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The Festival of Divine Love and Devotion

Ratha Yatra, or the Festival of Chariots, is one of the oldest and most celebrated festivals in Jagannath Puri, Odisha. On this special day, Lord Jagannath, who is worshipped as the Lord of the Universe, comes out of His temple, along with His elder brother Baladeva and sister Subhadra Devi. They're taken out in grand, colourfully decorated chariots, and thousands of devotees gather to pull those chariots through the streets. It's not just a ritual—it's a moment where the Lord personally comes out to bless everyone.

Lord Jagannath is merciful form of Lord Krishna. His elder brother Baladeva is none other than Lord Balarama, and Subhadra Devi is their divine sister. The Lord desires to come out of the temple and give His darshan to everyone—especially those who are not able to enter the temple.

Three huge wooden chariots are built every year. Nandighosha for Jagannath, Taladhawa for Baladeva, and Darpadalana for Subhadra. The deities are brought out of the temple and placed on these chariots, which are pulled through the streets by thousands of devotees using thick ropes. The chariots travel from the Jagannath Temple to the Gundicha Temple, about 3 kilometres away. Gundicha temple represents the home of Lord Jagannath's aunt, and the Lord visits there for a few days during the festival. This journey is symbolic of the Lord coming out to meet His devotees and shower His mercy on all.

Devotees express their devotion by offering flowers, incense, ghee lamps, and garlands. The atmosphere is vibrant with joyful chanting—“Jai Jagannath! Jai Baladev! Jai Subhadra!”—along with the sounds of drums and devotional dancing. People from all walks of life come together to celebrate the Lord's grand journey and receive His blessings. The Lord lovingly reciprocates with His devotees. Just as they come forward with offerings, prayers, or even just a longing glance—He returns it with His merciful darshan, letting them feel seen, accepted, and uplifted.

All glories to the divine vision of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Srila Prabhupada, the founder-acharya of ISKCON, who brought the joy of Ratha Yatra to the Western world in 1967—with a grand celebration on the streets of San Francisco! Since then, the festival has been celebrated annually in cities like London, New York, Sydney, Nairobi, Moscow, and many more. Ratha Yatra spreads Lord Jagannath's mercy far and wide.

Ratha Yatra is not just about pulling the Lord's chariot through the streets—it's about pulling our hearts closer to Him. It's when hearts connect, egos dissolve, and love for the Lord takes centre stage.

So, let's pause and ask ourselves—are we clearing the path within, just like the roads are cleared for the chariot? Are we ready to welcome the Lord by sweeping away pride, ego, and distractions? Because the most beautiful journey is the one where we make space in our hearts for divine love to enter and stay.

We, at ISKCON Bhiwandi cordially invite you to Jagannath Ratha Yatra on 28th June at 2pm.

The Ratha Yatra will start at Varal Devi Mandir and proceed through Chandan Baugh, Mangal Bhavan, Peace Park, Fene Gaon and Mansarovar Gate, ending at ISKCON Bhiwandi Temple followed by prasadam.

**Jagannath Swami Nayan Path Gami Bhavatu Me!
“May Jagannath Swami be the object of my vision.”**





The Merciful Lord of the Universe

Lord Jagannath is a divine form of Lord Krishna, worshipped with deep devotion in the sacred city of Jagannath Puri in Odisha, India. He is always seen along with His elder brother, Lord Baladeva, and His beloved sister, Subhadra Devi. The name “Jagannath” means Lord of the Universe—but what truly makes Him so special is His warmth and accessibility. He doesn’t look at who you are or where you’re from—He simply opens His arms wide to welcome everyone with boundless love. No wonder millions of hearts across the world feel an instant connection to Him!

What’s really unique about Lord Jagannath, Baladeva, and Subhadra Devi is that Their forms aren’t made of stone or metal like most deities—they’re made of wood and hand-painted! This shows us something truly beautiful: the Lord is not limited by form. He can appear in any way He chooses, just to bless His devotees and steal their hearts.

Lord Jagannath’s big round eyes and unique form might look a little unusual at first—but there’s a wonderfully deep reason behind it! As our acharyas explain, once in Dwaraka, Mother Rohini was sharing the sweetest stories of Krishna’s childhood in Vrindavan with the queens. She spoke of His playful mischief, His enchanting flute playing, and above all, the love that the Vrajavasis—especially the gopis—had for Him.

As Mother Rohini spoke about Krishna’s sweet Vrindavan pastimes, Krishna, Balaram, and Subhadra stood at the door, listening. The love and longing in those stories were so intense that all three were filled with deep spiritual emotion. Their eyes widened, limbs drew in, and they froze in divine ecstasy!

That very moment became their form as Lord Jagannath, Baladeva, and Subhadra Devi. So, what may look unusual is actually a powerful expression of pure love—bhava. Lord Jagannath’s form overflows with the deep bond between Krishna and His devotees!



Rath Yatra—one of the most famous festivals in the world—is a grand celebration of Lord Jagannath’s overflowing love! Once a year in Puri, He comes out of His temple along with His brother Baladeva and sister Subhadra, riding majestic, beautifully decorated chariots.

Lord Jagannath isn’t just a wooden form—He’s the ever-loving Lord who hears our prayers, smiles at our efforts, and waits with wide open arms to welcome us home. His mercy knows no limits, and just one glance from Him can wash away lifetimes of karma. He’s not distant—He’s right here, calling us closer with love. The moment we chant— “Jaya Jagannath! Jaya Baladev! Jaya Subhadra!”—we invite Them into our hearts.

This Rath Yatra season let’s open our hearts to receive the Lord with love and gratitude. Chant His names, pull His chariot with devotion (physically or in your heart), and rejoice in knowing that the Lord of the Universe is coming to see you.



The Most Purifying of All Fasts

Have you ever wondered how, in an age where comfort has become second nature, some individuals fast without water—especially on the hottest summer days? Each year, on Nirjala Ekadashi, millions of devotees lovingly take up this effort—not because they must, but out of love and devotion.

This fast is more than just giving up food and water; it's a powerful act of spiritual discipline that helps reduce worldly activities and allows more time for inner reflection and reconnecting with the divine.

The word "Nirjala" literally means without water. Unlike other Ekadashis where fruits or water may be allowed, Nirjala Ekadashi is observed with complete abstinence from both food and water for the entire day. It is considered the most intense of all Ekadashi fasts, requiring strong will and unflinching devotion. Keeping this fast bestows the spiritual benefit of all twenty-four Ekadashis, purifying the heart and bringing one closer to Krishna.

In the year 2025, this auspicious Ekadashi was observed on the 7th of June, Saturday, by all the Vaishnavas in India. Devotees in Mumbai broke their fast on the 8th of June, Sunday, between 06:00 and 07:20 AM.



Bhimasena, the mighty second-born of the Pandavas, struggled to observe regular Ekadashi fasts like his mother Kunti, his brothers, and wife Draupadi. Due to the Vrika Agni—the fire of hunger burning in his stomach—his immense appetite made it nearly impossible for him to refrain from food.



Concerned, Bhima approached Srila Vyasadeva, his spiritual master and grandfather, and requested a way to gain the merit of all twenty-four Ekadashis without having to fast each time. Bhima humbly admitted that, despite his deep devotion to Lord Krishna, he simply could not go without eating.

Pleased by Bhima's sincerity and desire for a solution, Vyasadeva instructed him to observe the Ekadashi in the Shukla Paksha of the Jyeshtha month—without food or water. Though difficult, if observed with devotion, this single fast—Nirjala Ekadashi—would grant the spiritual benefit of observing all twenty-four Ekadashis in the year.

After getting the solution, Bhima became joyful. With the feeling of contentment, he undertook the Nirjala fast with great eagerness. By seeing Bhima's dedication, Lord Vishnu, who is an ocean of compassion, became very pleased, and blessed 'Nirjala Ekadashi', affirming that this fast, when done with sincerity, purifies all the sinful reactions and transcends one to the Vaikuntha planets. Since then, this Ekadashi came to be known as Pandava Nirjala Ekadashi and Bhimseni Ekadashi moreover became the king of all Ekadashis.

Though Nirjala Ekadashi is challenging, it's a spiritually rewarding experience. Just as Krishna stood by Arjuna during his toughest moments, this fast gives us a chance to turn to Krishna with sincerity. Whether we do a full Nirjala fast or a partial one, what truly matters is the mood of remembrance and surrender.

May we all receive the Lord's merciful glance by sincerely observing Nirjala Ekadashi.

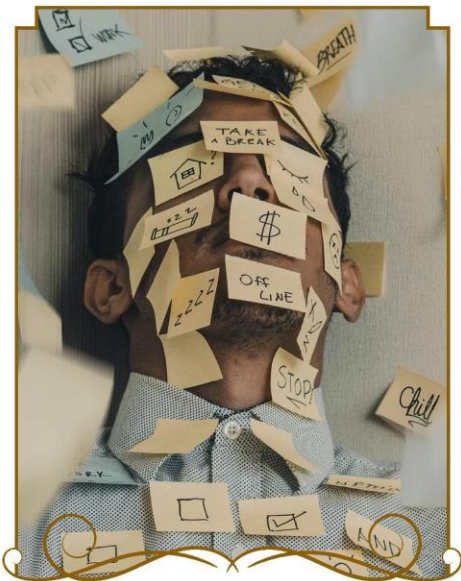


By HH S.B Keshava Swami

With regards to stress, a quick flick through some Sanskrit verses of the Bhagavad-gita immediately reveal three common reasons why our consciousness diverges into this uncomfortable emotional state:

Regulation –

Gita insights (Chapter 6, Verse 17) reveal that regulated habits of eating, sleeping, work and recreation counteract all physical and mental pain. An imbalanced lifestyle blinds us from knowing our limits, drawing us into dangerous territory that we can't navigate. Pushing beyond one's comfort zone and venturing into the unknown is admirable, but too much irregularity will begin 'bending' and eventually end-up 'breaking' you. Be dynamic and daring but maintain your balance and strength through regulation.



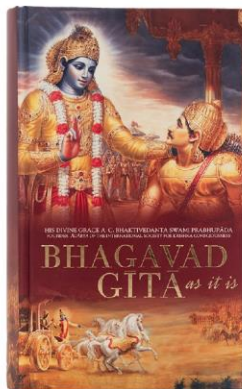
Expectation –

Gita insights (Chapter 2, Verse 47) remind us to perform our duty, but simultaneously remain detached from the results. All said and done, we are not the controller. When we formulate ambitious hopes on what we'll achieve and how we'll be seen, we carry a burden of expectation that is unsustainable. It's commendable to have plans and aspirations and it's healthy to strive hard for them, but once we've tried our best, we must step back, disconnect and remain detached. When 'plans' turn into 'expectations' we set ourselves up for misery.

Competition –

Gita insights (Chapter 3, Verse 35) guide us to perform our own dharma (inner calling) instead of someone else's. Being ourselves is more productive, joyful and sustainable. Unfortunately, we tend to measure our worth by comparing ourselves with others. We forget that we're on our own path, with our own obstacle course and our own unique calling. Comparison clouds our original thinking and blocks our distinctive contribution. As Albert Einstein said: "Everybody is a genius, but if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid."

Overcoming stress, then, is quite simple: maintain your regulation, alter your expectation and drop the competition. Sometimes it pays to look back, in order to look forward.





Dated: April 2nd 1968, San Francisco

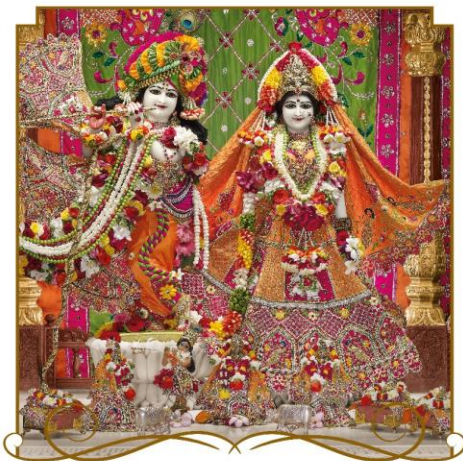
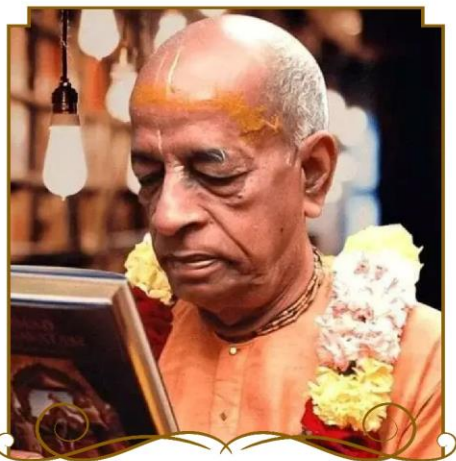
In the Bhagavad-gītā it is said that one who is intelligent, he will see four things before him. You may be very great scientist. You may be very much advanced in material science. You may be able to construct skyscrapers, and many millions of motorcar, but you have to think whether you have solved the real problem. The real problem of life is birth, death, disease and old age. Not that to live in a high skyscraper our problems of life is solved. No. The problem of life is how to stop these four things: birth, death, old age and disease.

But we have neglected the real problems of life. And we are misusing our intelligence for constructing big buildings and constructing or increasing the so-called bodily necessities of life. The bodily necessities of life are four only. What is that? Eating, sleeping, mating and defending. To maintain this body you require to eat something. Everyone is eating. You are eating, the cats are eating, the dogs are eating, the birds are eating. They have no economic problem. Eating is there already. Have you seen ever that a bird is dying for want of eating, eatables? No. So these things are already arranged. That is no problem. In every form of life your eatables are there by nature's supply.

Similarly sleeping. The bird is sleeping, the dog is sleeping, the cat is sleeping, and you are also sleeping. But you have got a very nice apartment. Does it mean that you have solved the problem of sleeping? No. Then defending. The birds, the dogs, the cats, the animals, everyone knows how to defend in their own way. You go every day in the, what is called, Stowe Lake path. And as soon as you go, the swans immediately jump to the water, because that is their defending.

As soon as they go to the water, they know that "These human beings, they cannot come to the water. We are now secure." So that defending process is there even in the swans, in the birds, in everything. You don't think that because we have manufactured atomic bombs, therefore we have become very good. What is this atomic bomb? Killing. Killing is going on. Have you manufactured anything by which you can save from death?

So our problems of life, as it is stated in the Bhagavad-gītā, is to solve these four things: no more birth... Because we are... Always remember that we are all eternal. Just like in this body, beginning from my mother's womb up to this old age, I am the same eternal soul, but my body is changing. So after changing this body also, I shall remain the same. Simply I shall have another body. This plain truth, there is no difficulty to understand.



Upcoming events



22nd June Yogini Ekadashi



23rd June Paran time -6:03am to 10:28am



27th June Ratha Yatra starts



Feel free to connect with us and share your experiences.

We are delighted to be of service to you.

For more information about our activities, please visit www.iskconbhiwandi.org

You can reach us at +91 9175263178 or drop us an email at support@iskconbhiwandi.org