

Jagannatha Snana Yatra

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Iskcon Mauritius

26th June 2021

Hare Krishna. Jagannatha Baladeva Subhadra ki jai.

Srila Prabhupada ki jai.

Okay so I see some devotees some Mataji's, Prabhu's and Maharaja, there is Sri Krishna Chaitanya Swami Maharaja and I think there are so many more that I cannot see. I think you are most probably seeing me but it is also important that we also see the devotees.

Then I was thinking that it is more important just to see the Lord otherwise what good are these eyes if they do not show us the Lord and we don't use the eyes to see the Lord? English is okay right, I think, yes? There is no-one to tell me yes or no. I think yes.

**Jagannatha Swami nayana patha gami bhava tume
(Jagannatha Astaka)**

This prayer is part of Jagannathastaka. And He will be there, nayana patha gami. Nayana are the eyes and patha is the path so eyes on the path. In Sanskrit it is Patha so they have just borrowed this word patha from the mother language Sanskrit.

'May you be on the path of my eyes or be there wherever I turn. Please give me darasana.'

So that is the prayer and so that Jagannatha Swami is giving is darsana in the form of the deity. Kindly He is giving darsana in the form of deity and He gives us an opportunity to not only see but serve also. And today is that opportunity of seeing and serving Jagannatha on His snana yatra day.

Jagannatha Snana Yatra Mahotsava ki jai!

So this is one of the great festivals of Jagannatha Puri and of Jagannatha.

Jagannatha Puri is known for its festivals, a series of festival after festival and it is full of festivities. Jagannatha Puri is known for its festivals but today is a very special festival and of course in Jagannatha Puri it was held a few days ago, precisely on Jyestha Purnima day. Chitra, Vaishakh, Jyestha. This is the third month and then a full moon. Jyestha Purnima day is the day of snana yatra in Jagannatha Puri.

So a long, long time ago, don't ask me how long ago (laughter). Probably no one knows or no one could say exactly how long ago. On that day of Jyestha Purnima, King Indradyumna also did snana (bathing) of Lord Jagannatha. In fact that was the first ever snana of Jagannatha and that first snana yatra day is considered the birthday of Jagannatha Baladeva Subhadra.

On that day they officially appeared as Jagannatha Baladeva and Subhadra. So what we do every year is celebrate the birth anniversary of Jagannatha on snana yatra day, Jyestha Purnima day. And there's a whole process that is followed since long, long time ago in Jagannatha Puri. A process which is there in the scriptures, on snana yatra day.

Snana yatra day is one of the two days, two times where He comes out of his mandir, Jagannatha Mandir (temple). And then the rathayatra day. So that is the second time and so there is only two times He comes out. So Jagannatha, He doesn't come, He is brought, He doesn't have legs to walk so devotees pick Him up.

I was just remembering your Jagannatha in Mauritius, your Jagannatha is a huge Jagannatha, you have a big Jagannatha, I haven't seen any big size Jagannatha like your Jagannatha in Mauritius which is right behind the screen curtain there. but

of course Jagannatha Puri's Jagannatha is the biggest deity in the world.

Otherwise also He is Jagannatha, so he has to be the biggest one and the heaviest one and that Jagannatha, the Panda's they carry Him to the altar outside in the courtyard of Jagannatha Puri temple. I don't know, probably you have enjoyed Jagannatha's prasadam in Jagannatha Puri temple. There is a whole ananda bazaar, they call it.

Tons of prasadam is sold, distributed and many buy and they just sit down there and they just relish Jagannatha prasadam. So in that area, the ananda bazar area, there is a special altar and it is always there. And only once on that day, once in that week and once in a year they have snana yatra day and at that time it is very well, beautifully decorated and the deities preside over on that altar.

And then exactly like rathayatra day, that kind of crowd gathers in Jagannatha Puri. Probably this is the next big crowd in Puri, Snana Yatra day. Thousands in attendance to witness, today of course only ten, fifteen devotees have come. Of course more could have come but because of this pandemic I could see you all with a mask on.

But in Puri a big gathering comes to attend this festival and to witness this festival. The bathing of Jagannatha Baladeva Subhadra happens only once in a year on Snana Yatra day. On other days they do Abhishek of Uttasava Murti but on Snana Yatra day they directly pour water on Jagannatha Baladeva Subhadra and this water is not from anywhere and everywhere, it is not tap water or well water, no.

In Jagannatha Puri temple in the courtyard next to Jagannatha's kitchen- Jagannatha has a huge kitchen, a big kitchen. I had an opportunity to visit the kitchen. Of course we saw it from outside through the windows and doors and it is like a small, quite small but good sized factory and so next

to the kitchen there is a well. So they draw the water from that separate well in either golden or silver or they may sometimes use copper pots.

This is part of the process which they follow and which is being followed for a long, long time. It is said that Brahma was the one who was presiding over the function of temple opening and deity installation of Jagannatha Puri temple. Brahma! Brahma personally was present!

arati karena brahma adi deva gane

As we sing everyday in sandhya arati that Brahma offers arati of Gauranga and Jagannatha is Gauranga, He is Krishna.

jei gaura sei krishna sei jagannatha.

So Brahma was present and he is worshiping Jagannatha including the snana yatra process. So they follow that and it is all written and they follow that. So water is then bought in a procession and there are special pujaris, daitas, and only they can carry those pots. Then with mantras and singing with playing instruments, water pots are bought to the altar and the grand abhishek, the auspicious ceremony of bathing Jagannatha Baladeva and Subhadra, this snana yatra takes place.

There are thousands who come to witness the snana yatra of Jagannatha Swami.

Jagannatha's Swami ki jai!

The different bhoga offerings go on and the offering of flowers and prayers happen and this is the day where in the evening or during the day there is a very special dressing. The Lord is dressed like a Gaja. Gaja veshha, like an elephant with a trunk and big ears and he looks exactly like an elephant, all the three deities Jagannatha Baladeva Subhadra, on this day of snana yatra day.

I don't know whether you were here but that is what you should be also doing, offering obeisances to this Hathi vesha to Jagannatha. There was some time in the past when a devotee of Ganesh was visiting Jagannatha Puri temple on snana yatra day. Of course his Isha Deva (worshipable Lord) was Ganesh and so he was expecting Jagannatha to also look like Ganesh.

As He had come and seen Jagannatha but there was no resemblance the Lord was not looking like Ganesh so this devotee was disappointed and he was going away. So Jagannatha realized the disappointment and then the Lord prompted one of the Pujari's. 'Hey go call that particular person and ask him to come back.'

So that is what the pujari did and the Ganesh bhakta was back in front of Jagannatha and the Lord was dressed, or rather the Lord had dressed Himself and He gave darsana looking like Ganesh, looking like an elephant as you know. Ganesh's half elephant head part and the rest is human like. So that is another speciality and so from that time Lord Jagannatha displayed that pastime of looking like and dressing like Jagannatha.

So from that day onwards or that year onwards on snana yatra day that is the dress Jagannatha wears. So as you know I don't know what season you have in Mauritius but the rainy season is here in India at that time and in Jagannatha Puri also. So while bathing Jagannatha the cool wind is blowing and this caused the sickness, Jagannatha becomes sick and feverish so the day after snana yatra is another utsava, another festival if you want to call it a festival.

They call it Annavasara Utsava, festival and this lasts for two weeks and the speciality of this festival is that the Lord is playing the pastime of a sick person. He is sick and he is not well! The doctor comes and the diagnosis is done and the prescription is bed rest for the Lord. No visitors. So from the day after snana yatra all the doors are completely closed

shut and not a single visitor is allowed inside.

And Jagannatha Swami is on a diet. There is no deity in the world who enjoys as much quantity of bhoga, the amount of bhoga offerings that Jagannatha has. The Lord enjoys so much rice and other preparations. We have seen and I have seen that six times a day, as I told you that the factory, the kitchen of Jagannatha has one thousand cooks! How many people do you have in Mauritius? There are one thousand cooks cooking for Jagannatha and he enjoys big meals six times a day!

So the Lord is known for His dancing in Rasa Lila in Vrndavan and like that in different places He is known for different things and in Jagannatha Puri the Lord is known for His big bhoga.

bhoktaram yajna tapasam

(B.G 5.29)

Translation

'I am the enjoyer of all sacrifices.

So He is a big bhogi, big bhokta, big enjoyer but during this time He drinks some juices with some herbs and therefore this is quite a austere program for Jagannatha as He is not well. The doctors and Laksmi personally is looking after the Lord and of course this is a lila, a pastime of the Lord. The snana yatra abhishek is a pastime and in getting sick, that is a pastime also.

Our getting sick, could that be called a pastime? 'You know I have coronavirus – I am a positive case and this is my pastime. I am playing a pastime.' We can't say that so that's the big difference between us and the Lord or our bodies and Jagannatha's body. In fact Jagannatha does not have body but Jagannatha is the body.

We have a body and we think we are that body. This 'we are' is our illusion. We are the soul and we have a body. So there are

two things but in the case of Jagannatha, He is the body, He is the form. When we get sick and this happens to us and that happens to us and so much suffering, the reactions of this karma and that karma. Karma catches up with us we are inconvenience and we have to suffer.

After all this we still have to take another birth but that does not apply to the Lord, does He have to take another birth? No, He is getting sick and these are His pastimes, this is not bad Karma.

**na mam karmani limpanti
na me karma-phale sprha
(BG 4.14)**

Translation

There is no work that affects Me; nor do I aspire for the fruits of action

The Lord has already declared in the Bhagavad gita that karma cannot entangle or bind the Lord. So during his Annavasara, snana yatra this is another festival of the Lord getting sick, but does He really get sick and does He really have fever? One year there were some Iskcon devotees, Yatri's in Jagannatha Puri and they were talking amongst each other and some were saying 'Hey does He really get sick? I don't think so, I don't believe it.'

So some talk was going on and then this reached some Panda's ears and then that Panda said, 'Are any of you doctors here?' There were some doctors so he asked them 'Do you have a thermometer?' They said 'Yes we do' so that pujari, the Panda brought that thermometer and touched the place under the arms, the arm pit.

After some time the reading was measured, 104 fever! The pujari showed that to the Hare Krishna walas, just see. And the devotees were convinced, 'Yes yes the Lord is sick, Lord is sick.' So in Jagannatha Puri you will not get darsana of

Jagannatha during that period. If you really want to have darsana of Jagannatha at that time you will have to travel some twenty or thirty kilometres away from Jagannatha Puri.

What is that place? It is called Alarnath. Lord Jagannatha gives darsana in Alarnath where He is a deity and He doesn't look like Jagannatha. It's a Vishnu form and the Alwar's from South India have been serving this deity. So from Alwar it became Alarnath, the Nath (Lord) of the Alwar's.

The Alwar's are special vaisnava poets and they are great devotees of the Lord, always glorifying the Lord. So they have been taking care of this deity near Jagannatha Puri, so the name is Alarnath. In Jagannatha Puri He is Jagannatha and over there He is Alarnath. So that used to be Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's program, during this Annavasara period Chaitanya Mahaprabhu would go to Alarnath and take darsana.

At one time He was taking darsana and He fell flat on the ground and in fact He fell on a rock and by the touch of Gauranga Mahaprabhu's Gaura Anga, His golden form, His ecstatic and trembling form, as this form touched that Sila, that rock, it melted! After dandavat pranam, offering of obeisances like a stick, as Mahaprabhu stood up He left an impression of His form on that stone.

And if you ever go to Alarnath, we have been there a number of times and we have seen the Sila. It is there and you can take darsana of that Sila and it will remind you 'Yes, Mahaprabhu was certainly here taking darsana.' So in Jagannatha Puri there is festival after festival and a series of festivals beginning with snana yatra and then Netra utsav and Gundicha marjana and then rathayatra and Hera Panchami and Ulta ratha.

Okay Sri Ksetra Jagannatha Puri Dham ki jai!

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna
Krishna Krishna Hare Hare
Hare Rama Hare Rama

Rama Rama Hare Hare