

**CHAPTER - III**

**SRI CHAITANYA AND PANCHASAKHA**

Sri Chaitanya's meet and consequent close intimacy with Sri Jagannath Das and other members of Pancha-Sakha find elaborate and vivid description in Chaitanya Charita Books of contemporary and after time Oriya writers. Sri Chaitanya, by dint of his personality, won the heart of the people and it was Hari-kirtan which resulted a close intimacy between Sri Chaitanya and Pancha-sakha; but Chaitanya Charita Books of Bengali writers make no mention of it. Any way, the authenticity of the event concerned is no more a matter of doubt.

Ancient manuscripts of Oriya writers contemporary to Chaitanya's time and after, have brought to light many things. One such manuscript is 'Chaitanya Chakada' published in 1985. In 1987, Prof. Brindavan Acharya, published another one known as 'Vaishnava Leelamrita'. The writer of this manuscript was Madhav Pattnaik who was the personal assistant of Ray Mamananda. Madhav Pattnaik has admitted it in this own manuscript.<sup>1</sup>

#### **SRI JAGANNATH DAS AND SRI CHAITANYA :**

The events described in Vaisnava Leelamrita relating to Sri Chaitanya's meet and closeness with Sri Jagannath Das and other members of Pancha-Sakha, are reliable ones.

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1. Madhav Pattnaik - Vaishnav Leelamrita

Here interesting thing is that they have got striking similarities with events - described by Govindadas Babaji, in his 'Chaitanya Chakada'.

Regarding Sri Chaitanya's first meet with Sri Jagannath Das, the description found in 'Vaishnav Leelamrita' and 'Chaitanya Chakada' are nearest to identical. According to Vaishnav Leelamrita, SriChaitanya stayed at Sarvabhauma's residence for about a month since his first visit of lord Jagannath.<sup>2</sup>

During this period Sri Chaitanya used to visit the lord everyday. In one evening he found Sri Jagannath Das reciting Bhagavata under 'Bata Banesh'. There after he keenly observed the outward expression of spiritual emotions of Jagannath Das and out of much pleasure and emotion, he embraced Jagannath Das and took the latter to be a great devotee. It was there and then that Sri Chaitanya addressed Sri Jagannath Das as 'Swamy' where as Jagannath Das addressed Sri Chaitanya as 'Prabhu'.<sup>3</sup>

Therefore, Sri Chaitanya and Sri Jagannath Das praised each other. Out of emotion Sri Chaitanya uttered that he would not leave his (Jagannath Das) company since he would not find such a feeling of love as that of Swamy from any where else.

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2. Madhav Pattnaik Vaishnav Leelamrita, Ch.IV L-35  
3. Ibid Ch.IV L-49

The exchange of cordial emotions between Sri Chaitanya and Sri Jagannath Das has been compared by Madhav pattnaik as a river embracing the sea.<sup>4</sup> Govindadas Babaji, in his 'Chaitanya Chakada' has presented an identical description. According to 'Chaitanya Chakada' Sri Chaitanya's first meet with Sri Jagannath Das took place when the former caught sight of a person reciting Bhagavat in front of Bata Ganesh. Later on Sri Chaitanya came to know that the person so reciting the Bhagavat was called Sri Jagannath Das, a Oriya Brahmin and a great devotee of lord Jagannath.<sup>5</sup>

Then Sri Chaitanya sent Swarupa Damodar to Jagannath Das to enquire about the reason as to why Bhagavata did not contain the name of Radha.<sup>6</sup> In reply Sri Jagannath Das explained that both Radha and Krishna are one : without one the existence of the other is unimaginable. He further added that Radha is inexpressible and if this very name appears for a single time, Bhagavata would be expressed in the name of Radha-leelamrita.<sup>7</sup> This idea of oneness of Radha-krishna and their individuality is also found in the description of Purva-Siddhanga by Sri Jagannath Das in

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4. Madhav Pattnaik Vaishnav Leelamrita Ch.IV L-28-50

Ed.by Dr.B.C.Acharya

5. Govindadas Babaji : Sri Chaitanya Chakada P-13-16

Ed.by Padmasree

Sadasiva Rathasarma

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.

Vaishnav Leelamrita.

According to the description in Vaishnav Leelamrita, Sri Chaitanya and Jagannath Das had already been very close to each other by 1518. One day Sri Chaitanya asked Jagannath Das to explain Purva-siddhanga.<sup>8</sup> Out of immense pleasure Jagannath Das explained that Radha and Krishna are one i.e. one is not different from other. He further added that he himself was born out of the smile of Radha whereas Sri Chaitanya was born out of the smile of Krishna.<sup>9</sup> Srichaitanya was so much pleased with that utterance that he at once embraced Jagannath Das and told that the latter had expressed the greatest (Ativada) words. Immediately after that he tied his upper garment on the head of Jagannath and offered him the title Ati-Vada.<sup>10</sup>

Chaitanya Chakada of Govindadas Babaji like Madhav Pattnaik's 'Vaishnava Leelamrita, also describe that Srichaitanya offered the title of Ativada to Sri Jagannath Das.

According to Chaitanya Chakada, one day Sri Chaitanya and Sri Jagannath Das were standing near Garuda Pillar to pay their devotion to Lord Jagannath. In the mean

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8. Madhav Pattnaik : Vaishnav Leelamrita Ch.V.L-109  
Ed. by Dr.B.C. Acharya

9. Ibid. Ch.V, L-116-117

10. Ibid. Ch.V, L-121

time, Jagannath Das observed that Sri Chaitanya's body was trembling and tears were rolling down from his eyes as he failed to garland lord Jagannath with Vakula mala which was tied with a knot. A garland with a knot is not to be offered to Jagannath. Sri Chaitanya was ignorant about it because of extreme emotion. So Jagannath das made Sri Chaitanya Conscious of that mistake. Immediately after that Sri Chaitanya untied the garland and offered the same to Jagannath. Then Sri Chaitanya conferred the title of 'Anti-vadi' to Jagannatha Das.<sup>11</sup>

Besides these identical presentation of descriptions and events, Chaitanya Chakada of Govindadas Babaji and Vaishnav Leelamrita of Madhav Pattnaik offer a lot of other reliable accounts of the relations between Sri Chaitanya and Jagannath Das.

In one occasion, Sri Jagannath Das, when asked, explained before Srichaitanya the reason as to why Sudarsan is worshipped in Sri Mandeer instead of Radha. Chaitanya Chakada, here offers a beautiful description and underlying meaning. Sudarsan Chakra (wheel), as explained by Jagannath Das, is round like Rasa-Mancha (stage) and therefore, symbolises Maha-rasa-arena and Maha-Bhava (Supreme emotion). Therefore, it is worshipped in Sri Mandeer. On the occasion of Radhastami, Sudarsan is being carried on

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11. Govindadas Babaji : Sri Chaitanya Chakada  
Ed.by Sadasiva  
Radhasarma.

a palanquin to Jameswar Mahadeva of Balisahi who keeps the account of income and expenditure of Lord jagannatha. It is there before Jameswar Mahadeva that the Chief Priest of the temple presents and explains the entire account before Sudarsan.<sup>12</sup>

In Chaitanya Chakada, another event of great importance, deciding the Siddhi (perfection) and greatness of Srichaitanya and Jagannath Das, has been presented. According to it, on the fourth day of the month of Kartika, the Deula karana (Temple Chronicler) of the temple got a chance to see who between Sri Chaitanya and Sri Jagannath Das, was a greater Siddha-Purusha, on that day the wind was blowing fast and it was impossible to bring vaitha (lamp) from the Rosha-Ghara (Kitchen) to the temple for worship of the lord. So bringing of Vaitha lighted from Rosha-Ghara (kitchen) up to the temple, as they thought, would be the test for Sri Chaitanya and Jagannath Das. In the mean time, Sri Chaitanya and Jagannath Das arrived at the spot. Sri Chaitanya was requested by a Karan (Chronicler) known as Akhandal Patra to bring the Vaitha Sri Chaitanya readily accepted the request and brought a Vaitha from the Rosha-Ghara. Then Jagannatha Das also held a Vaitha and followed

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12. Govindadas Babaji : Chaitanya Chakada

Srichaitanya. To the great surprise of all, it was seen that both Srichaitanya and Jagannath Das came out successful in brining Vaitha upto Jagamohan. As a result, they proved themselves equally great.

In order to commemorate this event, two Vaitha (lamps), one on behalf of Radhakanta Matha and other on behalf of Vada Oriya Matha of Jagannath Das, are lighted at Jay Vijaya gate for entire days of the month of Kartika every year till today and special landed property has also been allotted to both the maths for performing the said seva for all time to come.

**MADHAVI DASI :**

Vaishnav Leetamrita of Madhav Pattnaik presents an interesting description depicting the relations between Chhota Hari Das and Madhavi Dasi, the sister of Sikhi Mohanty. This description is interesting due to the fact that it is indicative of the jealousy which Bengali Vaishnav saints expressed against the close intimacy between Jagannath Das and Sri Chaitanya. Chhota Hari Das, when caught red handed by Sikhi mohanty, was beaten by the latter as he paid a visit to Madhavi Dasi despite repeated warning against such unwanted visit.

The Bengali Vaishnav devotees of Puri reported the event to Sri Chaitanya who instead of siding with the Bengali devotees, expressed his views not to see the face



of Chhota Hari Das. Under such situation, some Bengali devotees became unhappy at such a behaviour of Srichaitanya who expressed his indifferent attitude towards their grivances and was in regular practice to address Jagannath Das as swamy who, according to them (Bengali devotees) was Anaupadesiya (one who is not initiated).<sup>13</sup>

As a result, the so called devotees left Puri. Then some other devotees led by Sivananda Sen requested Sri Chaitanya to bring those devotees back to Puri, Sri Chaitanya proposed Sri Jagannath Das to accompany him to Jajpur for the purpose but Swamy declined.

Lastly, as per the wish of Sri Chaitanya, a letter was written by Jagannath Das and Sivananda Sen went to Jajpur with that letter which was given to the Bengali devotees. Sivananda Sen reported Sri Chaitanya's request for their return to Puri. But nothing resulted. The Bengali devotees did not return, rather they took the letter to Bengal where it was called as "Chaitanya Sikshastaka" though of course, according to the views of Madhav Pattnaik, the same had actually been written by Sri Jagannath Das.<sup>14</sup> But this has not been corroborated by any other Oriya or Bengali writers.

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13. Madhav Pattnaik : Vaishnav Leelamrita Ch.VI - L-63  
Ed.by Dr.B.C. Acharya

14. Ibid.

Swamy Jagannath Das was called Anaupadesiya since he had not been initiated. Therefore, he desired to be initiated. According to the description of Vaishnav leelamrit Sri Chaitanya advised Jagannath Das to be initiated by Balarama Das who according to Sri Chaitanya was eldest among Pancha Sakha and a great devotee. When Kashi Mishra heard of it, he became disgusted and enraged because Balarama Das was a sudra by caste. But this displeasure and opposition of Kashi Mishra had no impact on Jagannath Das who by then, was in a look out for Social-equality which proclaimed all human souls are equal as parts of the supreme soul. As such he considered it wise to be initiated by Balaram Das, though the latter was a sudra by caste.<sup>15</sup>

Here, a clear indication is seen that both Sri Chaitanya and Jagannath Das had taken a brave and wise attempt to wipeout casteism in the society by proclaiming social equality.

From the serial presentation of events described in vaishnav leelamrita it is learnt that after 1520 A.D. Sri Chaitanya proposed before Panchasakha the organisation of Samkirtan in different places of Orissa in different times of a year. That proposal was welcomed and Pancha Sakha led by Sri Chaitanya used to go to different places

for Samkirtan in different times every year. In this way, they had been to Alarnath, Bentpur, Bhubaneswar, Jajpur, Cuttack, Kendrapara and Jhankad.

From the description of Vaishnav-Leelamrita, it is learnt that "Bhagavata" of Sri Jagannath was worshipped like Krsna where Samkirtan was held.<sup>16</sup> Sri Jagannath Das, himself was the director of Samkirtan.<sup>17</sup> Sometimes an Oriya kirtan song composed by Sri Jagannath Das was also sang by the samkirtan Group. From this description, it is clear that during the time of 'Hari Kirtan, also Sri Jagannath Das was a close companion of Sri Chaitanya.

Sri Jagannatha Das was not only the close companion of Sri Chaitanya but also was the only one present at the time of latter's sad demise. Sri Chaitanya breathed his last in 1533 A.D. in the month of Baisakh, out of a fatal wound he received in his leg while dancing during Kirtan at Puri. It was Sri Jagannath Das who was attending the Lord.<sup>18</sup> After the demise, Jagannath Das called for Ray Ramananda to decide the next course of action. Sri Madhav Pattnaik here presents a pathetic account of the last days of Sri Chaitanya when Sri Jagannath Das was engaged in nursing the lord with dedication, devotion, utmost love and care.

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16. Madhav Pattnaik : Vaisnava Leelamrita Ch.VIII-L-98  
Ed.by Dr.B.C. Acharya

17. Ibid. Ch.VIII-L-88

18. Ibid.

After that Sri Jagannath Das decided not to come to the temple when his close companion and lord was no more. As a result, he resided at the seashore<sup>19</sup> where he breathed his last. The place now is called Satlahari Math and in the compound of this Math, the body of Jagannath Das had been given a samadhi.

#### **SRI CHAITANYA AND ACHYUTANANDA :**

It is a matter of great surprise that while the meet between Sri Chaitanya and Achyutananda finds elaborate description in the writings of Oriya devotees, the same is absent in Sri Chaitanya Bhagavata, Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita and other writings of Bengali devotees.

According to the description found in 'Chaitanya Chakada', Sri Achyutananda heard many things about Sri Chaitanya before he met the latter. This fact is proved by the discussion between Achyutananda and his father Sri Dinabandhu Khuntia found in Chaitanya Chakada.<sup>20</sup> According to it, Sri Dinabandhu-Khuntia was the father of Achyutananda.

Once Achyutananda explained the spiritual life (leela) of Srichaitanya at Purusottam Kshetra before his father. According to him Sri Chaitanya who was the

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19. Madhav Pattnaik : Vaisnava Leelamrita

Ch.IX, L-156

20. Govindadas Babaji : Chaitanya Chakada

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Ed.by Sadasiva Rathasarma.

exponent of Bhakti Marga, knew the inner meaning of 'Yugala Tatva'.

Achyutananda, then, requested his father to proceed to Srikshetra where he could pay a visit to the lord and receive initiation into 'Mantra'.

The discussion, as presented above was held at Tilakana of Nembala which was the birth place of Sri Achyutananda. As per the discussion, Sri Achyutananda and his father had been to Srikshetra to pay a visit to the lord Srichaitanya. According to Sri Chaitanya Chakada they arrived at Srikshetra in Saka 1436, on Sukla Astami of Vaisakha.<sup>21</sup> Then they took bath in Indra Dyumna tank and proceeded towards the temple. On the way, they saw the image of Sri Jagannath alongwith Rama-krishna and Madana Mohan in a Vimana (car) going on 'Chandan Yatra'. Here, Achyutananda found Sri Chaitanya engaged in 'Samkirtana' alongwith his devotees. That was Achyutananda's first visit to Sri Chaitanya. Sri Chaitanya Chakada describes it in following manner :-

'Sri Achyutananda filled his eyes with tears as he sees (Sri Chaitanya) at a distance (1) made his old father to see Sri Chaitanya Chandra.'<sup>22</sup>

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21. Govindadas Babaji : Chaitanya Chakada P-64  
Ed.by Sadasiva Rathasarma.

22. Ibid P-65

Sri Achyutananda, prior to his meet with Sri Chaitanya, was a Siddha-Purusha, i.e. Yogi of Yoga-Marga i.e. path of Yoga. But his coming in contact with Sri Chaitanya - added something extra to his spiritual life : he attained the higher stage in Bhaktimarga of visudha prema i.e. Pure Devotional love. This fact is proved in his 'Nitya-Rasa', Generally a Siddha-Yogi, at the time of attainment, is seen to have full contentment to see the yugal image of Siva-Sakti, but Achyutanand, at that type of stage, found the Nitya-Rasa of Radha-krishna in stead of Siva-Sakti.<sup>23</sup>

Irrespective of the fact that Sri Achyutananda was the staunch exponent of void (Sunya) ; his relations with Sri Chaitanya was cordial. He was, in fact, a close companion of the lord during Nagar Kirtan procession and Rasa leela.

According to Vaishnav leelamrita Sri Chaitanya once proposed before Panchasakha to proceed on Kirtan procession to different places of Orissa for the purpose of spreading kirtan in Orissa.<sup>24</sup>

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23. Achyutananda Das Nitya-Rasa P-96

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24. Madhav Pattnaik : Vaisnava Leelamrita P-62

Ed.by Dr.Brindavan L-32-35

Acharya Ch.VIII

As it is sensed from the description of the Vaishnav leelamrita, the Panchasakha accepted the proposal of the lord and in the process, they were in habit of touring different places of Orissa to have 'Hari Kirtan' there. Sri Achyutananda was one among the close companions of Srichaitanya during the time of this kirtan processions.

Sri Chaitanya, along with Panchasakha including Achyutananda, used to go to Alarnath during the days of Anabasar.<sup>25</sup> They used to visit Ekamra Ksheta in Fullmoon day of the month of Pausa and from there they went to Linga Raj, Kedar Gouri and Ananta Vasudev.<sup>26</sup>

It is also indicated that Sri Achyutananda accompanied Sri Chaitanya in Kirtan Group, which visited Kenduli village, the birth place of Jaydev.<sup>27</sup>

The places like Kakatpur, Cuttack, Jajpur, Kendrapada were also visited by Sri Chaitanya and Achyutananda was a Kirtan Companion of the lord.

As per the advice of Sri Achyutananda, one of his disciples called Ramachandra, invited swamy Jagannath Das

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25. Madhav Pattnaik : Vaisnav Leelamrita P-34

26. Ibid P-42-46

27. Ibid P-53.

to Jhankar, the seat of Sarala Chandi to have their Kirtan there. As a result Sri Chaitanya being accompanied by Panchasakha including Achyutananda, had been to Jankar where Radhabhav (idea) was created in the bodily expression of Sri Chaitanya and Pancha sakha <sup>28</sup>.

The poet Madhav Pattnaik describes in detail about the Hari Kirtan and Rasa leela of Sri Chaitanya and Pancha Sakha specifying the role taken by each member of Panchasakha. According to him Jagannath Das was the Chief Director of Kirtan, 'Kirtan Rasa Mahameru'<sup>29</sup> where as Achyutananda Das was Chief in directing Rasa leela in Kirtan.<sup>30</sup> Sri Achyutananda not only joined the Nagar Kirtan at Puri but also accompanied the lord and Kirtan Group comprising other Panchasakha during their trip to different parts of Orissa for the spread of Hari Kirtan. From this it is understood that Sri Achyutananda Das, despite his void philosophy, was one of the close companions of Sri Chaitanya at Puri.

Sri Achyutananda was present at Puri when Sri Chaitanya passed away. He became so much of emotional out of broken heart that he asked Jagannath Das as to why did

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28. Madhav Pattnaik : Vaishnav leelamrita P-103-109

Ed.by Dr.B.C.Acharya Ch.VIII

29. Ibid Ch.VIII,L-88

30. Ibid. Ch.VIII,L-87



the latter fail to keep the lord with him so that he could not see Him.<sup>31</sup> His emotional out burst at the demise of the lord certainly indicates his love and close intimacy with the latter. Sri Achyutananda was, in fact, one of the close companions of Sri Chaitanya. Achyutananda Das, like other members of Pancha-sakha, was very close to the lord and his yogic talent had been recognised by the latter. Sri Achyutananda, on the other hand, recognised Sri Chaitanya as lord, who according to the former, spread 'Hari nama Maha-mantra' there by a large number of devotees appeared around him and it was then and there that the five associates surrounded the lord and made their mark.<sup>32</sup>

**SRI CAITANYA AND BALARAM DAS :**

Balaram Das, the author of the Oriya Ramayana, was the oldest among the Pancha-Sakhas i.e. the five associates. According to Dr. Mayadhar Mansingh, Balaram Das, the most talented and oldest among Panchasakha was born in 1472. He was a man of middle-age by the time Chaitanya established himself at Puri.<sup>33</sup>

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31. Madhav Pattnaik : Vaishnav Leelamrita Ch.IX

Ed. by Dr.B.C.Acharya L-140-141

32. Achyutananda Das, Sunya Samhita P-I, Ch.10

33. Dr. Mayadhar Mansingh : History of Oriya  
Literature,1942 P-91

Like other members of the Panchasakha, Balaram Das was also a close associate and considered to be a 'Parikar' of Sri Caitanya though of course according to Prof. Brundavan Acharya, he was not a follower of 'Prema Bhakti marga'. But Sri Caitanya, being pleased with the deep devotion of Balaram Das, considered a pride for his life to keep contact with the latter. It is due to this reason, we usually find Balaram Das as a parikar (belonging to Caitanya Sampradaya) of Sri Chaitanya.<sup>34</sup>

That Sri Balaram Das as a member of Panchasakha, was a close associate of Sri Chaitanya, is proved from Sunya Samhita of Achyutananda Das, another reputed member of Pancha Sakha. According to Sunya samhita Sri Caitanya considered 'the five associates' as his five souls.<sup>35</sup> Even the contact and closeness between Sri Chaitanya and Panchasakhas including Balaram Das, has been supported by Yasobanta Das, in his 'Chaurasi Agyan'.<sup>36</sup>

Matta Balaram Das was not only closely related to Sri Chaitanya, he was the spiritual mentor of Jagannath Das and he initiated Jagannath Das as per the instruction of Sri Chaitanya.<sup>37</sup>

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34. Prof. Brindavan : Odiya Sahityara P-104  
Acharya Samkhipta Parichaya

35. Sri Achyutananda Das: Sunya Samhita Ch-11th

36. Sri Yasobanta Das : Chaurasi Agyan P-93

37. Prabhat Mukherjee : History of Medieval P-138  
Vaisnavism in Orissa.

Govindadas Babaji, in his 'Caitanya Chakada' has also described the initiation of Jagannath Das by Balaram Das.<sup>38</sup> Madhav Pattnaik, in his 'Vaishnav leelamrita' gives a detailed description of this event. According to Vaishnav Leelamrita Swamy (Jagannath Das) asked Caitanya to take initiation into mantra and sing the name of Krishna according to 'Raga marga'. There upon, Caitanya instructed Jagannath Das to approach Balaram Das and asked him to be initiated into mantra.<sup>39</sup> Sri Jagannath Das acted according to the instruction of the lord.

Balaram Das of Panchasakha Group was well versed in Tatva<sup>40</sup> who wrote Ramayan, an epic in Oriya. His deep devotion and interest in 'Bhakti Bhava' was a main attraction for Caitanya. This great talent of Balaram Das, has been described in Vaishnava leelamrita of Madhav Pattnaik, the personal attendant of Ray Ramananda. According to it Balaram Das was a greatman who was the son of Somanatha. He was well versed in Vedanta Tatva. He was

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38. Govindadas Babaji : Chaitanya Chakada : P-83

Ed.by. Sadasiva Rathasarma

39. Madhav Pattnaik : Vaisnava Leelamrita - Ch.VII, L-2-7

Ed.by Dr.B.C. Acharya.

40. Sri Surendra Mohanty: Odiya Sahityara

Krama Vikash (1978)-P-58

a Yoga Purusha who wrote Ramayana.<sup>41</sup> A great scholar, Balaram Das, concentrated upon vedanta sastra having strong mind in Brahma Gyana, silent in most of the time, he was engaged in Kirtana.<sup>42</sup>

As has been discussed before hand, Balaram Das was a man of middle-age by the time Caitanya established himself at Puri. In spite of the fact that he was not a follower of Prema-bhakti marga of Caitanya Sampradaya in the initial phase of his contact with Caitanya, he, however, won the heart of the lord for his talent and Bhakti-bhava i.e. devotion. In course of time, he became a close associate of Chaitanya like Sri Jagannath Das and other Pancha-sakha. In this connection, Vaishnava leelamrita of Madhav Pattnaik offers a detailed account as to how he joined the kirtan group engaged in Harikirtan in the line of Raganuga Bhakti-marga.

As per the description of Vaishnav Leelamrita, a special Rasa arena (mandap) had been constructed near 'Vata-Ganesha and its architect, according to Madhav Pattnaik, was Kanhai Khuntia. It was here at Rasamandap that the Pancha-sakha alongwith Kanhai Khuntia and Gopal Guru held Samkirtan daily.<sup>43</sup> In course of time, as the

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41. Madhav Pattnaik : Vaisnava Leelamrita Ch.V, L-131-33  
Ed.by Dr.B.C.Acharya

42. Ibid. Ch.IX, L-28-31

43. Ibid. Ch.II, L-22-28

Pancha-sakha came in contact with Caitanya, Samkirtan was adopted and the name of Hari was sung by Sri Caitanya himself, Ray Ramananda, swarupa Damodar and all the Five associates i.e. Pancha-sakha.<sup>44</sup>

From this inference, it may be surmised that the Hari-samkirtan was perhaps the Chief Media which resulted such a type of closeness between lord Caitanya and Pancha-sakha, Balaram Das, the eldest among Pancha-Sakha, and well-versed in Vedanta Tatra and Brahma-Gyana, also became one among the Group engaged in Hari-kirtana.

Sri Caitanya, by dint of his magnetic personality, prema-bhakti, gradually won the heart of the people. According to the description of Vaishnava leelamrita Sri Caitanya offered a 'Salagram' to Raghunath Das, who was a sudra by caste. Kasi Misra became enraged at this event but Pancha-sakhas including Balaram Das concentrated upon Samkirtan alongwith Sri Caitanya. It seemed as if they gave up 'Vaidhi-marga' and embraced Raganuga-bhakti-marga.<sup>45</sup> This was perhaps a transition from 'Gyana-misra' to 'Raganuga' Vaishnavism which is based on Pure-love and devotion and sees no difference between low or high.

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44. Madhav Pattnaik : Vaisnav leelamrita Ch-I  
Ed.by Dr.B.C.Acharya L-74-80

45. Ibid. Ch.VII,L-19-30

The period of war between Pratap Rudra and Krishnadeva Roy was a tragic period in the history of Orissa. As per the description of Vaishnav-Leelamrita, flood and famine became other enemies of Orissa. The Pancha-sakhas held Samkirtan in villages and preached the name of Krishna<sup>46</sup> perhaps to keep up the moral strength of the people. Here, two things are obvious from this description. First, Balaram Das, being one among the Panchasakha, was by that time, also one among the kirtan group of Sri Caitanya. Secondly, the allegation that Sri Caitanya's Raganuga Vaishnavism had demoralised the militia of Orissa, may not hold good. Rather, Panch-sakhas, being inspired by the 'Prema-bhakti-marga' of the lord, wanted to keep up the moral strength of the people while war was going on in the frontier.

As per the description of Vaishnav-leelamrita, when peace treaty was concluded with Vijaynagar, Prataprudra Dev, out of mental agony, desired to listen to the name of Krishna through Hari-kirtan before him. For this purpose, he called for Swamy Jagannath Das and Balaram Das and requested them to call for lord Caitanya and tell about Bhakti i.e. devotion<sup>47</sup>. As per the description, Sri Caitanya danced among the kirtan group comprising the

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46. Madhav pattnaik - Vaisnav Leelamrita Ch.VII,L-41-42  
Ed.B.C.Acharya

47. Madhav Pattnaik : Vaisnav Leelamrita - Ch.VII,L-93-96

Pancha-sakhas i.e. Balaram Das, Achyutananda Das, Ananta, Yosobanta and Jagannath Das.<sup>48</sup>

Towards the later part of Sri Caitanya's stay at Puri, the lord desired to tour villages of Orissa with kirtan group and with that aim in view he made a proposal before the Pancha-sakhas. His proposal is reported to have been accepted. In every year, he made tour to different places along with the Pancha-sakhas.<sup>49</sup>

The samkirtan which the lord organised in different places was systemetic. As per Madhav-Pattnaik, Achyutananda Das was the Chief architect of Rasa leela where as Swamy Jagannath Das was meticulous about Kirtan Rasa. Matta Balaram Das, on the other hand, was the architect of Bhava-Rasa. Ananta and Yasobanta, like Jagannath Das<sup>50</sup> also knew about 'Kirtan-Rasa'.

As has been reported by Madhav-Pattnaik-Balaram Das passed away on the tenth day of Phalguna, perhaps on March, 26, 1533 A.D. After this, the Pancha-sakhas, Ray Ramananda and lord Caitanya, expressed condolence by recollecting the greatness of Balaram Das.

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48. Madhava Pattnaik - Vaisnava Leelamrita L-102-103  
Ed. by B.C. Acharya
49. Madhab Pattnaik : Vaishnav Leelamrita Ch.VIII, L-84-85
50. Ibid. L-87-89

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Here, it is obvious to conclude that Balaram Das, by dint of his greatness, was not only revered by his fellow Pancha-sakha but also won the heart of lord Caitanya thereby making us to see him as one among the Caitanya-Sampradaya, even if he was not considered a staunch follower of Raganuga Bhakti of lord Chaitanya in the initial stage of his contact with the latter.

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