



Lord Jagannath : The Symbolic Concentration

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Shree Shree Jagannath Mahaprabhu is the frame of reference for any form of greatness throughout the country. He is the Bada Thakura, the Chief among the Gods. His Temple is named as Bada Deula, the main Temple among the Temples and the Path in front of His temple is the Bada Danda, the grand Pathway. The sea washing the shores of His Kshetra is called Mahodadhi or the great ocean. Even the cremation ground here is named Swargadwara or gateway to the heaven. In worshipping Him, all the deities are worshipped and in visiting His Seat or Kshetra all pilgrimages are made. He is conceived as the king, the co-subject, the father, the brother and the son in One. All religious practices, social customs and cultural activities get their sanction by reference to what is followed in His temple and the deviations, if any are also made humble supplication of His sanction. The Lord of the Lords is the ideal of ideals for the people.

Lord Shree Shre Jagannath has been conceived as the emperor and the temple itself as His empire. The kings who were ruling over the state of Orissa from long past were considering themselves as the servants of the great Lord. The paraphernalia as is found in a royal household, is also discernible in the temple of Jagannath with much splendour and magnificence.



The three deities have different colours and symbols. As such Subhadra, the symbol of Prakrti or Sakti has yellow colour. Prakrti is the source of all living things and forms, which assumes various colours as they grow and develop, but at the origin are characterised by yellow colour. Balabhadra who is the symbol of pure being or pure indeterminate spirit, has white colour, which



is at the same time the synthesis and negation of all spectral, the veil of mystery which surrounds the Supreme Lord. Black is no colour in itself, nor it is a synthesis of colours. It is the negation of all colours as well as the colourlessness.

Lord Shree Jagannath is all pervading and He combines in Himself all the main five Hindu deities namely Shree Narayana, Shree Rudra, Shree Ganesh, Shree Surya and Shree Durga. When on the Ratna Simhasan of His temple, He is Shree Narayana; during the Nabakalebara ceremony, He is considered as Shree Rudra; during the Snana Yatra, He is conceived as Gajanana, (Shree Ganesh); at the time of car festival, He is taken to be Shree Suryanarayana; while enjoying the divine slumber (Sayana Yatra), He becomes Shree Durga. Thus all the main deities of Hinduism are considered to have been merged in Him. Thus, He is represented as the Supreme God to Saivas, Saktas, Ganapatyas, Sauras and Vaisnavas.

The eyes of Lord glisten with divine grace (Krupa) and the Supreme Lord is connected with the world of things and beings by Bhakti and Prema. Devotion (Bhakti) or absolute self surrender constitutes the most dominant note in the religious tradition of Shree Jagannath and before the Lord of the Universe all are deemed as equals and co-sharers of Mahaprasada. The famous Jagannath cult enjoins upon the acceptance of Mahaprasad by members of all castes and creeds together. The greatness of Mahaprasad has been loudly acclaimed in the Holy Puranas. After taking Mahaprasad, a devotee touches his head with that hand as he considers Mahaprasad to be most sacred. This custom was prevalent in the Vedic Age. So, especially we will never find in famous Jagannath cult the caste or creed feelings for taking Mahaprasad.

Nabadha Bhakti (Bhakti of nine types) is found specially on the occasion of famous Rath Yatra or the Car Festival which is observed on Asadha Sukla Dwitiya i.e. second day of the bright fortnight of the month of Asadha. The celebration of the Rath Yatra during the rainy season is significant.

The car of Lord Jagannatha which is named as Nandighosa has another name called the "Garudadhwaja". The car of Lord Balabhadra is named as "Taladhwaja". The mystery behind the formation of this car is still unsolved. Baladeva is the incarnation of "Sesa", the holy infinite serpent on whom Lord Visnu takes rest. It is said that Lord Balabhadra functions as mirror of wisdom and receives a view of the entire universe through that. As the mirror is placed below (tala) it is called 'tala.' Besides, pure and transparent qualities of the mirror are symbolically observed in Lord Balabhadra Himself, who is therefore designated as "Talanka". In this way His car is named as "Taladhwaja." The outline of a mirror is perpetually found in the banner of his car. The car of goddess 'Subhadra' is called both 'Devadalana' and "Padmadhwaja". Goddess Laksmi who is identified with Subhadra is again called Padma (the goddess on the lotus). Subhadra represents wealth, prosperity and grace (Sree.) Hence there is the lotus profile in the banner of Her car and it is called "Padmadhwaja" too. On the eve of the car festival the cars are virtually worshipped and the presence of other deities are admirably invoked. It is believed that such deities descend into the cars and protect the cars for nine days. Hence the three cars are considered as divine during this time. The tradition is that, all categories of people ought not to ascend these. In Puranas various rules and directions of ascending the cars have been mentioned. It is said that the protection of the cars for full nine days is much more important than all sorts of worship



and meditation before the deities therein. It is enjoined to safeguard and protect the attires, decorations, the weapons, the Parsva Devatas placed in the cars when these move.

When the hilarious people drag the cars with the help of ropes, they are advised not to drag these speedily either out of excitement and fun or out of exhibiting their strength indicating lack of respect for the cars. To drag the cars in high speed is unconventional, which is discouraged. As the hymn says :-

*"The car ought to be
Dragged very slowly
And the Holy wheels
Shall move slowly,
And with sounds,
Of universal love,*

*Saneh Saneh Ratho Neyo
Ratha snehatu cakrma." (Surya Purana)*

In this way the Gods descend into the cars and gradually seat themselves in the cars in supreme comfort. Hence the Gods get rest and poise if the cars move in a slow and sober manner. If the cars move otherwise, there might be some harm and it is believed that if by chance,

some part of a car is damaged, it leads to disaster for the country and humanity. It attracts people from different parts of India, nay from the world.

*"Rathe Tu Bamanam drustwa,
Punarjanma Na Bidyate"*

If we have strong devotion before the deities or self surrender completely before Him while seeing the Lord on the car, we the devotees get better pleasure of heavenly bliss and create eternal peace in our heart, ultimately called the Salvation.

All people, irrespective of caste, creed and religion can of course get maximum facility as to the viewing and worshipping the Lords placed on Rathas. This is possible because the evil of unsociability is consciously absent here.

*Jagannatha Swamy
Nayana Pathagami
Bhaba Tu Me.*

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