

Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.



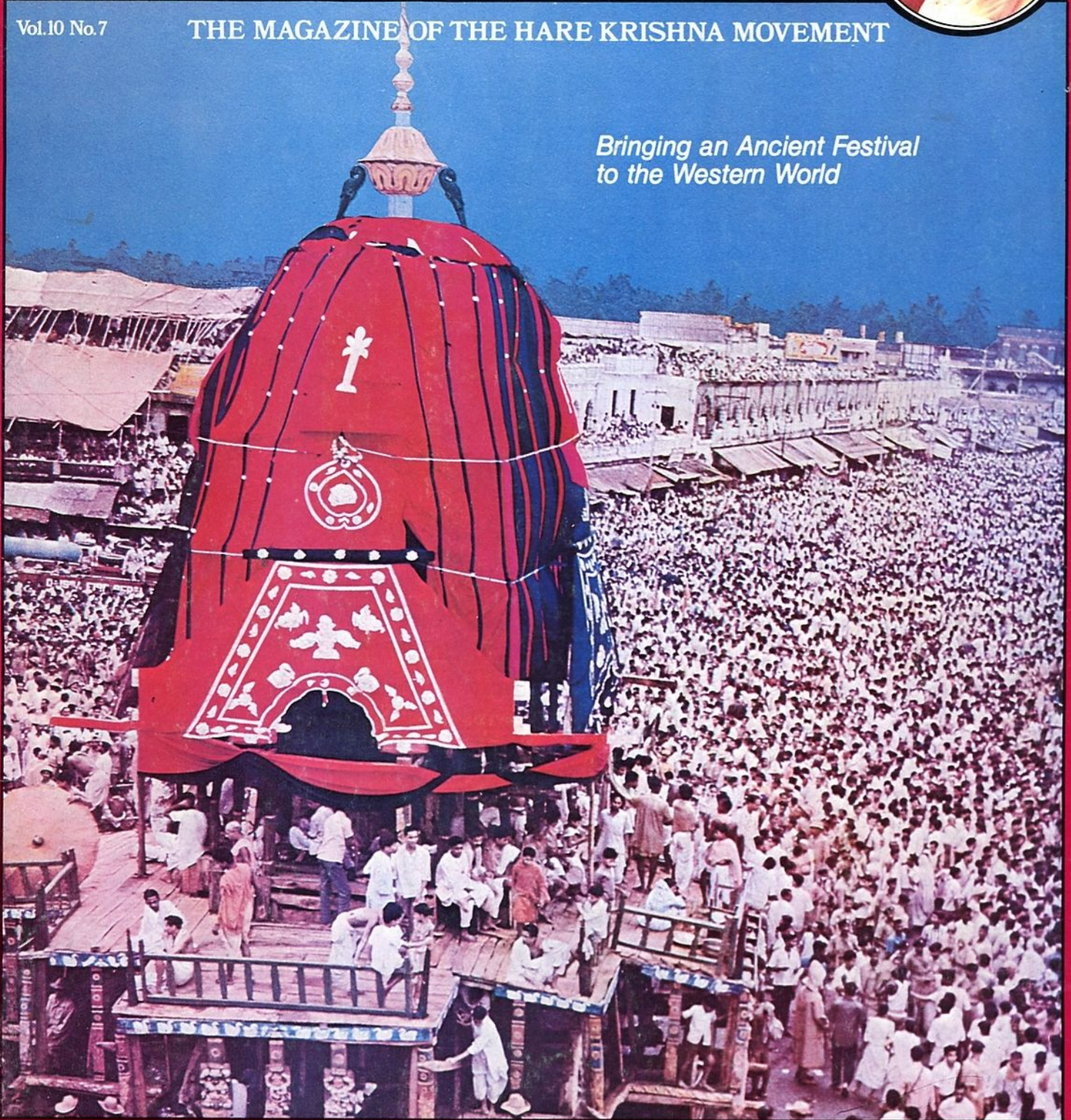
BACK TO GODHEAD



Vol.10 No.7

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT

*Bringing an Ancient Festival
to the Western World*





At the Ratha-yātrā festivals around the world.

The Ratha-yātrā festival in downtown Chicago

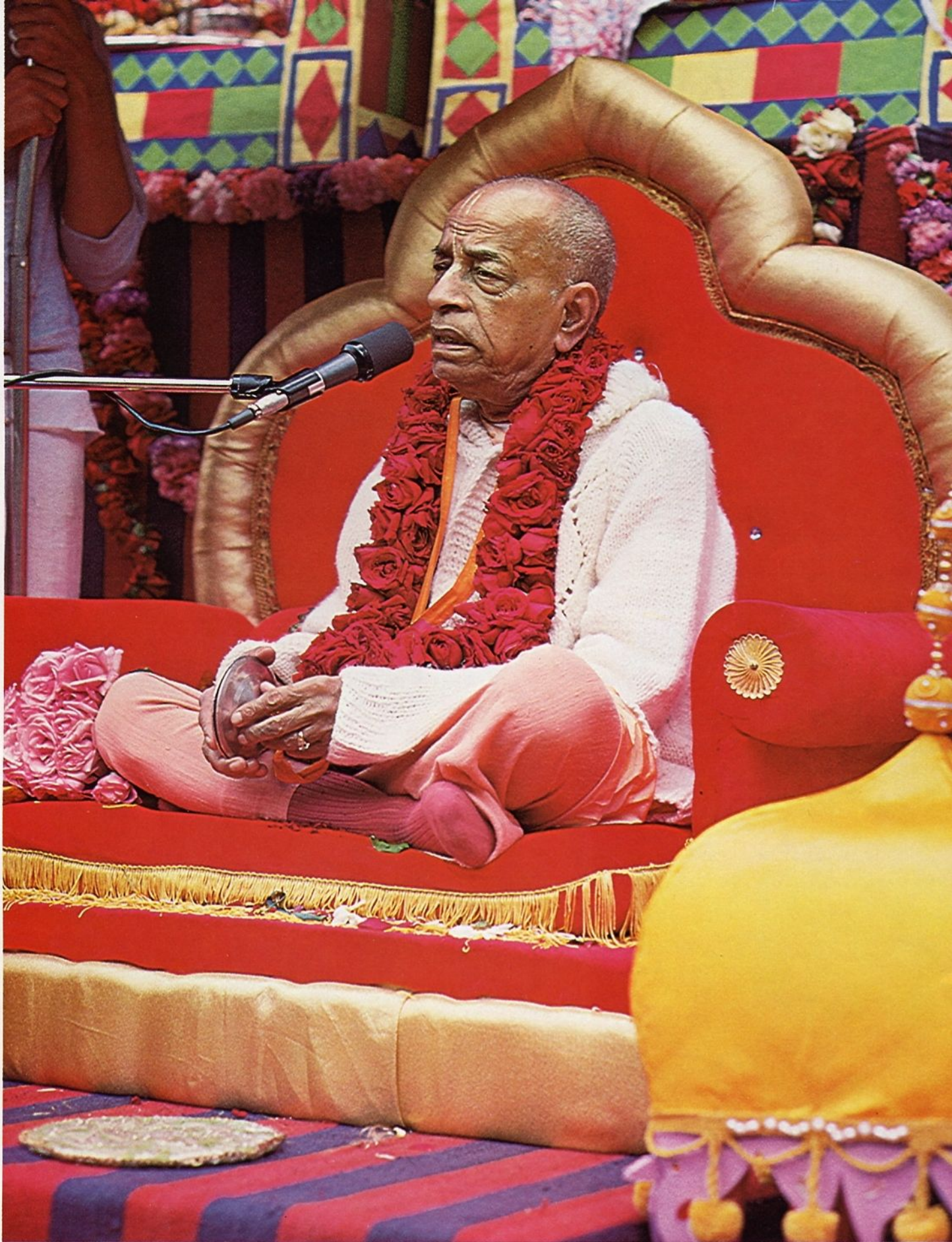
Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare

The scene is a downtown area in a great metropolis: honking horns, vendors' shouts, crowded streets. Business goes on as usual as the towering canopies appear in the distance, accompanied by the rhythmic sound of drums and hand cymbals. Suddenly, the parade explodes into view—three enormous, gaily decorated carts surrounded by waving pennants, astonished onlookers and dancers in saffron robes. As flower petals rain down, the chanting rolls through the city streets in waves, inundating everything and everyone with transcendental sound—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. This is the *mahā-mantra*, or Great Hymn for deliverance from material contamination. Composed entirely of the names of God, it is profusely chanted at the Ratha-yātrā festival described above.

Ratha-yātrā is an ancient festival glorifying Lord

Jagannātha, the Supreme Lord of the universe. Although Ratha-yātrā has been observed for thousands of years in India, it is not an Indian or Hindu festival. The location of the above scene could just as easily be London's Trafalgar Square as Purī, India. Since 1966, as a result of the efforts of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, the joyful Ratha-yātrā festival has become an international event. People of all ethnic and religious backgrounds now celebrate Ratha-yātrā in cities all over the world.

This year, ISKCON will again present the transcendental Ratha-yātrā festival in major cities throughout the world. This issue of BACK TO GOD-HEAD explains what the Ratha-yātrā festival is and how it came to the West. We invite you to experience the spiritual excitement of Ratha-yātrā by joining us in the streets of your city or by reading the pages of this magazine.



His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda
Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

BACK TO GODHEAD

THE MAGAZINE OF THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT

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PRONUNCIATION OF SANSKRIT WORDS

Sanskrit words and names in BACK TO GODHEAD are spelled according to a system that scholars throughout the world use to show how to pronounce each word. Vowels in Sanskrit are pronounced almost as in Italian. The sound of the short *a* is like the *u* in *but*. The long *ā* is like the *a* in *far* and held twice as long as the short *a*, and *e* is like the *e* in *evade*. Long *i* is like the *i* in *pique*. The vowel *r* is pronounced like the *er* in the English word *fiber*. The *c* is pronounced as in the English word *chair*. The aspirated consonants (*ch*, *jh*, *dh*, etc.) are pronounced as in *staunch-heart*, *hedge-hog* and *red-hot*. The two sibilants *ś* and *ṣ* are like the English *sh*, and *s* is like the *s* in *sun*. So pronounce *Kṛṣṇa* as KRISHNA and *Caitanya* as CHAITANYA.

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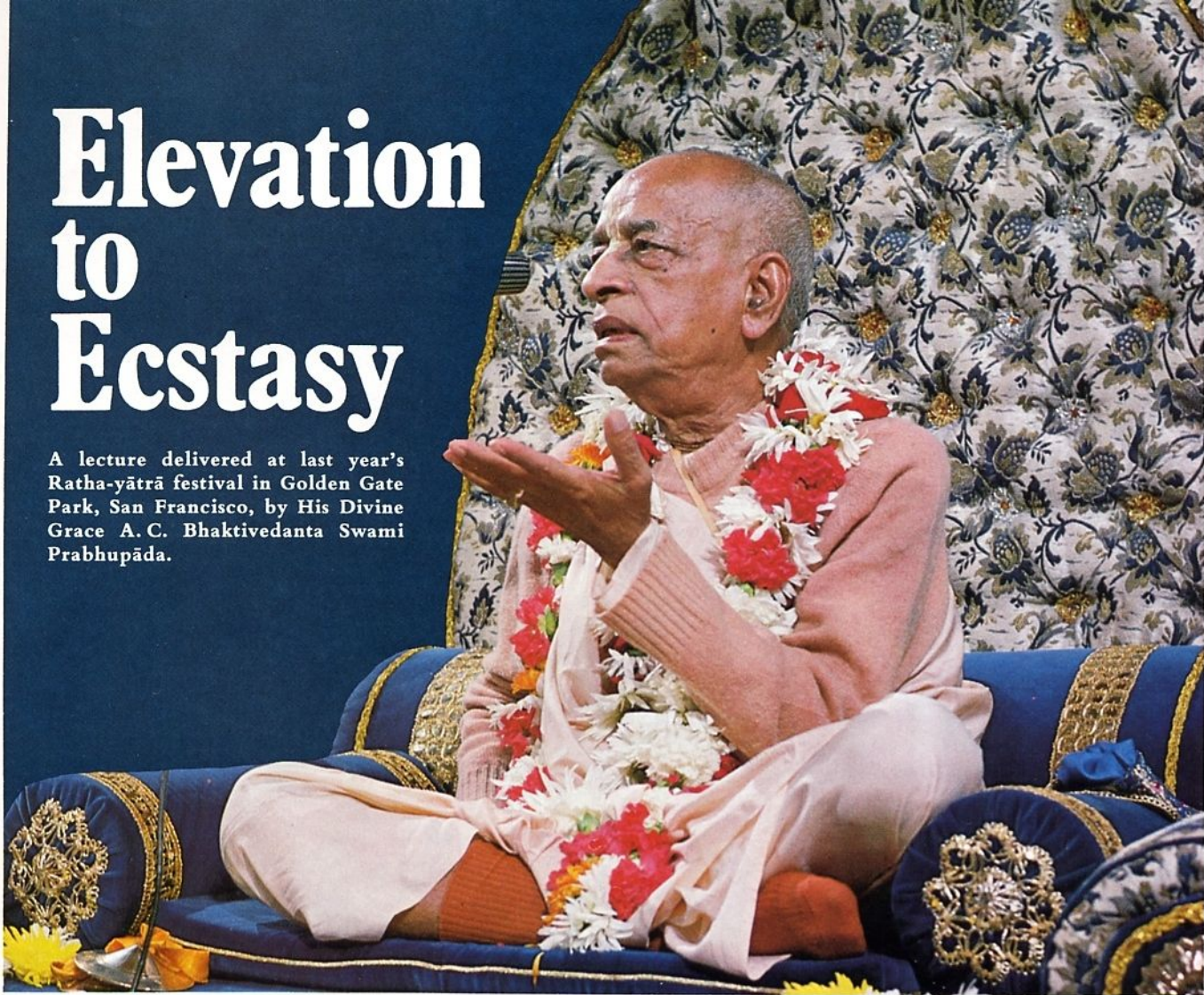
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Elevation to Ecstasy

A lecture delivered at last year's Ratha-yātrā festival in Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda.



Ladies and gentlemen, devotees and all the *saṁnyāsīs* present, I thank you very much for kindly joining this Ratha-yātrā festival. This festival has been going on in India for more than 2,000 years in the city of Jagannātha Purī. The name *jagannātha* comes from two words—*jaḡat*, which means “the universe,” and *nātha*, which means “the Lord.” Thus *Jagannātha* means “the Lord of the universe.” The Ratha-yātrā festival and the *saṅkīrtana* movement, the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, are meant to enable one to realize the Lord of the universe. From Vedic literature we understand that there are not only one but innumerable universes. It is said:

yasya prabhā prabhavato jagad-aṅḡa-koṭi-koṭiṣv aśeṣa-vasudhādi vibhūti-bhinnaṁ tad brahma niṣkalam anantaṁ aśeṣa-bhūtaṁ govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi

“I worship Govinda, Kṛṣṇa, the primal Lord, who is endowed with great power. The glowing effulgence of His transcen-

dental form is absolute, complete and unlimited. It is the basis for the varieties of countless planets, with their different opulences, in millions and millions of universes.” (*Brahma-saṁhitā*, 5.40) Just as the sun is the source of the sunshine, so the Supreme Lord is the source of the impersonal effulgence in which all the universes rest. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* says, therefore:

*vadanti tat tattva-vidas
tattvaṁ yaj jñānam advayam
brahmeti paramātmēti
bhagavān iti śabdyate
(Bhāg. 1.2.11)*

This verse informs us that the Absolute Truth may be realized from three angles of vision in three different aspects. One is impersonal (Brahman), and another is localized (Paramātmā), but the ultimate phase of the Absolute Truth is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa.

We find in *Bhagavad-gītā* that Lord Kṛṣṇa says: “There is no truth superior

to Me. Everything rests upon Me, as pearls are strung on a thread.” (Bg. 7.7) Thus the Supreme Personality of Godhead says that He is the ultimate goal, the Absolute Truth. The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, therefore, is meant to help one advance in understanding the Absolute Truth.

The material world is full of relative truths, but one need not study these relative truths separately, for in the Vedic literature, in the *Upaniṣads*, it is said, *yasmin vijñāte sarvaṁ evaṁ vijñātaṁ bhavanti*: “If one understands the Absolute Truth, the relative truths will automatically be understood.” The material world is full of relative truths, and the spiritual world is the Absolute Truth.

Age of Fighting

The Absolute Truth is very difficult for us to understand, however, because we are living in the age called Kali-yuga, which is an age of fighting and misunderstanding. *Prāyeṇālpāyusaḥ sabhya*

“The Kṛṣṇa conscious devotees here come from the same country as you, and formerly they also felt frustrated..”

kalāv asmin yuge janāḥ. One of the symptoms of this age is that almost everyone has a very short life span. We understand from the Vedic literatures that in this age one can live for as many as 100 years. There are four *yugas*, or ages—Satya-yuga, Tretā-yuga, Dvāpara-yuga and Kali-yuga. In the Satya-yuga, or the *yuga* of truthfulness, we used to live for 100,000 years. (I say “we used to live” because in fact we are eternal, although we are changing from one body to the next.) In the next age, Tretā-yuga, the duration of life was reduced to 10,000 years, and in the next, Dvāpara yuga, it was reduced to 1,000 years. Now, in Kali-yuga, our duration of life is limited to only 100 years. But unfortunately, because we are fallen—because our bodily strength, our sense of mercy, our memory and our other good qualities have all been reduced—we do not live for even 100 years. For instance, I am now about eighty years old, so people think that I have lived very long. But eighty years is nothing; we should actually live for 100 years. Because of our sinful life, however, the time is coming when our duration of life will be reduced so much that if a man lives for twenty or thirty years, he will be considered a grand old man.

Therefore, since we are not very comfortable in material life, the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is meant to take us to the spiritual life of the spiritual world. There is a spiritual world, and we receive information about it from *Bhagavad-gītā*. Those who have read *Bhagavad-gītā* know this, and so I shall request all of you to read our *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*. We have published about twenty books, each a minimum of four hundred pages long, and *Bhagavad-gītā* is eleven hundred pages. Nevertheless, we shall have to publish about eighty books to fully explain the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.

I know that all the American ladies and gentlemen here are educated and intelligent, and I am very much obliged to the Americans who have helped me make this movement popular all over the world. When Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu first introduced the Hare

Kṛṣṇa movement, He said:

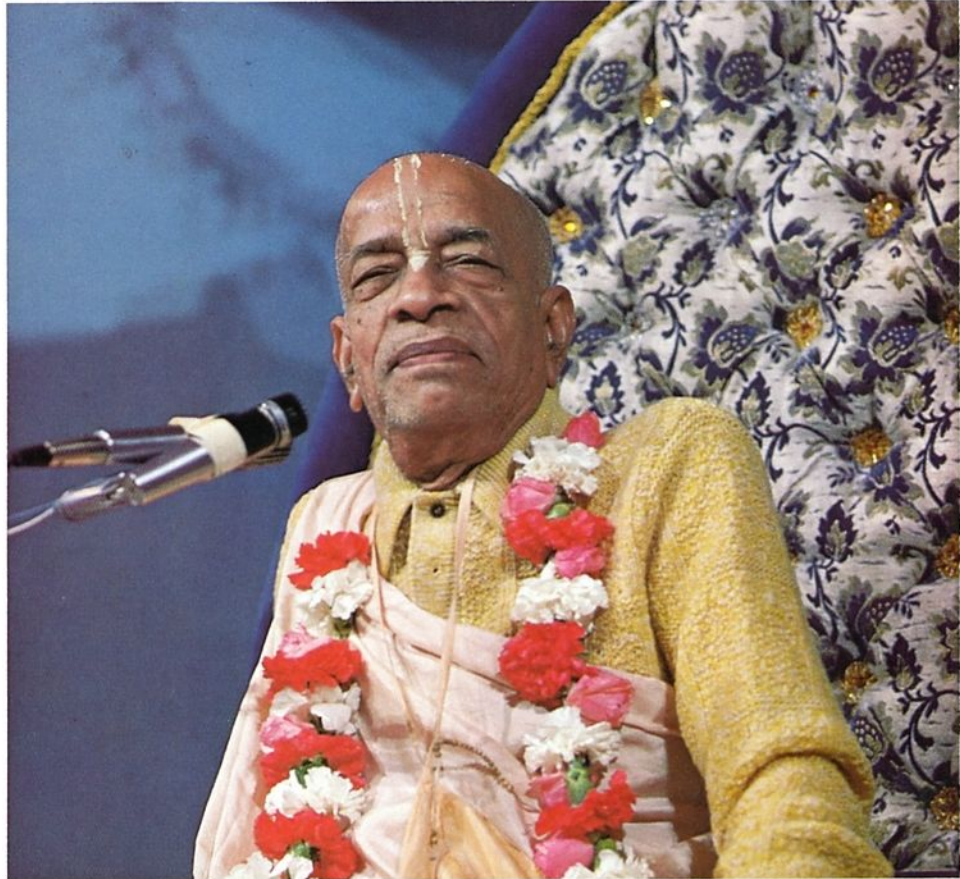
*bhārata-bhūmite haila manuṣya-janma yāra
janma sārthaka kari’ kara para-upakāra*
(Cc. Ādi, 9.41)

He thus expressed His desire by saying that anyone who has taken birth as a human being in Bhārata-varṣa, or India, should understand the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement and spread it all over the world for the benefit of all humanity. He also said:

similar festival, in which many thousands of people joined and chanted and danced with us. Then I went to Chicago, where we held the same ceremony. Now this morning I have come here, and I am so glad to see that you are also joining this movement.

Universal Movement

This is a universal movement. Don’t think that it’s something only for Indians or Hindus. It is a movement for



*prthivite āche yata nagarādi grāma
sarvatra pracāra haibe mora nāma*

This is a prediction that in all the villages and towns of the entire world, the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement will be known. So with the cooperation of you young Americans who are kindly helping to spread this movement, it is now factually becoming well known all over the world. I recently went to Melbourne, Australia, where we held a

every living being. Kṛṣṇa is the supreme living being, and we are subordinate living beings. Because we are part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa, we are qualitatively one with Kṛṣṇa, but because of our material association, we have forgotten that our qualities are in the same category as His. We are qualitatively the same as Kṛṣṇa but quantitatively different, just as a drop of ocean water is equal in its qualities to the entire ocean, although the drop is but an insignificant portion of the great ocean. We are part and

“Now, however, they feel complete, and that is why they are chanting and dancing.”

parcel of God. God is great, and we are small; God is the maintainer, and we are maintained; God is the predominator, the master, and we are the predominated servants.

This understanding that God is great and that we are all servants of God is the essence of self-realization. Self-realization means knowledge of one's own identity. The self-realized person must be able to answer the question, “Who am I?” and since this movement enables

yātrā festival was well received. In fact, there is a great monument in London called the Nelson column, and because our Jagannātha car was so high, a leading London newspaper, *The Guardian*, reported that the car competed with that monument.

So I am glad that in Europe, in America and, indeed, all over the world, the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is being very well received. A few days ago, we had a meeting in Melbourne,

*brahma-bhūtaḥ prasannātmā
na śocati na kāṅkṣati
samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu
mad-bhaktiṁ labhate parām*

The meaning of this verse is that if you come to the platform of self-realization, or *brahma-bhūta* understanding, you will always be jubilant. By our constitutional position we are meant to be jubilant, and therefore, despite frustration due to our contact with matter, we are always hankering for happiness. We have to get out of contact with matter and come to the stage of self-realization in order to be always jubilant. If you become self-realized, you will have no more hankering and desires. Instead, you will feel, “Now I have everything and am fully satisfied.” The Kṛṣṇa conscious devotees here come from the same country as you, and formerly they also felt frustrated. Now, however, they feel complete, and that is why they are chanting and dancing.

Dance of Love

This dancing is not the dancing of dogs; it is a dance of feeling. Those who are dancing are actually understanding God and feeling their relationship with God. Therefore, their dancing is not ordinary, it is a dance of love of God. And it is open to everyone who will simply chant the *mahā-mantra*—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

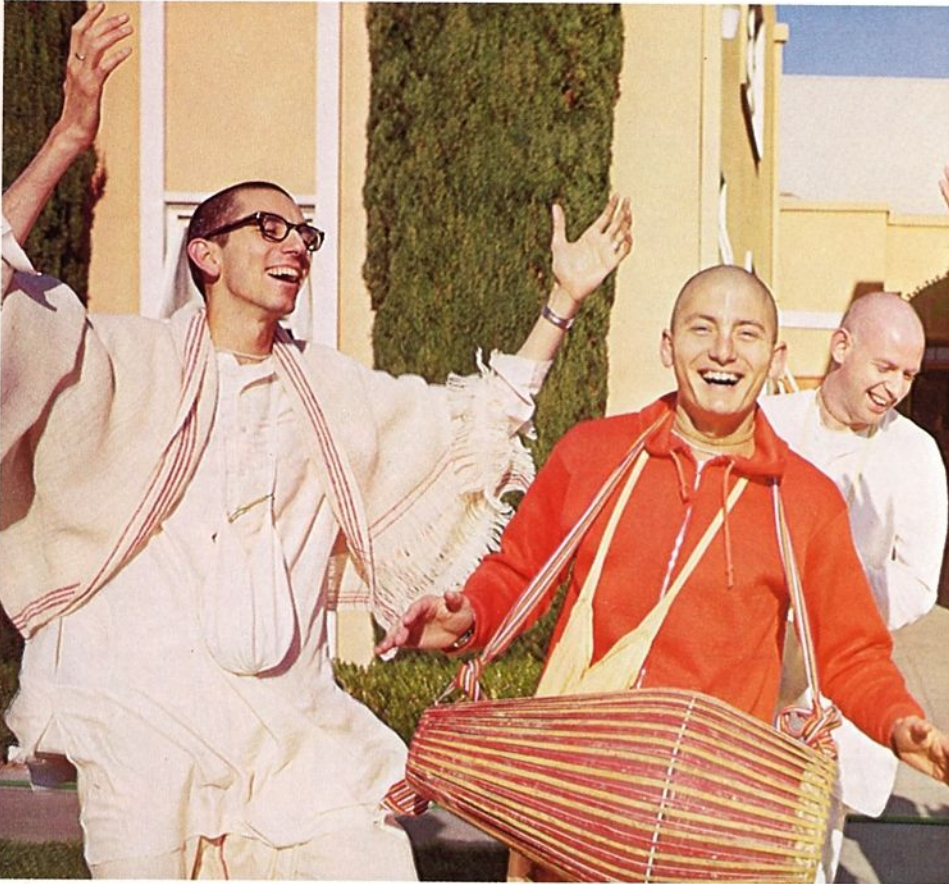
You are generally young, whereas I am an old man who may die at any moment. Therefore I request you to take this movement seriously. Understand it yourselves and then preach it throughout your country. People outside America generally follow and imitate what America does. I am traveling all over the world, and everywhere I see other countries building skyscrapers and in other ways imitating your country. Therefore if you kindly become Kṛṣṇa conscious and chant and dance in ecstasy, in emotional love of God, the entire world will follow you. Thus the entire world can become *Vaikuṅṭha*, a spiritual world in which there will be no more trouble. Thank you very much. 🙏

one to do so, it is a movement of self-realization. I am therefore very glad that you are taking part in it.

We celebrate the Ratha-yātrā festival every year. I started the Ratha-yātrā festival here in San Francisco in 1967, and in your great country it has continued here since then. We also celebrate the same festival in other cities, such as London. Last year when I was in London, more than ten thousand people followed our procession from Piccadilly Circus to Trafalgar Square. Our Ratha-

Australia, in which the Bishop of Melbourne and many other priests greatly appreciated this movement. Indeed, they admitted that they can learn a great deal from it.

I therefore request you not to consider this movement a sectarian movement or a cultural import from India, for this is a movement meant for all humanity. Its purpose is to educate men in such a way that humanity will be lifted to the *brahma-bhūta* platform, the platform of self-realization. *Bhagavad-gītā* says:





It was in San Francisco, 1967, that Śrīla Prabhupāda's disciples first came to him with a small carved wooden image. They didn't know what it was, but they were attracted to it—its bright colors, red, black and green, and its large, saucerlike eyes. Moreover, the unique form was labeled "Made in India." The neophyte devotees couldn't help being surprised when Śrīla Prabhupāda, upon seeing the image, immediately offered his obeisances and requested that two similar images be brought from the import emporium where one of his disciples had come across the first one. Thus, in this unassuming way, the eternal forms of Lord Jagannātha, the Supreme Personality of Godhead; His sister, Subhadrā; and His elder brother, Balarāma, made Their divine appearance in the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Upon Śrīla Prabhupāda's order, the disciples recarved the three-inch Deities in a much larger size, placed Them upon the altar of the San Francisco temple, arranged a curtain around Them, and from that time onward offered Them all respect and worship.



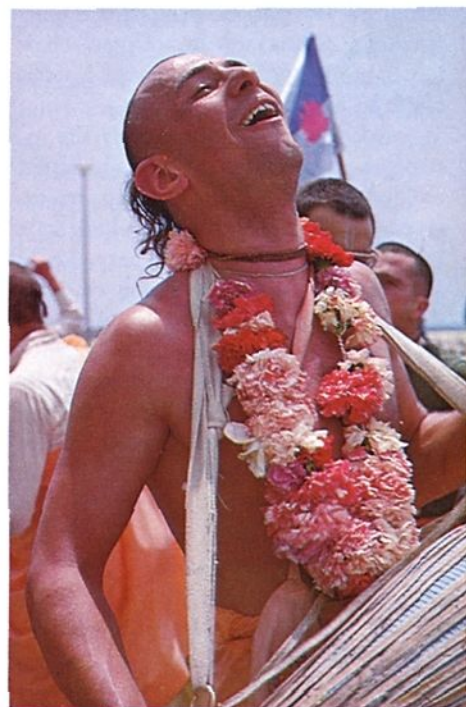
RATHA-YĀTRĀ

an Ancient Festival Comes to the West

by Viśākhā-devī dāsī

THROUGH THE ŚĀSTRAS, or scriptures we learn that God's energy is everywhere. God is not different from His energy, just as the sun is not different from the sunshine; therefore it is correct to say that God, in His energy, is everywhere. However, it is not possible for us to establish an intimate relationship with this impersonal, all-pervasive aspect of God. Therefore, to enable us to

relate to Him personally, God, the Supreme Person, descends to the material world in the authorized form of the Deity. In unusual circumstances, such a Deity may be found in an unlikely place, such as an import emporium, but no matter where He is, He remains the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the *summum bonum*, the cause of all causes. We may find gold in a dirty place, but its



Right: *The Deities of Lord Jagannātha (far right), Subhadrā (center), and Balarāma (left) made Their first public appearance in the western world in San Francisco, June, 1967.*

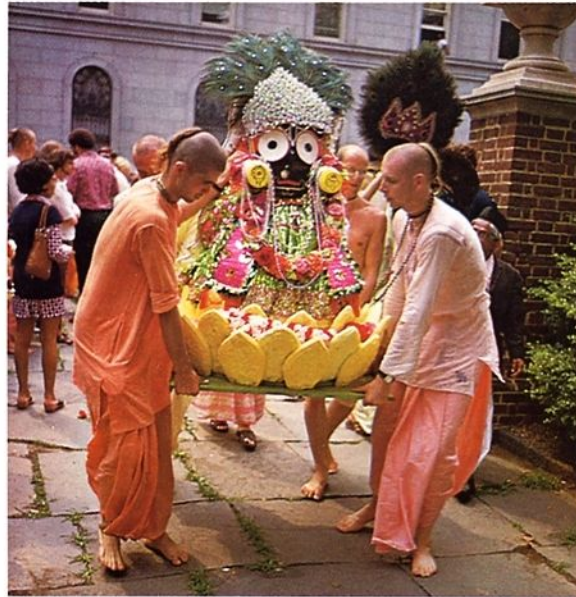


Below: *Preparing for the celebration. Devotee carpenters make the five-ton, forty-five-foot high carts.*



value does not change; it is still gold. So, Kṛṣṇa is always Kṛṣṇa, wherever He may be. He is always Jagannātha, the Lord of the universe. As a pure devotee of Lord Jagannātha, Śrīla Prabhupāda perfectly realizes that the form of Lord Jagannātha and Lord Jagannātha Himself are non-different. Therefore he offered obeisances to the Lord and instructed his disciples to worship the Deity.

Simply by following sincerely the instructions of an expert spiritual master, one can make spiritual advancement, surely and certainly. Thus when Śrīla Prabhupāda explained that there should be a great festival in honor of Lord Jagannātha each year, his disciples were eager to make the proper arrangements. Mālatī-devī dāsi, the young disciple who had first brought the small carved Deity to the San Francisco temple, recalls: "One day Śrīla Prabhupāda called us up to his quarters and told us about a wonderful yearly festival in Purī, Lord Jagannātha's home in India. He requested that we also hold this great festival, called Ratha-yātrā. He said that Jagannātha should be kept in seclusion for fifteen days prior to the festival, and in that time we should thoroughly cleanse and repaint the temple. So that's what we did. Śrīla Prabhupāda ex-



Above: *Three huge carts await the arrival of their transcendental passengers in Golden Gate Park, San Francisco.*

Left: *Jagannātha, the Lord of the universe, on His way to the ratha cart, where He will sit and observe the festival in His honor.*

Below: *Śrīla Prabhupāda participates in Ratha-yātrā every year, just as he did in his childhood. Here he arrives at the London ceremony.*





plained that Jagannātha, Balarāma and Subhadrā should ride in three hand-pulled vehicles with wheels about eight feet high. But for the first festival we had to simplify things, so we used a large flat-bed truck, decorated with leaves and flowers. We began at the corner of Haight and Lyon Streets and proceeded to the ocean.” During the journey, the devotees continuously chanted Hare Kṛṣṇa and distributed fruit and chapatis (a kind of bread) that had first been offered to the Lord. “It was Lord Jagannātha’s first public appearance in the West,” said Mālatī dāsī, “and what was lacking in opulence was made up for by everyone’s enthusiasm.”

The Ratha-yātrā ceremony has always

been very dear to Śrīla Prabhupāda. When Śrīla Prabhupāda was a young boy, his father, Gour Mohan De, who was also a great devotee of the Lord, built him a small cart. Then, at the same time that Lord Jagannātha, Balarāma and Subhadrā were being magnificently pulled through the streets of Jagannātha Puri in three giant carts with millions of pilgrims in attendance, Śrīla Prabhupāda and his young friends would pull their small cart through the streets near their home in Calcutta. This procession, although small, was nonetheless glorious. Just in front of the cart some of the youngsters played *mṛdaṅgas* (drums) and *karatālas* (cymbals) and sang for the Lord’s pleasure. Others pulled the cart



Top: The two and a half-mile journey to the sea begins.

Above: The streets of Philadelphia become sanctified by the presence of the Lord and His devotees.

Right: The Deities’ carts are pulled by hand with strong ropes.





with ropes, while still others cared for the Deities during Their journey, fanning Them and seeing to Their comforts. As the jubilant group passed, people would stop their work, come out of their homes or offices to watch, and be reminded of the Lord. In this way, everyone benefited. As confirmed in the revealed scriptures, "A person who sees the Lord's Ratha-yātrā car festival and then stands up to receive the Lord can purge all kinds of sinful results from his body." (*Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa*) A similar statement appears in the *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa*: "Even if born of a lowly family, a person who follows the Ratha-yātrā car when the Deities pass in front or from behind will surely be elevated to achieving equal opulence with Viṣṇu, the Supreme Lord."

As the children grew, Gour Mohan De would have the cart built proportionately larger, and each year the children would distribute ample *prasāda* (food that had first been offered to the Lord in love) to one and all. Thus by imitating their elders these fortunate children were honoring the Lord from the beginning of their lives.

Every one of us has a natural tendency to honor someone, just as a child has a natural propensity to walk. This propensity to honor and love someone is present in every living being. Even an animal like a tiger has this loving propensity at least in a dormant stage, and it is certainly present in human beings. The missing point, however, is where to repose our love so that everyone can become happy. At the present moment, human society teaches one to love his country or family or his personal self, but there is no information about where to repose the loving propensity so that everyone can become happy. That missing point is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Jagannātha, and by celebrating different ceremonies in honor of the Lord, such as Ratha-yātrā, we can learn to stimulate our original love for the Lord and thus enjoy our blissful life.

As San Francisco's 1974 Ratha-yātrā festival concludes, Srila Prabhupāda leads the entire audience, thirty-thousand, in a joyful kirtana (chanting of the holy names of the Lord).



Top: Accompanied by His devotees, guests and thousands of participants, Lord Jagannātha makes His way through the streets of downtown Chicago.
Bottom: Since the Jagannātha car festival was introduced in the West, each year it grows larger. Here, in Golden Gate park, an early festival is about to begin.

Crowds jam London's Trafalgar Square as Lord Jagannātha and His associates take Their places on the steps of the Nelson Monument.




It is for this reason, to revive the God consciousness dormant in their hearts and in the hearts of others, that Śrīla Prabhupāda first asked his disciples to organize a Ratha-yātrā festival. Now this ceremony is observed not only in Jagannātha Puri and San Francisco (which Śrīla Prabhupāda has called New Jagannātha Puri), but also in many of the other centers of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness around the world. Previously Śrīla Prabhupāda was participating with his playmates in this great event, and today he is still participating, but now with his disciples. That is the nature of a pure devotee; he is continuously and fully absorbed in his eternal loving relationship with the

Supreme Lord. Such a pure devotee is described in *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.14) by Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself: "Always chanting My glories, endeavoring with great determination, bowing down before Me, these great souls perpetually worship Me with devotion."

The Ratha-yātrā festival that will be held this month in major cities throughout the world will enable millions of people to come directly in touch with Kṛṣṇa Himself. Those fortunate souls will get the opportunity to sow the seed of love of God in their hearts, and if they water that seed by continuing to hear and chant the *mahā-mantra*—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare

Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—that seed will fructify, and the spiritual plant of their love of Godhead will start to grow and grow.

This process of developing our dormant love for God is easy, and it can be performed in a happy mood. One does not have to undergo any severe penance or austerity. We can live this life serving God, guided by an expert spiritual master, and in any position, anywhere in the world, perform some kind of service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Thus we can become eligible to go back home, back to Godhead. One can start the whole process simply by participating in the Lord's wonderful Ratha-yātrā festival. Everyone is welcome. 



Left: As Jagannātha, Subhadrā and Balarāma look on, a play based on Bhagavad-gītā is performed by a devotee cast after the feast in San Francisco.

Above: Everyone who took part in the celebration enjoys a full-course meal of pure vegetarian prasāda (food first offered to Lord Jagannātha).

Are the Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees idol worshipers?

A senior member of
the International Society for Krishna Consciousness
resolves this question by explaining the authenticity of
the Deity form of the Lord.

Whose Worship is Idol Worship?

by Jayādvaīta dāsa

IT'S NATURAL for us to want to know what God looks like, just as it's natural for a child who's never seen his father to want to know what his father looks like. And just as such a child may imagine, "Maybe my father looks like this" or "Maybe he looks like that," so we, too, speculate about what God must be like. The artist Michelangelo, for example, knowing God to be the original person, speculated that He must actually look old, with white hair and the features of an aged man. In this way, perhaps all of us have at one time or another formed at least some mental picture of God from whatever little we knew of Him. Imagination, however, is not reality, and therefore the Supreme Lord, both in the Bible and in other scriptures, warns us not to engrave our imaginary conceptions in wood or stone and thus offer homage to our illusions.

But the soul hankers to see the beautiful form of God, and if he cannot do so, he is likely to try to satisfy himself with the beautiful but temporary things to be seen in the material world. Or

worse still, in frustration he may conclude that there is no such thing as God or that God really has no form at all. However, actually seeing the form of God in the Ratha-yātrā festival can rescue the soul from the perils of materialism and the hopelessness that comes from thinking that God is void or dead.

Sometimes people unfamiliar with the meaning of the Ratha-yātrā festival think that the devotees singing and dancing with their arms in the air are offering homage to a statue. Indeed, sometimes they condemn the entire celebration as paganism. Or else they hesitate to join the Ratha-yātrā parade, for they remember that God is "a jealous God" who commands, "Thou shalt have no other God before Me" and "Thou shalt not worship a graven image." What about this? Are the Hare Kṛṣṇa people really idol worshipers?

Golden Calf

To know for sure, first we must define what idolatry is. Concisely, idolatry is the worship of a material form of God

imagined by the human mind. The classic example occurs in the Bible. When Moses ascended Mt. Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments, in his absence the Israelites molded a golden calf and began to worship it as God. This, indeed, was idolatry, for instead of worshipping God, they had worshiped their own whimsical creation.

But aren't the Hare Kṛṣṇa people also worshipping statues made of metal and wood? To understand what is actually going on in the Hare Kṛṣṇa temples and the Ratha-yātrā parade, first we must think about Kṛṣṇa, or God (Kṛṣṇa is a name of God), as a real person. We must overcome false notions that God is impersonal or void, for such ideas arise only from a poor fund of knowledge. A child who sees a satellite floating in space may think that it's traveling on its own, but the enlightened father knows that great teams of scientists are applying their intelligence and energy to guide the satellite in its orbit. Similarly, a thoughtful human being must know that directing all the greater satellites we call

“Although the scriptures of the West consistently speak of God as a person, they give only scanty information about His personal form, qualities and Kingdom.”

the stars and planets is a supreme intelligence, a supreme person. The cosmos, with its seemingly unlimited wonders, could not have just hatched from some void or impersonal force. Such an idea is absurd. “Force” implies that ultimately a person must be applying the force. We may not know who that person is, but that is no excuse for denying that He exists.

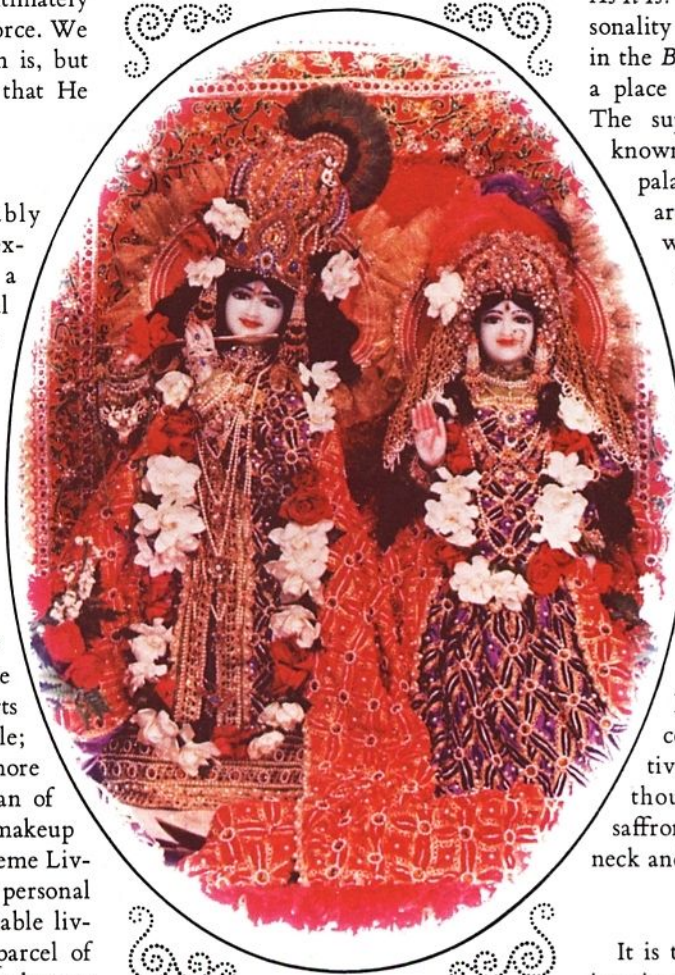
Honest Ignorance

Granting, as we reasonably should, that such a person does exist, why should we deny Him a name, form and other personal qualities? We may honestly admit that we don't know what they are, but to say that what we don't know about cannot exist betrays a narrow, unreasonable mind. If God is the Supreme Person, the Supreme Father, He must have all the qualities of a person. Otherwise, how could personal qualities appear in His sons? The emanations cannot have more than their source; the parts cannot have more than the whole; the tiny drop cannot have more than the ocean. Just as an ocean of water has the same chemical makeup as its individual drops, the Supreme Living Being must have all the personal qualities found in the innumerable living beings who are part and parcel of Him. Therefore, God must also have a name, form and senses.

So if God has a personal form, what is it? Our limited, imperfect mind and senses cannot tell us, for He is beyond them. Indeed, God is beyond the entire universe. (How else could He be its creator?) Therefore if we want to know about the personal qualities of God, we must receive this information from God Himself, through the revealed scriptures. We may also learn from a self-realized saint or spiritual teacher, but the qualification of such saintly teachers—like Jesus Christ, for example—is that they always speak on the basis of the

scriptures and refer to the scriptures to support their own words. They never invent anything new.

However, although the scriptures of the West consistently speak of God as a



person, they give only scanty information about His personal form, qualities and kingdom. If we want more detailed information about God, we must turn to the Vedic scriptures of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. These are books like *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and other scientific scriptures, which were first compiled in writing in India some 5,000 years ago.

This is the call of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement: if you indeed want to understand God in His full glory as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, then you must turn to these scriptures,

for nowhere else will you find the details of His spiritual name, form, qualities, pastimes and abode.

Consider this excerpt from the Bhaktivedanta purports of *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*: “The supreme abode of the Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, is described in the *Brahma-saṁhitā* as *cintāmaṇi-dhāma*, a place where all desires are fulfilled. The supreme abode of Lord Kṛṣṇa, known as Goloka Vṛndāvana, is full of palaces made of touchstone. There are also trees called ‘desire trees,’ which supply any type of eatable upon demand, and there are cows known as *surabhi*, which supply a limitless supply of milk. In this abode, the Lord is served by hundreds of thousands of goddesses of fortune (*lakṣmīs*), and He is called Govinda, the primal Lord and the cause of all causes. The Lord is accustomed to blow His flute (*veṇuṁ kvāṇantam*). His transcendental form is the most attractive in all the worlds—His eyes are like lotus petals and His bodily color like clouds. He is so attractive that His beauty excels that of thousands of cupids. He wears saffron cloth, a garland around His neck and a peacock feather in His hair.”

Not Imagination

It is to be stressed that these are not imaginary conceptions, like those of a poet or an artist. These are the explicit descriptions of the revealed Vedic scriptures. The Vedic scriptures tell us God's name—Kṛṣṇa—and they describe in minute detail His qualities, pastimes, entourage and abode. And most important for resolving the question of idol worship, they describe in detail His form.

The forms of Kṛṣṇa on the Rathayātrā car and in the Kṛṣṇa consciousness temples are not imaginary creations. They are fashioned exactly according to the descriptions of the Vedic literature. The Deity is not a whimsical icon. When we see the form of the Deity of



A pūjārī (priest) makes an offering to the Deity of Lord Jagannātha. "The reason the Deity is accorded such reverence is that the form of God is God. There is no difference between the form of the Lord and the Lord Himself"

Kṛṣṇa, what we are seeing is the actual form of God.

But even if we accept that the Deities in the Kṛṣṇa consciousness temples accurately represent what God looks like, this still does not explain why the Hare Kṛṣṇa people worship the form of the Deity as if it were actually God Himself. This is a matter that requires some philosophical astuteness.

The reason the Deity is accorded such reverence is that the form of God *is* God. There is no difference between the form of the Lord and the Lord Himself. On the material platform, a person and his picture, for instance, are different. Seeing a picture of a friend may remind us of that friend, but the picture is only a representation, not the friend himself. Furthermore, in the material world a person is different even from his very body, for the body is matter whereas the person is the spiritual spark within the body. But God, if we accept Him as being fully spiritual, must be free from all such dualities. The Supreme Per-

sonality of Godhead and His transcendental form are the same spiritual identity. The Vedic literatures describe that each part of His transcendental body can perform any of the functions of any other part. Thus although with our eyes we can only see, the Lord can not only see with His eyes, but also taste, smell or hear with them. Thus the transcendental form of the Supreme Lord is unlimited and all-powerful.

Transcendental Appearance

The Lord's form is eternally transcendental wherever He appears, even in the material world. When an ordinary living being comes to the material world, the material energy subjects him to many limitations. It covers him with a temporary material body that afflicts him with many miseries. Thus he has to get old and diseased and finally die and accept another body. But the Supreme Lord is not under the material laws of nature; He is beyond those laws, just as a king who visits a prison is beyond the

laws that govern the prisoners. The transcendental form of the Supreme Lord has all opulence and power. Therefore the Lord has the power to appear in the material world in His transcendental form as the Deity but always remain the same transcendental Lord.

We may object that God cannot have a form made of ordinary matter like wood or stone. But we should consider that for the Lord there is no difference between matter and spirit, for the Lord can change spirit into matter and matter into spirit. Everything is God's energy, and God is all-spiritual. Therefore all of God's energy is also spiritual. We call it "material" or "spiritual" according to how it acts upon us, but in reality it is one spiritual energy. To draw another comparison, electricity is one single energy, although sometimes it works in a refrigerator to cool things and sometimes in a stove to make things hot. The expert electrician who can master electrical energy can use it to perform either func-

(continued on page 19)

"In this world, there is nothing so sublime and pure as transcendental knowledge. Such knowledge is the mature fruit of all mysticism. And one who has achieved this enjoys the self within himself in due course of time."—Bhagavad-gītā As It Is



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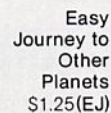
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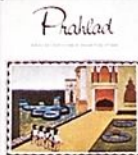
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**(listed on page two of this issue)*

Kṛṣṇa Conscious Calendar

Kṛṣṇa conscious devotees follow a spiritual calendar that divides the year into twelve months, each named for a different form of Kṛṣṇa. The year is full of Kṛṣṇa conscious festivals, and some of the upcoming ones are listed here. The devotees of the ISKCON center nearest you will gladly tell you more about the meaning of these festivals.

Year 489, Caitanya Era
Vaiṣṇava Month of Vāmana (30 days, June 24-July 23)

Kṛṣṇa-pakṣa (dark fortnight)

Vāmana 1 (June 24)	Vāmana 5 (June 28)
Disappearance of Śrīla Śyāmānanda Prabhu.	Disappearance of Śrīla Vakreśvara Paṇḍita.
Vāmana 11 (July 4)	Vāmana 12 (July 5)
Disappearance of Śrīla Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura.	Yoginī-ekādaśī.
Vāmana 13 (July 6)	Vāmana 16 (July 9)
Ekādaśī Pāraṇa before 9:27 a.m.	Disappearance of Gadādhara Paṇḍita and Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. Cleansing of the Guṇḍicā Temple.

Śukla-pakṣa (bright fortnight)

Vāmana 17 (July 10)	Vāmana 18 (July 11)
Ratha-yātrā of Lord Jagannātha.	Disappearance of Śrīla Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī and Śrīla Śivānanda Sena.
Vāmana 21 (July 14)	Vāmana 25 (July 18)
Herā-pañcamī and Śrī Lakṣmī-vijaya.	Return Yātrā of Lord Jagannātha.
Vāmana 26 (July 19)	Vāmana 27 (July 20)
Śāyanā-ekādaśī.	Ekādaśī Pāraṇa before 9:30 a.m.
Vāmana 30 (July 23)	
Beginning of Cāturmāsya Vrata. Disappearance of Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī.	

“Wherever God’s energy is existing, God Himself is also existing; just as the sun is present wherever there is sunshine.”

(continued from page 16)

tion. Similarly, the Lord, the master of all energies, can turn matter into spirit at His will. Who can stop Him? So even if we accept the Deity as being stone or wood, we must admit that the Supreme Lord has the power to change stone or wood into spirit at any moment.

Eternal Omnipresence

In one sense, the Lord is already present in all stone and wood—as well as everywhere else—because everything is His energy. Wherever God’s energy is existing, God Himself is also existing, just as the sun is present wherever there is sunshine. A fully God conscious person can recognize God’s presence in His energy, and therefore He can see God everywhere. For the benefit of those who are not so advanced, however, the energy of God can be shaped into the transcendental form of God so that even in this material world we can see the transcendental form of the omnipresent Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Those who are addicted to the idea of a formless, impersonal God object to the worship of the Deity in the temple. “God is everywhere,” they say. “Why should we worship Him in the temple?” But if God is everywhere, is He not in the temple also? God is certainly everywhere, but we cannot see Him everywhere. We are all eternal servants of the Lord, but we have forgotten our relationship with Him. Therefore the Lord, by His causeless mercy, appears as the Deity in the temple so that even in this world of material forgetfulness we can see Him and revive our eternal relationship with Him.

How does the Lord change matter into spirit? He does so when He appears, by the grace of His devotee, as the transcendental form of the Deity. When a pure devotee paints or carves the form of the Deity and calls upon the Lord to kindly agree to accept his humble service, the Lord agrees to do so, provided everything is done according to the scriptural regulations. One’s sincere attitude of service to the Lord and strict

adherence to the rules of the scriptures are the essential ingredients that make Deity worship vastly different from worship of an ordinary idol. If the form one worships is merely imaginary, then one’s worship is whimsical idolatry. But if one worships the authorized transcendental form of the Lord with a sincere desire to serve the Lord, and if one strictly adheres to the rules and regulations of the scriptures, his worship is transcendental, and the Lord will certainly accept it. The example is often given of a post office and an authorized mailbox. Because the post office may be far from our homes, the postal officials install authorized boxes in various neighborhoods so that we can use them to send our mail. One can paint any box blue and red and call it a mailbox, but it will have no value. However, when the postal officials install an authorized mailbox, that box is as good as the post office itself. Similarly, an imaginary form of God is nothing more than an idol; but the authorized form of the Lord is as good as the Lord Himself, and the Lord, in His transcendental form as the Deity, will accept the service we render to Him and will also reveal Himself to us more and more.

Now, we may see the Deity to be no more than wood or stone, but that is due only to our defective vision. The Lord cannot be seen with our blunt material senses. One has to purify his eyes by seeing through the vision of the scriptures and by rendering devotional service to the Lord. This is the process for developing our spiritual vision so that we will be able to see the supreme Lord.

Process of Purification

Only by devotional service can the Lord be known. As confirmed in the *Padma Purāna*,

*ataḥ śrī-kr̥ṣṇa-nāmādi
na bhaved grāhyam indriyaiḥ
sevonmukhe hi jihvādau
svayam eva sphuraty adaḥ*

“No one can understand the transcen-

dental nature of the name, form, qualities and pastimes of the Lord through his materially contaminated senses. Only when one becomes spiritually saturated by transcendental service to the Lord are the transcendental name, form, qualities and pastimes of the Lord revealed to him.”

The *Padma Purāna* specifically mentions that we can best begin to purify our senses by purifying the tongue. Of all the senses, the tongue is the most difficult to control. Nevertheless, one can control it very easily by eating food first offered to Kṛṣṇa and by chanting the holy name of Kṛṣṇa, as found in the *mahā-mantra*—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. This will certainly purify the tongue of even a most materialistic person. And when the tongue is thus engaged in the service of the Lord, all the other senses can also be engaged.

The worship of the Lord as the Deity—and specifically the worship of Lord Jagannātha in the Ratha-yātrā festival—is an opportunity for us to purify our senses in this way. When the Lord appears before us as the Deity, we can purify our minds simply by thinking about Him. Similarly, we can purify our eyes simply by seeing Him, our ears and tongues just by hearing and chanting His holy names, our nostrils by smelling the incense and flowers offered to Him, and our bodies by standing up to see Him, dancing before Him or bowing down to offer Him our obeisances.

Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad-gītā*, *ye yathā māṁ prapadyante tāṁs tathaiva bhajāmy aham*: “As one surrenders himself unto Me, I reciprocate with him.” Thus for one who refuses to accept the verdict of the Vedic scriptures and who therefore considers the Deity a wooden idol, Kṛṣṇa will remain an idol forever. The scriptures say that such a person is cursed with a hellish mentality. But for one who tries to appreciate the Lord’s presence as the Deity and render service unto Him, the Lord will one day fully reveal Himself.

THE DANCE OF DIVINE LOVE

FOR THE PAST SIX YEARS, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness has sponsored Ratha-yātrā festivals in major cities throughout the world. The devotees of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement are introducing this ancient festival to the modern world because they are followers of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is pictured at the right. Lord Caitanya is an incarnation of Kṛṣṇa who appeared 500 years ago to teach that the best way to achieve spiritual perfection in the present Age of Quarrel is to chant the holy names of the Supreme Lord. The following article recounts the miraculous dancing and transcendental pastimes performed by Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu when He personally took part in the Ratha-yātrā festival in Jagannātha Purī, India. The article is an excerpt from *Srī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (Madhya-līlā, Chapters 13-14), a work originally composed in Bengali, shortly after Lord Caitanya's disappearance, by the great poet and spiritual master Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī. It has been translated into English by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, who has supplemented the work with illuminating purports.

May the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, who danced in front of the cart of Śrī Jagannātha, be all glorified! By seeing His dancing, not only was the whole universe held in wonder, but Lord Jagannātha Himself became very much astonished.

All glories to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Nityānanda Prabhu, Advaita Ācārya and all the devotees of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Glorifying the listeners of *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, I request them to hear the description of the dancing of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu at the Ratha-yātrā festival. This is very enchanting. Please hear it with great attention.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His personal associates got up in the dark and attentively took their early morning baths.

They then went to see the ceremony of *pāṇḍu-vijaya*. During this ceremony, Lord Jagannātha leaves His throne and gets up onto the *ratha* car.

King Pratāparudra in person [the King of Orissa], as well as his entourage, allowed the *pāṇḍu-vijaya* ceremony to be seen by all the associates of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His prominent devotees—Advaita Ācārya, Nityānanda Prabhu and others—were greatly happy to observe how Lord Jagannātha was beginning the Ratha-yātrā.

The very strongly built *dayitās* [carriers of the Jagannātha Deity] were as powerful as drunken elephants. They manually carried Lord Jagannātha from the throne to the car.

PURPORT

The word *dayitā* refers to one who has received the mercy of the Lord. Lord Jagannātha has a number of stalwart servants known as *dayitās*. These servants do not come from very high-caste families (brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas or vaiśyas), but because they are engaged in the service of the Lord, they have been elevated to a respected position.



While carrying the Deity of Lord Jagannātha, some of the *dayitās* took hold of the shoulders of the Lord, and some caught His lotus feet.

The Lord Jagannātha Deity was bound at the waist by a strong, thick rope made of silk. From two sides the *dayitās* caught hold of this rope and raised the Deity.

Strong, puffed-up cotton pads called *tulis* were spread out from the throne to the cart, and the *dayitās* carried the heavy Deity of Lord Jagannātha from one pillow-like pad to the next.

While the *dayitās* carried the heavy Deity, some of the pads broke, and the cotton contents floated into the air. When they broke, they made a heavy, cracking sound.

Lord Jagannātha is the maintainer of the whole universe. Who can carry Him from one place to another? However, the Lord moves by His personal will, just to perform His pastimes.

While the Lord was transported from the throne to the car, tumultuous sounds were made on various musical instruments. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was chanting "*Maṇimā maṇimā,*" but He could not be heard.

PURPORT

The word *maṇimā* is used in Orissa to address a respectable person. Lord Jagannātha was being respectfully addressed by Śrī Caitanya in this way.

While the Lord was being carried from the throne to the car, King Pratāparudra personally engaged himself in the Lord's service by cleansing the road with a broom that had a golden handle.

The King sprinkled the road with water scented with sandalwood. Although he was the owner of the royal throne, he engaged himself in menial service for the sake of Lord Jagannātha.

Although the King was the most exalted and respected person, he nonetheless accepted the menial service of the Lord. Thus he became a suitable candidate to receive the Lord's mercy.

Upon seeing the King engaged in such menial service, Caitanya Mahāprabhu became very happy. Simply by rendering this service, the King received the mercy of the Lord.

PURPORT

Unless one receives the mercy of the Lord, he cannot understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead or engage in His devotional service.

athāpi te deva padāmbuja-dvaya-
prasāda-leśānugṛhīta eva hi
jānāti tattvaṁ bhagavan mahimno
na cānya eko 'pi ciraṁ vicinvaṁ
(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, 10.14.29)

Only a devotee who has received a small fraction of the mercy of the Lord can understand Him. Others may engage in theoretical speculation to understand the Lord, but they cannot know anything about Him. When Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu saw the King engaged in menial service for Lord Jagannātha, He became very happy. Thus



"THE SEER AND THE DANCER WERE ONE AND THE SAME SUPREME PERSON..."

the King became eligible to receive Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's mercy. If a devotee accepts Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu as the universal guru and Lord Jagannātha as the Supreme Personality of Godhead Kṛṣṇa, he is benefited by the combined mercy of Kṛṣṇa and guru. That is stated by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in His instructions to Rūpa Gosvāmī (Cc. Madhya 19.151):

brahmāṇḍa bhramite kona bhāgyavān jīva
guru-kṛṣṇa-prasāde pāya bhakti-latā-bija

The seed of devotional service fructifies and becomes a transcendental creeper. Finally it reaches the lotus feet of the Lord in the spiritual sky. This seed is obtained by the mercy of the Lord and the guru. By the Lord's mercy one gets the association of a bona fide guru, and by the mercy of the guru, one gets the chance to render devotional service. Devotional service, the science of bhakti-yoga, carries one from this material world to the spiritual world.

Everyone was astonished to see the decorations on the ratha car. The car appeared to be newly made of gold, and it was as high as Mount Sumeru.

The decorations included bright mirrors and hundreds and hundreds of *cāmaras* [white whisks made of yak tails]. On top of the car were a neat and clean canopy and a very beautiful flag.

The car was decorated with silken cloth and various pictures. Many brass bells, gongs and ankle bells rang.

For the pastimes of the Ratha-yātrā ceremony, Lord Jagannātha got aboard one car, and His sister, Subhadra, and elder brother, Balarāma, got aboard two other cars.

The fine white sand spread all over the path before the car resembled the bank of the Yamunā, and the small gardens on both sides looked just like those in Vṛndāvana.

As Lord Jagannātha rode in His car and saw the beauty on both sides of Him, His mind was filled with pleasure.

The pullers of the car were known as *gauḍas*, and they pulled with great pleasure. However, the car went sometimes very fast and sometimes very slow.

Sometimes the car would stand still and not move, even though it was drawn very forcibly. The chariot therefore

moved by the will of the Lord, not by the strength of any ordinary person.

As the car started, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu gathered all His devotees and, with His own hand, decorated them with flower garlands and sandalwood pulp.

Paramānanda Purī and Brahmānanda Bhāratī were both personally given garlands and sandalwood pulp from the very hands of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. This increased their transcendental pleasure.

Similarly, when Advaita Ācārya and Nityānanda Prabhu felt the touch of the transcendental hand of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, They both became very pleased.

The Lord also gave garlands and sandalwood pulp to the performers of *saṅkīrtana*. The two chief performers were Svarūpa Dāmodara and Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura.

There were four parties of *kīrtana* performers, comprising twenty-four chanters. In each party there were also two *mṛdaṅga* players, making an additional eight persons.

There was also a *saṅkīrtana* party from the village known as Kulīna-grāma. Rāmānanda and Satyarāja were appointed the dancers in this group.

Another party came from Śāntipura and was formed by Advaita Ācārya. Acyutānanda was the dancer, and the rest of the men were singers.

Another party was formed by the people of Khaṇḍa. These people were singing in a different place. In that group, Narahari Prabhu and Raghunandana were dancing. Four parties chanted and danced in front of Lord Jagannātha, and on both sides were two other parties. Another was at the rear.

Thus there were seven parties of *saṅkīrtana*, and in each party two men were beating drums. Thus fourteen drums were being played at once. The sound was tumultuous, and all the devotees became mad.

All the Vaiṣṇavas came together like an assembly of clouds. As the devotees chanted the holy names in great ecstasy, tears fell from their eyes like rainfall.

When the *saṅkīrtana* resounded, it filled the three worlds. Indeed, no one could hear mundane sounds or musical instruments other than the *saṅkīrtana*.

Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu wandered through all seven groups, chanting the holy name, "Hari, Hari!" Raising His arms, He shouted, "All glories to Lord Jagannātha!"

Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu then exhibited another mystic power by performing pastimes simultaneously in all seven groups.

Everyone said, "Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu is present in my group. Indeed, He does not go anywhere else. He is bestowing His mercy upon us."

Actually, no one could see the inconceivable potency of the Lord. Only the most confidential devotees, those in pure unalloyed devotional service, could understand.

Lord Jagannātha was very pleased by the *saṅkīrtana*,

and He brought His car to a standstill just to see the performance.

King Pratāparudra also was astonished to see the *saṅkīrtana*. He became inactive and was converted to ecstatic love of Kṛṣṇa.

When the King informed Kāśī Mīśra of the glories of the Lord, Kāśī Mīśra replied: "O King, your fortune has no limit!"

The King and Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya were both aware of the Lord's activities, but no one else could see the tricks of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Only a person who has received the mercy of the Lord can understand. Without the Lord's mercy, even the demigods, headed by Lord Brahmā, cannot understand.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu became very satisfied to see the King accept the menial task of sweeping the street, and for this humility, the King received the mercy of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. He could therefore observe the mystery of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's activities.

PURPORT

The mystery of the Lord's activities is described by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. Lord Jagannātha was astonished to see the transcendental dancing and chanting of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and He stopped His cart to see the dancing. Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu then danced in such a mystical way that He pleased Lord Jagannātha. The seer and the dancer were one and the same Supreme Person, but the Lord, being one and many at the same time, was exhibiting the variegatedness of His pastimes. That is the meaning behind His mysterious exhibition. By the mercy of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the King could understand how both of Them were enjoying each other's activities. Another mysterious exhibition was Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's simultaneous presence in seven groups. By the mercy of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the King could understand that also.

Although the King was refused an interview, he was indirectly granted causeless mercy. Who can understand the internal potency of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu?

PURPORT

Since Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was playing the part of a world teacher, He had refused to see the King because a king is a mundane person interested in money and women. Indeed, the very name "king" suggests one who is always surrounded by money and women. As a sannyāsī, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was afraid of both money and women. The very word "king" is repugnant to one who is in the renounced order of life. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu refused to see the King, but indirectly, by the Lord's causeless mercy, the King was able to understand the mysterious activities of the Lord. Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu's activities were exhibited sometimes to reveal Him as the Supreme Personality of Godhead and sometimes to show Him as a devotee. Both kinds of activity are mysterious and appreciated only by pure devotees.

When the two great personalities Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya and Kāśī Mīśra saw Caitanya Mahāprabhu's causeless mercy upon the King, they became astonished.

Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu performed His pastimes for some time in this way. He was personally singing and inducing His personal associates to dance.

According to His need, the Lord exhibited sometimes one form and sometimes many forms. This was being executed by His internal potency.

Indeed, the Personality of Godhead forgot Himself in the course of His transcendental pastimes, but His internal potency [*līlā-śaktī*], knowing the intentions of the Lord, made all arrangements.

PURPORT

As stated in the Upaniṣads: *parāśya śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate. "The Supreme Lord has multi-potencies, which act so perfectly that all consciousness, strength and activity are being directed solely by His will."* (Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 6.8)

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu exhibited His mystic power in presenting Himself simultaneously in each and every saṅkīrtana group. Most people thought that He was one, but some saw that He was many. The internal devotees could understand that the Lord, although one, was exhibiting Himself as many in the different saṅkīrtana groups. While Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was dancing, He forgot Himself and was simply absorbed in ecstatic bliss. However, His internal potency arranged everything perfectly. This is the difference between the internal and external potency. In the material world, the external potency (material energy) can act only after one endeavors at great length, but when the Supreme Lord desires, everything is performed automatically by the internal potency. By His will, things happen so perfectly that they appear to be carried out automatically. Sometimes the activities of the internal potency are exhibited in the material world. In fact, all the activities of the material nature are actually performed by the inconceivable energies of the Lord, but so-called scientists and students of material nature are unable to understand ultimately how things are happening. They evasively conclude that everything is being done by nature, but they do not know that behind nature is the potent Supreme Personality of Godhead. This is explained by Lord Kṛṣṇa in Bhagavad-gītā:

mayādhyakṣeṇa prakṛtiḥ
sūyate sa-carācaram
hetunānena kaunteya
jagad viparivartate

"This material nature is working under My direction, O son of Kuntī, and it is producing all moving and unmoving beings. By its rule this manifestation is created and annihilated again and again." (Bg. 9.10)

Just as Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa formerly performed the *rāsa-līlā* dance and other pastimes at Vṛndāvana, Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu performed uncommon pastimes moment after moment.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's pastime, His dancing in front of the Ratha-yātrā, could be perceived only by pure devotees. Others could not understand. Further examples of the Lord's uncommon dancing can be found in the revealed scripture, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

PURPORT

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa expanded Himself into many forms while engaged in the *rāsa-līlā* dance, and He also expanded Himself when He married 16,000 wives in *Dvārakā*. The same process was adopted by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu when He expanded Himself into seven forms to dance in each and every group of the saṅkīrtana party. These expansions were appreciated by pure devotees, including King *Pratāparudra*. Although for reasons of external formality Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu refused to see King *Pratāparudra* because he was a king, King *Pratāparudra* became one of the Lord's most confidential devotees by the Lord's special mercy upon him. The King could see Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu simultaneously present in all seven groups. As confirmed in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, one cannot see the expansions of the transcendental forms of the Lord unless one is a pure devotee of the Lord.

In this way Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu danced in great jubilation and inundated all the people with waves of ecstatic love.

Thus Lord Jagannātha got to His car, and Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu caused all His devotees to dance in front of the car.

Seeing the dancing and the ecstatic love of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, everyone became astonished. In their hearts they became filled with love of Kṛṣṇa.

Everyone danced and chanted in ecstatic love, and a great noise resulted. Everyone was overwhelmed with transcendental bliss just to see the dancing of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Apart from the others, even Lord Jagannātha and Lord Balarāma, with great happiness, began to move very slowly upon seeing the dancing of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Lord Jagannātha and Lord Balarāma sometimes stopped the car and happily observed Lord Caitanya's dancing. Anyone who was able to see Them stop and watch the dancing became witness to Their pastimes.

In his prayer known as the *Caitanyāṣṭaka*, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has given a vivid description of the Lord's dancing before the car of Jagannātha.

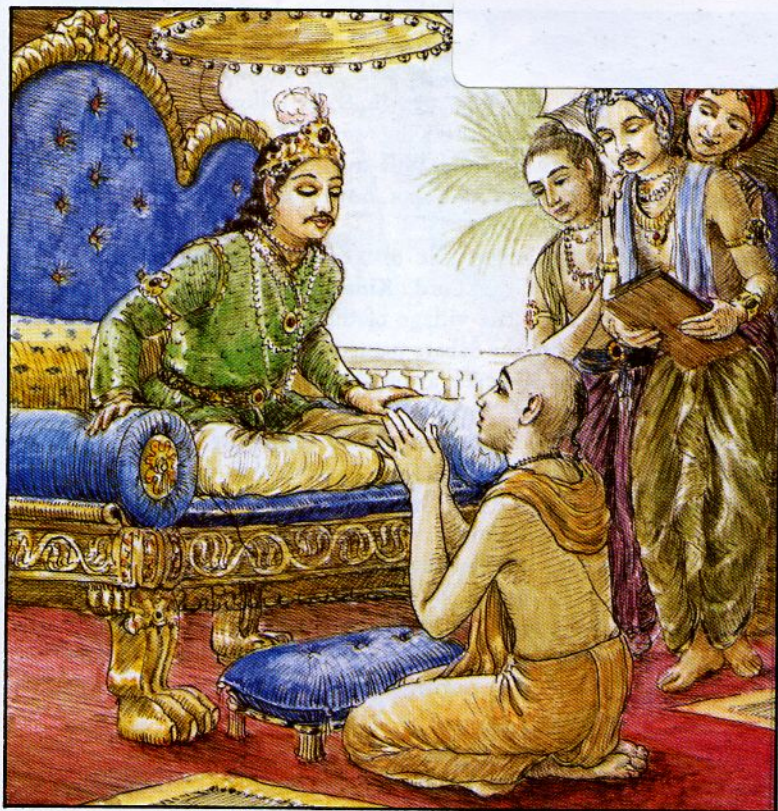
PURPORT

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī composed three prayers, each with the title *Caitanyāṣṭaka*. The verse next quoted is from the first of the *Caitanyāṣṭaka* prayers included in the book *Stava-mālā*.

"Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu danced down the main road in great ecstasy before Lord Jagannātha, the master of Nīlācala, who was sitting on His cart. Caitanya Mahāprabhu was overwhelmed by the transcendental bliss of dancing. He manifested waves of ecstatic love of Godhead, and He was surrounded by Vaiṣṇavas who sang the holy names. When will Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu again be visible to my vision?"

Anyone who hears the description of the car festival will attain Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. He will also attain the elevated state by which he will have firm conviction in devotional service and love of Godhead.

The Appearance of LORD JAGANNĀTHA



THE RATHA-YĀTRĀ festival, the parade of the chariots of Lord Jagannātha, Subhadrā and Balarāma, is yearly celebrated at the home of Lord Jagannātha in India called Jagannātha Purī. At Jagannātha Purī, Lord Jagannātha is worshiped in one of the oldest temples in India. The story of how Lord Jagannātha appeared is a very interesting episode in Vedic history.

King Indradyumna was a great devotee of Lord Viṣṇu and was very eager to meet Him face to face. One time, by the Lord's arrangement, a devotee of the Lord arrived in the court of King Indradyumna, and in the course of discussion he began to talk about an incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu named Nīla-mādhava. After hearing these topics, King Indradyumna became very inspired and sent different *brāhmaṇas* in different directions to search for and inquire about Lord Nīla-mādhava. All of them, however, were unsuccessful and returned to the capital city of the King, except for one priest of the name Vidyāpati. After wandering in many places, Vidyāpati finally came to a district whose population was of a non-Aryan type called Śābara. There he took

secret place to worship Śrī Nīla-mādhava.

After that day, Vidyāpati's joy knew no bounds. Actually Lalitā had been ordered by her father not to tell anyone about Śrī Nīla-mādhava, but she overstepped that order by telling her hus-

by Nitāi dāsa

band. Vidyāpati immediately became eager to see Śrī Nīla-mādhava, and finally one day, by the repeated request of his daughter, the Śābara Viśvāsu bound the eyes of Vidyāpati and took him to see Śrī Nīla-mādhava. As they were leaving, Vidyāpati's wife secretly bound some mustard seeds in the border of Vidyāpati's cloth, and so while passing on the path he threw them down to mark the way. When they reached Śrī Nīla-mādhava the Śābara removed the blindfold, and Vidyāpati, seeing the unprecedented beauty of the Deity of Śrī Nīla-mādhava, began to dance in ecstasy and offer prayers.

Here it is clearly seen that Śrī Nīla-mādhava was a Deity incarnation of the Supreme Lord. Deity incarnations are called *arcā-vigraha*. The Lord appears in Deity forms to benefit His devotees, especially those who are less advanced. Since the Lord cannot be seen by any but the most advanced devotees, He appears

While Vidyāpati lived in the house of the Śābara, he noticed some peculiarity in his host's behavior. Every night the Śābara would go out, and on the next day at about noon he would return to the house scented with various fragrances such as camphor, musk and sandalwood. Vidyāpati inquired from his wife about the reason for this, and she informed him that her father would go out to a

Since the Lord cannot be seen by any but the most advanced devotees, He appears

as the Deity to accept worship. Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.34),

*man-manā bhava mad-bhakto
mad-yāji mām namaskuru*

“Always think of Me, become My devotee, worship Me and offer Me your obeisances.” Therefore He appears as the Deity to accept the worship and obeisances of His devotees. He puts Himself in the hands of His devotees to receive their service and help them develop love for Him. This is an aspect of Kṛṣṇa’s great mercy and His desire to free all the conditioned souls from bondage in this material world. Thus Vidyapati personally witnessed the mercy of Śrī Nīlāmādhava.

After Vidyapati finished his prayers, the Śabara kept him near the Deity and went out to collect roots and forest flowers for worship. While the Śabara was out, Vidyapati witnessed an astounding thing. A sleeping crow fell off a branch of a tree into a nearby lake and drowned. It immediately took a four-armed Vaiṣṇava (spiritual) form and started back to the spiritual sky. Seeing this, the *brāhmaṇa* climbed up the tree and was about to jump into the lake, following the liberated crow.

As he was about to jump, however, a voice in the sky said, “O *brāhmaṇa*, since you have been able to see Śrī Nīlāmādhava, you should before all else inform King Indradyumna.” Thus the *brāhmaṇa* climbed down from the tree and waited.

The Śabara soon returned carrying forest flowers and roots and started his daily worship of Lord Nīlāmādhava. As he was engaged in the service of the Lord, the Lord spoke to him, saying, “I have for so many days accepted the simple forest flowers and roots offered to Me by you. Now I desire the royal service offered to Me by My devotee King Indradyumna.”

When the Śabara heard this, he thought, “I shall be cheated from the service of Śrī Nīlāmādhava!” Therefore he bound his son-in-law Vidyapati and kept him in his house. After a time, however, at the repeated request of his daughter, he freed the *brāhmaṇa* and allowed him to go. The *brāhmaṇa* then immediately went to King Indradyumna and informed him of the discovery.

“Although his minister again and again forbade him, the King, on the advice of his queen, by force opened the door of the temple with his own hand.”

The King, in great ecstasy, went forth with many people to bring back Śrī Nīlāmādhava. From the mustard seeds thrown along the path by Vidyapati, small plants had grown. So by following these plants the King was able to trace the path to Śrī Nīlāmādhava. When they reached the spot, however, they did not find Him.

Not being able to see the beautiful form of the Lord, King Indradyumna besieged the village of the Śabarās and arrested the Śabara named Viśvāsu. Suddenly, however, a voice in the sky said to the King, “Release this Śabara! On top of Nīla Hill you should construct a temple. There as Dāru-brahman, or the Absolute Truth manifest in a wooden form, you will see Me. You will not see Me as Nīlāmādhava.”

To build the temple, King Indradyumna made arrangements to bring stone from a place called Baulamālā by building a road from there to the Nīla-Kandara Hill. The holy abode of Śrī Kṣetra, or Purī, is in the shape of a conch, and in the navel of that conch the King established a town of the name Rāma-Kṛṣṇa-pura and constructed the temple. The temple extended 60 cubits beneath the earth and rose 120 cubits above the surface. At the top of the temple the King built a *kalasa*, or round pinnacle, and on top of that a *cakra*, or disc. He also had the temple decorated with golden ornamentation. Then King Indradyumna, desiring for Lord Brahmā to consecrate the temple, traveled to Brahmāloka and spent a long time there waiting for him. During that time, the temple, which is very near the sea, became covered with sand from the shore.

When King Indradyumna was away, first Suradeva and then Gālamādhava took over as the kings of that area. It was Gālamādhava who raised the temple from within the sands, where it had been buried for a long time. Shortly after the temple was uncovered, however, King Indradyumna returned from Lord Brahmā’s abode. Indradyumna claimed that he had constructed the temple, but



Gālamādhava put forward the claim that he was its constructor. In a banyan tree near the temple, however, lived a *bhū-ṣaṇḍī* crow who had been living through many ages, constantly singing the name of Lord Rāma. From his abode on the branches of that banyan tree, the crow had seen the whole construction of the temple. Therefore he made it known that actually King Indradyumna had constructed the temple and that in his absence it had been covered by sand. He further said that King Gālamādhava had later merely uncovered the temple. Because King Gālamādhava had concealed the truth, Lord Brahmā then ordered him to reside outside the grounds of the temple, on the western side of the lake called Indradyumna-sarovara.

Indradyumna then prayed to Lord Brahmā to consecrate the temple and the surrounding area, known as Śrī Kṣetra which gives the highest type of liberation. But Lord Brahmā said, “This Śrī



Kṣetra is manifested by the Supreme Lord's own internal potency, and the Supreme Lord manifests Himself. Therefore it is not within my power to install the Lord here. Lord Jagannātha and His abode are eternally situated in this material world by His own mercy. Therefore I shall simply place a flag on top of the temple and give this blessing: anyone who from a distance sees this flag and bows down, offering his prostrated obeisances, shall easily become liberated." After some time, King Indradyumna became discouraged at so much delay in seeing Śrī Nīla-mādhava. Deciding that his life was useless, he lay down on a bed of *kuśa* grass, being determined to give up his life by fasting. At that time Lord Jagannātha spoke to him in a dream as follows: "My dear King, don't be anxious. I shall come floating in from the sea in My wooden form as Dāru-brahman at the place called Bāṅkimuhān." With a company of

soldiers, the King then went to that place and saw on the shore a huge piece of wood marked with a conch, disc, club and lotus. Although he engaged many men and elephants to move that Dāru-brahman, or woody Brahman, they couldn't even budge it. But that night in a dream Lord Jagannātha again spoke to the King, saying, "Bring My previous servant Viśvāsu, who used to serve Me as Nīla-mādhava, and place a golden chariot in front of Dāru-brahman!"

The King began to work according to the instruction of that dream. He brought the Śabara Viśvāsu and put him on one side of Dāru-brahman, and on the other side he put the *brāhmaṇa* Vidyāpati. Placing a golden chariot before the Dāru-brahman, he then started *kīrtana*, chanting of the holy names of the Supreme Lord. Then the King caught hold of Dāru-brahman and prayed for the Lord to mount the chariot. Dāru-brahman was then easily

placed on the chariot and taken to an appointed place. There Lord Brahmā began a sacrifice and established a Deity of Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva on the raised platform of the sacrifice. It is said that the place where the present temple stands is the place where the sacrifice was performed and that the Nṛsiṃha Deity now standing at the western side of the Mukti-maṇḍapa in the temple compound is that original Nṛsiṃha Deity.

To carve the Deity of Lord Jagannātha from the Dāru-brahman, King Indradyumna called many expert sculptors. None of them, however, was able to touch Dāru-brahman, for as soon as they started, their chisels broke and fell to pieces. Finally the Supreme Lord Himself came in the disguise of an old artist who introduced himself as Ananta Mahārāṇā.* He promised that if he were allowed to work behind closed doors for twenty-one days, the Deity would be carved. Immediately preparations were made. According to the old sculptor's directions, all the other artists were engaged in making three chariots. The old sculptor then took Dāru-brahman into the temple and closed the doors, after making the King promise that the sculptor would reside alone and the King would not open the doors of the temple even slightly before the twenty-one days were up. After fourteen days had passed, however, the King was unable to hear the sounds of the artist's tools, and so he became full of anxiety. Although his minister again and again forbade him, the King, on the advice of his queen, by force opened the door of the temple with his own hand.

Inside, the King did not find the old sculptor, but instead he saw that Dāru-brahman was manifested in three forms, as Lord Jagannātha, Subhadrā and Balarāma. Going forward in front of these three Deities, he saw that Their fingers and toes were unfinished. The King's wise minister then informed him that the architect was none other than Lord Jagannātha Himself and that because the King had broken his promise

*According to the Nārada Purāṇa (Utkala Khaṇḍa 54.22-65), the artist Viśvakarmā, the architect of the demigods, carved the Deities in pursuance of the desire of Lord Viṣṇu, who had assumed the form of an old brāhmaṇa.

by opening the doors seven days too soon, Lord Jagannātha had manifested Himself in that way.

Then the King, thinking himself a great offender, decided to end his life. Thus again he lay down on a bed of *kuśa* grass and began fasting. When half the night had passed, Lord Jagannātha appeared to the King in his dreams. The Lord said, "I am eternally situated here in Nilācala in the form of Lord Jagannātha as Dāru-brahman. In this material world, I descend in twenty-four Deity incarnations with My abode. I have no material hands and feet, but with My transcendental senses I accept all the items offered in service by My devotees, and for the benefit of the world I move from one place to another. You have broken your promise, but that is just a part of the sweetness of My pastimes to manifest this Jagannātha form, which protects the eternal words of the *Vedas*. Anyway, those devotees whose eyes are smeared with the salve of love will always see Me as Śyāmasundara, holding a flute. If your desire is to serve Me in opulence, then from time to time I may be decorated with hands and feet made of gold or silver. You should certainly

know, however, that My limbs are the ornaments of all ornaments."

The *Vedas* assert, specifically in the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (3.19):

*apāṇi-pādo javano grahitā
paśyaty acakṣuḥ sa śṛṇoty akarmaḥ
sa vetti vedyam na ca tasyāsti vettā
tam āhur agryam puruṣam mahāntam*

"Without legs and hands, He moves and accepts. Without eyes He sees, and without ears He hears. He knows all that is knowable, but no one knows Him. They call Him the original Supreme Person." To protect this assertion of the *Vedas*, Lord Jagannātha takes His form without hands and legs. Still, Lord Jagannātha is able to accept fifty-six different types of food, offered eight times daily, and He tours the world in His splendid carts.

Hearing the words of Lord Jagannātha in his dream, the King became satisfied and prayed to Him as follows: "My Lord, grant that those who appear in the family of the sculptor who manifested Your form may age after age assist in constructing the three carts."

Lord Jagannātha, slightly smiling, replied, "That shall be." Then Lord Jagannātha said to the King, "The de-

scendants of Viśvāsu, who used to serve Me as Nila-mādhava, should generation after generation serve Me. They may be called My *dayitās*. The descendants of Vidyapati born from his *brāhmaṇa* wife should perform the Deity worship for Me. And his descendants born from his Śabari wife, Lalitā, should cook My food. They shall be known as *sūyāras*."

Then King Indradyumna said to the Lord Jagannātha, "My Lord, kindly grant one favor to me. Let the doors to Your temple be closed for only three hours a day. The rest of the time, let the doors be open so that all the residents of the universe may have access to see You. Further, let it be that all day long Your eating may go on and that Your lotus-fingers may thus never become dry."

Lord Jagannātha replied, "*Tathāstu*, so be it. And for yourself, what benediction do you ask?"

The King replied, "So that no one in the future will be able to claim Your temple as his own property, I desire to be without descendants. Kindly just grant me this one benediction."

Lord Jagannātha replied, "*Tathāstu*, so be it."

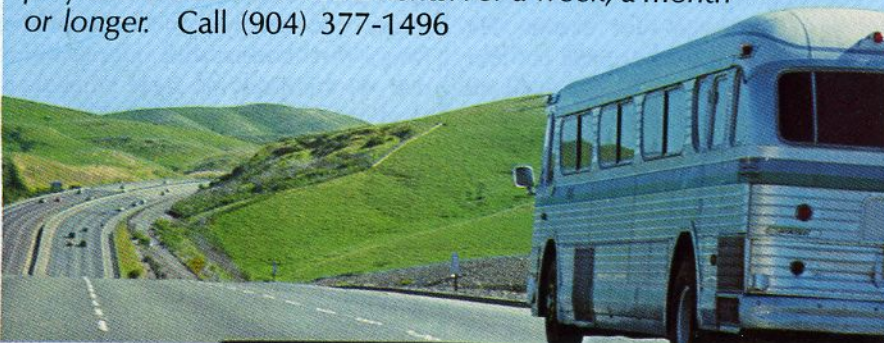
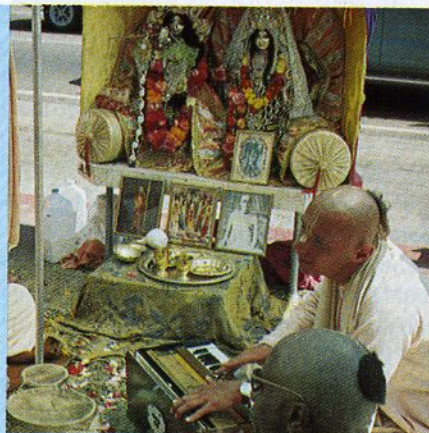
Thus the merciful Lord Jagannātha, Subhadrā and Balarāma appeared in this material world to benefit all living beings. What is the benefit They bestow? That is stated in the *Nārada Purāna* (U.Kh. 52.12):

*pratimām tatra tām dr̥ṣṭvā
svayam devena nirmītām
anāyāseṇa vai yānti
bhavanam me tato narāḥ*

The Supreme Lord Nārāyaṇa tells Lakṣmī-devī, "In that great abode known as Puruṣottama-kṣetra, which is rarely achieved among all the three worlds, the Keśava Deity, who was fashioned by the Supreme Lord Himself, is situated. If men simply see that Deity, they are easily able to come to My abode." In this way Lord Jagannātha is delivering the whole universe, especially as He rides on His cart before the eyes of all. Therefore I offer my prostrated obeisances to Lord Jagannātha, Subhadrā and Balarāma on the occasion of Their chariot ride and pray for Them to forgive me for any offenses I have committed in my clumsy attempt to describe Their glorious appearance.

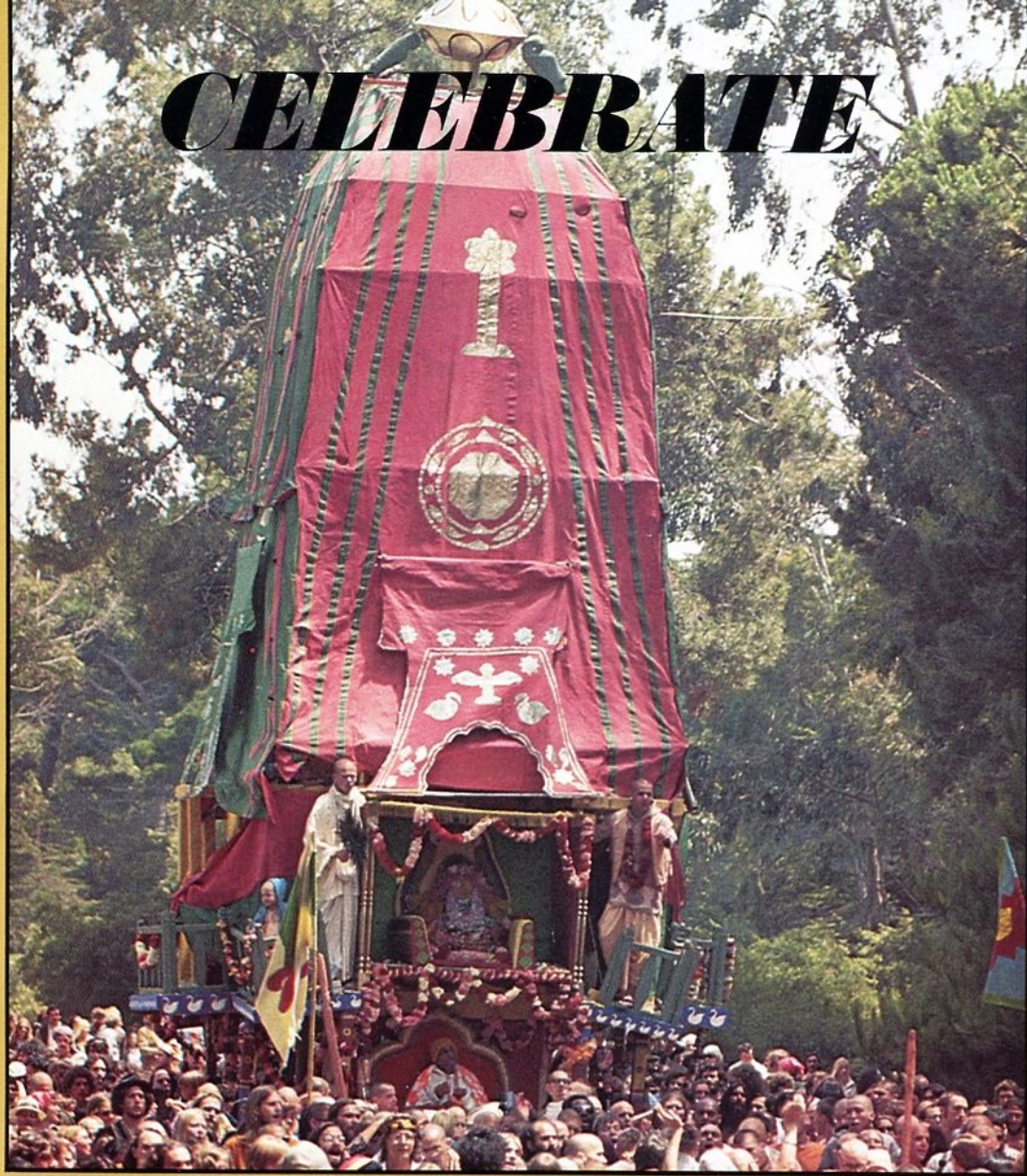
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