

June 2008

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# Ratha Yatra Festival 2008



Snana Yatra (Bathing Ceremony) - Sunday June 8th - 5:30 pm  
 Ratha Yatra (Parade) - Saturday June 14th - Noon \*5th Av, 59th St Manhattan\*  
 Panihati cida-***dahi and Father's Day*** - Sunday June 15th - 5:30 pm  
 Vegetarian Feast and Festival - Every Sunday 5:30 pm  
 All Events (except parade) At ISKCON NY At Long island Temple -  
 197 S. Ocean Ave, Freeport, NY 11520

*"...(Lord) Jagannatha is Krishna. Krishna's childhood ages up to His 15th year He lives in Vrndavan. Radharani is His childhood friend. But Krishna, after returning to His father's home at Dvarka, came to see Kurukshetra during some solar eclipse. At that time His sister Subhadra and brother Balarama also came in a chariot, and this incidence is worshipped as Jagannatha Ratha Yatra. The conclusion is that Jagannatha and Krishna are the same."* - Srila Prabhupada (Excerpt from letter 19700515)

\*\*\*\*\*Latest Temple News\*\*\*\*\*

# Lord Nrsimhadeva Appearance Day Celebrated

On Sunday May 18<sup>th</sup>, the temple celebrated Lord Nrsimhadeva’s appearance day in wonderful fashion. Krsna-Balarama Swami gave a wonderful lecture on the story behind the Lord’s advent. That was followed by his wonderful recital of the Nrsimha Kavaca, which he perfectly executed from memory. As described in its opening, the kavaca is “most pious, vanquishes all kinds of impediments, and provides

one all protection.” Concurrent to the kavaca recital, devotees lined up to offer flowers and candles to a picture of Lord Nrsimhadeva (the



Lord bifurcating Hiranyakasipu while being offered a flower garland by Prahlada Maharaj) and to the newly donated sculpture of the Lord’s head (thank you to Cakra Prabhu and John for this wonderful donation). This was

followed by a rousing kirtan led by Ajata Sartru. A sumptuous prasadam feast followed. Special thanks to Manju Mataji, Mira Mataji, and Madhavananda for cooking the prasadam and to Vraja Seva Mataji for her beautiful floral arrangements. Thank you to all who attended and who helped organize this wonderful event.

### Vaishnava Calendar:

- Saturday June 14
  - Pandava Nirjala Ekadasi
- Sunday June 15
  - Panihati cida-dahi
  - Father’s Day
- Sunday June 29
  - Yogini Ekadasi



# Origin of Ratha Yatra Festival

*Excerpt taken from BTG Magazine #16-10, 1981*

“...More than two thousand years ago, Srila Prabhupāda told them, there was a king named Indradyumna, a devotee of Lord Krishna. Mahārāja Indradyumna wanted a statue of the Lord as He had appeared when He and His brother and sister had traveled on chariots to the holy field of Kuruksetra during a solar eclipse. When the king requested a famous artist from the heavenly planets, Visvakarmā, to sculpture the forms, Visvakarmā agreed—on the condition that no one interrupt his work. The king waited for a long time, while Visvakarmā worked behind locked doors. One day, however, the king felt that he could wait no longer, and he broke

in to see the work in progress. Visvakarmā, 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, Balarāma, and Subhadrā that he decided to worship them as they were. He installed them in a temple and began worshipping them with great opulence.

Since that time, Srila Prabhupāda continued, Lord Jagannātha has been worshiped all over India, especially in the province of Orissa, where there is a great temple of Lord Jagannātha at Puri. Each year at Puri, during the gigantic Ratha-Yātrā festival, millions of pilgrims come to worship Lord Jagannātha, Balarāma, and Subhadrā. as the deities ride in procession on three huge carts. Lord Caitanya, who spent the last eighteen years of His life at Puri, used to dance and chant in ecstasy before the Deity of Lord Jagannātha during the yearly Ratha-

Yātrā festival.”



# Lord Krishna, The Supreme Father

*With Father's Day upcoming, we would like to pay homage to our supreme father, Lord Krishna. The Lord explains how He provides full and complete protection to all His devotees in the following excerpt from "Bhagavad-Gita, As It Is" (12.6-7), translated by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada...*

ye tu sarvāni karmāni  
mayi sanniyasya mat-parāh  
ananyenaiva yogena  
mām dhyāyanta upāsate  
tesām aham samuddhartā  
mrtyu-samsāra-sāgarāt  
bhavāmi na cirāt pārtha  
mayy āveśita-cetasām

## TRANSLATION

**For one who worships Me, giving up all his activities unto Me and being devoted to Me without deviation, engaged in devotional service and always meditating upon Me, who has fixed his mind upon Me, O son of Prthā, for him I am the swift deliverer from the ocean of birth and death.**

## PURPORT

It is explicitly stated here that the devotees are very fortunate to be delivered very soon from material existence by the Lord. In pure devotional service one comes to the realization that God is great and that the individual soul is subordinate to Him. His duty is to render service to the Lord-if not, then he will render service to māyā.

As stated before, the Supreme Lord can only be appreciated by devotional service. Therefore, one should be fully devoted. One should fix his mind fully on Krishna in order to achieve Him. One should work only for Krishna. It does not matter in what kind of work one engages, but that work should be done only for Krishna. That is the standard of devotional service. The devotee does not desire any achievement other than pleasing the Supreme Personality of Godhead. His life's mission is to please Krishna, and he can

sacrifice everything for Krishna's satisfaction, just as Arjuna did in the Battle of Kuruksetra. The process is very simple: one can devote himself in his occupation and engage at the same time in chanting Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare/Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare. Such transcendental chanting attracts the devotee to the Personality of Godhead.

The Supreme Lord herein promises that He will without delay deliver a pure devotee thus engaged from the ocean of material existence. Those who are advanced in yoga practice can willfully transfer the soul to whatever planet they like by the yoga process, and others take the opportunity in various ways, but as far as the devotee is concerned, it is clearly stated here that the Lord Himself takes him. He does not need to wait to become very experienced in order to transfer himself to the spiritual sky.

In the Varāha Purāna this verse appears:

nayāmi paramam sthānam arcirādi-gatim  
vinā, garuda-skandham āropya yathecccham  
anivāritah

The purport of this verse is that a devotee does not need to practice astānga-yoga in order to transfer his soul to the spiritual planets. The responsibility is taken by the Supreme Lord Himself. He clearly states here that He Himself becomes the deliverer. A child is completely cared for by his parents, and thus his position is secure. Similarly, a devotee does not need to endeavor to transfer himself by yoga practice to other planets. Rather, the Supreme Lord, by His great mercy, comes at once, riding on His bird carrier Garuda, and at once delivers the devotee from this material existence. Although a man who has fallen in the ocean may struggle very hard and may be very expert in swimming, he cannot save himself. But if someone comes and picks him up from the water, then he is easily rescued. Similarly, the Lord picks up the devotee from this material existence. One simply has

to practice the easy process of Krishna consciousness and fully engage himself in devotional

service. Any intelligent man should always prefer the process of devotional service to all other paths. In the Nārāyaṇīya this is confirmed as follows:

yā vai sādhana-sampatti-purusārtha-catustaye  
tayā vinā tad-āpnoti naro nārāyaṇāśrayah

The purport of this verse is that one should not engage in the different processes of fruitive activity or cultivate knowledge by the mental speculative process. One who is devoted to the Supreme Personality can attain all the benefits derived from other yogic processes, speculation, rituals, sacrifices, charities, etc. That is the specific benediction of devotional service.

Simply by chanting the holy name of Krishna-Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare/Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare-a devotee of the Lord can approach the supreme destination easily and happily, but this destination cannot be approached by any other process of religion.

The conclusion of Bhagavad-gītā is stated in the Eighteenth Chapter:

sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekam śaranam vraja  
aham tvām sarva-pāpebhyo moksaisyāmi mā śucah.

One should give up all other processes of self-realization and simply execute devotional service in Krishna consciousness. That will enable one to reach the highest perfection of life. There is no need for one to consider the sinful actions of his past life because the Supreme Lord fully takes charge of him. Therefore one should not futilely try to deliver himself in spiritual realization. Let everyone take shelter of the supreme omnipotent Godhead Krishna. That is the highest perfection of life.



# Panihati Cida-Dahi Festival

*Panihati Cida-Dahi is an annual festival celebrating the pastimes of Raghunatha Das Goswami and Lord Nityananda Prabhu in the city of Panihati. The wonderful story of the festival's origin is described in the following excerpt from Caitanya Caritamrta Antya Lila Vol 2 Ch 6*

In the village of Panihati, Raghunatha dasa obtained an interview with Nityananda Prabhu who was accompanied by many kirtana performers, servants and others. Sitting on a rock under a tree on the bank of the Ganges, Lord Nityananda seemed as effulgent as hundreds and thousands of rising suns. Many devotees sat on the ground surrounding Him. Seeing the influence of Nityananda Prabhu, Raghunatha dasa was astonished. Raghunatha dasa offered his obeisances by falling prostrate at a distant place, and the servant of Nityananda Prabhu pointed out, "There is Raghunatha dasa, offering You obeisances." Hearing this, Lord Nityananda Prabhu said, "You are a thief. Now you have come to see Me. Come here, come here. Today I shall punish you," the Lord called him, but Raghunatha dasa did not go near the Lord. Then the Lord forcibly caught him and placed His lotus feet upon Raghunatha dasa's head. "Make a festival and feed all My associates yogurt and chipped rice." Hearing this, Raghunatha dasa was greatly pleased.

Raghunatha dasa brought chipped rice, yogurt, milk, sweetmeats, sugar, bananas and other eatables and placed them all around. As soon as they heard that a festival was going to be held, all kinds of brahmanas and other gentlemen began to arrive. Thus there were innumerable people. Seeing the crowd increasing, Raghunatha dasa arranged to get more eatables from other villages. He also brought two to four hundred large, round pots. He also obtained five or seven especially large earthen pots, and in these pots a brahmana began soaking chipped rice for the satisfaction of Lord Nityananda.

In one place, chipped rice was soaked in hot milk in each of the large pots. then half the rice was mixed with yogurt, sugar and bananas. The other half was mixed with condensed milk and a special type of banana known as canpa-kala. Then sugar, clarified butter and camphor were added. After Nityananda Prabhu had changed His cloth for a new one and sat on a raised platform, the brahmana brought before Him the seven huge pots.

On that platform all the most important associates of Sri Nityananda Prabhu, as well as other important men, sat down in a circle around the Lord. Among them were Ramadasa, Sundarananda, Gadadhara dasa, Murari, Kamalakara, Sadasiva and Purandara. Dhananjaya, Jagadisa, Paramesvara dasa, Mahesa, Gauridas and Hoda Krsnadasa were also there, Similarly, Uddharana Datta Thakura and many other personal associates of the Lord sat on the raised platform with Nityananda Prabhu. No one could count them all.

Hearing about the festival, all kinds of learned scholars, brahmanas and priests went there, Lord Nityananda Prabhu honored them and made them sit on the raised platform with Him. Everyone was offered two earthen pots. In one was put chipped rice with condensed milk and in the other chipped rice with yogurt. All the other people sat in groups around the platform. No one could count how many people there were. Each and every one of them was supplied two earthen pots, one of chipped rice soaked in yogurt and

the other of chipped rice soaked in condensed milk. Some of the brahmanas, not having gotten a place on the platform, went to the bank of the Ganges with their two earthen pots and soaked their chipped rice there. Others, who could not get a place even on the bank of the Ganges, got down into the water and began eating their two kinds of chipped rice. Thus some sat on the platform, some at the base of the platform, and some on the bank of the Ganges, and they were all supplied two pots each by the twenty men who distributed the food.

At that time, Raghava Pandita arrived there. Seeing the situation, he began to laugh in great surprise. He brought many other kinds of food cooked in ghee and offered them to the Lord. This prasada he first placed

seeing the fun.

No one could understand what Nityananda Prabhu was doing as He walked about. Some, however, who were very fortunate, could see that Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu was also present. Then Nityananda Prabhu smiled and sat down. On His right side He kept four pots of chipped rice that had not been made from boiled paddy. Lord Nityananda offered Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu a place and had Him sit down. Then together the two brothers began eating chipped rice. Seeing Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu eating with Him, Lord Nityananda Prabhu became very happy and exhibited varieties of ecstatic love. Lord Nityananda Prabhu ordered, "All of you eat, chanting the holy name of Hari." Immediately the holy names "Hari Hari" resounded, filling the entire universe.

When all the Vaisnavas were chanting the holy names "Hari Hari" and eating, they remembered how Krsna and Balarama ate with their companions, the cowherd boys, on the bank of the Yamuna. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and Lord Nityananda Prabhu are extremely merciful and liberal. It was Raghunatha dasa's good fortune that They accepted all these dealings. Who can understand the influence and mercy of Lord Nityananda Prabhu? He is so powerful that He induced Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu to come eat chipped rice on the bank of the Ganges. All the confidential devotees who were Cowherd boys, headed by Sri Ramadas, were absorbed in ecstatic love. They thought the bank of the Ganges to be the bank of the Yamuna.

When the shopkeepers of many other villages heard about the festival, they arrived there to sell chipped rice, yogurt, sweetmeats and bananas. As they came, bringing all kinds of food, Raghunatha dasa purchased it all. He gave them the price for their goods and later fed them the

very same food. Anyone who came to see how these funny things were going on was also fed chipped rice, yogurt and bananas. After Lord Nityananda Prabhu finished eating, He washed His hands and mouth and gave Raghunatha dasa the food remaining in the four pots. There was food remaining in the three other big pots of Lord Nityananda, and a brahmana distributed it to all the devotees, giving a morsel to each. Then a brahmana brought a flower garland, placed the garland on Nityananda Prabhu's neck and smeared sandalwood pulp all over His body. When a servant brought betel nuts and offered them to Lord Nityananda, the Lord smiled and chewed them. With His own hands Lord Nityananda Prabhu distributed to all the devotees whatever flower garlands, sandalwood pulp and betel nuts remained.

After receiving the remnants of food left by Lord Nityananda Prabhu, Raghunatha dasa, who was greatly happy, ate some and distributed the rest among his own associates. Thus have I described the pastimes of Lord Nityananda Prabhu in relation to the celebrated festival of chipped rice and yogurt.



before Lord Nityananda and then distributed among the devotees. Raghava Pandita said to Lord Nityananda, "For You, sir, I have already offered food to the Deity, but You are engaged in a festival here, and so the food is lying there untouched."

Lord Nityananda replied, "Let Me eat all this food here during the day, and I shall eat at your home at night. I belong to a community of cowherd boys, and therefore I generally have many cowherd associates with Me. I am happy when we eat together in a picnic like this by the sandy bank of the river." Lord Nityananda made Raghava Pandita sit down and had two pots delivered to him also. There were two kinds of chipped rice soaked in them.

When chipped rice had been served to everyone, Lord Nityananda Prabhu, in meditation, brought Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. When Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu arrived, Lord Nityananda Prabhu stood up. They then saw how the others were enjoying the chipped rice with yogurt and condensed milk. From each and every pot, Lord Nityananda Prabhu took one morsel of chipped rice and pushed it into the mouth of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu as a joke. In this way Lord Nityananda was walking through all the groups of eaters, and all the Vaisnavas standing there were