



Gajapati Maharaja Dibyasingha Deb

29th October 2024

**H.H. Guru Prasad Swami Maharaj
Chairman, Governing Body Commission
ISKCON**

Sub: Celebration of Snana-yatra and Ratha-yatra of Lord Jagannatha by ISKCON Centres outside India contrary to scriptures and tradition.

Pujya Swamiji Maharaj,

**Jaya Jagannatha
Jaya Shree Krishna**

I wish to bring to your notice my letter of 26th February 2008, to the then Chairman, Governing Body Commission, ISKCON, Mayapur, for ensuring celebration of Ratha-yatra of Lord Jagannatha by ISKCON Centres around the world only on the Tithis sanctioned by scriptures and tradition, that is, from the 2nd day (dwitiya) of the bright fortnight (shukla-paksha) of the month of Ashadha to the 12th (dwadashi) or 13th (trayodashi) day of the bright fortnight (shukla-paksha) of the month of Ashadha. A copy of my said letter is attached here for your kind perusal. The aforesaid Tithis have been clearly prescribed in Skanda Purana (Purushottama-kshetra Mahatmya) and other sacred scriptures and faithfully followed in the Moola-peetha Shree Jagannatha Temple at Puri and elsewhere since time immemorial.

After several rounds of discussions, the Governing Council (Bureau) of ISKCON India formally passed a Resolution on 21 July 2021 that ISKCON Centres within India will henceforth celebrate Ratha-yatra only on tithis/dates sanctioned by scriptures and tradition, as aforementioned. A copy of the said Resolution of ISKCON India Bureau is attached.

ISKCON Centres outside India, however, continue to hold Ratha-yatra, as in previous years, on dates contrary to scriptures and tradition which is hurting the religious sentiments of countless devotees around the world. ISKCON Houston Centre has now proposed to hold at Houston Snana-yatra of Lord Jagannatha on 3rd November and Ratha-yatra on 9th November 2024. I am attaching here my letter sent today to the Temple President of ISKCON Houston Temple urging him to postpone both the above celebrations for the reasons stated in my said letter; and to hold them in 2025 only on the tithis/dates sanctioned by scriptures and tradition. I am also informed that ISKCON Centres in Nigeria are proposing to hold Ratha-yatra of Lord Jagannatha at Wari City on 23rd November 2024.



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According to well-established tradition of Sanatana Vaidika Dharma, our sacred festivals round the year, whether it is a festival of Lord Krishna, Lord Rama, Lord Shiva, Lord Ganesha, Goddess Durga or any other Deity -- they are all celebrated strictly in accordance with scriptural injunctions. Then why are we making a departure when it comes to the sacred festivals of Lord Jagannatha who is none other than the Supreme Lord, referred to in our scriptures as – Shree Purushottama, Paramatma, Parama-Brahman?

We must also remember that the “Chaturdha Daru Vighras” (Lord Jagannatha, Lord Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra and Chakraraj Sudarshana) are Moola Vighras (Presiding Deities in the Temple). They are not “Utsava Vighras” or “Chalanti Pranamas” which are taken out of the Temple on various festive occasions. In the various festivals of Lord Jagannatha round the year, it is His “Chalanti Pratima” Shri Madanamohana (Shri Krishna) who is taken out in procession outside the Temple. It is only on the two most holy occasions, namely, Snana-yatra and Ratha-yatra, that the Chaturdha Daru Vighras come out of the Temple, as mentioned above, **on specific Tithis** in compliance with Lord Jagannatha’s own Commandments contained in our sacred scriptures. Taking the Chaturdha Daru Vighras out of the sanctum-sanctorum of the Temple on any other day of the year is not sanctioned either by our scriptures or tradition.

In view of the above and having regard to sacred scriptures, long-established tradition and the religious sentiments of devotees around the world, I request you to ensure that the Most Holy Ratha-yatra and Snana-yatra of Lord Jagannatha are celebrated by ISKCON Centres around the world only on the tithis/dates sanctioned by scriptures and tradition.

Yours, in the service of the Lord,

Aa Swigla.

(Gajapati Dibyasingha Deb)

Aadya Sevak of Lord Jagannatha

& Chairman, Shree Jagannatha Temple Managing Committee, Puri.
