Cult of Lord Jagannath and Ideals of Human Philosophy

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Orissa is a holy land of different gods and goddesses. Lord Jagannath is the supreme Lord of the land. Jagannath is the center of human conscience and consciousness. The cult of Lord Jagannath is the cult of Orissa. The religion of Jagannath is the religion of Orissa. The history of Lord Jagannath is the history of Orissa. Kindness, benevolence, tolerance, peace and tranquility are the ornaments of the philosophy which enrich and deepen the sense of humanitarian values and absolute freedom. The cult develop the mental insight to build up super human consciousness for obtaining liberation from materialistic needs and desires and to attain salvation and to merge with the absolute. Lord Jagannath is symbolic in character. Some says he is the incarnation of Lord Krishna, Others say he is the embodiment of Lord Buddha, Siva and Bhairaba. The philosophy of Adveitabada of Hindu Guru Sankaracharya tells Aham Brahmasmi which means Brahma and the Soul are the one and inseparable. He is dual as well as one. He is Purusottama as well as Sunyapurusa. This is the uniqueness of the Jagannath philosophy. From Aryan to Dravidian, from Saivites to Vaishnavites, from Vedic to Tantric all the religious ideologies have been assimilated and integrated in this universal philosophy of Lord Jagannath.

The cult of Lord Jagannath is a beautiful combination of worldly and cosmic realities. The speciality of the cult is that all the religions of the world has been merged within it to make it flexible, open and generous. Like all other religions it has not been narrowed down itself within certain idealistic values and principles. The cult is based upon peak ideals of democracy, humanitarian principle of equality, justice, honesty and integrity, which purely illustrates against the conservative outlook of castism, sectarianism and any such other barriers for attainment of complete universalism. Therefore, Jagannath has been called the Lord of the whole universe. From Adveitabada of Hindu Guru Sankaracharya to message of rebirth in Gita it has always enlightened the human consciousness for attainment of Moksha or salvation. The cult depicts that the ultimate end of self realization is the merger of soul with Paramatma, the Satchitananda-Sat (Truth) + Chit (Consciousness) +Ananda (Eternal joy).

Jagannath Philosophy deeply influences the social life, literature and culture of Orissa, which makes the Oriyas, energetic and sensitive. Every Oriya feels proud to express that Lord Jagannath as part and parcel of his life is a family member to share all his pleasure and pain. There is no other religion in the world where a common man see his Lord as his own family member who is an inseparable entity. It is based upon the beliefs of Sarbajana Hitaya Sarbajana Sukhaya that the cult is meant for the shake of well being of entire humanity of the universe. According to Indian classics only the Brahmins have the rights to do the Vedic rituals of Lords. But with an exception...
to that Jagannath Philosophy entails that every year during the time of Rathayatra the Daitapati Sevakas of Lord Jagannath, the heirs of Savara King Biswabasu get the opportunity to provide all services and worship to Lord during his stay outside the temple. This practice depicts the humbleness and modesty of the religion. Kaibalya or Mahaprasad is called Arnabrahma, which destroy all evilness and enemity by extending the message of love, mutuality and support. During different ceremonial occasions, marriage and thread ceremony, Mahaprasad is distributed among the friends and relatives. It is said that by offering the same it perpetuates the ties of friendship and brotherhood. Not only in the holy deed but also after the death of the person after all Sanskaras are over, the friends and relatives enter the home of the person only after taking the Mahaprasad of Lord Jagannath.

The cult is a simple illustration of human nature and traits of God which makes it unique and distinctive from other worldly religions. The natural history of the cult also reflect the synthesis of human values and character. Different facets of human life have emerged within the cult to give it a unique place and stature. The devotee never think himself separate from his lord. The two are inseparable and are tightly hold with each other in the sacred bond of love, devotion and loyalty. Like daily happenings and day-to-day activities of a common man, everyday rituals of the God includes bathing, brushing of teeth, dressing with a variety of colourful dresses and adornments in definite time intervals. Because of these manly traits and attributes it has been replicated in various facets of life. It also illustrates that there is no discrimination and inequity among the people of different strata. All are equal before the Universal Lord. Whoever completely surrenders before Him with humble motive leaving apart all other material and non-material existence He takes care of all pain and pleasures by sheltering him under his supreme grace mitigating all His sorrows and sufferings. When different facets of the cult is thoroughly unfold it has been profoundly noticed that it spreads the ideals of human philosophy generously reflecting life in varied dimensions. From king to ordinary man all are equal in the God's empire. The cult of Lord Jagannath has crossed all the borders of casteism, untouchability and disruptive selfish motives of human temperament. It proclaims the victory of human endeavour over all narrowness and conservatism.

The cult spreads the massage of patriotism and national integration. As sugar and potato were imported from outside the country it has been prohibited in the kitchen of the temple as vegetables of foreign origin, which exemplify that the cult promotes patriotism and loyalty towards own country or nation. The foods are cooked in usual Indian style through steaming, thereby preserving the nutrient values intact and it also makes the food tasty and flavoursome. Cakes are prepared from grinding rice, Saga (green leaves) is given as religious offering to God everyday which is the daily food of a common man in the State. It has also been noticed that inside the temple of Lord Jagannath from Brahmin to untouchables all takes food from the same plate without any unfairness and discrimination among them. It shows that Jagannath is not the God of rich and affluent class of people but the God of the subjugated, needy and poor. Before him rich and poor, privileged and deprived, superior and inferior, Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Jain and Buddhist all are similar. Therefore, he is called Jagat Natha i.e the God of entire universe and not confined to any religion, sect or creed.

Jagannath is called Darubrahma. It is said that Daru is the only object where the Brahma or the Sensitivity confines itself. The holy body of the three deities are made up of Neem wood
instead of any costly metals like gold, silver or iron. Because if the metals are thrown into the fire those get heated and nobody can touch them. But if Daru is set into fire, though one side get burnt the other side remains cool since there is much resistance to hit, which teaches us to be tolerant and lenient and to become broad and generous to engulf all pain and miseries for realization of the ultimate truth. During the Sri Gundicha Yatra the Lord takes his brother Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra along with him instead of taking his beloved wife Sri Lakshmi, which reveals that romanticism is sacrificed even by the Lord himself. In this incarnation Lord Jagannath himself takes birth as the younger brother and Balabhadra as the elder and in the Ratha Yatra the Nandighosha Yatra of Jagannath takes place at last after the Yatra of Balabhadra in Taladwaja Ratha and Devi Subhadra in Debadalana Ratha is over. It express the sense of respect, politeness and loyalty for siblings and elders.

The world famous Ratha Yatra propagates the message of universalism, impartiality and universal equality. Once in a year the God himself comes to his disciples for giving peace and pleasure to the mankind freeing them from all their pains and problems. The persons who are prohibited from entering the temple get the opportunity to see the three Gods in their Chariots. Many people says, who see Lord Jagannath in the Chariot during the festival does not take rebirth again. The carnival also demonstrates the major ideal event where the king, at the highest position of the State serves the God by engaging himself in the lowest job like scavenging, which is the job of untouchables. The event illustrates his modest polite moral bending before Almighty which breaks the sense of superiority and self arrogance. For this lowest work the king gets the highest honour and he is called the prime servant of Lord. In the eyes of people as the representative of Lord Jagannath the king is also the Moving Incarnation of Lord Vishnu which increase the sense of self confidence and self realisation. In the holy Patitapabana Yatra from highest to lowest cadre everybody is equal and alike.

The mortality of the mundane existence has been clearly reflected in the observance of Navakalebara which add new synthesis to human life and existence. Since the human body is perishable but the soul never get destroyed, so it takes a new form after a life period is over. Since Lord Jagannath symbolizes the Human God, he is also abided by the same principle of rebirth and regeneration. Once in twelve years the celebration of Nabakalebara asserts that like human being God also take rebirth by leaving apart his old wooden body and the Navibrahma is transferred from old to new body. Some says the soul of Lord Jagannath is nothing else but the tooth of Lord Buddha.

From the overall analysis it has been clear that the cult of Lord Jagannath is quite distinctive and idiosyncratic in its character and for this reason it has been treated as the best religion of the world. From traditionalistic principles to modernistic views all are embedded within the cult to give it a unique position among the world religions. Starting from socialist philosophy to universal brotherhood, nationalistic ideals to patriotism, devotion, dedication and perseverance, all have been merged within the vast ocean of religious conviction and consciousness.

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