



A Legend of Proud Millionaire and Lord Jagannath

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Lord Jagannath, identity of all Odia people and Odisha is known as a legendary God. The very genesis of this great deity is based on various legends. A lot of legends are found in different scriptures of Odia language. Again a lot of legends are yet to find their places in scriptures, but those are alive in the form of story telling from generation to generation. The present presentation of the legend is an example of transformation of a proud millionaire to a high degree of spiritual personality.

This was possible with sheer concentration in meditation, self confidence, and self reliance. As we know, our Almighty Lord Jagannath is Lord Vishnu and omnipresent God. He takes different tests of his devotees before attracting towards Himself. He wipes out all his negative qualities of his devotees i.e. ego, ignorance, proudness, etc. He is not present in the Divine Log (Daru), but He is a living entity for all.

He rules upon our every sense to intimate His presence. He is really human god for all of us. His presence is felt in our thoughts and in faith not in our wise arguments. So He is very delicate God, but is associated to close people, who like to Him.

In the past, the essential commodities were available in cheap rate. So that it was never possible to spend lakhs of rupees for a single Bhoga in the temple of Lord Jagannath.

Once a millionaire came to the holy city of Puri on pilgrimage. He had a desire to offer one lakh of rupees for a single “Bhoga” of Lord Jagannath. He expressed his wish before the servitudes and king also.

Observing his eagerness the temple servants (Pandas) sat together to discuss, but they could not find the way to spend such a huge amount of money for a single “Bhoga”, when the thing are available at so cheap rate. But the proud millionaire pilgrim spoke repeatedly the said thing that he would spend one lakh of rupees to feed the Lords a meal. If the Lords would not be able to consume, he might consider taking back the said amount.

This type of sarcastic statement by the proud millionaire challenged the prestige issue of the temple of Lord Jagannath. When the Ananda Bazar was considered as the greatest restaurant of the world, how it could not be possible to spend one lakh rupees for one Bhoga of Lord Jagannath. Lord of the Universe could not be able to consume mere one lakh rupees for his Bhoga, where a number of items are offered to the Lords every day.

The proud millionaire waited in puri to get positive reply from the king and the temple servitudes to serve the Lord. The temple servants (pandas) could not arrive in any conclusion. At last it was decided by them that the responsibility of the consumption of one lakh



rupees in Bhogas would be left to Lord Jagannath. Now Jagannath Himself would say what Bhoga could be offered to Him.

Lord Jagannath felt the helplessness condition of the king and the temple priests. The Lord at night said to his main servitude in a dream “well, the pilgrim is proud of his wealth, what can he offer me merely with one lakh of rupees. I want only a betel from him.

The betel should at least be a good one where the lime used should not be ordinary lime available in the market. It should be the lime prepared out of pearls produced from the head of the elephant (Gajamukta). After he offers Me the betel next I shall think regarding the Bhoga that should be appropriate for him.

In the next morning ,the millionaire asked his priest about what the temple authorities decided to accept his gift for one lakh rupees for a single Bhoga, to be offered to the Lords in his presence. The priest said last night the authorities discussed on this matter but they failed to arrive at any conclusion, so that the matter has been left to Lord Jagannath Himself. The millionaire said again the money should be spent for a single Bhoga in his presence. Otherwise, after his departure who knows whether the amount would really be spent for the purpose or not.

While they were talking like this, the Panda (main priest) of Lord Jagannath arrived there with the message of the Lord that the deity wanted to take only one betel now and after that, the items of the Bhoga would be intimated. The chief priest again said, lime of that betel would not be out of ordinary conch shell, but the elephant’s pearl should be used as lime. As it is generally known that to get Gajamukta from the head of the elephant was a very difficult task. Because, all the elephants could not hold Gajamukta in their heads. Only special category of elephant could possess this precious elements(Gajamukta)in its head. It was very

difficult to identify this special category elephant. To find out the lime of Gajamukta ,one has to kill lakhs of elephants, which was practically not possible and it was a challenging task for the millionaire to get the special lime from Gajamukta.

The proud millionaire now understood his limit and ran to Lord Jagannath with folded hands by saying,”Oh Lord ! I am a poor creature. What can I give you then? Even I am unable to give you a betel,” with this he surrendered to the Lords in the tearful eyes after realizing his mistakes. His proudness vanished, and felt, “really, Lord Jagannath is Creator, nourisher and destroyer of the entire universe. Man is a mere helpless creature. Without the order of the Lord of Universe, nothing can happen in this cosmos.

Since Lord Jaganath is the master of whole mankind let us surrender ourselves before Him and pray

*‘Bhuja tale mote rakha Mahabahu !
Bahu tale mote rakha,
Bipula bhuja bistaridele prabhu !
Ki kari pariba dukha, Mahabahu !*

(Gajapati king Sri Bira Kishore Dev)

(Oh ! God having big hands !, Keep me under the shelter of Your hands. Please keep me under the shelter of Yours arms. Oh God ! If You enlarge your big arms, there would be no sorrow at all.

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