



Gajapati Maharaja Dibyasingha Deb

14th June 2023

*Om Namo Bhagavate Jagannathaya
Om Shree Gurave Namah*

MESSAGE

Shree Jagannatha Puri is one among the four Principal Dhamas (most sacred places of pilgrimage) for Hindus all over the world. The ancient festival of Ratha-yatra held in Puri every year symbolises and signifies the supreme and eternal presence of God, by whose Divine Grace this endless and seemingly infinite play of the Universe becomes possible. The One Omnipotent, Omniscient and Omnipresent God is indeed the Creator and Sustainer of the entire Universe of beings and things. It is to glorify Him and to seek His Grace that this grand festival has been celebrated in Puri since time immemorial.

In the established tradition of Sanatana Vaidika Dharma, the Presiding Deities never leave their sacred throne in the sanctum-sanctorum; and only the Utsava-Vigrahas (Festival Deities), representing the Presiding Deities, are taken out in procession in various festivals. In the tradition of Lord Jagannatha, on the other hand, the Presiding Deities themselves come out of the Temple every year on the occasion of Ratha-yatra to travel to the sacred Mundup where they first manifested during the First Manvantara. Our scriptures, such as Skanda Purana, state that since Lord Jagannatha (as his name suggests) is the Lord of the Universe, He comes out of the Temple on Asadha Shukla Paksha Dwitiya Tithi (falling this year on the 20th of June) so that all beings in the entire Universe can have His darshan and seek His Grace. After being worshipped for seven days in His Abode of First Manifestation (now Shree Gundicha Temple), the Lords are re-installed on the Ratnasinghasana in His Temple (Shreemandira) on Asadha Shukla Paksha Trayodashi (1st of July this year), bringing down the curtains on His sacred Yatra.

This festival also celebrates the essential unity of all mankind and the concept of universal brotherhood –“*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*” -- enshrined in our ancient cultural heritage. The entire humanity is the children of the One God. The whole world is one family. The festival of Ratha-yatra thus witnesses devotees from diverse nationalities and faiths, transcending all distinctions, coming joyously together to participate in this glorious festival and seek the Grace of the Lord.

It is indeed laudable that Shree Neelachala Seva Sangha, Delhi, has been celebrating the sacred Ratha-yatra of Mahaprabhu Shree Jagannatha in Hauz Khas over the last 44 years. This year they will once again hold the grand festival on the most auspicious Asadha Shukla Paksha Dwitiya Tithi, the 20th of June 2023. May the Lord bless the Ratha-yatra at Hauz Khas with complete success and shower His Grace upon all devotees. I trust and pray that this festival of the Lord will bring about a spiritual awakening there and promote peace, harmony and a spirit of universal brotherhood.

***Loka Samasta Sukhino Bhavantu
Om Shanti Shanti Shantihi***


(Dibyasingha Deb)