

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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[www.festivalofindianyc.com](http://www.festivalofindianyc.com)

### **34<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL KRISHNA PARADE AND FESTIVAL CELEBRATED ON NEW YORK'S FIFTH AVENUE**

**WHAT:** Ratha Yatra (Festival of the Chariots), one of India's most ancient and most popular festivals, a sacred day for Hindus worldwide, will be celebrated with a parade down New York's Fifth Avenue, from 59<sup>th</sup> Street to West 8<sup>th</sup> Street. The parade will culminate in a festival and vegetarian feast until 7:00pm at Washington Square Park. All are welcome and admission is free.

**WHEN:** Saturday June 13, 2009 12pm until 7pm.

**WHERE:** Fifth Avenue from 59<sup>th</sup> Street to Washington Square Park.

**WHO:** Thousands of Indian and American members, guests, and spectators from the greater New York Metropolitan area.

**SPECIAL:** **VERY VISUAL** event with colorful floats, traditional costumes, performances of classical Indian music dance and dramas, Vaishnava Hindu rituals, activities for kids, and a free vegetarian feast served to approximately 10,000 people.

On Saturday June 13, 2009 the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) will present their jubilant annual *Ratha Yatra* (Festival of the Chariots) Parade down Fifth Avenue. The procession of colorful chariots begins promptly at 12:00PM from the Doris C. Freedman Plaza at 59<sup>th</sup> Street and 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue and proceeds down Fifth Avenue, to Washington Square Park in Greenwich Village. From 2pm until 7pm the celebration continues in the park with the *Festival of India*, a traveling exhibition of India's spirituality and culture.

The festival site will feature 2 stages, showcasing Indian cultural and spiritual performances by professional artists and local community groups. The stage entertainment schedule includes Bharat-natyam performances by Anapayini Dasi and Bhakti-kalalayam dance school, from Alachua, FL, as well as a dramatic rendition of a classic tale, *The Age of Kali*, adapted from the Bhagavata Purana, one of India's favorite spiritual epics, performed by local Hare Krishna actors. There will be displays of traditional Indian handicrafts and books on bhakti-yoga. Visitors can explore the varied spiritual and cultural exhibitions, and enjoy a complimentary multi-course vegetarian feast. The public is welcome and admission is free.

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**Ratha Yatra Festival, Background:**

The festival of Ratha Yatra has been celebrated since ancient times, as one of the most important yearly events in the Vaishnava-Hindu faith. Vaishnavism, the worship of Lord Krishna, is one of the principle branches within the broad Hindu tradition. Vaishnavas are monotheists, and believe Lord Krishna to be the same God worshipped by Christians, Jews and Muslims.

In Jagannath Puri, the deity worshipped in the main temple is an image of Lord Krishna, and is called *Jagannath* (which means “Lord of the Universe”). He is worshipped along with his brother, Balarama, and sister, Subhadra, in the main shrine. Every summer, at the beginning of the monsoon season, the three (3) deities are taken out of the temple amidst great fanfare, and are placed on bright and colorful chariots. Almost a million worshippers throng to the city and pull the chariots with love and devotion, accompanied by joyful music, religious chants, and dancing. In 1976 A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, the founder of the worldwide Hare Krishna Movement inaugurated the New York City version of this ancient Indian parade. Since then, it has been celebrated annually and has become a New York summer tradition. This festival blends the splendor of a millennia-old celebration with the excitement of a parade down New York’s world famous Fifth Avenue.

Don’t miss this event as thousands of people, from various walks of life bring the best of the East and West together in a demonstration of universal peace, harmony and goodwill. For more information please visit our website: <http://www.festivalofindianyc.com>

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