



The Legend of Ganapati Bhatta

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Philosophy differs regarding the forms (manifestation) of God within the people of same faith and religions too. For instance, some people in Hindu religion have faith on Lord Vishnu and claim themselves as Vaisnavites while some others belief Lord Shiva as the supreme power and worship. They term themselves as Shaivites. In other religions too, there are differences in faith. Let us take the example of Islam religion. They are sharply divided as Shiya, Suni, Ahmediya and more faiths. The Ahmediyas are not allowed to the Mosque segregating them as non-Muslims. In Christian religion also, people are divided into Catholics and Protestants. However, it is universally agreed upon that there is no form of God whatsoever in any faith or philosophy as there is no manifest of His own although all manifestations are creation of God. Let us think about remote past, before the time started to tick, there was no existence of manifest or non-manifest. There was no faith or philosophy either. Vedic expression on God is that Maha Vishnu was floating on a leaf measuring about ten fingers in vast ocean. This form of Maha Vishnu was human like with limbs may be considered as the first manifest of God and named as Vishnu, who was over the Anantanag, a serpent with thousand

hoods. Later Vishnu probably thought of manifestations and outcome was a lotus from His navel. Brahma, the self born ab intra found himself over the lotus. This was how the manifest of God came to appear as per the Veda. This hypothesis has no legs to stand with either in logic or in science. Again science also faces impasse on many aspects of the hypothesis derived on the beginning of this vast universe. However, people in Hindu religion have imagined different forms of God although there is agreement upon that the Brahma is one and only one which is non-manifest. The puranic manifest of God is said to be Basudev. In course of time, many forms of God like Shiva, Ganesha, Durga besides Krishna, Rama et al were imagined and placed in scriptures. As such they have been accepted by the respective followers with faith and philosophy.

The form of Lord Jagannath, with four sense organs i.e. eyes, nose, skin and tongue being devoid of the fifth sense organ i.e. ear, was created by the heavenly carpenter, Biswakarma out of the wooden log, as the legend goes. This form of Lord Jagannath is unique in the world and considered as the universal God as the very name implies. Therefore, there is throng of pilgrims and devotees



throughout the year from every nook and corner of the country and out of it in Puri. Although the idols of Trinity along with Sudarshan undergo changes during every Nabakalebara, which falls at an interval of twelve to nineteen years, as the case maybe, but the Brahma remains unchanged but only transferred from the old idols to the new ones. The servitors who undertake the job of transfer of Brahma, also are not able to know what it is.

The devotees come to Puri with different faiths and philosophy for the purpose of *darshan* of Lord Jagannath. It is said that even St. Jesus, the founder of the Christianity also came to Puri and spent a good time there in order to acquire the philosophy of Jagannath cult and Buddhism.

Lord Ganesha is worshipped as the supreme by a good proportion of population in our country and elsewhere. Long long ago there was a devotee of Lord Ganesha in the state of Maharashtra. His name was Ganapati Bhatt. He was an ardent devotee of Lord Ganesha and strongly believed Ganesha as the supreme. Therefore he didn't consider any other form of God and paid no respect too.

Time rolled on. Gradually Ganapati Bhatt became more and more confident on his conviction of supremacy of Lord Ganesha and no other form of manifestation of God whatsoever. But a number of saints he came across tried to convince him that there is manifest of God in the form of Lord Jagannath of Shrikshetra (a synonym of Puri). But Ganapati Bhatt was the last person to sway away with soothe saying. He took them as an argumentum ad ignorantiam. All seemed yellow to the jaundiced eye, thought Ganapati Bhatta and became as firm as a rock in

his conviction of supremacy of Lord Ganesha. Of course, nobody had the slightest of doubt on his belief. But time came when he had to submit to the vox Dei. So one day he decided to visit Shrikshetra to see things on his own eyes. After all seeing is believing. But Shrikshetra is far away from his native place of Maharashtra and the communication was a difficult proposition to undertake. The urge of Brahma *darshana* took the better part of the valour. As such he decided with determination to visit Shrikshetra.

Ganapati Bhatta set out for the bon voyage. Indeed he has to face a lot of problem on his way. But nothing could dissuade him to stop his journey further, rather he became more and more determined with a fortiori than before. After all adversity leads to prosperity. In the long run he reached his destination Shrikshetra just the day before the celebration of *Snana Purnima* of the trinity. Though he was extremely tired of the arduous long march, he did not waste time by taking rest. But taking a formal wash up, he proceeded to the temple for *darshan* of Lord Jagannath. He looked to the idol of Lord Jagannath expecting the sight of his ever cherished Lord Ganesha. But he felt to find. Frustration reigned over him. Finally he decided that Lord Jagannath cannot be Brahma in manifest. He felt extremely sad on taking of the unwarranted long journey basing on the sooth saying and thought to be a reduction ad absurdum. Being disappointed he was about to return when an unknown devotee started to discuss with him on topic of this and that. From the discussion the devotee could know the reason of disappointment of Ganapati Bhatta. Then the unknown devotee advised him that he can see in any form of Lord Jagannath provided his wish has the utmost sincerity by heart. Ganapati Bhatta obeying the



advice of his fellow devotee, prayed with concentration of mind and heart. Lo and behold ! He opened his eyes after the prayer and miraculously saw the form of Lord Ganesha in the idol of Lord Jagannath. He immediately prostrated then there and begged for pardon for disbelieving the saints. But to his astonishment the fellow devotee was vanished whom he wanted to thank for his timely advise. Here I want to quote a couplet from Shrimad Bhagabat Geeta which would be appropriate, I suppose.

“Jeapianyadevta bhaktya yajanti shradhayanwita,
Teapi mameba kounteya yajanti abidhipurbakam,
(23 – 9th Chapter)

Ahamhi sarbajagyanam bhaktaacha prabhu ebacha,
Natumam abhijanati tatwena ataschya chyabanti te.”
(24 – 9th Chapter)

The couplet quoted, ut supra, explains that, if a devotee has sincere faith over any form of God, that ultimately comes to me, which he does not understand. I am the soul, the Bramha, devotee, or the God whatsoever. This is the result

of the devotion which most of us do not have the least idea.

“Aham karturahamyagyanhaswadhaha
mohuswadham
Mantrohamahamyagyam
ahamevaajyamahamagneehahamhuttam.”

(16- 9th Chapter)

This means in short He is omnipresent.

Due respect is given to the devotee Ganapati Bhatta, since then and Lord Jagannath is adorned with the mask of head gear of an elephant during the function of Snana Purnima.

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