Hindu Temple and Cultural Center of Wisconsin

2138 South Fish Hatchery Rd, Fitchburg, WI 53575

June 29, 2014 Rathyatra Festival

Souvenir
American Hindu Association
Phone: (608) 234-8634
Email: contact.aha@aha-svtemple.org
Website: www.aha-svtemple.org
Welcome Message from Chairman of The Board of Trustees

On behalf of Trustees of American Hindu Association, I would like to extend a warm welcome to you all to our 3rd Annual Rathyatra Festival at our temple. This is a very exciting time for our organization as we embark on a substantial development program to provide facilities for the community. The trustees are humbled by the show of support from the community for project.

We look forward to a fun and enjoyable day as we bring the revered Jagannath Puri Rathyatra puja to our community. This event has grown substantially over the last 3 years and this has been only possible through hard work and support form all the volunteers. I would like to thank the 3rd Annual Rathyatra Festival organizing committee to have put together such a wonderful program for the community.

Once again a warm welcome to everyone and I hope you will have an enjoyable day.

Mahesh Sharma
Welcome Message from the
President of American Hindu Association

On behalf of the American Hindu Association, I would like to welcome you all to our 3rd Annual Rathyatra festival at our temple. The Jaganath-puri Rathyatra puja and the accompanying Mela activities has become a landmark summer event for Madison and the surrounding community and I would like to thank the community for making this such a success for us all.

As we strive to build our facilities here in Fitchburg, events such as these have allowed us to bring the community together to celebrate our religion and culture. We hope that you all will have a wonderful time at the event and also have an opportunity to taste mouthwatering dishes from all corners of India and have a chance to participate in various fun and cultural activities. We have a very good line up of cultural programs featuring our young and young-at-heart performers from the community.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our sponsors and well wishers for all your support and look forward to an enjoyable day with you all.

Narend Reddy

AHA 2014 Rathyatra Festival Program

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Rathyatra

By Akshita Pattnaik, 6th grader at Kromrey Middle School, Middleton WI.

You may think, “Rathyatra? What is that?” It is an amazing, magical experience. Just to be invited to it, would be an honor. Not many people get to go. It is an annual festival, mainly held in Orissa, India, that is so big it pulls millions of people at the least.

Rathyatra is held all around the world. Every year at least a million people around the world witness this grand occasion. For example in Houston Texas on Saturday July 13, 2013, over 4,000 people witnessed the Royal Chariot Festival of an incarnation of Vishnu, a Hindu Lord of the universe.

Rathyatra is a long process. There are many special people and rituals associated with it. There is a story behind the celebration. On his birthday, the Lord, his siblings, and Sudarshan, the mighty weapon, first take 108 baths of scented water, which has been given the name, Snana Purnima. Therefore, they become sick, and take a long nap. Fifteen days later the Lord Shri Jagannath of Puri, his elder brother Lord Balabhadra, and younger sister Goddess Subhadra, wish to go to their aunt’s house. So they take a trip to Gundicha Mandir. Eight days later is Bahuda Yatra. Bahuda celebrates the siblings’ return home.

The most significant ritual associated with the Rathyatra is the Chera Pahara. During the festival, the King wears the outfit of a sweeper and sweeps all around the deities and chariots in the Chera Pahara (sweeping with water) ritual. The King cleanses the road before the chariots with a gold-handled broom and sprinkles sandalwood water and powder with utmost devotion. As per the custom, although the King has been considered the most honorable person in the Kalingan kingdom, he still does the common service to Jagannath. This ritual signified that under the lordship of Jagannath, there is no difference between the powerful sovereign King and the most humble devotee. Chera Pahara happens twice, on Rathyatra and Bahuda Yatra.

As per another ritual, when the deities are taken out from the Shri Mandir to the chariots in Pahandi Vijay, annoyed devotees hold a right to offer kicks, slaps and dishonoring remarks to the images, and Jagannath accepts it like a commoner. They also are so ecstatic that they sing cry and laugh all alike.
Mr. Raju Indukuri & Family
(Ph: 608 320 1898)
are proud to be associated with American Hindu Association and wishes them all the best for the 2014 Rathyatra Festival
Message from Chairman of the Rathyatra Organizing Committee
Dr. Subash Das

“Jagannatha Swami Nayana Patha Gami Bhaba Tume.” May the LORD bless you with health, wealth, wise thoughts and good people around. On behalf of the organizing committee, I welcome you to the 3rd Annual Rathyatra and Mela Festival being held at the Fitchburg temple. Please enjoy this premier event that is only of its kind in Madison showcasing of Hindu culture and heritage. Take part in this religious and auspicious event of the journeys of the three deities Jagannatha, Balabhadra and Subhadra from their abode to the place of their relatives. An occasion of great devotional triumph, where hundreds of families from Wisconsin and beyond can come and experience the flavor of India, enjoy educational and social activities.
Best wishes on 3rd Madison RathYatra

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Message from Chief Guest, Mayor of Fitchburg
Mr. Shawn Pfaff

I am so pleased that the 3rd Annual Rathyatra and Mela Festival is being held in Fitchburg where hundreds of families from across southern Wisconsin and beyond can come enjoy educational and social activities along with great food and conversation in a beautiful spiritual setting.

Message from President of Madison Community Foundation
Mr. Bob Sorge

Congratulations to American Hindu Association for organizing their 3rd Annual Rathyatra Festival in Fitchburg.
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Message from Founder of American Hindu Association

Dear Members of the Community,

I would like to welcome you to the American Hindu Association, a non-profit organization for the Community. On July 4, 1997, my family members joined together at 2637 Stevens St, Madison and agreed there was an urgent need for a Hindu Association dedicated to individuals and families of Dane county. Now, sixteen years later, hundreds of families have joined in our efforts to build a Community Center in Dane County, Wisconsin.

Since the beginning of the Association, we have conducted several educational programs of Bala Vihar and Bala Gokulam for our young kids, and have launched several programs for youth and adults too. AHA continues to listen to the needs of our community and develop resources and plans to meet these needs. All of the programs that you have read about on our website have been created by and for our community.

AHA has helped educate countless children in Hinduism and has supported numerous fellowships. Today, because many others have shared a common vision, we have been able to accomplish a great deal and much more needs to be done on behalf of our community. We encourage you to join in our efforts by becoming involved in AHA, whether as a consumer of our services, a volunteer or a philanthropic donor.

I would like to welcome you all to AHA. I hope you will be our supporter and ally in the change we all wish to see in the world.

Sincerely,

Bahee Sathasivam
Founder of American Hindu Association
Board of Director and Trustee
AHA Cultural Center Project

In 2009 AHA purchased a seven acre property at 2138 South Fish Hatchery Road, Fitchburg with a long term vision of building a Hindu Temple and other associated amenities for the benefit of the community. The AHA Management Board has approved the construction of an approximately 7000 square feet building to house all temple activities. This cultural center building will be appropriately sited such that it does not affect any future property development. The facility will involve a 4000 square feet main level and a 3000 square feet lower level.

The following pictures show preliminary renderings of the proposed facility.
Your Generous Support is Needed for this Very Important Community Project!
I am happy to learn that American Hindu Association will be celebrating Rath-yatra of Lord Jagannatha at Fitchburg (Wisconsin) on Sunday, the 29th June 2014 coinciding with the authentic tithi – asadha shukla paksha dwitiya – the very day it is being celebrated at the moola-peetha Shree Jagannatha-dham Puri (Odisha).

The Lords comes out of Their sacred abode on this holy occasion to shower Their Divine Grace upon one and all transcending all distinctions of caste, creed, color, religion and nationality. It is for us to make ourselves eligible to receive Their Grace by firmly treading the path Divine and devoutly surrendering at His lotus feet. The festival is a wonderful and most appropriate occasion for propagating our ancient spiritual heritage by organizing spiritual discourses, distributing spiritual literature and chanting the Lord’s Name.

On this most auspicious occasion of Rath-yatra, I offer my prayer at the Lotus Feet of the Lord for the material and spiritual welfare of all devotees in Wisconsin.

Sarve bhoavantu sukhinau
Om shanti shanti shantih

Dibyasingha Deb

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India is a 365-day celebration!

India is a land of spirituality, mystique, and year-round celebration. There are stirring religious festivals, joyous celebrations that mark the passing of the seasons, and a host of colorful cultural events held throughout the country. Many of these events transcend their religious, regional, and cultural origins, and draw thousands of visitors from all over India and around the world.

Here are a few of the most important upcoming events:

**DUSSEhra/VIJAYA DASHAMI** Oct. 13 – Marks the tenth and final day of Dussehra/Durga Puja, a triumph of good over evil for all faiths with origins in India. A time of joy, gift-giving, and celebration.

**DIWALI** Nov. 3 – India’s most well known holiday, the “Festival of Lights” celebrates the dispelling of evil and the affirming of familial bonds of love. Spectacular fireworks light up the sky all across India.

**CHRISTMAS** Dec. 25 – India’s 25 million Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, and are joined by all Indians who accept the holiday as the “Big Day.” The weather is ideal for visiting India.

For more information about these and all the other upcoming special events in India this year, and help in planning your trip, contact your travel agent.

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As always, the superb Indian cuisine and fine wines served in both cabins draw rave reviews, as does the attentiveness and gracious style of our experienced flight attendants. For reservations, see your travel agent or call 1-800-223-7776.

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**Happy Rathyatra**  
from our family to yours!

The Fards
American Hindu Association

The American Hindu Association (AHA) is a non-profit Hindu cultural and heritage organization founded in July of 1997 to serve the greater Madison area community under Section 501 (C) (3) of United States Inland Revenue Service Tax code. The devotees of AHA, who are currently residents of greater Madison area, migrated from various places around the world including Canada, Fiji Islands, Guyana, India, Malaysia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, United Kingdom, and other parts of the United States. The AHA is funded primarily from community and devotee donations.

Our Vision

A well respected and supported organization that provides leadership and opportunities for members of the Hindu community of greater Madison in preserving, espousing and enhancing our cultural, religious, educational, societal, and other heritage related needs.

Our Mission

1. Providing services to devotees of all ages in order to promote and enhance the awareness of principles and practices of Hinduism through activities such as regular prayers, recitals, and public discourses by scholars and invited guests.
2. Sponsoring and organizing religious festivals and cultural events for all sections of the Indian community to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to celebrate such occasions as done in their respective home countries.
3. Promoting and providing yoga, meditation and other educational activities to support personal and spiritual growth of devotees.
4. Developing, supporting and implementing appropriate devotee activities in support of local, regional, and national community based services and programs.
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American Hindu Association Bala Vihar Program

AHA is proud to offer Bala Vihar classes for children of every age every Sunday from 10am to 11:15am at the Temple. It is a wonderful opportunity for kids and youth to learn and practice our Hindu way of life, develop social and spiritual awareness as well as leadership skills in a fun and enjoyable environment.

**AHA’s Bala Vihar Program Goals are:**

- To facilitate our children to appreciate, learn and practice Hindu way of life.
- Instill pride and confidence in our children about their identity.
- Raise Hindu awareness in the society around.
- Develop social awareness and leadership skills among our children.

Bala Vihar is the place where a seemingly ordinary cowherd boy Krishna blossomed into a divine incarnation. It is here where his magical days of childhood were spent and his powers came to be recognized. At AHA we believe that every child has that spark of divinity within. Bala Vihar is a forum for children from our community to discover and manifest that divinity. It will enable our Hindu children in US to appreciate their cultural roots, learn Hindu values in an enjoyable manner while making friends. They will also develop a sense of Seva – Service to mankind and our society. Children will have lots of fun while they learn. Activities are planned for their physical, intellectual, social and spiritual development.

**Weekly Activities:** Games, Yoga, Vedas, Stories, Bhajans, Shlokas, Mantras, Sanskrit, Bhagvad Gita, Arts and Crafts.

**Kathak Dance by Natalia Hildner:** Students learn our beautiful Hindu stories through the art of Kathak. This includes basic knowledge on expression, movement, and rhythm. Great spiritual leaders of India such as Swami Vivekanda and Rabindranath Tagore believed that music and dance have the tremendous power of bringing harmony to the mind, heart, and body. Come join us once a week to explore the joy and magic of dance with Bhajans, Brajbasha poetry, and much more!

**Vedic Math** lessons by Mr. Aman Sharma (Every 3rd Sunday of the month)

**Festivals:** Hindu Festivals like Ganesh Pooja, Holi, Janmashtami, and Shivaratri are celebrated with a special focus on children from Bala Vihar’s participation. Children perform the pooja themselves and explain the meaning behind the festivals.

**Camps:** We conduct annual Bala Vihar camps. A time to explore, enjoy and make friends.

**Community Service:** Sewa or service is the best way for us to realize the divinity in all and serve the needy. Children from Bala Vihar classes are encouraged to visit elderly people in hospitals and/or participate in any appropriate activities such as volunteering, etc.

**The Bala Vihar classes are taught by Mrs. Vasundra Iyer.** Contact AHA for more information on the program and enrolling your child.
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Message from Mr. Venu and Mrs. Vinitha Pittala
We wish American Hindu Association all the best for the 2014 Rathyaatra Festival. Congratulations for doing such a marvelous job for our community.
Wells Fargo Wishes
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JAGANNATHA CONSCIOUSNESS

Jagannatha, literally the Lord of the World, the presiding deity of the Srimandira of Puri, embodies in himself the collective aspiration not only of the Oriya race but of the entire Indian nation. In the succession of incarnations, he is the last but the most powerful and most compassionate. Identified as Krishna-Vishnu, he has all the attributes of all the gods and goddesses, yet he is beyond them and transcends them in many unique aspects. He is the fountainhead of a consciousness which cannot be confined within the limits of a traditional religious-theological order, a cult or even a philosophical system.

What, then, is Jagannatha Consciousness? What is so unique and special about this consciousness? In my humble opinion it will be sheer audacity for any human to claim that he has fully understood what Jagannatha Consciousness is and even more foolhardy to claim that he can describe it comprehensively. Jagannatha Consciousness is truly ineffable. One can only attempt, with obvious limitations, to touch on some aspects to get the feel of it.

Jagannatha is unique and Jagannatha Consciousness is also unique. Jagannatha is the dark lord, the dark colour of his countenance can be considered either as absence of any colour or as the commingling of all colours in one. But his is a darkness of a special kind. His is the darkness of Krishna - a most pleasing and captivating darkness that makes the Gopis, the bhaktas and even the gods and goddesses pine for a glimpse of his pretty countenance. He is the ‘Dark Darling’, in whose praise saints and poets have waxed eloquent over centuries. Those who are fortunate to have a darshan (an audience) of the Dark Darling are emancipated from the travails of birth and rebirth. On a more mystic and symbolic plane, his choice of a dark visage connotes his closeness to the masses, the dark skinned aborigines, the savaras represented in the legends by Jara who killed Krishna and Viswavasu who worshipped him as Nilamadhava. Jagannatha essentially heralds the victory of simple Jagannatha Consciousness devotion, the same devotion with which the savara woman fed Rama the jungle berries after tasting each one to confirm its sweetness.

This latter legend brings us to another unique feature of Jagannatha Consciousness, a consciousness which transcends the barriers of caste, creed and colour. Mahaprasada the offerings of food to Lord Jagannatha is shared by the high caste Brahma and the lowly Chandala. In fact, according to traditions, the bond of friendship is sealed by exchange of Mahaprasada. As if the mere establishment of this unique catholicity was not enough, the Lord enacted a colourful play to confirm this universality. This is the legendary account of Sriya chandaluni. Mother Laxmi, wife of Jagannatha, accepts the offerings of her great devotee Sriya - a chandaluni, a humble woman of lowly social status generally tasked with sweeping and cleaning. Lord Jagannatha and more than him elder brother Balarama are outraged and expel Laxmi from the Srimandira. The exit of Laxmi brings in its trail a series of misfortunes and humiliations and at last the lords accept their mistake and proclaim the triumph of the sincere devotion of Sriya. The legendary, literary and poetic accounts are full of such episodes like the lord accepting the gift of cocoanut from Dasia Bauri, the lord coming to feed Bandhu Mohanty etc.

While Jagannatha is beyond the understanding of human intellect and mere words are inadequate to describe the Jagannatha consciousness, He is not beyond our reach. All that is needed to reach him is sincere and unalloyed devotion and surrender. Again and again, Jagannatha has displayed his great compassion in the resplendent victory of his bhaktas. When the saint poet Salabega, struck by an illness, called out from seven hundred and fifty krosas, and prayed that the lord remain in his chariot till he reached there to have a glimpse of His pretty countenance, the lord stopped his Nandighosa chariot at Balagandi and moved only after his dear bhakta had his darshan to his heart's content.

In his closeness to the devotees, to the millions pining for his Grace, Jagannatha has no peers or equals. Where does one find a god who surrenders himself totally to his dear devotee, who affords such intimacy not only on the spiritual and mental planes but even at a physical level. During the annual sojourn to his garden house – Gundicha ghara, he is pushed and pulled, coaxed and cajoled, threatened and Jagannatha Consciousness abused, hugged and embraced and carried in loving affection with such thrilled, ecstatic intimacy, of which only he is capable. All distinctions and barriers are dissolved in this grand festival and the god and his devotees become one and the same. In most, if not all other temples, it is the mobile representative or the chalanti pratima or utsava murti which goes out in ritual procession. It is only in Srimandira, the presiding deity himself comes out every year and commingles with millions of his devotees. This feeling of oneness of the god with his devotees is in fact central to and is the core of Jagannatha Consciousness. Another unique aspect of Jagannatha Consciousness is the absolute and total humanization of the deity. Jagannatha is the supreme lord, the God of all gods and yet he lives like a temporal lord with all the trappings of royalty. The Srimandira is organized like a palace and the arrangements within the temple are all on a grand scale befitting a great emperor. The kings of Orissa proclaimed Jagannatha as the true ruler and the kings themselves were mere regents, viceroy, deriving their authority from Jagannatha. The subordination of the temporal authority to the spiritual is perhaps nowhere so symbolically accepted as in the case of Jagannatha. The kings even ceremonially sweep the floors of the chariots of the three deities every year during Ratha Jatra. Jagannatha is so intimately human that he suffers from fever and cold and has an annual convalescence. He even accepts death every twelve years or so and takes a new body in the ceremony of navakalevara. The concept of Brahma being transferred from the old bodies to the new is again unique.
The concept of Brahma being transferred from the old bodies to the new is again unique. ‘Brahma’ that which is the primordial force, the Truth of all Truths—that without the sanction of which Vayu (Air) cannot flutter a blade of grass nor Agni (Fire) burn it nor Varuna (Sea) flood an inch of land, Brahma who is omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent, Brahma who is beyond comprehension and beyond confinement, the same Supreme Divinity has accepted a mortal frame in the image of Jagannatha to redeem mankind and to cool the heats of the three worlds. Jagannatha also called the Daru-brahma is the symbolic embodiment of this mystery of creation. No wonder therefore that all the gods and goddesses queue up every morning to get a glimpse of Jagannatha before the humans crowd the temple. **Jagannatha Consciousness** Jagannatha Consciousness is essentially a consciousness made up of loving surrender to the lord where the sole rasa is Hari. The body, mind and soul are totally submerged in this rasa as was Radha in Jayadeva’s *Gitagovinda*. When such a state of absolute surrender is attained Krishna-Jagannatha himself becomes one with the devotee and goes to the extent of even asking Radha to place her feet on his head with the words *dehi pada pallavamudaram*. Let all our consciousness be overwhelmed by the love of Jagannatha and let him ever envelop our beings—our bodies, minds and souls with his enchanting sweet compassion.

**JAI JAGANNATHA.**

© Dr Subas Pani. The author is a retired civil servant, independent researcher and creative director and presently lives in Delhi. He can be reached at drsubaspani@gmail.com.
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