sri Rama Navami we celebrate the divine appearance of Lord Rama by remembering and hearing about His wonderful qualities and pastimes from qualified saintly persons. In this way, we become purified to achieve spiritual perfection. The Lord affirms this: "The thoughts of My pure devotees dwell in Me, their lives are fully devoted to My service, and they derive great satisfaction and bliss from always enlightening one another and conversing about Me. (Bg.10.9) "One who knows the transcendental nature of My appearance and activities does not, upon leaving the body, take birth again in this material world, but attains My eternal abode. O Arjuna." (Bg. 4.9)

**Come celebrate Rama Navami with us on April 12  
at 7pm at Sri Sri Radha Radhanath Temple**



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# Festival of Chariots Highlights

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- Chariot Parades on Friday afternoon and Monday evening
  - Dramas by Bhaktimarg Swami
  - Russian Baratha Natyam Dancers
  - Hatha Yoga Demonstration – Estonian Artists
  - Martial Arts Display – Lithuanian Artists
  - Local Dancers and Musicians
  - Internationally Acclaimed Shashika Mooruth
  - Silk Road Bhajan Band from Khazakstan
  - Madhava
  - Golden Age (Soweto)
  - 2 cultural Entertainment Venues
  - On-site Temple
  - Gift shop  
(clothing, jewellery, CDs & DVDs, etc.)
  - Little Gokul Children's Village
  - Cooking Demos
  - Vegetarian Restaurants and Take-aways
  - Multi-media Shows
  - Questions and Answers
  - Spiritual Literature
  - Free Meals
  - Special Guests :  
Bhakti Caitanya Swami  
Partha Sarathi Das Goswami  
Indradyumna Swami  
Bhakti Brnga Govinda Swami  
Bhaktimarg Swami  
Kadamba Kanana Swami  
Bhakti Brhat Bhagavat Swami

Photos by Sri Nathji Das