



TORONTO HARE KRISHNA NEWS

ISKCON Founder-Acharya His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

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August 2009



FESTIVAL OF INDIA CELEBRATED!

Two major festivals were celebrated in July and both were extremely well attended. First there was the Snana-Yatra festival, which is a festival that is always held two weeks before the world-famous Festival of India (Ratha-Yatra), which is an annual event held in Toronto and attended by over 30,000 people.

Snana-Yatra is a festival where Lord Jagannatha (another name for Lord Krishna), His brother Balarama, and His sister Subadhra are given a special abisheka (bathing ceremony). After the bathing ceremony (Snana-Yatra), Lord Jagannatha ostensibly becomes sick. He is therefore removed to His private quarters, where no one can see Him for two weeks. Actually, during this period renovations are made on the body of the Jagannatha Deity. This is called nava-yauvana.

A few days after Snana-Yatra, there was a huge pre-festival party at Yonge-Dundas square in the heart of downtown Toronto. Events included an early

morning yoga session, a spicy dosa eating competition that attracted media attention, as well as a performance by the Krishna Culture Festival Tour. Hundreds of people, young and old, stopped by and joined in the festivities all while enjoying the events on stage.

During the Ratha-yatra ceremony, Lord Jagannatha once again comes before the public.

The Festival of India has taken place in Toronto for over 35 years. However, its rich history stems from thousands of years of tradition and heritage. Toronto's festival kicks off with a vibrant parade down Yonge St wherein three giant floats are hand-pulled by thousands of attendees amidst chanting, drumming and dancing (pictured above).

The parade commemorates the very same procession which has taken place in the ancient city of Puri in the state of Orissa, in India. There, three mammoth chariots, known as *rathas* are taken on a jubilant procession, known as a *yatra*. Hence, the Festival is also known as Ratha-Yatra or "chariot procession". In

DAILY SERVICES

Mangala Arati	4:30 am
Shringar Arati	7:00 am
Rajbhoga Arati	12:00 noon
Dhoop Arati	4:00 pm
Sunder Arati	6:00 pm
Shayan Arati	8:00 pm

For spiritual ceremonies to celebrate or commemorate any special family occasion (e.g., birthdays, weddings, anniversaries), please feel free to contact the Hare Krishna Temple at (416) 922-5415 for use of the facilities.

Full catering for each event is also available.

Puri, this tradition continues every year and the Ratha-Yatra procession annually draws over a million people!

The procession itself symbolizes the pulling of the Lord into our hearts and thus is done with great pomp and grandeur.

With the Toronto civic workers strike still in effect this year, there were certainly a number of challenges faced by the organizing committee. Considerations like garbage collection and ferry services were all affected. These two aspects alone were enough to seriously affect the festival. However, through hard work, determination, and the mercy of the devotees and Krishna's mercy, all obstacles were overcome.

Since the ferries to Centre Island weren't running, an alternate site had to be found for all the events and performances. Luckily, thanks to Subhavlitas Prabhu, we were able to secure a parking lot just

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GLOSSARY

Arati

Offerings presented to the deities meant to welcome Them.

Kirtan

Devotional music often accompanied by dancing.

Prasadam

Food that has first been offered to Krishna before eating.

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minutes east of the ferry docks. All the tents and events were set up along a site that backed on to the lake. It set a beautiful scene for when the chariots arrived with a refreshingly cool breeze coming in off the water.

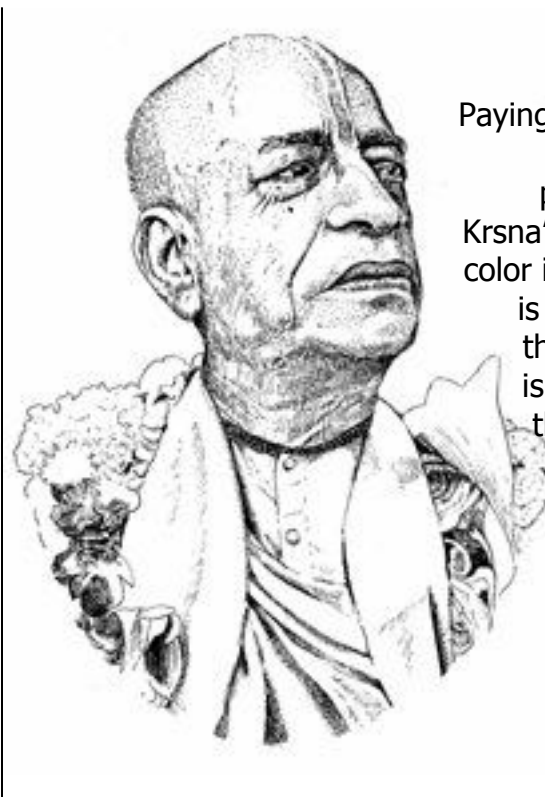
Air canons launched rose petals into the air as the chariots were pulled to their final destinations. The sun peeked through the clouds as the chariots were engulfed in a shower of petals. The scene set the mood for what would be an amazing second half of the festival.

Throughout the weekend a number of events occurred, including the second annual Yoga Meltdown. On the second day of the festival, over 100 yoga enthusiasts came to the festival site to take part in free yoga lessons, cooking demonstrations as well as engage in *kirtan*.

There was also the main entertainment tent, which had a number of cultural and spiritual performances. The performances included one by our very own *kirtan*-yoga band Gaura Shakti. They were followed up by Gauravani with As Kindred Spirits who brought the festival to an enlivening and emphatic end.

When it was all said and done, thousands of plates of *prasadam* were served and thousands of people attended! The festival could indeed be deemed a success.

Let's see what the organizing committee can do to top this next year!



Paying attention to Bhagavan, the Supreme Person, is practical. Here is Krsna. Krsna's form is there. Krsna's color is there. Krsna's helmet is there. Krsna's advice is there. Krsna's instruction is there. Krsna's sound is there. Everything Krsna. Everything Krsna. There is no difficulty.

- Srila Prabhupada

SPIRITUAL SEMINARS HELD IN TORONTO

In July, two very special visiting lecturers were in Toronto. Dravida das, who is from San Diego, came first and facilitated two seminars during his time here. He is well known for his sincerity and dedication, and his creative ways of presenting spirituality through poetry and song. His seminars reflected this fact as they covered topics like how sound vibration can help one become absorbed in Krishna Consciousness.

Later in the month, Narayani devi dasi, who is originally from Chicago and currently resides in India, facilitated four seminars during her time here. She currently teaches at the Vrindavana and Mayapur Institutes for Higher Education but also holds seminars around the world. Her seminars covered the topics of focused on improving our personal relationship with Krishna and the different ways to do so.

Each seminar for each lecturer was well attended and well received. All who

attended were extremely happy with the material presented. While many people attended in person, each seminar was also broadcasted live online. Viewers from around the world were able to view each lecture and were also able to submit questions online. This feature made it possible for hundreds of online viewers to actively be a part of the conversation.

Select recordings of each seminar can be found on our blog.

Visit our site at
toronto.iskcon.ca

To watch live webcasts each Sunday, visit our blog at
www.torontokrishna.com

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