RATH YATRA

On the auspicious day of Ashadh Sud 2 (early July) Hindus all around the world celebrate the Rath yatra Festival.

Rath Yatra originates from two words: "Rath" meaning chariot and "yatra" meaning a pilgrimage or procession. The Rath Yatra festival originated in Jaganaathpuri, Orissa (on the North Eastern coast of India) where it is still observed by the entire population today. The Rath yatra festival symbolises various stories of Lord Krishna's travels on a chariot but the most popular one is the story of Jaganaathpuri. On this day, Shree Jaganaath (Shree Krishna) announced His wishes to visit His birthplace once every year. Therefore, every year the deities of Jaganaath Temple; Shree Jaganaath, His brother Balaram and His sister Subhadra, are traditionally installed on beautifully decorated chariots and pulled in a Yatra through the streets from Jaganaathpuri to Ghundicha Ghar. The journey is accompanied by thousands of devotees joyously singing and celebrating the Rath yatra festival.

Also on this day, Lord Krishna and Balaram left Gokul and travelled to Mathura. It was Shree Krishna's maternal uncle, the evil tyrant Kansa who had sent Akrur with a chariot to Gokul to invite Shree Krishna for a wrestling competition in Mathura. In conclusion, the Rath Yatra Festival depicts the many journeys of Shree Krishna on a chariot with His brother Balaram and His sister Subhadra. Jaganaath Temple is or was the only temple with these three murtis, therefore this festival is most celebrated there.

QUESTIONS

1. What does the word Rath and Yatra mean?

2. In what month is this festival celebrated?

3. Where did the Rath yatra festival originate?

4. Who was Shree Jaganaath?

5. Who was Shree Jaganaath's sister and brother?

6. Who was Shree Krishna's maternal uncle?