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#### Editor's Note Sun Hats and A Hair Net

For some people, Easter is synonymous with the Easter bunny, family gatherings, long weekend getaways and not forgetting, delicious hot cross buns. For others, Easter is primarily a time of celebrating Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection. For ISKCON KZN, the four-day Easter weekend cannot be disconnected from the most auspicious occasion when the Lord of the Universe leaves His residence, takes to the street to give His darshan to everyone.

This year is no different to any other, with the exception that Ratha-yatra 2011 is guaranteed to be more colourful, more exotic, with more variety than any Ratha-yatra held ever before on this coastal city. Not to give away too many surprises, this year's festivities include an all-new children's theme park, Russian Baratha Natyam dancers, Hatha Yoga and Martial artists from Eastern Europe. Every year Ratha-yatra sees a host of international artists and speakers with this year being no exception. Check out our festival highlights page for more details.

Behind every successful festival hides a hard working, dedicated and enthusiastic team of devotees. Unknown to most people, the Sri Sri Radha Radhanath temple is blessed with a wonderful festival committee comprising of Swarup Damodar Das, Champakalata Dasi, Umesh Prakash, Upendra Ramlakan, Vibhu Caitanya Das, Balaram Das and Ramvijay Das.

These devotees brainstorm to come up with fresh ideas ensuring that every festival is bigger and better than the previous ones. The festival committee are blessed by Lord Jagannath, Baladev and Subhadra Devi for their unconditional service. If you bump into any of them be sure to express your gratitude.

It is time to put on your sun hats and bring your family, friends and neighbours to Ratha-yatra 2011. To quench your thirst stop by the Govinda's Milky Treats tent and look out for me. I'll be the one in a hair net whipping up your strawberry milkshake, or scooping ice cream on your fresh hot waffle!

Hope you have a spiritually enlivening experience!

Haripriya Devi Dasi

Email: Haripriya@nitai.co.za







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#### oth Feet in Spiritual Life By Swarup Damodar Das

I recently participated in a series of meetings in Sridham Mayapur, India, that were focused on charting out the future expansion and intelligent organisation of ISKCON. During these meetings I developed a deeper appreciation for Srila Prabhupada's remarkable devotees that are serving with dedication and commitment all over the world. ISKCON's current progress is phenomenal and I perceived that Srila Prabhupada was pleased with his movement's progress. Achieving amazing results, devotees all over the world are conceiving and implementing innovative ideas to spread Krishna consciousness. We can feel fortunate and proud to be

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' 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.

serving in this merciful movement.

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.

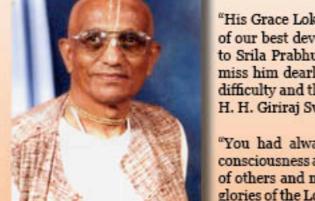
Lokabandhu Prabhu commanded respect and admiration from all devotees not due to his advanced age, or years of initiation, but especially due to his humble disposition, his taste for hearing Srimad-Bhagavatam, his strict adherence to sadhana-bhakti or his morning programme, and his strong desire to help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

# H'arewell Lokabandhu Prabhu!

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

## Lord Jagannath Appears in ISKCON From Srila Prabhupada-lilamrita, Volume 3, Chapter 24

One day Malati hurried into Srila Prabhupada's apartment, took a small item out of her shopping bag, and placed it on Prabhupada's desk for his inspection. "What is this, Swamiji?"



Srila Prabhupada looked down and beheld a threeinch wooden doll with a flat head, a black, smiling face, and big, round eyes. The figure had stubby, forwardjutting arms, and a simple green and yellow torso with no visible feet. Srila Prabhupada immediately folded his palms and bowed his head, offering the little figure respects.

"You have brought Lord Jagannath, the Lord of the universe," he said, smiling and bright-eyed. "He is Krishna. Thank you very much." Srila Prabhupada beamed with pleasure, while Malati and others sat amazed at their good fortune of seeing Swamiji so pleased. Prabhupada explained that this was Lord Jagannath, a Deity of Krishna worshiped all over India for thousands of years. Jagannath, he said, is worshiped along with two other deities: His brother, Balaram, and His sister, Subhadra.

Excitedly, Malati confirmed that there were other, similar figures at Cost Plus, the import store where she had found the little Jagannath, and Srila Prabhupada said she should go back and buy them. Malati told her husband, Syamasundara, and together they hurried back and bought the two other dolls in the set.

Srila Prabhupada placed the black-faced, smiling

Jagannath on the right. In the centre he placed the smallest figure, Subhadra, who had a red, smiling mouth and a rectangular black and yellow torso. The third figure, Balaram, with a white, round head, red-rimmed eyes, and a happy red smile, had the

> forward-jutting arms like Jagannath and a blue and yellow base.

Prabhupada placed Him next to Subhadra... More than two thousand years ago, Srila Prabhupada told them, there was a king named Indradyumna, a devotee of Lord Krishna, Maharaja Indradyumna wanted a statue of the Lord as He had appeared when He and His brother and sister had travelled on chariots to the holy

field of Kuruksetra during a solar eclipse. When the king requested a famous artist from the heavenly planets, Visvakarma, to sculpture the forms, Visvakarma agreed-on the condition that no one interrupt his work.

The king waited for a long time, while Visvakarma worked behind locked doors. One day, however, the king felt he could wait no longer, and he broke in to see the work in progress. Visvakarma, true to his word, vanished, leaving behind the uncompleted forms of the three deities. The king was nevertheless so pleased with the wonderful forms of Krishna, Balaram, and Subhadra that he decided to worship them as they were. He installed them in a temple and began worshiping them with great opulence.

Since that time, Srila Prabhupada continued, Lord Jagannath has been worshiped all over India...Seeing this appearance of Lord Jagannath in San Francisco as the will of Krishna, Prabhupada said that they should be careful to receive and worship Lord Jagannath properly...He chanted, jagannatha svami nayanapatha-gami bhavatu me. "This is a mantra for Lord Jagannath," he said, "Jagannath means Lord of the universe. 'O Lord of the universe, kindly be visible unto me.' It is very auspicious that He has chosen to appear here."



#### GOD AND DEMIGODS Ganesh, The Remover of Obstacles

By Nikunja Vilasini Dasi

Ganapati bappa moriya, pudhachya varshi laukar ua, 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 6 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.

#### Snana Yatra Bathing the Lord of the Universe! By Kribashne Naidoo

Once, Lord Jagannath requested King Indradyumna to excavate a well near a banyan tree next to the temple and collect the water to bathe Him.

Taking the instruction seriously and further expanding his thoughts, King Indradyumna built a large area for this occasion and placed a variety of opulent paraphernalia including pearls, flags, jewels and asanas (seats) for the demigods to participate

in the bathing ceremony. Moments before Their Lordships Jagannath, Baladev and Subhadra Devi entered the bathing area (snana-vedi) they were offered red kumkum powder and were enthusiastically embraced by the demigods and lovingly placed on Their asanas.

Their Lordships were offered cool sandalwoodscented water, taken from the special well and transported in golden water pots (survarna kumbhas). Lord Brahmaled the bathing ceremony by offering that water to Lord Jagannath. All the devotees present eagerly followed Lord Brahma and participated in offering Their Lordships relief from the heat in Jagannath Puri.

The festival took place on one of the hottest days of the year. The Lord bathed in cool water during the high heat is known as snana-yatra. After snana-yatra Lord Jagannath stood outside in the cool evening air at which time He developed a high fever and became ill.

Lord Jagannath clearly instructed King
Indradyumna that the fifteen days after
snana-yatra, no one should have His audience.
Their Lordships retired in a private area, with
no disturbance, these fifteen days are known as
anavarsara. The deities were offered various
remedies (including herbs, fruit juices and roots
collected from Orissan jungles) to reduce Their fever.

At this time the deities are restored and Lord Jagannath engages in svakiya-rasa, as an ideal husband to the Goddess of Fortune. After Lord Jagannath sought Laksmi Devi's permission to leave, He, Lord Baladev and Subhadra Devi mount Their



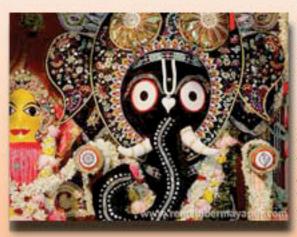
chariots and are enthusiastically and lovingly pulled through the streets of Puri. This Rathavatra festival is known to be the life and soul of the devotees as they once again have darshan of Their Lordships in perfect opulence, newly painted with a hint of youth, rejuvenation and effulgence.

Following Lord Brahma, King Indradyumna and the eager devotees of Jagannath Puri we also can bathe Lord Jagannath on the 9th April 2011 at the Sri Sri Radha Radhanath Temple.

Hathi Vesh By Nikunja Vilasini Dasi

Once, during the snana-yatra Ganapati Bhatta came to Jagannath Puri to seek the Lord. He was told that whoever sees the form of Lord Jagannath would be liberated. Being a devotee of Lord Ganesh, he expected to see the Lord with an

elephant face. However, when he saw Jagannath he was disappointed and confused. Lord Jagannath reciprocated with Ganapati Bhatta's desire of achieving spiritual perfection.



In a dream, he told the king's representative to convince Ganapati Bhatta to seek His darshan again. When Ganapati Bhatta was convinced to return and again saw the form of Lord Jagannath, the Lord appeared to him in hathi-vesh—with a face of an elephant, a big trunk and a beautiful tusk. Now with his doubts dispelled, Ganapati Bhatta surrendered to the Lord, knowing Him to be the origin of Lord Ganesh and everything else. He asked the Lord to always appear in this form during the snana-yatra. Then like a flash of lightning, Ganapati Bhatta's soul entered into the body of the Lord to the amazement of everyone present. Till today, Lord Jagannath, Baladeva and Subhadra are dressed in hathi-vesh on the Snana Purnima day. By His inconceivable mercy, the Lord fulfils the desires of His devotees.



# 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 dearmost 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-vatra 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-vatra 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 dearmost 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.



# The Golden Avatar

By Nikunja Vilasini Dasi

On a full moon night during a lunar eclipse, hundreds of thousands of Bengalis bathed in the holy Ganges crying out the names of God, "Hari! Hari!" At this auspicious moment, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Sri Krishna, appeared as Nimai, the son of Mother Saci and Jagannath Misra. Also known as Gaurahari, because of His golden complexion, He exhibited the qualities and pastimes of the Supreme Lord, making Him the most merciful

incarnation of this age of Kali. Sri Gaura Purnima celebrates His appearance in this world.

"Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu is the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself. Therefore there is no difference between Him, Lord Jagannath and Lord Nrsimhadeva."

( C a i t a n y a - caritamrta, Antya 2.67)

Lord Krishna, who wanted taste the to of Srimati sweetness Radharani's for love Him, assumed the mood of Radha in the form of Gaura Caitanya. Radharani's mood was always in intense separation from Krishna and she displayed the highest form of love for Him. Her desire was to always bring others closer to Krishna. Sri Caitanya, like Srimati Radharani, not only exhibited the highest love of Godhead. but distributed this love freely to anyone He came in contact with. Simply by seeing Him, by touching Him or having any connection with Him, anyone would be transformed into lovers of God.

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 Caitanya, who danced in front of the car of Sri Jagannath, be all glorified! By seeing His dancing, not only was the whole universe held in wonder, but Lord Jagannath Himself became very much astonished." (Caitanya-caritamrta, Madhya 13.1)

Lord Caitanya's feelings of separation were relieved as he looked upon Lord Jagannath at Ratha-yatra. Jagannath, as Krishna, and Lord Caitanya as Radha, experienced great bliss in union. He revealed to the world the essence of unalloyed devotion and urged everyone to revive their love for God through the chanting of Krishna's holy names: Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Hare Hare Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare. He proclaimed that this is the most effective method of cleansing our hearts and connecting with God in this age.

Every year, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu would chant and dance with his intimate associates at the Jagannath Chariot Festival. There were seven parties of sankirtan, loud chanting of the holy names, accompanied by the tumultuous beating of drums. The Caitanya-caritamrta describes that when the Vaishnavas came together they were like an assembly of clouds. As the devotees chanted the holy names, tears fell in great ecstasy like rainfall from their eves. When the sankirtan resounded, it filled the three worlds. Lord Caitanya wandered through the seven groups shouting, "Hari! Hari! All glories to Lord Jagannath!" He simultaneously appeared in all sankirtan parties just like Lord Krishna appeared to each gopi in the rasa dance. Only the Lord's most intimate devotees could witness this.

Lord Jagannath was so overwhelmed by Caitanya's love, that many times during the procession he stopped to watch Gaura's delightful dance and to hear His beautiful prayers and songs of the gopis. At one point Lord Jagannath's cart refused to move. Lord Caitanya, circumambulated the Lord, went behind the cart and pushed it with His head. The chariot immediately started to move amidst the loud cheering of the devotees and chanting of Krishna's names.

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.



#### erfect Lord Rama By Nikunja Vilasini Dasi

For millenniums, the stories of Lord Rama in the Ramayana have captured the hearts of generations of people all over the world. My grandmother tells me of the challenging days shortly after the indentured labourers arrived in South Africa. After a day of hard

work, the entire family would sit together to discuss and read the Ramayana. Reading about Lord Rama's



character -His valour, His values, His exploits, His adventures, His countless noble qualities - was a refreshing balm to their afflicted souls. Sometimes they would stay awake the entire night, absorbed in reading the Lord's pastimes.

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

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new insights to life - His pastimes are ever fresh, full of valuable lessons. It has the power to enlighten and uplift anyone from material consciousness and transcends any other topic of this world. Thus, the Ramayana continues to capture our hearts and minds.

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

like the monkey warriors; Jatayu, the vulture; and many others sacrificed their lives for Rama's service. And Lord Rama's topmost servitor, Hanuman was most famous for his unflinching and selfless service to his Lord. Sitadevi, the perfect chaste wife, tolerated so much adversity for the sake of upholding Rama's reputation. Her spotless service and purity gives Her eternal residence at Lord Rama's side.

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

### Nrsimhadeva, The Divine Protector

By Nikunja Vilasini Dasi



The famous half-man half-lion incarnation of the Lord appeared to protect his surrendered devotee Prahlada from his demonic father Hiranyakashipu. Demonstrating how dear his devotees are to Him, He assumed a ferocious form to save Prahlada. Therefore, devotees of Lord Nrsimhadeva approach Him for protection from the onslaughts of the material modes of nature and especially lower tendencies in themselves – the internal obstacles in their journey towards God.

"I offer my respectful obeisances unto Lord Nrisimhadeva, the source of all power. O my Lord who possesses nails and teeth just like

thunderbolts, kindly vanquish our demon-like desires for fruitive activity in this material world. Please appear in our hearts and drive away our ignorance so that by Your mercy we may become fearless in the struggle for existence in this material world." (Srimad-Bhagavatam, 5.18.8)

Once, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, the avatar of the Lord in Kali-yuga, was challenged by a Muslim leader, Chand Kazi. He forbade Lord Caitanya's sankirtan party to perform congregational chanting and even broke the mridanga drum in rage. In a dream, Lord Nrsimhadeva appeared to Chand Kazi and angrily pierced the offender's chest with His sharp claws. When Chand Kazi awoke, he saw the fearful markings

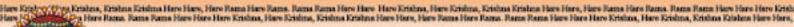
of Lord Nrsimha's nails on his chest. He
then realized his mistake and together
with his followers became staunch devotees of the
Lord.

Lord Rama also worshipped Lord Nrsimhadeva and offered prayers to Him at Ahovalam, Nrsimha's appearance place. Srila Prabhupada explains in the Nectar of Devotion, "In the Brahma-samhita it is stated that Ganapati worships the lotus feet of Lord Nrsimhadeva and in that way has become auspicious for the devotees in clearing out all impediments."

Shanideva, the Lord of the planet Saturn associated with sorrow and suffering, obtained blessings from Lord Nrsimha. The Lord agreed to alleviate the suffering of those who recite Shani's Nrsimha prayers. Lord Nrsimhadeva, the source of all power, the supreme divine protector and remover of the real obstacles in life, delivers us from the greatest suffering, the cycle of birth of death.

Celebrate Lord Nrsimha's Appearance on May 16 at 7pm at Sri Sri Radha Radhanath Temple





# Festival of Chariots Highlights

- 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