



Purusottama Jagannatha and Sri Chaitanya

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The cosmic functions of creation, preservation and destruction constitute the sport of the Lord. He is the root of all existence, the source and substance of all creatures. He appears in different incarnations in different ages and displays his grandeur and divine majesty. He is called the Purusottama and Jagannatha, the Lord of the universe.

The supreme lord enacts his *leelas* in the mundane world, thereby enabling people to visualize Him and join His sport delightfully. Such spontaneous and cheerful participation in His play is the secret of union with Him. When this is realized, action is performed entirely for His sake. The ancient Vedic seers realized this truth and therefore performed all their individual and social duties as sacrifices on the altar of the Lord. This was known as *yagna*. Gradually ritualism veiled the essence of the divine purpose, giving rise to formal festivals. Time and again, bold speculators came and revealed their visions of truth in different systems of philosophy. Out of the six standard schools of Indian philosophy, is Vedanta as propounded by Vyasadeva. It is the most perfect system of knowledge, which leads to the realization of God in this very life. The Vedanta *sutras* of Vyasadeva have been variously interpreted by Acharyas like Sankara, Ramanuja and Madhva. But all of them have accepted God-realization as the sole object of Vedantic pursuits. The aim of Vedanta is to realize the integral self-consciousness of one's existence, consciousness and bliss. This self-realization clears the veil of ignorance and

leads to the liberation of the immortal soul through union with the Lord.

Vedas, Upanishads, Bramhasutras, Mahabharata, Ramayan, Bhagabat and the *Gita* have described this glory of the Supreme Lord. In *Srimad Bhagabatam*, the powers and skill of Lord Krishna together with His blissful sport have been described exhaustively. By the sixteenth century, the entire country accepted this Bhagabata school of religious philosophy as the guideline. Bhagabata was accepted as the hand book of religious tenets by all sections of people of the country. The essence of Bhagabata Dharma was propagated by different religious teachers including Sri Chaitanya Dev. The entire Sanskrit text was beautifully and lucidly translated by the greatest Oriya Vaishnava saint, Sri Jagannatha Dasa of Puri, who recited it daily in the temple premises of Lord Jagannatha. The scripture, Bhagabata has been inspired by a deep and concentrated love for Krishna-Jagannatha.

The *Bhagabata* explains comprehensively all the intricate subjects like the secrets and purposes of creation, the nature of the individual soul, the law of *karma*, the preservation of the world by the Lord. The *leelas* of different incarnations, with particular emphasis on Lord Krishna and His glories. The central teaching of *Bhagabata* is that the 'Lord of lords' alone will bring about the highest welfare of mankind by eliminating all miseries of the entire humanity, with a view to establish lasting peace, harmony, brotherhood and equality among different races through



unalloyed devotion to the Lord. This philosophy teaches man about His relationship with God, the duty of man and the prospect of attaining love and joy through devotion to the Lord. This intense love for the Lord has been fully practiced and perfectly attained by devotees in four important spiritual centres of India namely, (1) Bithalanatha of Maharashtra, (2) Ranganatha of Mysore, (3) Tirupatinatha of Andhra Pradesh and (4) Jagannatha of Puri, besides numerous other temples and holy shrines in India.

A true devotee of the Lord does not hanker after worldly pleasures of the lower self, enjoyed through senses, as he derives the highest bliss in life, by contact and communion with the Supreme Lord of all delights. This is known as 'Life Divine'. Through such intense devotion to God, a devotee is freed from all distresses and he easily scores victory over the vices such as greed, vanity, hatred and fear permanently. The Bhakta has no ego; he is modest in respecting all and is compassionate towards the whole world, feeling God's presence everywhere. He sees his adorable Lord-Vasudeva in himself and around him, in all beings, in insects as well as plants. He loves and serves them all, like the dearest 'tulsi' tree, the favourite of all Vaishnavas, In a nutshell, this Bhagabata Dharma brings about the steadfast union of man with God, through love alone, which integrates all other virtues of self-perfection like selfless 'Karma' and the spreading of spiritual knowledge for removing all worldly fears.

Fortunately, this perfect socio-political religious culture of India was established by the Lord Himself in Orissa. Due to the august and benign presence of Lord Jagannatha, who is the incarnation of the supreme consciousness, this perfect culture

manifested itself at Puri. This truth has been proclaimed loudly by all the great spiritual teachers such as Sankara, Ramanuja, Madhva, Tulsidasa, Kavir, Nanak, Chaitanya, Jagannatha Dasa and Salabega. The utopian concepts of socio-political and religious perfections of life propagated by the Greek philosophers like Socrates, Plato and Aristotle remained in their philosophical teachings only. But the Supreme Lord Jagannatha, out of His infinite mercy and compassion towards His children, revealed this perfect culture to the ancient temporal leaders of the country, like the great king Indradyumna of Orissa. The great saintly king Indradyumna discovered the secret of all secrets, the panacea to all problems of the mankind and attained supreme bliss in his own life, by surrendering to Lord Jagannatha. He declared that all are saved by a mere glimpse of His graceful countenance. This intensity of faith and profundity of love transcends time, religions, caste and race. This knowledge of the Supreme has been permanently introduced and idolized in the cult of Jagannatha, yet it baffles idolatry. Brotherhood, sisterhood, motherhood and love are permanently attained, where there is no narrowness of caste, creed and colour. Wealth and power are of no consequence before the eternal glory of the supreme lover. The real wealth, the most precious possession of all hearts, is a view of the adorable Lord and the feast and ecstasy of millions of souls for all times. This realization is open to all races. Self-realization through this path brings eternal youth to the entire mankind, who are otherwise decaying with fear and ignorance, till the discovery of the highest self-perfection, called Purusottama of the Universe.

The sublime attraction of



Purusottama is like the pure water of Mother Ganges, which purifies and sanctifies everything. With a gold-handled broom, the spiritual successor and progeny of Indradyumna publicly demonstrates this truth of cleaning the hearts of the millions of people, through intense love for God, and by repeating the act of cleaning and sweeping the chariots of the deities every year in the public view of millions of devotees. Saints and sinners are delivered equally by the Lord during the Car festival. One wonders at the grandeur of the supreme consciousness of Lord Jagannatha during this festival. This has been realised by the saints like Nimai (Chaitanya) of the past and Nimai Harichandan of the present age.

In the sixteenth century, Chaitanya propagated this cult for long eighteen years till his miraculous disappearance. His love for Lord Jagannatha was the essence of his ecstatic union with the supreme consciousness. It is traceable in the tenth canto of *Srimad Bhagavatam*, particularly in "Gopi-Gita", "Bhramar Gita", and "Mahisi Gita". The earthly sports of Sri Radha, revealed in Vrindavan, during the advent of Srikrishna, was again revived as the power of Allahadini in Chaitanya. Sri Chaitanya assumed the role of a world teacher and therefore he appeared as Krishna-Chaitanya to the outsiders, while retaining his internal-potency of 'Allahadini' at the time of adorning Lord Jagannatha as Srikrishna. Unique indeed was another spiritual contemporary, the famous Vyasa of Orissa, Sri Jagannatha Dasa Goswami, who also propounded this culture. He thought himself to be Radha and represented perfect bridal devotion for 'Krishna-Jagannatha'. Both Sri Chaitanya and Sri Jagannatha Dasa represent the consummation of intense love

for Srikrishna. Such consummate love for Krishna was possible in Vrindavan and it again appeared in Nilachala due to the advent of the same Srikrishna, as Lord Jagannatha. Thus, experience of this consciousness of God, in its intense form, is the perfection of self-delight of the unalloyed souls, like Sri Chaitanya and Sri Jagannatha Dasa. In fact, the Lord has manifested himself in countless forms, for revealing His playful self-delight. Such Delight-Incarnate, is therefore called, Jagadananda Kanda. Like Gopis, there are many such associates of Lord Jagannath, engaged in the various services of the temple.

This super human relationship with Lord is not accessible to ordinary mind. However, this system of philosophy is known as Achintya Bhedabheda Cult.

*Vrindvanam parityajya
Padamekham na gachhati*

This eternal love-consciousness of the supreme is open to all and closed to none. The followers of the Lord can attain self-delight in their present lives. Gopabandhu Das once said, "Anywhere in India, I am in Nilachala." The essence of this realization is that the outer self may move anywhere, but the inward reality remains unmoved.

Purusottama is perfect in all respects. He comes out twice a year, to meet people. Real seekers are indeed very particular to have *Darshanas* and come in close contact with their dearest Lord on such special occasions. In fact, He extends special invitations contained in the utterances of realized saints and sages -

*Ratharudho gachhan pathi milita.
Rathetu Bamanam drustwa, Punar-janma na vidyate.*

There is no rebirth after this vision and



realization. Verily, we see this perfection in millions once a year. This resembles the scene of Srikrishna and Arjuna in one chariot, face to face in the battle of life, for the victory of the Divine-Power. Blessed are those who avail of such unique opportunity, granted to one and all so gracefully by the kind and compassionate Lord.

Purusottama - *leela* revealed its profound mellowness during the stay of Lord Chaitanya at Puri. During this period, the hearts of millions were flooded with passionate love for the Lord. He adopted an unprecedented method of display of God's love through the medium of *kirtan* and ecstatic dances in houses, roads, streets and temples, travelling groups and settled *sankirtan* monasteries. Such powerful contact with God through recitation of His holy-name became universally popular, as the easiest path of God-realization for the common people irrespective of their age or education. This is Chaitanya's greatest gift to the whole world. Such a transcendent soul is not affected by Maya. This cult is powerfully depicted in the deities : Balabhadra representing Sivahood, Subhadra representing Radha, Krishna manifest in Lord Jagannatha and Sudarshan representing the 'Turiya' state of *samadhi*. This is called Abheda stage in the 'Achintya-Bhedabheda' doctrine. Generally, *sadhakas* realize the consciousness of *sankhya-yoga* and monistic Vedanta in their lives. But this Adwaya Tatwa is realized through saturation of intense love of Lord. One who dives deep enjoys it in the unfathomable recess of his self-delight. This fierce pursuit is still continuing for more than five hundred years in India and abroad, even after the so-called disappearance of Lord Chaitanya, who appears eternally in Lord Jagannatha. Therefore, it is said that the *leela* of

Gouranga is eternal.

Time has come when the most ignorant self, groping in darkness will be fully benefitted by this Supreme Light, not through the pursuit of science, but through the compassion of the Lord. In spite of the governance of the law of *karma*, this freedom and bliss of the self can be realized by devotees of Lord through intense faith in the Lord. All can attain this self-culture in an age of objective westernized education, which insists on utilization of material resources. Vivekananda, Aurobindo and Satya Sai Baba in India have again illuminated this path in the modern age. They have boldly declared that the problems of 'Economics' should not be approached separately but integrally with the force of the 'spirit' in man, Reforms will evidently follow to revive this grand perfection attained in the past through the four-fold self-development in *dharma, artha, karma* and *mokshya*. If one cannot acquire this self-culture in the universities, he is not lost as the Supreme Saviour saves millions of such souls by His beautiful and charming looks. Upendra Bhanja, the poet has sung. "Here sits the supreme king of the universe to distribute the highest four fold self perfection, freely to all, without any reservations." Coming to the forces of spiritual reforms of the society in India, the cosmic-consciousness of brotherhood of mankind is only possible through 'divine-life.' This has been experienced by the seers in all ages. This culture has reached its settled perfection in the seat of Jagannatha providing the real foundation of unity in the solidarity of Dharma, which rests eternally in Lord Jagannatha.

Every reform has inspired the inner awakening of human consciousness to a supreme wisdom and then to rise to that



state or highest level of sublimity. A servitor or participant in his sport experiences the divine bliss. Most of these experiences are built on the edifice of deep devotion, not accessible to empirical pursuits. This is experienced through performance of nine kinds of Bhakti, directly offered to Lord Jagannatha through hearing, chanting, remembering, serving, worshipping, dealing like friends and finally surrendering one's self to the Supreme lover, Sri Jagannatha.

Jagannatha is the sole subject (*vishaya*) of delight of the living beings, who in their turn, are the objects of this delight (*ashraya*). When they join, there flows a *Rasa* which is extremely delightful. Lord Jagannatha combines in Himself an all round love for the powers of beauty and benevolence. He is called the supreme source or fountain of all incarnations. Hence the realization of Purusottama - consciousness actually starts where Srikrishna's teaching '*Mamekam Saranam Braja*' ends in the *Gita*. This shelter is extended through out-stretched hands to embrace all on earth. Now that automobiles, railways and airways have removed the gap of distance between places, all can easily participate in the eternal *leelas* of Lord Jagannatha on various occasions throughout the year, which are *ganayatra*s or mass-festivals. The supreme lover's regard for his devotees even excels the regard of the '*Sadhakas*' towards their Lord, as he is the master, who excels all others in all respects. So he declares : 'Neither the holy shrines, not the images of clay and stone are competent enough to sanctify us so quickly as you saints and absolute -

realised souls do by giving your *Darshan*' (Bhagabata, x-84-10-11). Incidents of such exaltation of devotees by Lord Jagannatha are found in the legends of Raghu Arakshita, Bandhu Mohanty, Dasia Bauri, Salabega, Balarama Dasa and Nimai Harichandan of the present age.

In short, this Jagannatha-consciousness is the goal of man. As a manifestation of this infinite blessedness, the Supreme Lord appears as a 'person', the Purusottama. He conducts Himself as such with all men and women, who flock around Him, like bees around the lotus. Let us blend this charming *rasa* of *madhurya* in our self-consciousness so that we can meet Him freely and enjoy His beauty, power and love throughout our lives like the famous poet Jayadeva, who sang His glory in ecstasy. The *bhavas* like *dasya*, *sakhya*, *batshalya* turn into the a passionate, *madhurya*, enthusing love-consciousness nurtured under the harmonious patronage of all the devotees. Let us bow to that 'Sangha Sakti', which is automatically organized during the *leelas* of Purusottama, already displayed by Shankara, Nanaka, Chaitanya, Jagannatha Dasa and all other saints. Let us pray to Lord Jagannatha to grant his *Prema-rasa* and his blessings for serving His lotus feet at Purusottama Dhama, His permanent abode on the earth, life after life.



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