

AVANTIKA



राधा-मदनमोहन
देवी विशाखादेवी

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“O Lord Jagannātha, to Your dear devotees
You give the nectar of Your lips
(in the form of mahā-prasāda.)
You satisfied King Indradyumna
(who prayed for Your appearance.)
You are very eager to protect Your younger sister
Subhadrā and Your older brother Baladeva.
I offer my respects at Your lotus feet.”

Śrī Jagannātha-deva-stavaḥ
By Sanatāna Goswāmī

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Yours in the Service of Śrīla Prabhupāda

A personal message from H.H. Bhakti Charu Swami

To me my birthday never really bore any special significance. Later on, however, after coming in contact with Śrīla Prabhupāda's teachings, I became aware that although our birth in this material nature is meant for undergoing various kinds of sufferings, yet birth as a human being offers us a golden opportunity to develop our loving relationship with Kṛṣṇa and go back to our eternal home in the spiritual sky. Therefore, irrespective of what others may think about the purpose of my coming here, to me it is clear that the only significant reason for my coming to this world is to take advantage of the causeless mercy of my spiritual master, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda.

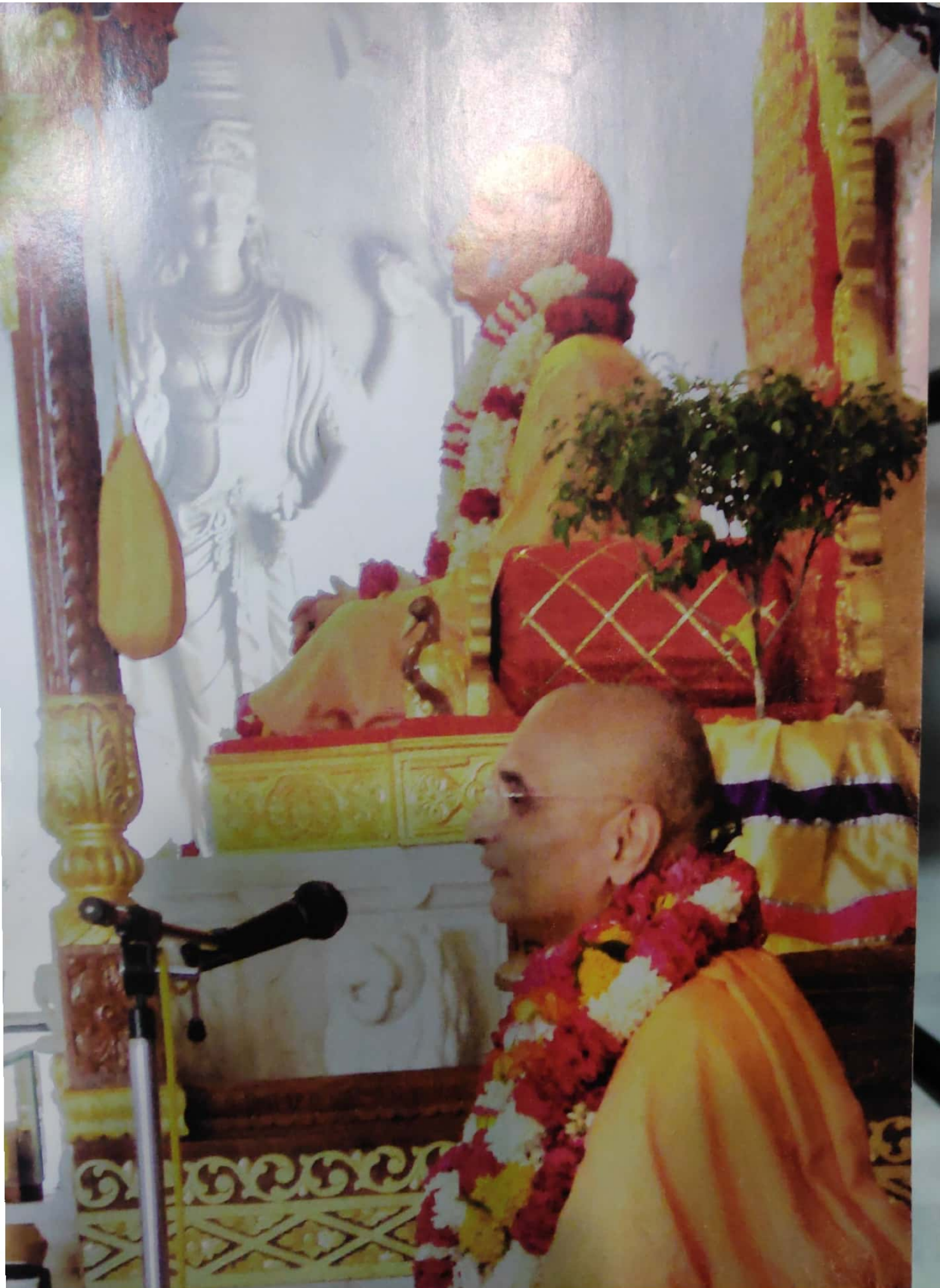
When I started to give initiation, my disciples, following the custom of ISKCON, started to celebrate my birthday with great pomp and grandeur. This used to make me feel extremely embarrassed and guilty. Therefore, at one point I decided to stop that and turned this day into the *Śrīla Prabhupāda Memorial Festival* in order to mark the day of his arrival in the USA.

It is through His Divine Grace that I received my real birth. He delivered me from my miserable material existence and reinstated me in my spiritual identity. He gave me a new life full of purpose and joy. He is my real father, and my real identity is in being his son. Ever since I became connected to him my life found its true meaning. The joy that I was searching for all my life became achieved simply due to my connection with him. He gave me everything that I was hankering for. Therefore, the best way I can celebrate my birthday is by singing his glories and broadcasting his greatness all over the world.

Yours in the service of Śrīla Prabhupāda,

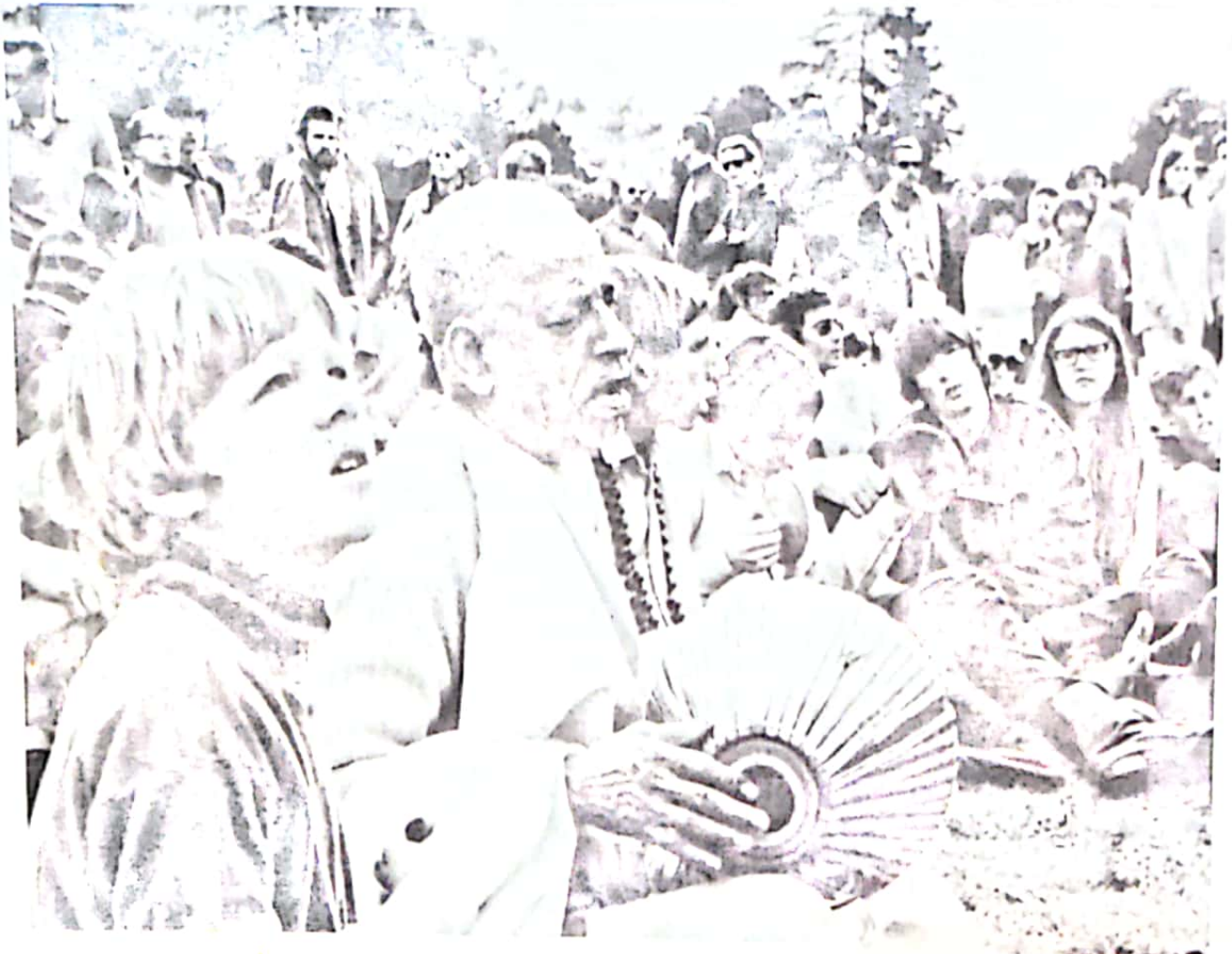


Bhakti Charu Swami



Prabhupāda Memorial Festival

17th September 2007



For the followers of ISKCON 17th September is a very important day. On this day in 1965 Śrīla Prabhupāda arrived in the West to fulfill the order of his spiritual master and the prediction of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu—to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world. This day is also the Vyāsa-pūjā of H.H. Bhakti Charu Swami. For many years Mahārāja has celebrated this occasion by organizing the Prabhupāda Memorial Festival. The last three years the event has been held in Ujjain. Last year devotees from around the world gathered in Ujjain to remember and recommit themselves to Śrīla Prabhupāda and his mission.

Amidst a day of festivities—lectures, *kirtānas*, glorifications and a fire sacrifice—the highlight was a speech given by the special guest, the King of Purī. Below are excerpts from his inspiring lecture, glorifying Śrīla Prabhupāda and explaining the significance of Ujjain.

It is by the Lord's mercy, the grace of Śrīla Prabhupāda and the very kind feelings and sentiments of our very dear Bhakti Charu Swami Mahārāja that this servant is with you today to share his feelings in glorification of the great spiritual master Śrīla Prabhupāda, in this town of

Ujjain, known in ancient times as Avantīpura. With your permission I would like to take you, with supersonic speed through time, on a journey from Avantīpura to Jagannātha Purī to Śrīla Prabhupāda and present day ISKCON.

The story begins here in Avantīpura and is described in the *Skanda Purāṇa*. Avantī is referred to as the second Avaramati, the capital of Indradeva. It was so beautiful, opulent and prosperous because the King of Avantīpura was Indradyumna. King Indradyumna was from the *Sūrya vāṁśa*, the solar dynasty, and fifth in generation from Lord Brahmā himself. He was a great king, a benevolent ruler and a true Vaiṣṇava.

Jagannātha appears for King Indradyumna
Having reached the fulfillment of his imperialistic and regal rule, King Indradyumna wanted to dedicate his life in the service of the Lord and to build a temple in the place where the Lord actually resided. So he asked all the courtesans and scholars of his assembly the whereabouts of such a place. An old travelling pilgrim got up and said "Yes, there is such a place where the Lord is residing now." He told the King's court about Purushottama Purī. At that very moment, the King of Avantīpura, took a *saṅkalpa* (vow) of going to Purushottama-kṣetra and building a glorious temple for the Lord where he would worship and dedicate his whole life to the Lord. King Indradyumna immediately sent out all his ambassadors to search for the Lord. One of them, Vidyāpati, with the help of the tribal *sabāra* people, had *darśana* of the Lord in Purī. But the Lord was not in the form of Jagannātha, Baladeva and Subhādra as we see Them today. He was in the form of Nīlā Mādhava, a beautiful Viṣṇu Deity, holding *śaṅkha*, *cakra*, *gadā* and *padma* in His four arms. He was *nīlamani*, that is blue sapphire gemstone and He was with Mahā Lakṣmī. Ananta-śeṣa was behind Him and Sudarśana and Garuḍa were in front. Having discovered Lord Nīlā Mādhava,

Vidyāpati rushed back to the king to inform him. King Indradyumna left Avantīpura in great hurry but by the time he reached Purushottama kṣetra the Lord was no longer there. There had been a huge sandstorm and the whole place was covered in sand; Lord Nīlā Mādhava had disappeared. King Indradyumna was such a great devotee that he wanted to give up his life. He felt there was no point living even a single day if he could not have *darśana* of the Lord. But he was guided by one of his priests, "Please do not do that. Your path has been ordained. I have heard it from Lord Brahmā himself: you must perform one hundred *aśvamedha yajñas* and at the end of that the Lord will reappear again." So King Indradyumna performed the *aśvamedha yajñas* at the place where today the Guṇḍicā Temple stands. At the end of the *yajña* a divine voice was heard saying "I will appear again because of your *tapasya*. For the benefit of the entire creation I will reappear. You will find a celestial tree in the waters of the ocean. Bring that tree and worship Me." So King Indradyumna went to the ocean and brought the tree onto land. But then there was a problem: None of the carpenters could carve the Lord's form from the log. Their instruments kept breaking. Again the King was in a dilemma. Then a divine voice said "Do not worry. You are a true devotee, so the Lord will help you. An old person will come forward. Let him work on the tree." According to the divine voice an old person came and the King gave him permission. But the old carpenter had a condition, "You must give me a chamber where I will not be disturbed until my job is done." The king agreed and placed him in the chamber along with the tree and shut the doors. For some time they heard voices and sounds and so understood the job was being done. But after a few days they couldn't hear anything. Queen Guṇḍicā became very worried and she ordered the doors to be opened. When the doors were opened they saw Lord Jagannātha, Balabhadra and Subhādra manifest. The old man was not there. So this is how Lord Jagannātha, Baladeva and Subhādra appeared in the world for

the first time. It is because of the great sacrifice and devotion of this great Vaiṣṇava, the King of Ujjain, King Indradyumna, that Lord Jagannātha Baladeva and Subhādra manifested to bless the whole world. So Ujjain is of great significance, and is very special and that is what brings me here today with Swamiji's kind grace.

The deities then had to be consecrated. To do that, King Indradyumna, along with Devarṣi Nārada, went to Brahmāloka and requested Brahmā to perform the ceremony. Lord Brahmā came to earth to perform the *ādi prāṇa pratiṣṭhā* of the Lords. When the Lords were consecrated they took a living form and spoke directly to the King, "Arrange for My daily worship and celebration of My festivals." These were divine orders and King Indradyumna had to carry them out. After the installation was over the first Rathayātrā took place from the Guṇḍicā temple to the new temple that King Indradyumna had built. The original temple was 1000 cubits high (15 hundred feet.) It is not the one we see now. That is the last in the series of temples built for the Lord. Many temples have come over time but the original temple was built by the King of Ujjain.

After establishing the worship of Lord Jagannātha King Indradyumna no longer had any desire for material acquisitions. So he asked Brahmā, "I would like to go to Brahmāloka." He entrusted the duty of serving the Lord to the King of Utkal. Just like Avantī was the ancient name of Ujjain, so Utkal was the ancient name of Orissa. King Indradyumna explained to King Kala of Utkala how to perform the various duties of worshipping the Lord. That is how this tradition started; whichever royal dynasty or sovereign political power of Utkala pradesha came to power, they had to become servants of Lord Jagannātha and fulfill the *sevā* of the Lord, in accordance to the Lord's instructions to King Indradyumna. This is how the tradition began and how the *sevā* continues. It is coming down from centuries.

During history we see that because of the Lord's mercy all the great *ācāryas* came to Purī to worship the Lord. Śaṅkarācārya, Madhvācārya, Rāmānujācārya, Nimbārkaācārya, all the great *ācāryas* came to Purī and established their *āśramas* there. In 1510, Caitanya Mahāprabhu first came to Jagannātha Purīdhāma. After travelling to South India and to Vṛndāvana, he stayed in Purī from 1513—1533. During the last twenty years of His pastimes Caitanya Mahāprabhu lived only in Jagannātha Purī, having *darśana* of Lord Jagannātha. Due to Caitanya Mahāprabhu's presence Purushottama kṣetra became a vibrant, dynamic Vaiṣṇava centre. Then of course Mahārāja Pratāparudra served Caitanya Mahāprabhu. All the Kings of Orissa, later known as the Gajapati Mahārājas, served the Lord.

Śrīla Prabhupāda brings Jagannātha to the West
And then we take a jump, 350 years from Caitanya Mahāprabhu's advent, and come to Ṭhākura Śrīla Bhaktivinode in the 1870's, when the King of Purī was Divyasinghdeva 3rd. At this time the British were controlling Orissa and they found that the temple affairs were not being properly managed. So they arranged



for the magistrate of Pūrī to look after temple affairs. Thus for several years Bhaktivinode Ṭhākura served Lord Jagannātha directly and looked after the affairs of the Jagannātha temple. During this time Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta took birth in Pūrī on February 6, 1874, very close to the temple, on Grand Road where the Rathayātrā took place. This is the place of the present Caitanya Gaudiya Math. It is said that when Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's mother brought the little baby onto the streets on Rathayātrā day, the chariot of Lord Jagannātha stopped and the Lord's garland fell on the baby, thus foretelling the great mission that the child had in hand. Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura laid the foundations of the Gaudiya movement around India, founding sixty-four Gaudiya Math temples. He set the stage for the great mission of Śrīla Prabhupāda. In the very first meeting that Śrīla Prabhupāda had with his spiritual master in 1922, Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura categorically advised him to take the message of Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the West and all over the world to fulfill the prediction of Caitanya Mahāprabhu that *harināma saṅkīrtana* would be heard in every town and village. Now this became a *guru adeśa* of Śrīla Prabhupāda. It was in his mind, but it was only after a long time, at the age of sixty-nine that this order came to pass. Most of us, if we lived that long, would think of retiring comfortably, having sufficient money in the bank and some place to lead a comfortable retired life. At such an age when the body starts giving problems who wants to work? We want to comfortably sit at home and chant *japa*. But here was this old person deciding to carry out his *guru's* order and travel. Those days it was not easy to travel. Nowadays it is so easy to travel from India to America. But for Śrīla Prabhupāda it was a two month journey in a ship and during that time he had two heart attacks. But nothing happened because he was meant to fulfill the Lord's mission. He arrived in America without a penny in his pocket and without knowing what to do. This is one of the best examples of

śaraṇāgati, complete surrender to the Lord. You surrender to the Lord and He does His work through you. It is not the individual, who is acting but it is the Lord's power. It is the Lord's action which takes over.

Now imagine the situation: It was 1965, the year of the hippy movement. In Greenwich Village, New York, the young people were doing all sorts of things, taking LSD, marijuana, intoxicants, and were full of pain. Here an elderly man, of sixty-nine years, in strange clothes was doing *harināma kīrtana*. This is unheard of! Just imagine the courage, conviction and sacrifice of Śrīla Prabhupāda. It is only his supreme devotion and complete surrender to the Lord which made this possible. And what followed is something which is magical and divine. He made human beings, from people who had gone off the path, who were dropouts and could not keep pace with the materialistic rat race of America. In this counter culture climate they had just dropped out and were looking for alternatives. But they had taken to the wrong paths and so were going to hell. To retrieve them and to make them human beings, then good human beings, and then transform them into divine beings, is a miracle. All this happened within a span of a few years. Śrīla Prabhupāda formed the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement in 1966.

The next year, in 518 Fredrick Street, in the Haight Ashbury district of San Francisco, Śrīla Prabhupāda was sitting in the temple when Malātī devi came and took out a little three inch doll from her bag and said "Here Swamiji I have brought you this!" Immediately Śrīla Prabhupāda paid his *prāṇāms* and with great devotion started praying. Malātī mataji was surprised, "What is this? I go to a little store which deals with imported goods and buy this souvenir which took my fancy and now Śrīla Prabhupāda is doing *dandavats* to it!" Then Śrīla Prabhupāda explained "This is Lord Jagannātha, the Lord of the universe." He asked her, "Are there two more



like this?" She said, "Yes, yes, there are two more like this." So she ran back and got Balabhadra and Subhadrā. That is the beginning of the Lord's manifestation in the United States of America. This is all actually the Lord's *līlā* and Śrīla Prabhupāda was the instrument. Immediately Śrīla Prabhupāda told Śyāmasundara, Malātī's husband, "Can you carve big images of these little three dolls?" Śyāmasundara began the job and three foot images of Balabhadra, Subhadrā and Lord Jagannātha were made and installed there. And then the first Rathayātrā in the West occurred. That was the beginning in 1967. And then the rest of the story is well known. Many of you have played an actual part in this movement. You have been next to Śrīla Prabhupāda and served him and his mission from the beginning.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's greatness

Over the span of twelve years, Śrīla Prabhupāda went around the world fourteen times and established one hundred and eight centers. This is not humanly possible. At the age of sixty-nine



he started his mission abroad and within a span of twelve years, it became a worldwide movement. Had it not been the Lord's will, the Lord's desire and the Lord's strength, none of this could have happened. This was something that the world needed the most. In the twentieth century, global humanity made tremendous achievements in science and all sorts of material advancement. But in the spiritual field very little was to be seen. It was so dormant that individuals became imbalanced. Outside there was so much opulence but inside everything was rotten and hollow. There were *asuras*, demons and animals, in the form of human beings. And from this came excessive materialistic culture without any inward spiritual growth. But Śrīla Prabhupāda changed that and fulfilled a great mission. Something is considered precious and its value measured by its rarity. Because it is not available therefore it is precious. If we go to a desert, where there is no water and we have a lot of gold and diamonds with us, they won't have much value. But a drop of water has a lot of

value. It can save lives. Similarly what the world and humanity needed in the twentieth century was spiritual awareness. It needed a spiritual revolution which Śrīla Prabhupāda brought into being. The whole of humanity was sinking into the path of excessive materialism devoid of spirituality and that would have led us to our destruction. After World War I and II, if there was a World War III nothing would remain. But now there is hope. When the world wakes up to spiritual awareness, to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, then there is hope for humanity. This was the great role Śrīla Prabhupāda fulfilled: He brought spirituality to the forefront of the international forum to give a chance for a golden tomorrow.

So with these words I would like to pay my homage to the great spiritual master Śrīla Prabhupāda. He continues to be with every devotee. It is said that when the master departs from his mortal physical body, his power actually becomes many-fold. He is no longer limited by the physical form because he has expanded to a subtle dimension which is more potent and powerful. Simultaneously he can be with each one of us to give us all strength. It will be a real tribute to Śrīla Prabhupāda, if this mission—which is God's own mission of spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness around the world—is taken further and further and made more intensive. Now we have more than four hundred centers. This shows that Śrīla Prabhupāda's grace is multiplying. Śrīla Prabhupāda's work is going ahead very nicely by devotees all around the world. That must be kept on because still much remains to be done. Kali yuga is still very strong and the proportion of the *sāttvik* people who are spiritually inclined is still very small. When we read the newspaper we know what is happening in the world. So work is yet to be done. It has to be constantly going forward and that is our *sevā* and our real offering to Śrīla Prabhupāda. If we can do our little bit to help the mission grow, so that ultimately the course of Kali yuga weakens, then Satya yuga will dawn on a golden tomorrow.

Śrī Jagannāthāṣṭaka

kadācit kālindī-tāṭa-vipina-saṅgītaka-ravo
mudābhīrī-nārī-vadana-kamalāsvāda-madhupaḥ
ramā-śambhu-brahmāmara-pati-gaṇeśārcita-pado
jagannāthaḥ svāmi nayana-patha-gāmī bhavatu me

bhuje savye veṇuṁ śīrasi śikhi-pucchaṁ kaṭi-taṭe
dukūlaṁ netrānte saḥcara-kaṭākṣaṁ vidadhate
sadā śrīmad-vṛndāvana-vasati-lilā-paricayo
jagannāthaḥ svāmi nayana-patha-gāmī bhavatu me

mahāmbhodhes tīre kanakā-rucire nīla-śilīharē
vasaḥ prāsādāntaḥ sahaja-balabhadrena bālinā
subhadrā-madhyā-sthaḥ sakala-sura-sevāvasara-do
jagannāthaḥ svāmi nayana-patha-gāmī bhavatu me

kṛpā-pārāvāraḥ sajala-jalada-śreṇī-ruciro
ramā-vāṇī-rāmaḥ sphurad-amala-paṅkeruha-mukhaḥ
surendrair ārādhyah śruti-gaṇa-śikhā-gīta-carito
jagannāthaḥ svāmi nayana-patha-gāmī bhavatu me

rathārūḍho gacchan pathi milita-bhūdeva-pāṭalaiḥ
stuti-prādurbhāvaṁ prati-padam upākarnya sadayaḥ
dayā-sindhur bandhuḥ sakala-jagatām sindhu-sutayā
jagannāthaḥ svāmi nayana-patha-gāmī bhavatu me

para-brahmāpīḍaḥ kuvalaya-dalotphulla-nayano
nivāsī nīlādrau nihita-carano 'nanta-śīrasi
rasānando rādhā-sarasa-vapur-āliṅgana-sukho
jagannāthaḥ svāmi nayana-patha-gāmī bhavatu me

na vai yāce rājyaṁ na ca kanaka-māṇikyā-vibhavavaṁ
na yāce 'haṁ ramyaṁ sakala-jana-kāmyāṁ vara-vadhūṁ
sadā kāle kāle pramatha-patinā gīta-carito
jagannāthaḥ svāmi nayana-patha-gāmī bhavatu me

hara tvam saṁsāraṁ druta-taram asāraṁ sura-pate
hara tvam pāpānāṁ vitatiṁ aparāṁ yādava-pate
aho dine 'nāthe nihita-carano nīścitam idaṁ
jagannāthaḥ svāmi nayana-patha-gāmī bhavatu me

jagannāthāṣṭakaṁ punyaṁ yaḥ paṭhet prayataḥ śuciḥ
sarva-pāpa-vīśuddhātmā viṣṇu-lokaṁ sa gacchati

Sometimes in great happiness Lord Jagannātha makes a loud concert with His flute in the groves on the banks of the Yamunā. He is like a bumblebee tasting the beautiful lotuslike faces of the cowherd damsels of Vraja, and great personalities such as Lakṣmī, Śiva, Brahmā, Indra and Gaṇeśa worship His lotus feet. May that Jagannātha Svāmī be the object of my vision.

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

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

Lord Jagannātha is an ocean of mercy and as beautiful as a row of blackish rain clouds. He is the storehouse of bliss for Lakṣmī and Sarasvatī, and His face resembles a spotless full-blown lotus. The best of demigods and sages worship Him and the *Upaniṣad* sing His glories. May that Jagannātha Svāmī be the object of my vision.

When Lord Jagannātha moves along the road on His Rathayātrā car, every step large assemblies of *brāhmanas* loudly chant prayers and sing songs for His pleasure. Hearing their hymns, Lord Jagannātha becomes very favourably disposed toward them. He is an ocean of mercy and the true friend of all the worlds. May that Jagannātha Svāmī, along with His consort Lakṣmī, who was born from the ocean of nectar, be the object of my vision.

Lord Jagannātha, whose eyes resemble full-blown lotus petals, is the ornament on Lord Brahmā's head. He resides on Nilācala Hill with His lotus feet placed on the heads of Anantadeva. Overwhelmed by the mellows of love, He joyfully embraces Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's body, which is like a cool pond. May that Jagannātha Svāmī be the object of my vision.

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

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

The self-restrained, virtuous soul who recites these eight verses glorifying Lord Jagannātha becomes cleansed of all sins and duly proceeds to Lord Viṣṇu's abode.



Lord Jagannātha Comes to Ujjain

The Installation of Lord Jagannātha
And the Opening of the Mid Day Meal Programme

By Kṛṣṇashish dāsa



The 30th of June 2007 marked the opening of the Mid Day Meal programme (MDM) and the auspicious occasion of the installation of Lord Jagannātha, Baladeva and Subhadrā Mahārānī in a beautiful wooden altar on the MDM building premises. Devotees from around India and South Africa came especially for the festival.

The evening prior to the festival, several Vedic ceremonies took place at our Mid Day Meal kitchen for the installation of the deities. H. G. Sevā Tulya dasa came especially from Mumbai to perform them. He is one of the most qualified *brāhmanas* in ISKCON and extremely expert in

the performance of *yajñas* and Vedic rites.

On the day of the installation Mahārāja gave a lecture explaining the importance of the Mid Day Meal project. The main highlight of the kitchen is the chapatti-making machine which makes 10,000 chapati's per hour. It seems appropriate that Lord Jagannātha, the Lord of the Universe, who likes to receive an abundance of offerings of *bhoga* and then takes pleasure in His *prasāda* being distributed widely, was now coming to preside in the new Mid Day Meal kitchen from where thousands of children would be fed daily. The atmosphere was filled with excitement as

Mahārāja described the mercy of Lord Jagannātha and His arrival in Ujjain:

"Lord Kṛṣṇa has a very special relationship with this city of Ujjain. He came here with His elder brother to study at Sāṇḍipani muni's āśrama. When we opened the ISKCON Rādhā Madan Mohan Temple, we also installed Kṛṣṇa Balarāma deities along with the deity of Sāṇḍipani muni. At that time I also thought of bringing Lord Jagannātha here because His appearance is related to this city. Lord Jagannātha has a very serious and deep connection with Avantika. In Satya yuga, about 4,000,000 years ago, Lord

assisted by highly qualified priests who had come from Vrṇḍāvana and Mumbai. While the *yajña* was going on suddenly it began raining which is a very auspicious sign.

Fourteen days after the installation, on 16th of July, one of the most important and glorious events took place for the first time in the history of Ujjain: Lord Jagannātha's Rathayātrā. After resting due to "sickness," Lord Jagannātha, along with His elder brother and sister, came out to give *darśana* to the general public through a grand procession.



Jagannātha manifested Himself to fulfill the desire of King Indradyumna, the King of Avantī. Even though Jagannātha manifested Himself to the King, He never came to Avantī. But today Lord Jagannātha is in His city and He will be staying here."

After the lecture the *netronmilan* ceremony took place, where the eyes of the deities are opened for the first time to give us Their *darśana*. The deities are extremely large and magnificent. They looked splendid. Amidst ecstatic *kīrtana*, Mahārāja performed the first *aratito* Their Lordships. *Sevā Tulya prabhu* then performed the fire sacrifice

Mahārāja, along with all the temple devotees, went to the Mid Day Meal kitchen temple. A festive mood had taken over the temple. Many dignitaries were invited, but the main guest was the Governor of Ujjain. He was welcomed by Mahārāja at the temple and then brought to the start of the procession where speeches were given followed by *arati* to Their Lordships. As the Ratha cart started moving devotees performed melodious *kīrtana* and danced. People came flooding in to pull the chariot as it moved from the market area, Freeganj, to the temple. Everybody was in joy having participated in Lord Jagannātha's first Rathayātrā in the city of Avanti.

Jagannātha Rathayātrā 2008

By Kṛṣṇarcana dāsa



The Rathayātrā celebrations this year in Ujjain took place with great enthusiasm and grandeur on the 4th of July. Many devotees arrived from various places across India and around the world to attend the Rathayātrā, including several senior devotees, Bhavānanda prabhu, Kāla Kṛṣṇa prabhu and Rādhā Kṛṣṇa prabhu.

The festivities began the day before with Sri Jagannātha's *netronmilana*, which means "the opening of the Lord's eyes." As we know, on the day of *Snāna yatra*, Lord Jagannātha bathes with a lot of water and thus performs His pastime of falling sick with fever and cold. He gets bed ridden and has a very special diet. After fifteen days, He again gives us *darśana* on the *netronmilana* day. This day is also significant as the day of *Guṇḍicā mandira mārjana*—the cleansing of the *Guṇḍicā* temple (where the Lord

arrives after His Rathayātrā procession). More than a hundred and fifty devotees, young and old alike, enthusiastically cleaned the entire temple premises. His Holiness Bhakti Charu Mahārāja personally took part in the temple cleaning explaining that during this service we are actually cleaning our hearts. Kāla Kṛṣṇa prabhu, a senior disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda from Canada, sang beautiful *kīrtanas* thus enlivening everyone while they cleaned the temple.

On the Rathayātrā day Their Lordships Śrī Śrī Jagannātha, Baladeva and Subhadrā were placed on a magnificent chariot that had been made in Ujjain under the direction of Guru Mahārāja. The canopy was made in the Diety dress department under the supervision of Syāmangī Rādhikā mataji. It took seven days to make and involved a team of ten people. It took Pundarika Govinda

prabhu and his team of devotees twenty-five days to build the main body of the chariot. The chariot was driven by an engine, while being drawn by ropes. The bottom part of the cart was on a truck and thus the Ratha moved very smoothly without any problems. The dome on the Ratha was operated hydraulically.

The Deities and the Ratha were gorgeously decorated with flower garlands. This year, the Ratha took a long route—about seven kilometers and covered the busiest parts of the city. The festival was attended by more than 50, 000

booths set up at intervals on the procession route and they showered flowers and offered garlands and drinks to the participating devotees. Devotees were tirelessly and enthusiastically singing and dancing throughout the procession which lasted for about six hours. There was profuse distribution of Lord Jagannātha's *prasāda* along the route. The Rathayātrā festival transpired to be a grand success.

This year we celebrated Rathayātrā with one Ratha cart. But next year Guru Mahārāja wants to hold the festival with three Rathas and to raise



people. The publicity was tremendous and the response overwhelming. Along the procession, people chanted the Hare Kṛṣṇamahā mantra, danced with the devotees and took *mahā prasāda*.

There was a program just before the Rathayātrā began. On the dais sat many honourable guests including prominent personalities of Ujjain. Speeches were given by the chief guest, Sri Paras Jain, the Minister for Education in Madhya Pradesh and the City Mayor. This was followed by Guru Mahārāja's address and *arātito* Lord Jagannātha.

Although we were apprehensive of heavy rainfall the weather turned out perfect on the day. It was cool and pleasant despite the fact that it was the hot, summer monsoon season. Various *samajas*, communities, in Ujjain, had their respective

the height of the cart from 37 feet to 45 feet so they look even more magnificent.

At the time of the Rathayātrā there were Hindu-Muslim riots all over India including Ujjain and Indore. However, though we went through a Muslim area, we encountered no problems. As Guru Mahārāja explained to us the following day, "Lord Jagannātha is the Lord of the Universe. God is one, whether we call Him *bhagavān*, Allah or God. Real religion makes our heart broad, not narrow. *Sanatāna dharma* means the eternal occupation of the soul. In that sense, we are neither Hindu nor Muslim nor Jew. We are eternal servants of the Lord. So if our Rathayātrā went by a mosque and our *kirtana* was opposed, we would chant 'Allah ho Akbar!' We should all spread God's—Kṛṣṇa or Allah's—glories together."

The Mystery of Lord Jagannātha

By H. H. Bhakti Charu Swami

The appearance of Lord Jagannātha is actually a mystery. Who is Lord Jagannātha? We know that Jagannātha is Kṛṣṇa. But if Jagannātha is Kṛṣṇa then why doesn't He look like Kṛṣṇa? Jagannātha looks different. Kṛṣṇa's form has been described as *nara vapuh*, a human-like form. His form is different to Nārāyaṇa who has four arms. Kṛṣṇa has two arms like human beings. Seeing Nārāyaṇa one can see that He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. But Kṛṣṇa doesn't look like the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He looks like a human being. And not only does He look like a human being, but He looks like a cowherd boy. He doesn't even look like a city boy but like a simple village boy. He doesn't look like a prince, but like a very ordinary boy from a village. But when it comes to Jagannātha we don't see any resemblance to Kṛṣṇa at all.

There are many different misconceptions about Lord Jagannātha. Some people think that Jagannātha is a Buddhist deity of worship. They don't consider that Jagannātha is even a Hindu god. There is the misconception that the Buddhists actually established the Jagannātha temple. There are many misconceptions because of a lack of understanding. This is due mainly to the different influences of the time. In the past, when different sects became prevalent in India and took over the worship of Jagannātha, they influenced the worship and tried to give their own stamp on the identity of Jagannātha. So at one point in time the Jagannātha temple was predominantly influenced by the Buddhists who took over charge of the temple. At this time the

whole of India was under the Buddhist influence. King Ashoka defeated the King of Kalinda, the King of Orissa, and he started to spread Buddhism. And in the temples, which are places of worship, common people, hearing the prevalent ideology of the time, naturally accepted and followed that doctrine. After Buddhism the influence of impersonalism emerged. But, in due course of time, by Kṛṣṇa's mercy, Jagannātha's original identity was once again established for our benefit. We are now recognizing Jagannātha as He is, as Kṛṣṇa. How can there be any doubt of His true position in anyone's mind? When we see Jagannātha, Baladeva and Subhadrā then we naturally understand that when Balarāma and Subhadrā are present then the personality of Jagannātha must be Kṛṣṇa Himself.

From the *Skanda Purāṇa* we learn how the Lord instructed King Indradyumna that these forms of Jagannātha, Baladeva and Subhadrā are His eternal forms in the spiritual sky. So who and where are these forms in the spiritual realm? This esoteric truth was explained by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura on the occasion of Rathayātra as he delivered a lecture on a radio programme.

The Queens of Dvārakā often noticed that Kṛṣṇa was often absent minded during the day. Although He was present in Dvārakā, His mind was elsewhere. At night they would hear Kṛṣṇa in His sleep calling out to the residents of Vṛndāvana. He was calling for His father and mother, for His friends and cows and for the

gopīs. They could therefore understand that although Kṛṣṇa was living in Dvārakā but actually He was always in Vṛndāvana. During the day His mind was in Vṛndāvana and at night, though His body stayed in Dvārakā, He went to Vṛndāvana. So they became curious, what is there in Vṛndāvana that makes Kṛṣṇa always absorbed in Vṛndāvana? What is so special about Vṛndāvana? One day the Queens approached Mother Rohiṇī and asked her, "You were in Vṛndāvana with Kṛṣṇa during His childhood, so please tell us what did Kṛṣṇa do there and what is there that attracts Kṛṣṇa so? Who are those residents of Vṛndāvana who always absorb Kṛṣṇa's thoughts?" Mother Rohiṇī replied, "I will explain to you when Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma are not present. If Rāma and Kṛṣṇa are here and They hear these descriptions They will be put into a very painful situation. We should spare Them of that agony." So one day when

Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were away, the Queens asked Mother Rohiṇī to tell them about Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma's activities in Vṛndāvana. While Mother Rohiṇī began describing events, Subhadrā was kept at the gate to guard the entrance; She was to stop Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma from entering in case They returned. As Mother Rohiṇī was speaking, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma indeed appeared there. But Subhadrā, hearing Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma's activities in Vṛndāvana, became so overwhelmed with emotions that Her voice became choked and she could not speak. So she couldn't warn Mother Rohiṇī and the Queens that Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma had arrived. Although she could not speak she stretched her arms out wide to stop Them from entering the room. Kṛṣṇa was on one side of Subhadrā and Balarāma was on her other side. Standing there Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma listened to Their own activities in



Vṛndāvana with the Vraja vāsīs. While hearing these pastimes Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma experienced such emotions that Their forms changed and were transformed. Kṛṣṇa's eyes became large like two fully bloomed lotuses. His face lit up with a beautiful, bright smile, and His limbs dissolved. His whole countenance and existence changed. His entire body became just His head and His arms. His arms stretched forward with an intense desire to embrace the residents of Vṛndāvana. Seeing Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma assuming that form Subhadrā was also induced with similar ecstatic emotions. She also assumed a similar form. But as she felt extremely guilty for stopping Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma from entering the room her arms became withdrawn into her body. This is why Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma and Subhadrā assume these transcendental forms: Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma's arms are stretched forward with an intense desire to embrace Their most intimate associates of Vṛndāvana and Subhadrā's arms are withdrawn within her body. This is the mystery of the wonderful forms of Jagannātha, Baladeva and Subhadrā and how these forms are eternally present in the spiritual sky. These forms are present in Dvārakā where Kṛṣṇa of Dvārakā intensely desires to go back to Vṛndāvana to be with His most intimate devotees in the mellows of friendship, parental and conjugal relationships and principally in the mellow of conjugal love.

There is another aspect of Lord Jagannātha's pastimes which have been revealed in *Caitanya Caritāmṛta* through the pastimes of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. When Caitanya Mahāprabhu was dancing in front of the chariot of Lord Jagannātha He was singing a love song describing a love affair between a young boy and a young girl. The young girl describes: The one who stole my heart when he was young, today he has become my lord and we have now become united. It is the same spring night where the gentle breeze blows from the *kadamba* trees carrying the fragrance of *mālātī* flowers. I am the

same heroine, the lover, with my beloved. But still my heart is yearning to go back to the bank of the River Reva, under the *betasī* trees.

Mahāprabhu was singing this song in front of Lord Jagannātha's chariot. Apparently this song is describing a young girl's love story, her dissatisfaction and her desire to go back to the days of their youth when they were not married and to relive their love affairs. All the devotees were wondering why Mahāprabhu was singing this song? The only person who knew the meaning and purpose of this song was Svarūpa Dāmodara.

After the Rathayātrā was over, one day Caitanya Mahāprabhu went to the *kutir* of Rūpa Goswāmī. At that time Rūpa Goswāmī was not there. He had gone to take bath in the ocean. Caitanya Mahāprabhu was waiting for him in the thatched hut and He noticed a palm leaf stuck on the ceiling. Out of curiosity He pulled it out and saw that a beautiful verse had been written on that palm leaf with hand writing as exquisite as pearls. The verse described a song where Rādhārāṇī is telling Her friend, "My dear friend, I met Kṛṣṇa again in Kurukṣetra. I am the same Rādhā and I met Kṛṣṇa again. But still my heart is yearning to go to the bank of the River Yamuna in the forest of Vṛndāvana where the whole atmosphere is steeped with the sound of the fifth note of Kṛṣṇa's flute." When Rūpa Goswāmī returned, Mahāprabhu out of intense happiness and joy slapped him on the back. He said, "Rūpa how did you get to know my heart?" Then Mahāprabhu asked Svarūpa Dāmodara, "How did Rūpa get to know my heart?" Svarūpa Dāmodara said, "My Lord, who can ever get to know your heart? Only when you reveal your heart to somebody and allow them to enter it, then only can one understand your heart." Caitanya Mahāprabhu said, "Yes, Rūpa is very dear to me."

The song that Caitanya Mahāprabhu was singing was actually in the mood of Srimati Rādhārāṇī;

Srīmatī Rādhārāṇī met Kṛṣṇa after a hundred years of separation. Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī could not even bear a moment's separation from Kṛṣṇa. When Her eyes would blink, for just one moment she was unable to see Kṛṣṇa. But She could not bear this separation, and She blamed Brahmā, "What kind of creator are you that you created a body which has eyes that blink?" That Rādhārāṇī had to bear separation from Kṛṣṇa for a hundred years. After a hundred years, on the occasion of the solar eclipse, Kṛṣṇa went to Kurukṣetra. It is a custom, since time immemorial, that people go to Kurukṣetra on the occasion of the solar eclipse and take bath in the Samanta Pancaka. The residents of Vṛndāvana also went there on that occasion. After the solar eclipse, when everyone was arranging to leave the place, the *gopīs* received news that Kṛṣṇa was also there. So they ran to meet Kṛṣṇa. At that time Kṛṣṇa was just about to leave. He was already on His chariot along with Balarāma and Subhadrā on Their respective chariots. Though Kṛṣṇa was leaving, the residents of Vṛndāvana immediately ran there to see Him after enduring a hundred years of separation. But Rādhārāṇī wondered, "This is not the Kṛṣṇa that I used to know. The Kṛṣṇa that I know is a cowherd boy, but this is a prince. The Kṛṣṇa that I know wears a peacock feather on His head, but this Kṛṣṇa is wearing a crown. The Kṛṣṇa that I know wears a flower garland around His neck, but this Kṛṣṇa is wearing valuable ornaments and jewels. The Kṛṣṇa that I know wears a yellow *dhotī*, but this Kṛṣṇa is decked in royal robes. The Kṛṣṇa that I know carries a flute in His hand, but this personality has bows and arrows, armour and swords. The Kṛṣṇa that I know is in Vṛndāvana, in the serene atmosphere of the forest, but this personality is surrounded by noblemen, soldiers, elephants and horses and they are making such a clamorous noise." Although Rādhārāṇī was meeting Kṛṣṇa after a hundred years She felt dissatisfied because He was not the same Kṛṣṇa that She knew. In the meantime, Kṛṣṇa, seeing

the residents of Vṛndāvana who were His dearest friends and intimate associates, experienced such emotions that His face lit up with a beautiful smile and His eyes became large like two fully bloomed lotuses. In that emotional state His whole countenance became just His arms and His head. And with His arms He just wanted to embrace the residents of Vṛndāvana. The residents of Vṛndāvana, seeing the mood of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and the mood of Kṛṣṇa, grabbed hold of the chariot along with the horses and started to drag it towards Vṛndāvana. This is the festival of Rathayātrā.

In this way, in different scriptures and through the descriptions of our *ācāryas*, the identity of Jagannātha, Baladeva and Subhadrā has been most wonderfully revealed to us. No matter what others think about Jagannātha, Baladeva and Subhadrā to us the understanding is very clear: this is Kṛṣṇa along with Baladeva and Subhadrā. Jagannātha Puri is actually Kurukṣetra. Dvārkesa Kṛṣṇa has come here and He is yearning to go back to Vṛndāvana. Kṛṣṇa doesn't want to be in Dvarka. He simply wants to be in Vṛndāvana because He wants to be in the association of His devotees exchanging the most intense love of friendship, parental and conjugal relationships. That is why when Kṛṣṇa came as Caitanya Mahāprabhu, assuming the mood of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, He came to Jagannātha Puri because He was in the same mood of separation. Jagannātha is Kṛṣṇa Himself, hankering for the association of the devotees of Vṛndāvana. And Kṛṣṇa Himself comes as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, in the mood of Rādhārāṇī, hankering for the association of Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana. That is why after taking *sannyāsa* Caitanya Mahāprabhu came and took shelter of Lord Jagannātha in Jagannātha Puri where the mood of separation and wanting to go to Vṛndāvana is prevalent.

Mahākāleshwar

Mahākāla, the lord of time and death
resides at the forest of Mahākāla, Ujjain

By Rāgahva paṇḍita dāsa

ākāṣe tārakam liṅgam, pātāle hatkeshwaram
bhūloke mahākālo, liṅga trayāḥ namostute
(Liṅga Purāṇa)

"Lord Śiva is worshipped in the form of Liṅgam. In the upper planetary system he is worshipped as *tarak liṅgam*, in the lower planetary system he is worshipped as *hatkeshwar* and in the middle planetary system, that is earth, he is worshipped as the lord of death and time, as Mahākāla."

The tradition of Mahākāla in the minds of the people is eternal. Ujjain used to be the central point for calculation of Indian time and Mahākāla was considered the distinctive presiding Deity of Ujjain.

Kālacakra Pravartako Mahākāla

In the *Varāha Purāṇ* Lord Śiva is referred to as *nābhideśe mahākāla* because he resides at the navel of the earth. The Mahākāleshwar Temple is



situated in this central point where the ancient line of the equator is cut by the line of Cancer. Mahākāla is considered to be "Great Time" and in ancient days all astronomical calculations of time were done from Ujjain. The *Varāha Purāna* reveals that by the mercy of Lord Mahākāla the cycle of time rotates. There is an observatory called the *yantramahal* near the Mahākāla temple which supports this fact.

The glories of Lord Mahākāla and Mahākālpuri (Ujjain) have been vividly described in various Purānas like the *Ādibrahma Purāna*, *Agni Purāna*, *Śiva Purāna*, *Saura Purāna*, and *Vāmana Purāna*. In the *Vāmana Purāna* it is mentioned that Prahalāda Mahārāja, after bathing in the River Kshipra, took *darśana* of Lord Mahākāla. Even Lord Rāmacandra prayed to Lord Mahākāla. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, offered one thousand lotuses to Mahākāla when he came to Ujjain to study at the gurukula of Sāndipani Muni.

Appearance of Lord Śiva in the form of light: Jyotirlingam

Lord Śiva is the Supreme Lords' divine hallow. At the time of creation the Lord allows living entities to enter into material nature. This fact is revealed in the scriptures:

tal-lingam bhagavān śambur jyoti rūpaḥ sanātanaḥ
(*Bramha Samhitā*)

Lord Śiva is the eternal element of the Supreme Lord manifested in the form of light.

Although Lord Śiva is residing in the Mahākāla-van (forest of Mahākāla) since the beginning of creation, for the sake of his devotees, he appears in the form of *jyotir lingam*.

Mahākāleshwar Jyotirlingam is the oldest self-manifested *jyotirlingam* deity among the twelve celebrated *jyotirlingams* in India. These *jyotirlingams* are situated in different parts of India: 1) Somanath in Saurashtra, near Dwarka; 2) Mallikarjuna in Sri Sailam; 3) Mahakala in



Ujjain; 4) Bhima-shankar in Dakini; 5) Vaidhyanath in Parli; 6) Mamleshwar in Omkar; 7) Rameshwaram in Setubandha; 8) Nageshwar in Darukwana; 9) Vishveshwar in Kashi; 10) Triambaka in Nasik; 11) Kedarnath in the Himalayas and 12) Ghrashneshwar at Shivalay, Orangabada.

Once upon a time, Avantī was ruled by the *brāhmanas* who were great devotees of Lord Śiva. The demon Dushan had conquered all the three planetary systems but could not win Avantipura. Dushan sent his generals to conquer Avantī but they failed. So he himself arrived and tried to kill the *brāhmanas*. No sooner did he attack the *brāhmanas* when suddenly the land broke into two pieces and Lord Śiva manifested himself into *jyotirlingam* and killed Dushan. Lord Śiva told the *brāhmanas* that he was very happy with their devotional service and was ready to give them any boon. The *brāhmanas* requested him to grant them the service of his lotus feet. Lord Śiva is most benevolent and easily pleased by service rendered to him. On the request of the *brāhmanas* and fulfilling the desires of his devotees he made his abode Ujjain.

By chanting of the *mahā-mṛtuñjaya japa* (which comes from the *karma kānda* section of the Vedas) before the deity of Lord Mahākāla, those on their death-bed can be cured by his blessings. Many people come to have *darśana* of Mahākāla from every corner of India and different parts of the world. The deity of Lord Mahākāleswar is *dakṣiṇa mūrti*, facing south. Because of this unique distinction the *mūrti* is also a centre of attraction for *tantrics* (black magicians). The Mahākāla shrine is installed in the upper sanctum of the temple called the Omkāreshwar temple. Hence the deity of Omkāreshwar is also consecrated here.

The worship of Lord Mahākāla by the great King Vikramaditya and King Bhoja is well known all over India. This worship continued even in the

Moghal period when the Mahākāla temple continued to receive the same grant for *pūja* expenses. There is a Nāgchandreshwar deity (Śiva *linga* over whose head a hooded snake sits) in the second floor of the temple but pilgrims are allowed *darśana* only on *nāga pañcamī* day, once a year. The atmosphere of the Mahākāla temple grounds is exactly like that of Śiva-loka (the abode of Lord Śiva). There are many small temples of demigods and goddesses inside the temple area.

Bhasm Arāti

Mahākāla is popularly known as Bhūtādipati, the lord of all living entities, including ghosts. This is the only Śiva temple in the world where, during ancient times, fresh ashes from corpses were smeared on the sacred *lingam* early in the morning. At present, ashes from dry cow dung are used for this purpose. Strict discipline is observed during *arāti* time. No one can enter the *garbhāgraha* (main altar) except men wearing *sola* (a special silk dhoti). Sounds of cymbals, conchshells, *damru* and Vedic hymns create a unique atmosphere revealing the mortality of the body and the immortality of the soul. This morning *arāti* is so enlivening that it assures us of Lord Śiva's divine presence.

Festivities and Anusthān Ceremonies

Mahā-mṛtuñjaya Anusthān

Chanting 125,000 *japa* of the *mahā-mṛtuñjaya mantra* before the deity of Mahākāla gives quick relief for all sorts of ailments and even critically ill people have been cured.

Parjanya Anusthān

In the month of June, to receive sufficient rainfall, this ceremony is performed by offering *pūja* and *abhiṣeka* to Lord Mahākāla.

Darśana

Lord Mahākāla gives *darśana* to his devotees in various forms. The *lingam* is often decorated with

various items such as lamps, rice, sandal paste, flowers and fruits. On the day after Śivarātri, Mahākāla wears the floral crown of a bridegroom.

Shravan Mahotsava

During the months of Shravan and Bhādrapad (mid-August to mid-September), special programmes of music and dance are performed for the pleasure of Mahākāla by renowned artists coming from distant places in Ujjain.

Hari-hara Milan

Hari-hara Milan is a festival which unites Śivaītes and Vaiṣṇavas on the midnight of Vaikunṭha Caturdaśī. Lord Mahākāla goes to Dvārakādiśha (Gopal mandir) and hands over the charge of this planet to Lord Viṣṇu. Śiva offers *bilbapatra* (leaf from the *bilba*—wood apple-tree, liked by Śiva) to Dvārakādiśha and a *tulsigarland* is offered to him in return.

Sawari of Mahākāla

The *sawari* (royal procession) of Lord Mahākāla is a unique celebration for the people of Ujjain to

have *darśana* of Mahākāla as the Lord of Avantī. Śrī Mahākāla moves through the city in a palanquin. The procession is escorted by the District Collector of Ujjain. A platoon of policemen with band and horse flight, perform a march-past throughout the procession. The royal *sawari* of King Mahākāla takes place in the month of Bhādra. There is much festivity throughout the grand procession. Devotees from all corners of the world gather to have a glimpse of their Lord in the form of a king. Lord Mahākāla is so benevolent on this day that he comes out from the temple and receives offerings from everyone, of all castes and creeds. The ISKCON devotees also take part in the *sawari*. They lead the procession with *harināma*, chanting the glories of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. H. H. Bhakti Charu Swami took part in the first *shahi sawari* (royal procession) along with the devotees. During the procession he swept the path of Śrī Mahākāla with a silver broom. From this time onwards it has become a tradition that the ISKCON devotees lead the *sawari* by chanting *harināma* which is a great attraction for spectators.



Guru Upadeśa

H. H. Bhakti Charu Swami

Śrīla Prabhupāda had a very big plan to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world. He stressed that this movement must expand. Today ISKCON has grown extensively but now we have to think how to expand it further. In Kṛṣṇa consciousness there is no room for stagnation. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is dynamic. Dynamic means movement. If we are not moving forward we will move in the opposite direction. If you do not progress, then you will regress towards *māyā*. In Kṛṣṇa consciousness there is no stagnation. We cannot stay static. We have to move forward. So in Kṛṣṇa consciousness we should be very concerned and careful that we are always progressing.

Now that we have come to Kṛṣṇa consciousness and accepted it sincerely we should not lose it. There is no way that we should fall back into *māyā*. We must move forward towards the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa in the spiritual sky. In order to move forward what do you have to do? We have to do newer and newer things. In order to move forward we must follow the four regulative principles and chant sixteen rounds daily. And we must render devotional service. Devotional service means doing things as an expression of our love for Kṛṣṇa and to please Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is very quickly satisfied. Kṛṣṇa Himself says, "If somebody offers Me with love a leaf, a fruit, a flower or water I will accept it."

As we make advancement our service attitude will develop. Initially, our service may not be so widespread or extensive because in the beginning our love for Kṛṣṇa has not developed. But as we

develop our love for Kṛṣṇa our service attitude will increase. Just like when you love someone, as an expression of your love, don't you want to do something for that person? The more we love the person, the more we want to do for him. Similarly, as we develop our love for Kṛṣṇa, we will want to do more and more for Kṛṣṇa. It is not that we just offer some fruits and flowers and think we have done our duty. If we love Kṛṣṇa then we always want to offer more to Kṛṣṇa. And when we do something for Kṛṣṇa then we will see how Kṛṣṇa reciprocates with us. Kṛṣṇa says, "You have shown so much love for Me, now I will love you even more." Then the devotee feels, "Kṛṣṇa, You have done so much for me and shown me so much love, I will do even more for You!" In this way a competition begins between Kṛṣṇa and His devotee to see who can love more. And actually in this loving contest Kṛṣṇa becomes defeated. Kṛṣṇa loves to be defeated by His devotee. That is how wonderful Kṛṣṇa is.

As you develop your love for Kṛṣṇa He will inspire you to do things. When you become an instrument in Kṛṣṇa's hands, there is no way of knowing how much Kṛṣṇa will do through you. We can become instruments by offering ourselves to Kṛṣṇa and giving up our false ego and selfish interests. Only our false ego is stopping us from surrendering to Kṛṣṇa. So let us try to offer everything to Kṛṣṇa. He is sitting in our hearts and knows everything. The whole world may think that I am a big devotee of Kṛṣṇa, but if my heart is full of selfish desires, then Kṛṣṇa will know. We can't hide anything from Kṛṣṇa. But if our heart is pure, then Kṛṣṇa will be so pleased.

If we sincerely want to serve Kṛṣṇa, then He will give us everything.

Sacrifice means offering everything to Kṛṣṇa. Nothing is for me. Even I am not mine. I am Kṛṣṇa's. This body is Kṛṣṇa's, this mind is Kṛṣṇa's, this intelligence is Kṛṣṇa's, everything is Kṛṣṇa's. When you offer everything to Kṛṣṇa,

then Kṛṣṇa gives Himself to us. Kṛṣṇa gives liberation very easily, but He doesn't give devotion so easily because through devotion Kṛṣṇa becomes sold out to the devotee. When a devotee offers himself, then Kṛṣṇa cannot help but offer Himself to the devotee. Kṛṣṇa becomes a servant of the devotee.



It is such a wonderful process. If we practice this process properly, then the benefit will be inconceivable. Is it that only Arjuna, or Prahāda Mahārāja, Janaka, or Nanda Mahārāja, are meant to be devotees? No. Everyone has the right to become Kṛṣṇa's devotee. These are examples we must follow. These examples are there to inspire us to become devotees of Kṛṣṇa.

Prabhupāda was often asked how he managed to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world in just ten years. His answer was that it was Kṛṣṇa who did it. Kṛṣṇa can do anything. He can make the impossible endeavour of his devotee possible. Kṛṣṇa can empower him because He is the supreme controller. By Kṛṣṇa's divine arrangement He can make His devotees achieve all kinds of wonderful things. We simply have to become devotees of Kṛṣṇa, then all kinds of wonderful things will happen by His mercy.

Preaching at the United Nations

H.H. Bhakti Charu Swami attends the UN giving
Kṛṣṇa conscious solutions to Global Concerns

By Kṛṣṇarcana dāsa

Śaraṇāgati devī dāsī (Mrs Sharon Hamilton-Getz) is a disciple of H.H. Bhakti Charu Swami. Both her father and brother are renowned in the American film industry; her brother being the famous Hollywood actor George Hamilton. She is a member of the NGO (Non-governmental organization) Committee for Spirituality, Values & Global Concerns (CSVGC) — at the United Nations.

In October this year, the CSVGC expressed interest in meeting Guru Mahārāja during their annual Week of Spirituality, Values and Global Concerns. Unfortunately he was unable to attend. Nevertheless in November, Śaraṇāgati mataji organized an informal meeting of CSVGC representatives at the UN offices in New York. Three other NGO's—The Sacred and Transcendental Arts Working Group, The Institute of International Social Development and The Institute for the Development of Education, Arts and Leisure, attended the meeting.

One of the guests was a young girl called Kamania from Dr Mishra's *Ananda Ashram*. Śrīla Prabhupāda stayed with Dr Mishra when he first arrived in America and gave some lectures at the ashram before he founded ISKCON. Guru Maharaja discovered that Kamania loves to sing *kīrtana* and so he asked her to open the programme. Playing on her folding harmonium she sang a beautiful *kīrtana*, leading the group in



chanting, thus creating a perfect environment for Guru Mahārāja's talk.

Guru Mahārāja began speaking on the present problems gripping the world, and pointed out how these problems are due to people's selfishness, anger and greed to possess more and more. However, in reality everything is owned by the Supreme Being, and He is providing for everyone in all respects. Whatever name we may call Him, God, Allah, Jehovah or Kṛṣṇa, He is the same Supreme Person. He is our Supreme Father, and with Him in the center if we become brothers and sisters then we can become a true family on earth.

Problems emerge in the world when we move away from our inherent relationship with our Father: He is like the sun showering its rays on everyone. He loves us: He gives us food, water,

oxygen and the balanced cycles in nature for our sustenance. But we have forgotten Him and are trying to lead our lives independent of His divine care. However, when one decides to reestablish one's relationship with Him, offering all the love of one's heart to Him, then He dances with joy. This bountiful joy is felt by both the devotee and the Lord, and that leads to a joyous chanting of His name, qualities and divine pastimes. This is called *kīrtana*. When many people congregate to sing and chant the glory of the Lord it is called *sankīrtana*.

Guru Mahārāja emphasized the point that God is the Supreme Personality. He is the Supreme creator, the Supreme maintainer and the Supreme proprietor. Many people think that God is an imaginary concept, that He is formless or a bright light. But He is a person: He has a name, form and pastimes. He is real. He is not a product of man's imagination but the Absolute reality. Creation cannot be the result of an accident; it is a systematic and intelligent arrangement. Energy may not have form but behind it there is the

energetic, who is a person. That energetic personality is active. He is not alone but is surrounded by His associates. He enacts pastimes to experience joy and provide joy to His devotees.

Then Guru Mahārāja went on to describe the importance of the human form of life. The human form is distinct from all other forms of life because of the human being's ability to develop his consciousness to such an extent that he can conceive the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Therefore it is extremely important that human beings take advantage of this most wonderful opportunity by developing their loving relationship with God.

After the programme all the attendees asked questions. Many were deeply affected by the speech. But Guru Mahārāja deflected any praise, saying whatever he had spoken was but a plain and simple representation of his spiritual master, His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.



One of the NGO members, Georgina Galinos, wrote about her experience of attending this programme. Excerpts include:

What does one expect when they meet a holy man in a saffron robe? And how does one allow an infusion of that sort to settle and take root in oneself? With the fragrance of a newly blossomed jasmine field, Bhakti Charu Swami Mahārāja graced our bland conference room, with a transmission of *darśana*, a light of hope to be imprinted on one's psyche and soul. His answer is a simple one - open your heart like a flower. The room will never be the same again for if the walls could speak they would echo. There was no pretense of political unrest, just a luminous glow surrounding his presence, which he generously left behind. His Holiness had a warm upturned smile that reflected golden into the iris of his eyes, into corners of the room, to seep into the hearts of those present, a gift of committed activism. "Whatever little I can, I will," he said, and humbly urged us, "This is not a time to be complacent. It is a time to re-spiritualize our world."

Each person approached Swami Mahārāja with their contribution of thought and perspective of which he openly addressed as if you were in a private room with him. His message was simple, personal, and joyfully lit. There were tears of happiness. There were frustrations and confessions. There were deep sacred directives and diverse insights exchanged. Alongside the sustenance of His Holiness's words, were deliciously prepared Indian delicacies of *prasāda* that we all shared at a table dressed with silk and gold threading. Surely this appearance allowed God Power and divinity to blossom once again at the United Nations.

During his visit to the United Nations, Guru Mahārāja was introduced to Mrs. Salwa Kader, president of the US Federation for Middle East Peace (USFMEP) and her husband, Mr. Ralph Kader, the chairman of the UN Military Mission for Peace. They had a long discussion with Guru Mahārāja and felt they must have a programme with him in the UN before he left for India in December.

The programme was arranged on 3rd December. The event, organized by USFMEP, was a discussion on, "*Exploring the Practice of Reconciliation: Muslims' and Hindu's vision of Understanding, Tolerance and Peace.*" There was media coverage from both India and the Middle East. Salwa Kadar opened the meeting by mourning the victims of the recent terrorist attacks in Mumbai and expressed her community's deepest sympathy for them and their family members. In Guru Mahārāja's moving speech he addressed the need to understand the real purpose of religion:

Synopsis of Guru Mahārāja's Speech

At a time like this, while mourning for those who lost their lives in the terrorist attacks in Mumbai, we are forced to wonder how can a group of individuals become so insensitive and brutal that they heinously slaughter so many innocent people who have nothing to do with the cause they are trying to advocate. Let us not try to find the answer to this question through some cheap sentiment or impractical intellectual speculation, but through the proper perception of reality. This problem is particularly difficult to deal with because it is happening in the name of religion, and religion, when misrepresented, can very easily turn into blind faith and fanaticism, and the breeding ground for violence and atrocities.

Therefore the first responsibility we have is to recognize the real purpose and objective of religion and work towards achieving that goal. Let us not try to recognize the existence of God

through some blind faith and superstitious rituals, but apply our common sense to understand Him and recognize His true identity. Let us recognize Him as the Absolute Reality by observing His divine arrangements. Let us observe with a truly inquisitive mind and wide-open heart, how a small seed falls on the ground and turns into a seedling. Then it grows into a tree and bears beautiful flowers with exquisite displays of colours, which gradually turn into fruits with innumerable seeds. And in each seed there is a tree with the possibility of producing innumerable fruits. Let us honestly consider whether this can be a result of a chance happening or the divine arrangement of the Supreme Omnipotent Personality. Let us consider with an honest heart how wonderfully we are receiving the supply of our food, water and oxygen, and how that Supreme Personality, like our dear-most Father, is taking care of all our needs.

Let us rise above all petty superstitions and blind faith, and sincerely try to know Him. Let us recognize the fact that all religions are speaking about Him and showing the way to develop our loving relationship with Him. Due to difference of language He may be identified by different names but He is the one, and only one, Supreme Personality, who created everything and is maintaining everything. He is our Supreme Father and dear-most friend.

We speak of universal brotherhood. That

brotherhood can be established only with that Supreme Father in the center. We aspire for everlasting peace. That peace can be achieved only by recognizing Him as the Supreme Proprietor and our greatest benefactor who is so concerned about us that He is residing in our hearts and taking care of us in all respects. It is due to our ignorance of Him that we submerged ourselves in an ocean of miseries and created such a precarious condition for the entire world. The solution to all the problems of this world lies in our recognizing Him and accepting Him.

Therefore, my sincere appeal to all the intelligent, concerned and thoughtful people of this world is: Please become united with a common mission to recognize your Supreme Father and dear-most friend. Please become aware that you have been endowed with a wonderful ability to expand your consciousness that enables you to perceive a reality that exists beyond your sight; and there your Supreme Father is waiting for you to return to His loving embrace. Utilize your intelligence and common sense to become convinced about His existence. If you are convinced, then try to get to know Him. Information about Him is available. Please make a sincere endeavor to collect that information. Please act according to His instructions and develop your loving relationship with Him. And when you have experienced that love, distribute it generously to others and invite them also to experience that joy, which is the natural outcome of that divine loving relationship.



Vyāsasāna

By Sītārāma dāsa

*nama om viṣṇu pādāya, kṛṣṇa presthāya bhūtale,
śrīmate bhaktivedānta svāmin iti nāmine*

With these immortal words all of ISKCON immediately fall to the ground offering *daṇḍavats* to the *param guru* Śrīla Prabhupāda. It's always a wonderful sight to behold and a heart-warming welcome that clearly designates Śrīla Prabhupāda's children, followers and grandchildren. Here, in Ujjain, it's made all the more beautiful by the resplendence of Śrīla Prabhupāda's presence. Seated on an ornate and wonderfully intricate *vyāsasāna*, he holds sway over the empire that his son, Śrīla Bhakti Charu Swami has built. Just hear Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta's explanation of this *guru sevā* rendered in a lecture:

"We have taken upon ourselves the responsibility of welcoming this grave charge. All the audience have accepted ordinary seats, I alone have been provided with a lofty seat. All are being told in effect, do have a look at a big animal from the Zoo-gardens. What arrogance! So foolish! So wicked! Have you ever seen such a big brute? Garlands of flowers have been put round his neck! What laudations! What bombastic long-drawn, and hyperbolic adjectives! And how complacently too he is listening to the praise of his own achievements, how intently, and with his own ears! He also evidently feels delighted in mind! Is he not acting in plain violation of the teaching of Mahāprabhu? Can such a big brute, so selfish and insolent, be ever reclaimed from brutishness? I happen to be one of the greatest of fools. No one offers me good advice on account

of my arrogance. Inasmuch as nobody condescends to instruct me I placed my case before Mahāprabhu Himself. The thought occurred to me that I would make over the charge of myself to Him and see what He would advise me to do. Then Śrī Caitanya deva said to me:

'Whom-so-ever thou meet'st, instruct him regarding Kṛṣṇa;
By My command being Guru deliver this land;
In this thou wilt not be obstructed by the current of the world;
Thou wilt have My company once again at this place."

In this verse is to be found the proper explanation of the apparent inconsistency noticed above. He, whose only teaching is humility greater than that of a blade of grass, said, "By My command being guru save this land!" In this instance Mahāprabhu Himself has given the command. His command being, "Perform the duty of the guru, even as I do it myself."

The *vyāsasāna* offered to Śrīla Prabhupāda here in Ujjain glimmers with gold leaf, shimmering with excellence while abounding with knowledge. It is a seat worthy of arājarṣi, saintly king, in the great tradition of Bhāratavarṣa and is, underneath the external design, deeply imbued with the knowledge, charity, humility and surrender evident in the words of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, guru of Śrīla Prabhupāda.

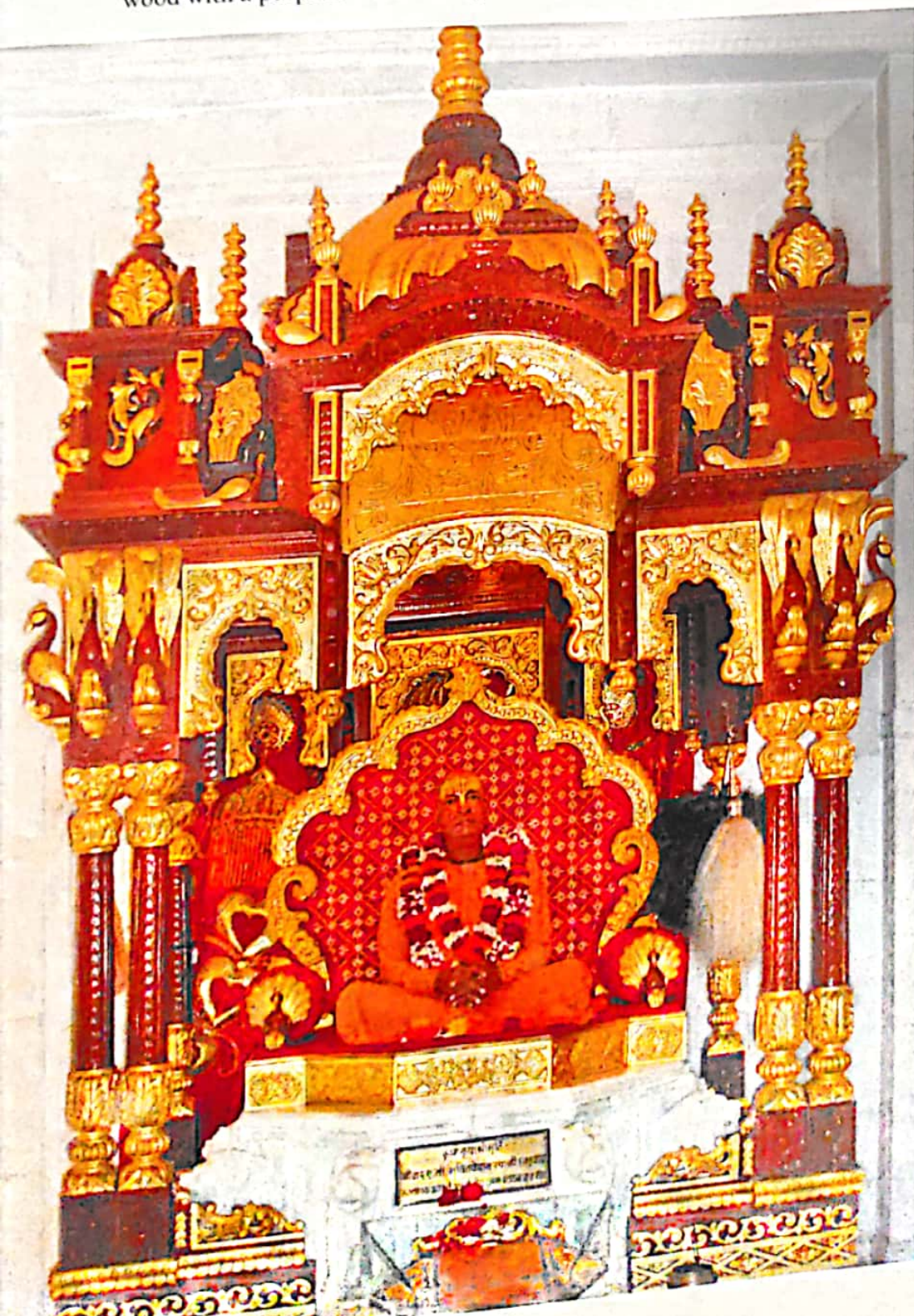
One simply stares in amazement at the craft of those who carved this exquisite piece of transcendental furniture. The eyes feast on the intricate and delicate features. Ultimately its crowning glory is the personality seated underneath its beautiful domes. In his own inimitable fashion Śrīla Prabhupāda presents the wood with a purpose while staring intently out at

us, ever compassionate, grave, silent yet continually speaking through those occupying the seat of Vyāsa. He is making sure that we do this properly and without speculation.

The reverence with which His Holiness Bhakti Charu Swami regards his spiritual master is seen in the great care he has taken to present his guru with an appropriate seat worthy of the learning exuding from this lofty perch.

"The spiritual master is the ocean of mercy, friend of the poor and lord and master of the devotees. By his mercy one can cross over the ocean of material suffering and obtain the mercy of Kṛṣṇa." — *Gurvaṣṭakam*

Śrīla Prabhupāda's vyāsasānais the example of how to do things nicely. This mantra, 'doing things nicely and first class,' under rides all of our beloved Gurudeva's activities in Ujjain. In the *Gurvaṣṭakam* we are glorifying the spiritual master as the representative of the Supreme Lord and exhort that he should be treated with the same respect afforded to God. This seat clearly shows how that understanding is manifested.



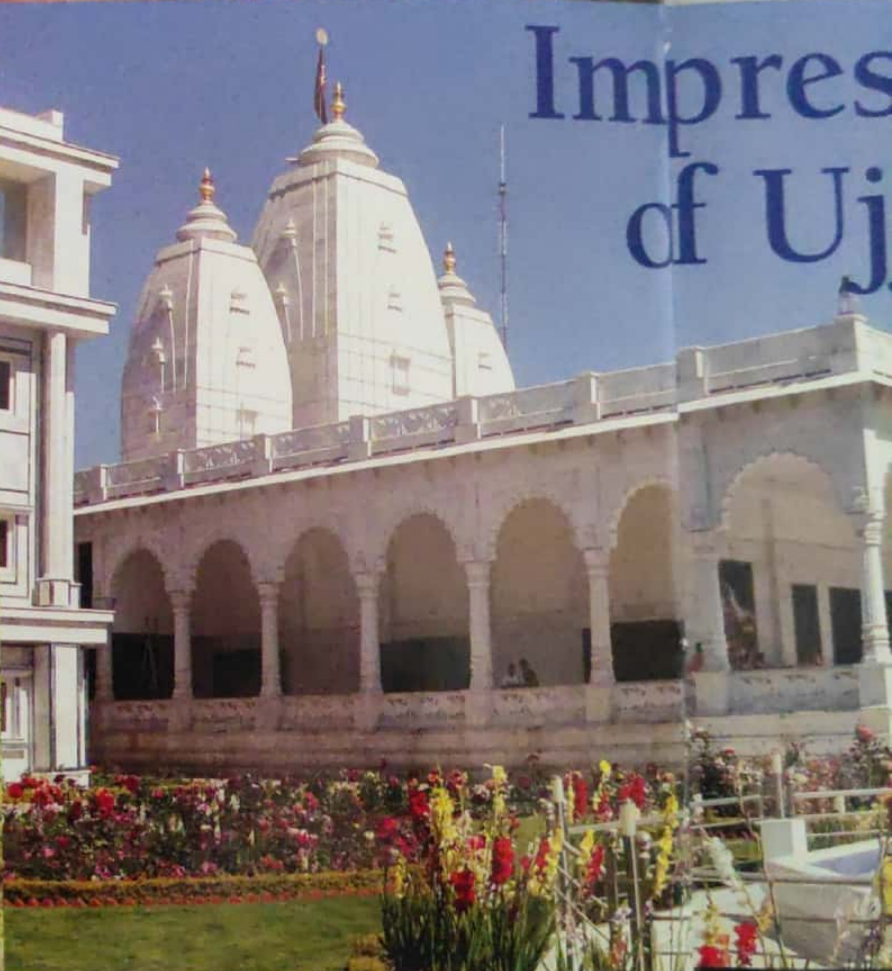
Rathayātrā 2008













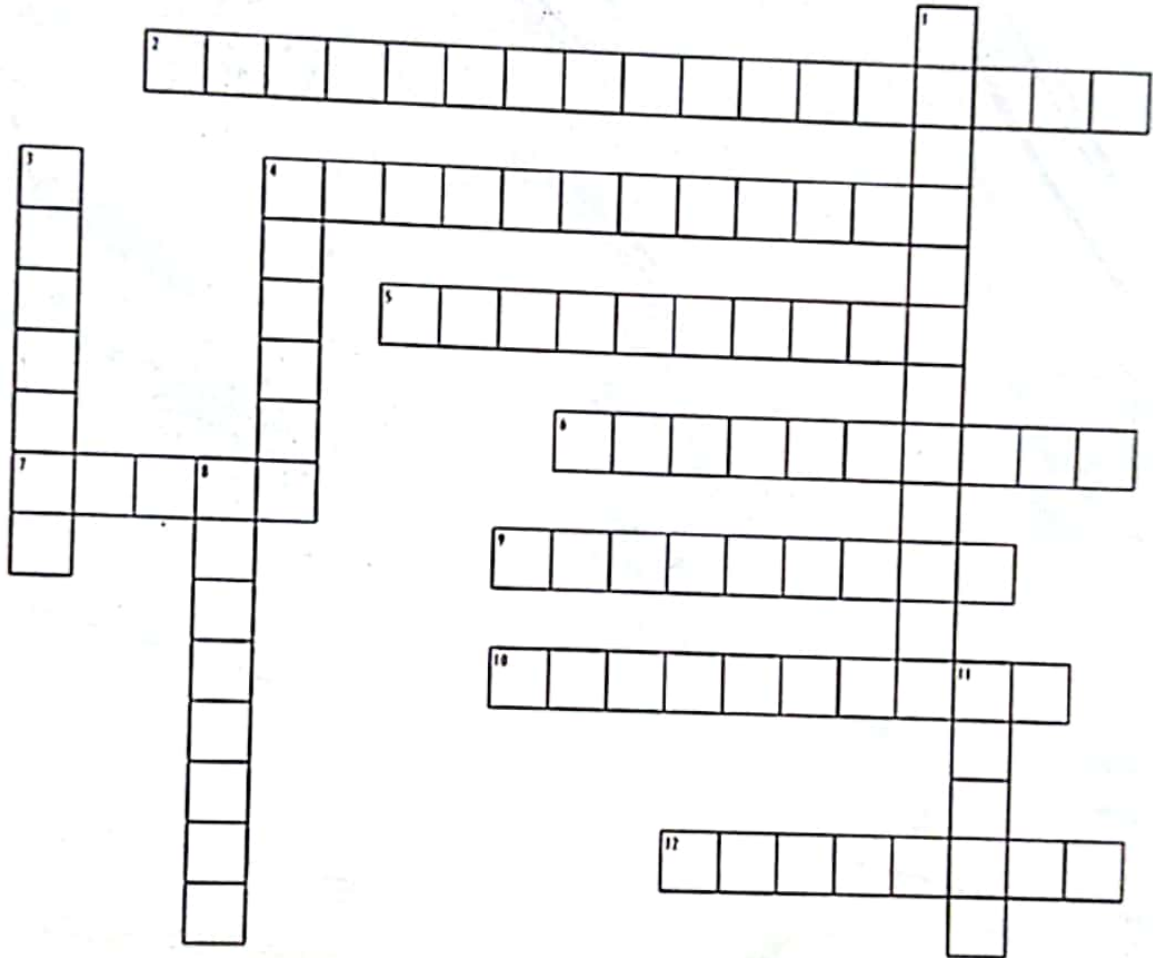
pressions of Ujjain



Kids Corner

Crossword

Have you enjoyed reading about Lord Jagannātha's pastimes?
Now you can test your memory.
Complete the crossword using the clues.



Across:

2. Lord Jagannātha's cart is followed by His elder brother and sister whose names are...
4. Who was the King of Puri in Lord Caitanya's time?
5. What is the name of Lord Jagannātha's conch?
6. Jagannātha Puri is shaped like a
7. What does Lord Jagannātha hold in His left hand?
9. How many food offerings are prepared daily for Lord Jagannātha?
10. What is used to clean the streets making way for the carts?

12. Jagannātha means the Lord of the

Down:

1. What is the name of Lord Jagannātha's home?
3. What is the name of the temple where Rathayātrā ends at?
4. What does Lord Balarāma carry with Him?
8. Rathayātrā is the festival of
11. What does Lord Jagannātha hold in His right hand?

Colour by Numbers

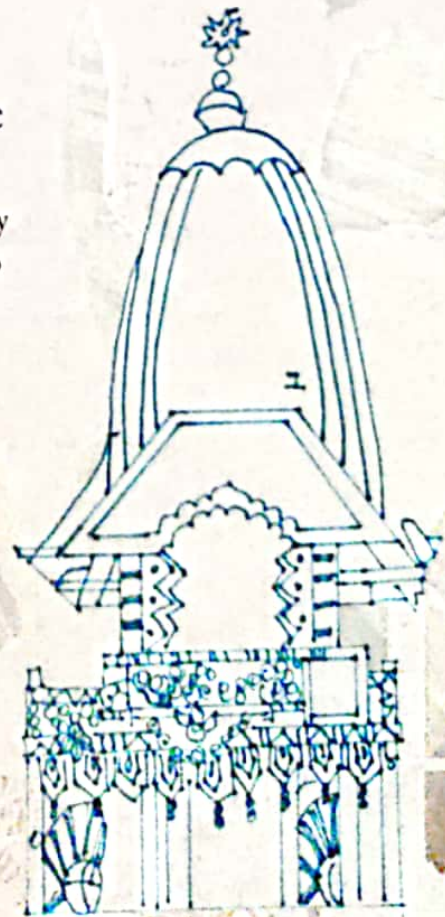
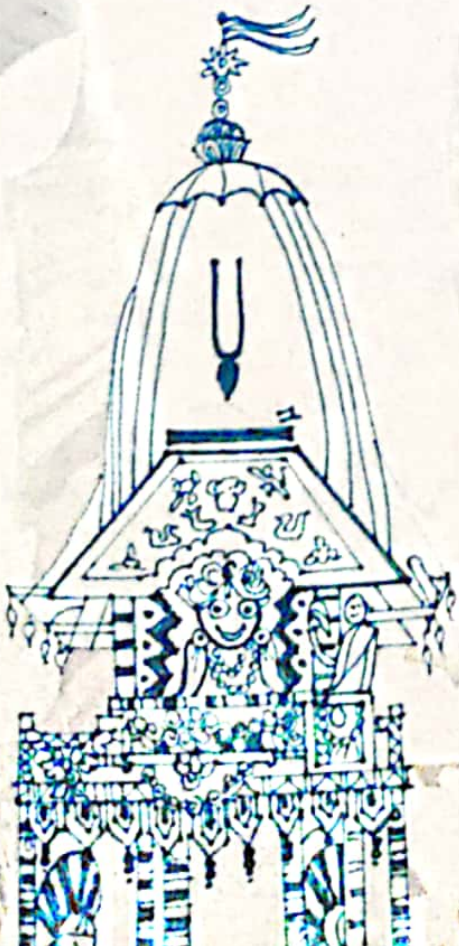
Have fun
colouring in
Lord Jagannātha!

1. Black
2. White
3. Red
4. Yellow



Spot the Difference

Look carefully to find how many
things the artist has forgotten to
draw and circle it in!



The Lord in the Heart

By Sitarāma dāsa



The glittering array of dresses and paraphernalia that adorn the inconceivable beauty of the Deities in Ujjain presents an ever interesting activity in the lives of the *pūjārī*'s. Busy from long before any one else has risen, they are always contemplating which of the many wonderful outfits most display the Lord's mood on a particular day.

Preparations begin the day before as colours have to be co-ordinated, jewellery selected, flower garlands prepared, cooks organized, support services arranged and all servants informed of their specific duties. Head *pūjārī*, Arunaksha prabhu, is rarely seen to engage in unnecessary conversation. This service demands his team's full time attention. Even an untrained eye can see

the meticulous attention to detail as the Deities appear for Their greeting ceremony in the morning.

Devotees all have their favourite outfits and wait with bated breath to see how Śrī Śrī Rādhā Madan Mohan are adorned.

The sharp architectural lines of the altar's design creates lots of space in which to maneuver while enhancing the Deities looks in crisp lighting that allows for an always unforgettable *darśana*. Maintaining this high standard of worship is a taxing affair that requires a truly dedicated team. *Brāhmaṇa*'s like Prema bhakti, Abhirāma, Ambarīṣa and a host of others ensure that the service remains of an extremely high standard.



I can state, emphatically, that this is the very first time that Ujjaini's get the opportunity to observe such tremendously high standards. Their appreciation can be seen by the way the temple has become a central gathering place. By slow degrees, Kṛṣṇa is simply turning their attention to Him by His Divine appearance in the opulence of sweetness that defies everything they've come

present a splendid feast to the material eyes which are spiritualized simply by seeing Their Transcendental Forms, thus cascading through the heart a flood of feelings unknown even to our own self. Visit the *mandir* and see, with those eyes devoid of insight, the Glorious Splendid Forms of God, Sri Kṛṣṇa, in His always continuing *līlā* as the worshipable Deity.



to know as the *mūrti*. These *mūrti*'s are not just statues but the eternal form of the Lord and people are beginning to recognize that.

Here in Ujjain, that same Lord of the heart, performing His pastime of standing still and accepting service, is permanently manifested in some of His most blissful appearances.

Śrī Śrī Rādhā Madan Mohan, Śrī Śrī Kṛṣṇa Balarāma and Śrī Śrī Gaura Nitāi.

The whole *paravyoma*, spiritual sky, on one altar worshiped by young *pūjārīs* who daily dress Them in the finery of spiritual fashion that makes Bollywood pale in comparison. They

Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender, through the eyes, to the Supreme Eternality. ISKCON Ujjain is the ornamentation of the spiritual sky in a visible feast that allows us to forget the absolute misery of material life which, like poison, fills our hearts and minds with sheer dreams of madness centered on sense enjoyment. Purify your eyes by seeing the Lord in a loving mood of servitorship and, as Śrīla Prabhupāda says, "Don't try to see the Lord, but act in such a way that the Lord will see you." Don't think but drink, with your eyes, the nectar of the Supreme *Sat-Cit-Ānanda Vighraha*.

Jaya! All Glories to the *Murti Līlā* of Śrī Śrī Rādhā Madan Mohan!



A Labour of Love

Flower vases for Rādhā Madan Mohan

By Jāhnavā devī dāsi

In the summer of 2005, Guru Mahārāja was visiting London during his yearly preaching tour of Europe. The ISKCON Ujjain temple had opened earlier that year in February and he had been telling the devotees about the new temple and of the exciting projects developing there. One day he asked me, "Jāhnavā, do you think we can make silk flower arrangements for the altar in Ujjain?" He explained how in Ujjain fresh flowers are not readily available especially during the hot summer season. In fact under his direction the devotees had grown lavish beds of marigolds and large dahlias in front of the temple. Many visiting guests were amazed to see such beautiful flowers, the likes of which they had never seen before in such abundance in Ujjain. Guru Mahārāja elaborated that I should get high quality silk flowers from London and make flower vases to decorate the altar. As with every aspect of the temple's development he outlined in detail what was to be done: He wanted six sets of arrangements, each set to be of different colours and flower combinations. The flowers had to look real and natural. Some devotees suggested we buy the flowers in India but Guru Mahārāja wanted the best quality goods which were available in London. Like other aspects of the temple construction he wanted only the best offered to the Lord.

Śrīla Prabhupāda said that flowers are the opulence of Deity worship. Following his desires, in our temples the Deities are daily offered fresh

flower garlands and the altar decorated with flower vases. The opulence and detail of such Deity worship has made our temples renowned and unique around the world.

In London the devotees often bought silk flowers for the many weddings held at Bhaktivedanta Manor and for the large festival Pandal programmes. I went with Lalitā sakhī mataji (an expert florist in charge of flower decorations at the Manor) and Nīlādri Kṛṣṇa prabhu (a god-brother) to the wholesale unit to buy the flowers and floristry equipment, like oasis (foam used for holding the flowers secure), tape and wire. The flowers were then packed and sent as fragile cargo with devotees travelling to Ujjain.

In October I went to Ujjain from Vṛndāvana to start the service. First we had to find some nice vases to hold the arrangements. Arcana mataji, Citra rūpinī mataji (a local Ujjain devotee) and I went into town. For two days we searched all over Ujjain's markets. We needed attractive brass or copper vases, about 50 cm wide, to hold the oasis and flowers securely. We also needed a large quantity—thirty vases for all the different sets! As Ujjain is a small town it was very difficult to find what we wanted and in the end could only buy a small quantity of smaller vases. Once I started making the vases I encountered some obstacles. I was used to working with fresh flowers which are easy to cut and assemble. But the silk flowers came with plastic stems covering

thick wires to give the flowers support. These wires had to be cut with wire cutters and pliers, requiring much strength and effort. I found myself spending most of my time and energy just cutting them. But, mercifully, Rādhā Madan Mohan sent devotees to help me. In particular They sent Kṛṣṇa vīrya mataji, who was befitting her name: vīrya means strong. Some of the flowers came in bouquets of short stems which had to be attached with floral tape to green wires to make them long enough for the large vases. Having cut and stuck the flowers together we could finally start making the arrangements. Initially we made two sample arrangements for Guru Mahārāja to check for his approval. While we were making the vases Guru Mahārāja walked into the room which was strewn with flowers everywhere. I was being frugal with the flowers as I had greatly under-estimated how many flowers we would need. But Guru Mahārāja, understanding the situation, told me we could always buy more and that I should make the

vases packed and over-flowing so they looked full and opulent. Then, to our great delight, he took some flowers and proceeded to show us how the flowers should be arranged. Having this direct guidance and inspiration, Kṛṣṇa vīrya and I made two complete sets of vases for the altar. It took time and there were more difficulties. Because the vases were too small for the large arrangements they would sometimes topple over! We put sand into the vase containers to give them weight and steadiness, but it was clear we needed bigger vases and, as is important in flower arranging, to get the mechanics of the art correct.

It was definitely a trial and error process—a learning curve in trying to serve Rādhā Madan Mohan. But I realized that this is part of the process in practicing devotional service; A process that is enhanced in the holy *dhāma*. I was beginning to understand that Ujjain, like Vṛndāvana and Māyāpura, is a holy place,



sanctified and special. The *dhāma* is surcharged spiritually and so more powerful and potent. The difficulties I encountered felt more intense but they also helped increase my desire to serve and depend upon the Lord: I had to pray harder for help in rendering service for His pleasure. My spiritual master was also personally present, overlooking the service and giving instant feedback. This gave me extra pressure and impetus to do the service well. But the difficulties were beneficial. As Śrīla Prabhupāda had told Guru Mahārāja, anxiety in the service of Kṛṣṇa is good.

Some months later I received a letter from Guru Mahārāja reminding me to arrange to get more flowers from London. While Candramukhī mataji kindly donated for the cost, Rādhā vinode and Campaklatā went with Lalitā sakhī to the wholesale floral outlet and spent six hours choosing the flowers. Rādhā vinode was shocked by the quantity and wondered what we would do with so many flowers, especially when he saw them occupying all the space in his garage. After spending hours carefully packing the flowers, came the issue of how to get them to Ujjain. The 1st Installation anniversary of the temple was approaching in early February. There were some



devotees attending from London but how could they take 50kg's of extra luggage with them? Eventually Narahari prabhu and Lilā purushottama prabhu offered to take some but there was still another box remaining. Rādhā vinode acknowledged that it would be cheaper to buy a ticket to India for his brother-in-law, Nīlādri Kṛṣṇa prabhu, then to send the box by freight. And so the remaining flowers reached Ujjain. In the meantime, Guru Mahārāja told me to go to Delhi to find better vases. After scouring the busy streets of Chandi Chowk market I eventually found the suitable vases.

When I heard about the lengths to which the devotees had gone to purchase and send the flowers I felt so indebted to them: I felt I had to try my very best to make beautiful vases for the pleasure of the Deities and the devotees. After the wonderful three day festival celebrating the 1st anniversary of the temple inauguration we began a two week marathon. Because of the festival there were many devotees who kindly helped with the strenuous task of cutting the wired flowers. Though it was an arduous job, and in my eyes not a very inspiring service, I was amazed and grateful at how the devotees were so happy to render this service. In the end there were five sets of arrangements. Guru Mahārāja and the devotees were pleased. The arrangements then had to be stored properly and cleaned regularly in the dusty climate. The temple president, Ganga Nārāyaṇa prabhu, allocated a separate room for them and had shelves built along the walls to keep them safely.

Some months later I heard from Arcana that the arrangements needed repairing: It was inevitable that as the vases were moved about frequently they would become disarranged and lose shape. Maintenance and care of the flowers became the next necessity in the service. I had wanted to train some local devotees but as they were so busy in the new expanding temple it had not been possible. But then I heard that Nāyika

matāji had been repairing the vases. I was amazed that Rādhā Madan Mohan had made Their own arrangements and inspired her to take care of Their flower vases. She was perfect for the service as she was very artistic and had a natural flair and attachment to working with flowers; her service was making garlands and on festival days she often made fresh flower decorations. When I went again to Ujjain in September 2007, I showed Nāyika the techniques and styles I had learnt in flower arranging. In my last conversation with Guru Mahārāja he noticed that the flowers were so dusty that their colour was fading. So he asked that they be washed and remade. In this way this service of flower decorations for Rādhā Madan Mohan continues

When I lived in London my service was making flower vases for Rādhā Gokulānanda and when we moved to Vṛndāvana in 2005 I missed my service very much. As the external manifestation of the Supersoul, my spiritual master knew this and arranged for me to render this service in Ujjain for Rādhā Madan Mohan. When he was building the Ujjain temple and with many more projects under development, I often felt bad that I could not help him in any way. Again out of his compassion he responded to my inner call and asked me to come and render some small service in Ujjain. And as the service unfolds as an ongoing project it also provides me with a constant connection of service to him and ISKCON Ujjain.

Through the different stages of the service I realized the importance of collective endeavour in service. For one person to render even this small service would be difficult, but through the efforts of all the different devotees involved the difficulties were overcome and an offering was made to Rādhā Madan Mohan. Such is the mercy of Śrīla Prabhupāda: He gave us a structure of temples worldwide where we can receive spiritual association and serve Kṛṣṇa together.

Come Dance with the Supreme Lord

By Sitarāma dāsa

Upon entering the ISKCON Ujjain Rādhā Madan Mohan Mandir just look up, instead of ahead, and you will be hurtled into a sight far exceeding the work of Michaelangelo or any renaissance artist, by the ecstatic vision of the Supreme Lord Śyāmasundara, dancing with His most beloved consort, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, and her *sakhis*, the *gopi*'s of Vṛndāvana.

Rooted to the spot you'll want to lie on your back to fully value and appreciate the exquisite art adorning the ceiling. Surrounded by the chief ornament of *bhakti* in Vṛndāvana, Śrīmatī Tulsi mañjarī, the Divine Couple exude their eternal fragrance which can, if you're so qualified, be sensed through the eyes.

One can almost visualize the Lord sporting in the groves of Vṛndāvana where the *rāsa līlā* takes place. The painting transports one to a domain where the spiritual senses are awakened by a musical mix of ankle bells, *kartāls*, *viṇās*, *sitars*, flutes and whatever sounds can be conjured by musical talents. The encircling *gopis*, their full attention on the independent Lord dancing with them simultaneously, are singing sweet songs of bliss that evoke the highest



pleasure. This is surpassed by the singing of Kṛṣṇa's female counterpart, His internal pleasure potency, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, whose ocean of transcendental sounds pleases Śyāmasundara beyond our description. He accompanies Her with His lilting and most bewilderingly beautiful dance moves while playing His most auspicious flute. So striking are these sounds that the hard knot of sensual pleasure binding us to this material sphere will be smashed to pieces.

Who needs to go night clubbing? Who wants to be a mallrat seeking pleasure in the modern shopping malls where young people now reside to purchase designer goods? Who needs to sit in bars searching out other bodies for sensual pleasure? Who is so mad that they can think that this bag of blood, bile, stool, urine, phlegm and narcissism was ever designed to give pleasure? Who has become so dull-headed that they regard the sensual screeching on MTV, ala Madonna, Aguilera, Spears etc. as singing, or the drug induced gyrations on the dance floors of epic rave parties as worthy of mention?

If you want to dance, come and join the *Gaura ārāti* and expose yourself to the Lord of the Dance, Śrī Śrī Rādhā Madan Mohan! Come and try to out-dance Him in a transcendental competition. Come and experience the real pleasure as the beautiful *bhajans* and *kīrtānas* flow from the mouths of devotees already enchanted with their Master. Come and join in the innocence and eternal lightness of being by simply dancing for the pleasure of the Lord and lose that temperamental ego that lives with all of us.

Come rant and rave, in the mood of *harināma sankīrtana*. It's so simple it defies the bewildering notion of enjoyment that drives us mad after sense enjoyment. Chant and dance to your hearts content.

Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare
Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare



Kṛṣṇa's Acts Purify the Heart

Reflections on media, actors and the original hero

By Malātī mañjarī devī dāsi

In India many basic aspects of life and death are more obvious or visible whereas in the West things appear to be hidden and nicely covered. Every time I go to India through Mumbai, I cannot help but notice the obnoxiously blaring billboards seeking to catch the attention of the passers-by: For example, Bollywood has a vast spectrum of movies which mostly advertise lust and violence. Not only movies, today almost every product is sold using attractive men and woman as sales agents for advertising campaigns.

The female form is especially capturing the senses of the masses and awaking men's lusty desires. Any film producer knows that without a romantic story his movie will not sell. Thus it is hard to find a movie without the element of lust or crime, which we as Vaiṣṇavas consider sinful. Even if in their own lives people do not act in such grossly sinful ways, their desires are fulfilled through the (e)motions on the screen.

The attraction to the dark and gloomy is so much stronger than to goodness and purity, in fiction as well as in reality. No newspaper would sell if it were not for reports about crime, disaster, violence and war. Thus, the sinful and lusty desires in the heart find their outlet in identification with dark acts.

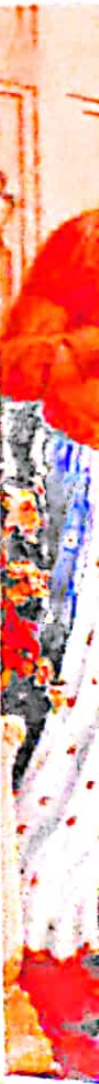
The material world is a perverted reflection of the spiritual world. And film is a reflection of that perverted reflection of the spiritual world. It is

where the conditioned souls like to take shelter by identifying with their heroes! (However, if we apply transcendental vision, then even in movies we find that Kṛṣṇa is indirectly the acting force behind the scenes and the agent of *karma*. This is amazingly clear to understand in many films.)

Recent studies have shown that our emotions and analytical thinking go side by side and cannot be separated. More than thoughts, our emotions leave deep imprints on the mind. If we feed our mind with material emotions we become more entangled in the network of material life. By watching movies or reading mundane novels people experience emotions which bind them to the illusory world. The carriers of these emotions are the movie-stars and protagonists, who become perverted reflections of the spiritual master.

Why do people have the desire to identify with these mundane heroes? Kṛṣṇa is the source of everything that exists and the perfection of everything. Therefore, He is also the best actor. Kṛṣṇa literally EN-ACTS His pastimes and these pastimes are the original dramas of which all other dramas are perverted reflections. However, while an ordinary actor only pretends to be something he is not, Kṛṣṇa and His pastimes are non-different.

In his original position the soul has pure love for Kṛṣṇa, but in the conditioned stage this love



turns into lust. So the original source of our taste for lust—and violence as the frustrated outcome of that desire—is Kṛṣṇa. He Himself has the desire to experience violence and love, but these exhibitions are pure and transcendental. Exhibiting His fighting spirit in many incarnations, Kṛṣṇa so ferociously kills demons that even the most sophisticated Special Effects technology in Hollywood cannot create a semblance of. As Lord Nṛsimhadeva He kills Hiranyakaśipu. As Lord Paraśurāma He kills twenty one generations of *kṣatriyas*, drenching the earth with rivers of blood. And in His original form as Kṛṣṇa He kills many demons who are all liberated by His touch.

In His highest *rasa*, the *ādi-rasa*, He satisfies the desires of His most intimate devotees, the *gopīs*. At the same time He purifies the whole world's desire for amorous pastimes, revealing Himself as

the best of lovers. Simply by hearing about these wonderful pastimes we experience spiritual emotions which purify us from our own lust and anger. Kṛṣṇa's acts are thus the highest benediction for mankind. They purify the heart and awaken our dormant spiritual love, whereas movies and other forms of material entertainment only incriminate us more and more in the cycle of birth and death. Thus the knot of material existence gets tighter and tighter.

Kṛṣṇa gave us the most amazing pastimes which cannot be imitated by any conditioned soul. Therefore the perfection of cinema surely is the depiction of the pastimes of the Lord and His devotees—as Guru Mahārāja and other devotees have already done. These transcendental movies bring us closer to Kṛṣṇa, the goal of our existence.



The Mid Day Meal Programme

Ujjain Temple Feeds 28,000 School Children Daily

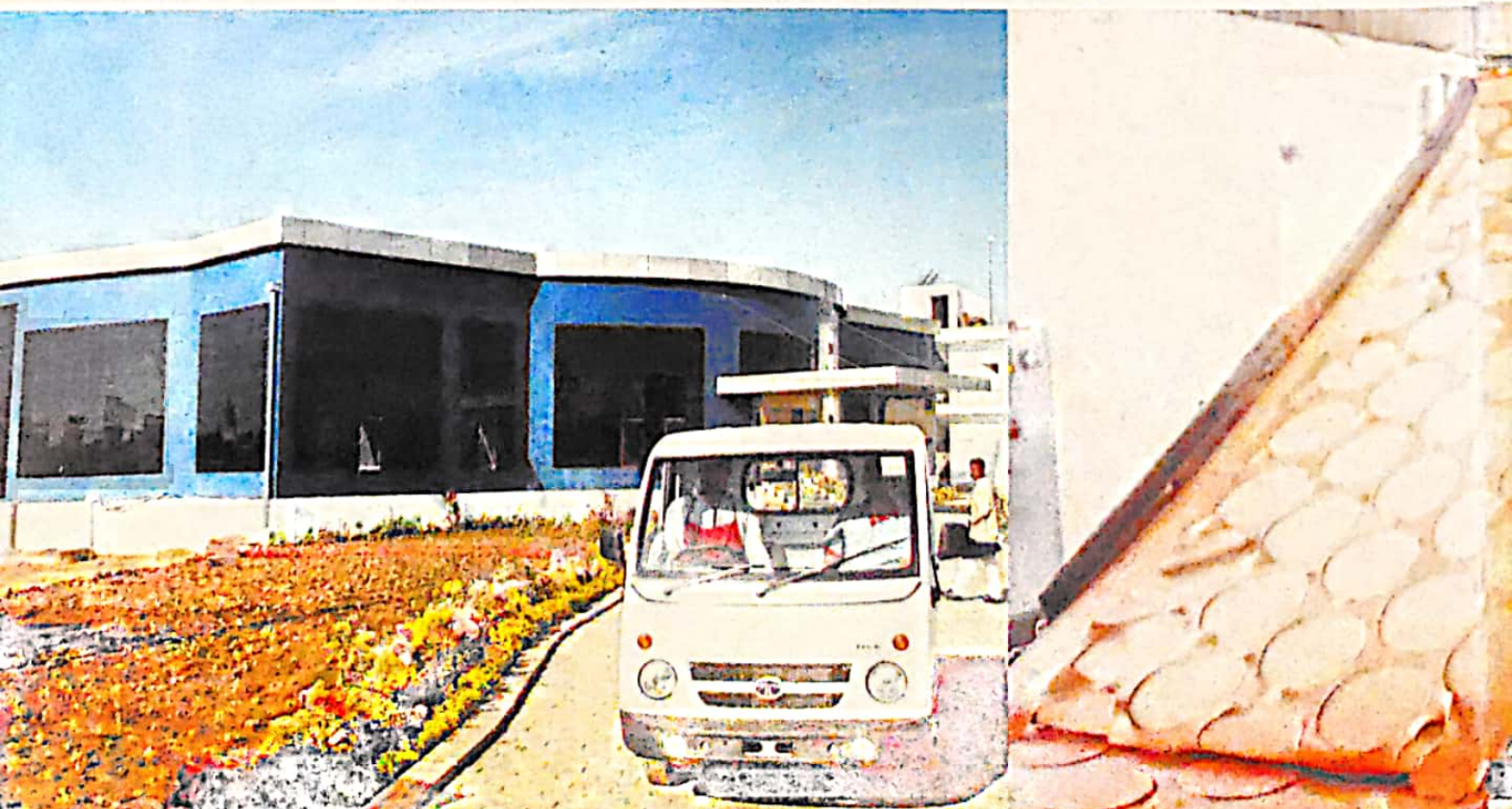
By Anuttamā Dāsa

Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh—In this central Indian city, best known as the place where Lord Kṛṣṇa studied at the school of his guru, Sāṅdipani Muni, during His childhood pastimes, today's school children are healthier and happier due to the free food program provided by the ISKCON Ujjain Temple to the one hundred and seventy schools in the local district.

Since July 2007, more than 28,000 school children each day are fed a healthy, vegetarian meal six days per week by the temple's Food for Life program. The project is a partnership of the

local and federal government, which provides partial funding, and ISKCON, which provides manpower, infrastructure, and additional funding.

"Malnutrition remains a serious problem for India's poorest children," said Bhakti Charu Swami, spiritual head of ISKCON in Ujjain. "The government asked us to run this program because they knew we could manage in a way that maximized both the quality and quantity of food distributed."



Each day, long before sunrise, the sixty-member Food for Life staff begins preparing its daily quota of fresh *subji* (vegetarian stew), *dahl* (lentil soup) and *chapattis* (unleavened bread). While the menu is traditional Indian, the means of production are not.

In the center of the large, modern Food for Life kitchen stands a 30-foot long machine that looks like a huge pizza factory. Every hour, more than 10,000 *chapattis* will be flattened and baked in the oven. By the end of each day, 90,000 *chapattis* are ready for distribution to the region's school kids.

"For many of the children, the lunch we provide is the only real meal they get all day," said Laksmīnāth dasa, Food for Life Manager. "Our founder-ācārya, Śrīla Prabhupāda, said no-one should go hungry within ten miles of a Kṛṣṇa temple. He inspires me to help as many kids as I can."

Upstairs, on top of the kitchen, an automatic wheat-sifting machine sorts the best grains and

sends them to the adjoining room to be fresh-ground into flour, and then downstairs to the *chapatti* oven. *Dahl* and *subji* are cooked in large table-size woks nearby.

By late morning, the first batch of 1,000 ten-liter stainless steel containers, full of hot *dahl*, *subji*, and *chapattis*, leave the Food for Life kitchen, a block from the ISKCON temple. Eight trucks, all painted with bright color murals of Kṛṣṇa enjoying lunch with His spiritual associates, the cowherd boys of Vṛndāvana, are loaded with the sealed containers of *prasāda*-sanctified food and then driven off to deliver their cargo of nutrition to the one hundred and seventy schools.

The Food for Life program was inaugurated by the Chief Minister (state governor) of Madhyapradesh, Mr. Shiva Raj Singh Chuan, less than one year ago. However, the programme's success has already prompted the nearby Devas School District to ask ISKCON to feed its 60,000 students—a task the temple plans to undertake in the very near future.



ISKCON Ujjain Projects

By Kṛṣṇarcana dāsa

Govinda's Restaurant

Within the temple compound is the Govinda's Restaurant, which is world class and truly the best vegetarian multi-cuisine restaurant in Ujjain. It offers the best quality food which is not only purely vegetarian, onion and garlic free, but also spiritualized by being offered to Kṛṣṇa. Besides that, the donation is used in Kṛṣṇa's service. Thus Govinda's helps you make spiritual advancement while satisfying your palate. As H. H. Bhakti Charu Swami has stressed, it is therefore very necessary to establish Govinda's Restaurants around the world. Govinda's at Ujjain serves as the model for all other such restaurants to follow.

Govinda's restaurant has a huge dining hall, about 3,500 square feet area. The interior was designed by Maharaja, who drew inspiration for the decor and wall paintings from Śrīla Prabhupāda's beautifully illustrated book, *Light of the Bhāgavata*. The huge windows are draped with plush deep blue curtains and the ceiling consists of painted domes depicting the night sky adorned with stars and clouds. The restaurant seats a capacity of a hundred and fifteen people and has about twenty-five employees, including four cooks.

The menu was created by Mahārāja himself and consists of a wide range of delicious cuisine, ranging from South Indian *doṣas* to pizzas, from soups to desserts and starters to full *thālis*. There are a variety of pizzas, with a multitude of toppings to choose from. There are sizzlers and a

variety of appetizers, *raitas*, salads and *papads*, which supplement the main course. This includes about fifteen different combinations of paneer and vegetable *subjis*. The breads range from *tandoori*, *rotis*, *naans*, *kulchas* and *parathas*. Along with a variety of flavoured and fried rice dishes there are lentils of all different kinds. Under the Chinese selection, items include sweet and sour soups and an assortment of fried noodles. There is also a diversity of snacks from *pakorās*, vegetable kebabs, sandwiches, rolls, burgers, cutlets along with French fries and *pav bhaji*. The South Indian delicacies include *idlis*, *vadas*, and a range of *doṣas* and *utappams*. There are also a variety of sweets, fresh fruit juices, desserts and hot and cold beverages including a very special variety of herbal teas.

Much of the credit for the success of Govinda's goes to Rādhā vallabha prabhu, a world-class cook and the manager of Govinda's. He is



assisted by Mālini mataji, a renowned cook who oversees the kitchen, and Vivasvān prabhu who takes care of purchasing. The restaurant is very busy especially during weekends and holidays. Since it's opening last summer it has become famous and is extremely popular amongst the local people of Ujjain. Govinda's also hosts many visitors from around the world. The guests who dine at Govinda's greatly appreciate the high quality of the preparations and the serene ambience of the restaurant. As remarked by several senior disciples of Śrīla Prabhupāda, Govinda's stands out as the ideal example of a Kṛṣṇa conscious restaurant.

The Guest House and Auditorium

Adjacent to Govinda's Restaurant is the ISKCON Ujjain Guesthouse. The three story building has twenty-eight luxurious marble rooms with the best quality furniture and en-suite bathrooms. The rooms are very spacious (21 feet by 10 feet) and the highest standards of cleanliness are maintained. The rooms all have split A/C facilities and come with wide balconies overlooking the beautiful gardens and the temple. H.G. Priyavrata prabhu manages the Guesthouse and takes care of the needs of residing guests. The Guesthouse certainly provides the best quality accommodation in Ujjain. Since it's opening last summer, the Guesthouse has been extremely busy accommodating many visitors, including

sannyāsīs, GBC members, gurus and other visiting devotees and pilgrims from across India and different parts of the world.

At the top of the building on the third floor is the Auditorium. This large hall, with a built in stage, has the capacity of holding five hundred people. Here we host various spiritual and cultural programmes during festivals and also seminars and other events.

Goshalla

ISKCON Ujjain has a well maintained Goshalla just behind the temple. We have about twelve cows, bulls and calves altogether. The elderly milk giving cows are Sujāta, Surabhī and Sunanda. Between them they give over twenty litres of milk daily.

There are two full time employees working for the Goshalla under the supervision of Yogeśa Candra prabhu, a resident *brahmachārī* of the temple. The cows are fed with different types of grass and fodder: Apart from dry grass, they are fed corn grass and a kind of grass called 'hathi ghaas' or 'elephant grass'. They are also given crushed wheat, jaggery (gur) and *kholi* (remnants after removing oil from soya bean seeds). All the medical needs of the cows are well taken care of. The milk from the cows is used to make the milk sweets and other preparations for the Deities.



ISKCON Youth Forum for Boys

By Kṛṣṇarcana dāsa

The ISKCON Youth Forum (IYF) for Boys in Ujjain actively conducts preaching programmes in colleges and hostels where students meet and congregate. In the local vicinity there are now about two hundred and fifty students regularly chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*. Apart from the colleges in Ujjain, IYF also organizes regular programmes in the nearby towns of Indore, Bhopal, Sehore and other places. We have three bases in Indore and one in Bhopal.

Programmes are being conducted regularly in the following colleges:

1. GEC, Ujjain
2. MIT, Ujjain
3. Vikram University, Ujjain
4. SGSITS, Indore
5. IET-DAVV, Indore
6. Medicaps Institute of Technology, Indore
7. IPS Academy, Indore
8. Maulana Azad National Institute of Technology (MANIT), Bhopal
9. Barkatullah University, Bhopal
10. RGPV, Bhopal
11. Oriental Institute of Technology, Bhopal
12. RKDF institute of Technology, Bhopal

Apart from holding programmes in colleges, we also preach in hostels and other locations. Summer camps are organized for college students

where young boys can stay in the temple for two to three days and receive first hand experience of temple life; attending the morning programme, participating in *kīrtanas*, listening to classes, honouring sumptuous feasts and engaging in various services to the Lord. Many students come from places like Indore and Bhopal to stay in the temple for a few days a month and become spiritually charged to engage in Kṛṣṇa consciousness before going back to their respective places.

Brahmacārī Training before Gṛhastha āśrama (BTG) camps are conducted in the summer vacation to give solid *brahmacārī* training to the boys. During festivals and other events, IYF students play a vital role in making these events a success—they do a variety of services including *prasādam* distribution, cleaning, queue management, singing *kīrtana* and dancing in the temple, book distribution and preaching. They also perform dramas and other shows to attract newcomers to Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

IYF Ujjain is headed by H.G. Narayan prabhu, the Temple President, and run by a team of preachers who guide the members of the Forum.



ISKCON Youth Forum for Girls

By Rādhā pyāri devī dāśī

Preaching is the only means to save ourselves and all other living entities from the dense darkness of nescience. Śrīla Prabhupāda wanted all of us to preach. And his main focus was preaching to the youth, for youth is the best time in one's life.

The great English poet John Milton also commented on the passing of his youth:

*How soon hath Time, the subtle thief of youth,
Stolen on his wings my three and twentieth year!*

Therefore to save the youth of today, who are the future of tomorrow, we have started the ISKCON Youth Forum (IYF) for the girls in our temple. We are under the solicitous guidance of H.G. Rādhārāṇī mataji. Our forum will benefit not only the residents of Ujjain but the whole of Madhya Pradesh.

Our Activities

We have a group of twenty very sincere girls who regularly visit the temple and serve Śrī Śrī Rādhā Madan Mohan. We hold Saturday Classes where extensive training is given to the girls. Our activities include college and school preaching and we also perform cultural stage shows on various festivals like Janmāṣṭamī, Prabhupāda Memorial Festival, etc. The project has just started, but soon we hope there will be a large involvement of girls in the mission of Śrīla Prabhupāda. This summer we had our first Girls Summer Camp in Ujjain. Many girls attended and it was a great success. We are now making preparations to start university programmes.

Involvement of His Holiness Bhakti Charu Swami

Our most honourable Gurudeva, His Holiness Bhakti Charu Swami, is not only concerned about preaching to young boys but equally emphasizes the importance of preaching to young girls.

Recently we had a wonderful meeting with him where he personally asked each of the girls to chant at least one round a day. Here is the summary of the nectar he gave us that day.

“The most basic yet most important teaching of our philosophy is the difference between the conscious and the unconscious. The soul and the body are not the same. The soul is conscious and the body is unconscious. We are not this body but we are the conscious spirit soul. That is our real identity. The spirit soul is part and parcel of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. We are His parts and parcels but we are now separated from Him. As a finger is unable to survive if it separates itself from the body, similarly because we have separated ourselves from Kṛṣṇa, we have lost our existence. We can regain it only if we re-establish our dormant relationship with the Supreme Lord. The way to do that is through love. Love is the power of the soul which is always associated with the soul, and it is there in our heart only to offer to Kṛṣṇa, the source of all pleasure. He always loves us. He gives us food, shelter, protection and everything we need. But the problem is that we don't love Him. And that is why our relationship with Kṛṣṇa is not complete. *Hṛṣīkeṣa hṛṣīkeṣa sevānam bhaktir ucayte*. We can learn to love Kṛṣṇa by

engaging all our senses in the service of the owner of all the senses, Hṛṣīkeṣa, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. By understanding this we can create a perfect balance between the body and the soul. The soul is the servant of Kṛṣṇa. *Jīvera svarūpa haya kṛṣṇera nitya dāsa*. And this body is an instrument to serve Kṛṣṇa. So by engaging all our senses in the service of the Supreme Lord with all the love of our heart we can actually make our life successful."

Our Aim

The aim of the IYF is to convince everyone to accept Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and to council and facilitate each and every individual so that they can become an asset to our movement. Our desire is to make each individual a catalyst to increase the rate of the preaching mission of Śrīla Prabhupāda. In simple words we want everyone to surrender whole heartedly to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Interviews

Mona Chaturvedi is a local resident of Ujjain. She is twenty one years old and a first year Commerce student at Vikram University, Ujjain. She also works as a supervisor and receptionist in the ISKCON Ujjain Guest house. She has been coming to the temple for three years and chants sixteen rounds daily.

What changes do you feel in your life after joining ISKCON?

I feel that there are a number of benefits from joining ISKCON, but definitely no loss. Before joining I knew nothing about spirituality. But now I am able to understand the importance of having a spiritual life. Because of ISKCON, I got to know the real aim of my life. By the mercy of Guru Mahārāja and the wonderful association of the devotees I am able to serve the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Sri Kṛṣṇa. From the bottom of my heart I admire H.H. Bhakti Charu Swami Mahārāja for all his kindness and mercy.



What do you like in ISKCON?

I am attracted to the most beautiful deities of Śrī Śrī Rādhā Madan Mohan. Actually their Lordships are not idols made of stone but They are really Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and Śrī Madan Mohan. I can realize this because They fulfill all my desires. Among the temple activities, I like to make garlands, distribute books, to dance during Guru Mahārāja's ecstatic kīrtanas and also to take the devotees shopping.

What is the aim of your life?

The aim of my life is to become a good devotee and to be a wonderful servant of Śrī Guru and Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Shradha Khemkahas lived in Ujjain for three years. She is twenty one years old and studied Engineering at Mahakal Institute of Technology in Ujjain. She has been coming to the temple for two years and chants sixteen rounds daily. She now works for a software company in Pune, Bombay.

What changes do you feel in your life after joining ISKCON?

After joining ISKCON I feel I have everything that my body and soul needs. Here I learnt what the soul is. Now the needs of my soul are totally fulfilled and my senses are fully engaged in serving Kṛṣṇa: My tongue chants the holy name of the Lord, my ears listen to Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, my eyes see the lotus-like form of the Lord, my nose smells the flowers offered to the Lord and my skin trembles. I am very happy and my heart is full of bliss. I have received the most precious possession of my life, my spiritual master, my Gurudeva, H.H. Bhakti Charu Swami. Whenever I get his mercy in the form of a garland I feel that I am a noble prize winner. When he smiles at me or talks to me, I feel my life is now successful. Now, after joining ISKCON, I feel that I am the most fortunate person in the world.

What do you like in ISKCON?

I like each and every activity in ISKCON.



ISKCON is a perfect institution and a most precious gift to us from Śrīla Prabhupāda. My favourite activity is to dance in front of their Lordships, especially during Guru Maharaja's ecstatic *kīrtanas*. I love to listen to class, to do translation work, gold leafing and to take visiting devotees to Ujjain's holy places for *darśana*.

What is the aim of your life?

In my early life I wanted to become very rich. I wanted to give a luxurious life to my mother as she had to struggle her whole life to give me the best education and facilities. But now I know that Kṛṣṇa is taking care of us all so nicely and so we don't have to worry for anything. Now the aim of my life is to serve my Guru Mahārāja in the best possible way and to please him. He is my eternal master and I simply depend on his mercy. My only prayer to him is to always allow me to remain under the shelter of his divine lotus feet. There is no other place suitable for me.

Medha Kakarhas lived in for Ujjain two years. She is seventeen years old and is studying Biology in class 12 at school. She chants eighteen rounds daily.

What changes do you feel in your life after joining ISKCON?

After joining ISKCON I feel that I have come to exactly the right place where we all really belong—the spiritual world. I feel very joyful, happy and enthusiastic. When I have *darśana* of Śrī Śrī Rādhā Madan Mohan I realized that They are the most wonderful deities. We can share all our problems with them and feel assured They will help us as long as we are devoted to Them.

What do you like in ISKCON?

First of all I like the deities, who are extremely beautiful. I also like the wonderful *kīrtanas* which makes us dance for Kṛṣṇa. I love *prasādam* and the association of the devotees through

which we learn many valuable things which help us in our devotional life. What I like best is hearing Guru Mahārāja's lectures.

What is the aim of your life?

My aim is to serve Rādhā Kṛṣṇa and my most dear Guru Mahārāja. No matter in whichever corner of the world I may be, my ultimate aim is to be able to serve my Gurudeva.

Heena Bhargava is a local resident of Ujjain. She is nineteen years old and a first year Computer Applications student at Mahārāja College, Ujjain. She has been coming to the temple for a year and chants four rounds daily. She regularly makes garlands for Their Lordships.

What changes do you feel in your life after joining ISKCON?

After joining ISKCON I found the answers to all my philosophical questions. Previously I used to feel very agitated and fearful about my future. I used to watch T.V. a lot. But now I feel very happy. All my problems have been solved. Now when I have time, instead of watching T.V., I sing *bhajans* or read Prabhupāda's books. By joining ISKCON, my tolerance has increased a lot and I don't get angry. Now I don't think of my own personal necessities like dressing myself beautifully, etc. But now, whatever I think or desire, is all for Rādhā Madan Mohan. Because I do service for Them I can feel Their love.

What do you like in ISKCON?

I love to stand in front of the deities and to have Their *darśana*. I also like to dance while Guru Mahārāja is singing *kīrtana*. I like to make garlands, to sing in the temple, to read Śrīla Prabhupāda's books, attend all the festivals and to associate with the devotees.

What is the aim of your life?

My aim is become a good devotee of Kṛṣṇa.

Congregational Preaching

By Kṛṣṇarcana dāsa

His Holiness Bhakti Charu Swami Mahārāja started the congregational preaching in Ujjain with five *gṛhastha* preachers. He told them to start a weekly programme in each of their homes with four or five members in each group. The five *gṛhastha* couples who initiated the preaching are:

1. Rāghava paṇḍita prabhu and Syāmalī mataji
2. Mohān rupa prabhu and Aparājita mataji
3. Vraja Kiśora prabhu and Vraja Kiśorī mataji
4. Paraśurāma prabhu and Syāmangī Rādhikā mataji
5. Śrīnātha Kṛṣṇa prabhu and Raṅgiṇī Rādhā mataji

These five couples conduct programmes every Saturday evening in their homes for local *gṛhastha* families. They have been conducting these programmes for the past eight months and started with four to six members attending every weekend. Now the number of people attending the groups has more than tripled. The programme includes *kīrtana*, lecture, a question and answer session and *prasāda*.

Every Sunday another programme is conducted separately for *matajis*. About twelve to fifteen *matajis* attend.

Apart from the weekly programmes, all the congregation members of Ujjain attend a monthly meeting at the temple. The lecture is given by His Holiness Bhakti Charu Swami Mahārāja or Ganga Nārāyana prabhu in Mahārāja's absence. In total about a hundred and twenty-five to a hundred and fifty devotees attend this programme which ends with a sumptuous feast.

Two months ago, a three day camp was conducted for the *gṛhasthas* connected to the temple. Each family was given their own separate room in the guest house. The day began with the morning programme and continued throughout the day packed with ongoing programmes including *kīrtanas*, lectures, video shows and group discussions. About twenty-two families attended the camp and they all had a blissful experience.





Bhūmi Puja for Varāha Mihir I.T. Park

By Rādhārāṇī devi dasi

On Sunday 9th of March, we held the Bhūmi Puja—Ground Breaking Ceremony—for the Varāha Mihir Info Domain IT Park. The land for this project is a short distance from our ISKCON Ujjain temple, located at 43 Bharatpuri Ujjain.

The IT Park will be the highest building in Madhya Pradesh consisting of twin towers, fifteen stories high. It will be built upon a seven acre piece of land, 300,000 square feet of area. The first two floors will be shopping malls. The third floor will be an exhibition of Vedic culture. The remaining twelve stories will comprise of exclusive IT Offices, plus conference rooms, a state of the art auditorium and a stereoscopic planetarium. It will also host IT related setups like a 3D animation studio, an animation school, advanced software base, a training school, a call centre and research and development centers. On one floor an exclusive ISKCON TV channel will be set up to broadcast, twenty-four hours a day, all over the world.

The IT park is named after Varāhar Mihir one of the greatest astrologers of all time. He was one of the nine gems in the court of Vikramaditya, King of Ujjain. In his royal assembly, King Vikramaditya had the most brilliant and learned individuals for different branches of knowledge. And Varaha Mihir was most renowned in the field of astrology. The third floor of the IT park will be an exhibit on the life of Varāha Mihir, his achievements and the glories of Vedic astrology. The museum will depict the glory of India's

heritage, culture and scientific advancement. The ground breaking ceremony for the IT park had been postponed many times due to uncertainties, but finally on the morning of 8th March 2008, Bhakti Charu Mahārāja summoned all the departmental managers for an urgent meeting. Immediately he started allocating duties to devotees. Laksmīnāth prabhu had to arrange to erect the *pandal*. Govinda prabhu and Sāndipan Kṛṣṇa prabhu were to design the invitation cards with Priyavrata prabhu organizing the printer. Then Rāgahva paṇḍita prabhu was to distribute the invitations. Rādhā Vallabha prabhu had to prepare the *prasādam* and Ganga Nārāyaṇa prabhu was to follow up on the VIP list. I had to organize the ISKCON Youth Forum for Girls team to serve *prasāda*, write up the press release and invitation cards. Having being allocated these tasks, we all sped off into action.

There was such a buzz and excitement as we all continuously liaised with one another and worked as a team to achieve our tasks for the pleasure of Mahārāja. All day Gurudeva was busy checking with us to see that our tasks were being accomplished.

That night Maharaja could not sleep due to the banging of the *pandal* being erected on the temple grounds. He walked downstairs just after midnight to find Laksmīnāth prabhu working away with his team erecting the *pandal*.

The next day, Mahārāja asked Laksmīnāth prabhu how long he had worked till. Laksmīnāth prabhu told Mahārāja he had been up until 2 am. After Śrīmād Bhāgavatam class, Mahārāja checked with the various devotees if all was well. He then went down personally to ensure that everything was being done as he had instructed. The air was filled with excitement and festivity.

The Bhūmi Puja commenced at 11:30am with devotees chanting the *mahā mantra*. Upon arrival Mahārāja paid his obeisances to the *yajña kunda* and circumambulated it three times before sitting before it. He then requested Mahaman prabhu,

After the *yajña*, Bhakti Charu Mahārāja dug into the earth with a decorated plough. All the devotees erupted into cheering loud "Haribols!" Then various politicians also dug into the earth, after which, they all left for the next part of the event that was being held at our ISKCON temple auditorium.

At the auditorium, Mahārāja and the guests were honored with flower garlands. Mahārāja gave a very powerful speech. He first explained that in this age of Kali, *dharma* is standing on one leg. In the age of Kali the Lord appears in a very special way: He comes in one day of Brahma in the 28th



his god-brother from Indore, and various guests and devotees to sit down and participate in the *yajña*. Mahārāja explained that the *yajñawas* being performing to obtain the blessings of Lord Kṛṣṇa for the commencement of the project. This was the authorized way to seek the pleasure of the Lord and invoke auspiciousness for the beginning of the project. As Mahārāja started the *yajña*, His Honourable Minister, Mr. Babulal Gaur, the Minister of Public Undertakings, arrived. Later many more VIP's attended. Mahārāja invited them all to participate in the *yajña* and chant the *Brahma Saṁhitā* verses.

catur yuga to depict His Vṛndāvana pastimes. That Lord Kṛṣṇa is not an incarnation but the original Supreme Personality of Godhead. Then in Kali yuga, Kṛṣṇa appears as Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu, to teach us how to be a devotee and serve Kṛṣṇa. Caitanya Mahāprabhu also comes to establish the process of *sankīrtana yajña*. The word *sankīrtana* has two connotations; when many people get together to perform *kīrtana* and the other is *samyak*, to completely use everything in the service of Kṛṣṇa.

Mahārāja then commented that people may be wondering what is a *sadhu* doing building an IT Park! He explained how before coming to Ujjain he had been busy making a movie. He realized that people don't read very much anymore: instead TV has become a very powerful tool. And so he decided to make a movie on the life story of his spiritual master His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Śrīla Prabhupāda. Now he wanted to establish an IT Park. In this age people have become very sinful. Today there is such a lack of proper education. There is no education on spiritual knowledge. Therefore it was necessary to teach people of their true identity

After the speech Mahārāja thanked all the dignitaries for their support. He then thanked the public and all the devotees with very heartfelt words of gratitude for coming forward to inspire and enthuse him: "No big job can be achieved single handedly. So let us all get together and do something wonderful for Ujjain."

Mahāmān prabhu then spoke explaining the true meaning of *yukta vairāgya* as utilizing everything in Kṛṣṇa's service. He ended his address by saying that Śrīla Prabhupāda always used to think big and Mahārāja has that same quality—He thinks big!



and for them to understand God. By engaging them in chanting the glories of the Lord they could very quickly attain spiritual perfection. Mahārāja elaborated how today people think that India is backwards. But 5,000 years ago, India was the most advanced country, while the rest of the world was in darkness. Therefore the objective of setting up the IT park was to establish the glory of Vedic culture and to show it as the most profound, exalted and elevated culture of this world in all fields.

In the evening Mahārāja thanked all the devotees for their hard work and wonderful services. Very humbly he explained, "We make plans and efforts to serve Kṛṣṇa. Now let us see what Kṛṣṇa wants. It is not that we just depend on Kṛṣṇa but we don't do anything. If Kṛṣṇa wants, all kinds of wonderful things can happen. Not a blade of grass can move without the sanction of Kṛṣṇa's will."

Mahārāja then distributed boxes of *mahā* sweets to us all, ending a perfect day in a perfectly sweet way.

Moments of Inspiration

H. H. Bhakti Charu Swami

Confidence: You have something to offer to this world. Even if your presentation is filled with flaws, still the world will benefit.

Learn: Accept what you lack.
Appreciate what others have and give them credit for it.

Ambition: The determination to move mountains to make way for the devotees to progress towards the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa.

Honesty: Kṛṣṇa is always watching you. He will correct you when you make mistakes and He will reward you as you deserve.

Sleep : How I sleep is not important.
How I stay awake is what really matters.

Sincerity: Although you are completely insignificant and Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, still He wants you to do something for Him. Therefore, try your best.



ISKCON UJJAIN

Śrī Śrī Rādhā Madan Mohan Mandir



ISKCON Ujjain cordially invites all of you to visit the ancient
Vedic land of Ujjain—Avantipura.
Come experience the holy abode where
Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma performed Their gurukula pastimes.



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