



## Realization of Lord Jagannath

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Lord Jagannath is the master of the universe. He is Lord Purushottam as described in many Puranas such as the Bhagavata Purana, Bhabisya Purana, Vaman Purana, Vishnu Purana and so on. Lord Purushottam first established himself in Odisha - "Odre tu Purushottamam." In no other part of the country the supreme Lord is worshipped as Purushottam or Jagannath.

Lord Jagannath - Purushottam exercises deep influence in social and religious lines of Odisha. For His antiquity, age-old rituals, traditions, festivals, legends etc. has been the prime adorable deity of the country as a whole. For His strange visage and fibre catholicity Car-Festival and splendid fame made him most visited and favourable amid people of the whole world. His edifice, Mahaprasad and participation of innumerable people in His service do cast a spell over all who become inquisitive of Lord Jagannath. He sees no discrimination among his children. He always is remembered right from birth to old age and dawn to dusk. His concept may be difficult to understand yet very clear and familiar. He stands

for fine characteristics of the Vedanta such as universality, impersonality, rationality, catholicity and optimism. He is the reminiscent of all religious activities undertaken by great ascetics and seers of the country. People bear Him in mind during all stages of life namely childhood, householder, wandering mystic and renunciation and mental status like consciousness, unconsciousness and trance. His Car-festival is equally enjoyed by child and old, poor and rich, people of all places, races, religions, castes, colours and status.



The unmanifested (Nirguna) supreme soul was only available when and where there was nothing besides utter darkness. He desired to be manifested and reign the total universe as Lord Purushottam. He completed the process of creation within a twinkle of eye in ten stages. These

stages are named as creation of Mahatattwa. Ahankar, Tamasik Ahankar, Rajasik Ahankar, Sattwik Ahankar, Ignorance, trees, birds and animals, human beings and divine elements. This was possible after the convulsion of primary nature by His river of illusion instilling life force. All the creatures inherited three qualities of nature like



Sattwa, Raja and Tama by the sweet will of the Lord Himself. The qualities are bestowed as per the record of past deeds. His creation is endowed with 24 Tattwas (essences) such as Purusha (Kaal-death-time), Prakruti (Prime nature), Mahatattwa (the great essence), Ahankar (Pride), five fundamental elements (sky, air, light, earth and water), five senses (vision, hearing, taste, smell, touch), five sense organs of knowledge (eye, ear, tongue, nose, skin), five sense organs of action (mouth, hand, foot, genital and anus). Mind is created of food and is added to the essences as the 25th.

Mind is the controller of all the senses. It has three substances (sattwa, raja, tama), three layers (conscious, unconscious, meditative), four abilities (reason, conscience, intelligence and pride) and five stages (scattered, ignorant, converging, concentrated and restrained). It is the root cause of love, manners, determination, bondage and salvation etc.

However, man is blessed with essences of the creation and the soul remains as the witness to all our activities. The prime aim of the creature or soul is to unite with the great soul. He is to choose the best among all pursuits like piety, lust, material prosperity and emancipation. Lord Jagannath is the image of Purushottam. Man thrives to commune with Him for fulfillment of individual goals. But devotion without any goal is the best among them.

Lord Purusottam has established Himself as Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva in appearances or names like Subhadra, Jagannath and Balabhadra being endowed with Rajasik, Sattwik and Tamasik qualities. Lord Brahma creates, Lord Vishnu protects (By Sudarshan) and sustains and Lord Shiva annihilates the creation.

*"Satwam rajastama iti prakruter guraasteirjuktah  
Parah purush eba ihasya dhatte,*

*Sthi tyaadaye Hari Biranchi Hareti Sargyaah  
Shreyaamsi tatra khalu sattwataronru namsyah"*

-The Bhagabata

Thus these three deities are highlighted as Trinath, Trideva or Triratna etc. But the lord can take any number of appearance in any medium of life when Dharma (righteousness), His creation gets endangered and blemished. He may incarnate as a divinity, ascetic, man, aquatic, bird, animal at once or to display a life for the betterment of people. The incarnation has three main aims- protection of pious people, punishment of impious souls and re-establishment of Dharma as the right track. The purposes are described in the Gita, Bhagavata and other Puranas. However, the Lord is not required to come down Himself with all His splendour. Thus six varieties of incarnation are underlined in our scriptures such as- Partial, Interposing, full fastive, incarnation of qualities (Gunavatara), incarnation of Manwantaras (time units) and Jugavatara (Ages like Satya, Treta, Dwapara and Kali) and special incarnation. Lord Purushottam-Jagannath is the source of all incarnation. All incarnations emerge from Him and merge into Him after the objectives are materialised.

There is no certainty of occurrence, variety, time, quality etc. of incarnations. That is the Lord's figment of imagination. However, a research has tried to make a chronological list of incarnations. It may not be so accurate. In general, we know about ten incarnations as laid by Padma Purana or Geet Govinda namely Matsya, Kurma, Varaha, Nrusingha, Vamana, Parshuram, Sri Ram, Balaram, Sri Krishna, Buddha and Kalki. Many authorities like the Mahabharat, writings of Ramanuja are silent on occurrence of Buddha as an incarnation.

However, the Bhagavata, Matsya, Harivamsa, Bishnu Garbha Puranas have



highlighted many incarnations. Among them, the list of the Bhagavata containing 24 incarnations is most popular. But the sources also reveal information as much as 45 incarnations as follows- Purusha, Ananta, Pouskar, Sanak, Hansa, Narada, Matsya, Sri Hari (Saviour of Dhruva and Gajendra), Pruthvi, Jagna, Kapila, Varaha, Nrusingha (Killer of Hiranyakasipu and saviour of divine consorts), Bibhu, Satyasena, Nara-Narayan, Vaikuntha, Ajit, Kurma, Dhanwantari, Mohini, Vamana, Sarababhouma, Rushabh, Viswakshena, Dharmasetu, Swadham, Jogeswar, Brihadbhanu, saviour of Balakhilya ascetic, curse liberator of Indra, Bharat, Mandhata Chakrabarti, Parsuram, Vyaasa, Sri Ram, Balaram, Sri Krishna, Pradyumna, Anirudha, Sisumar, Jayant, Buddha and Kalki.

The incarnation always carry the same saviour of Lord Purushottam, all are divine and full in every respect. Though Orissa has no such ancient shrine like that of Jangi-Dasavatara temple, yet Saintala (Balangir district) has accommodated remains of such a shrine of 6th century A.D. Till today, we find sculptural pieces depicting ten Avatars on the edge of the sculpture that surround the standing posture of Lord Vishnu.

Interestingly, Puri Jagannath temple depicts Avatars on corner projections as that of Nrusingh temple in the same campus. The latter monument displays a fish and a tortoise at the respective niches in place of Lord Matsya Avatars or Kurma Avatars. Jagannath temple is the hub of all religious activities - Vaishnavism, Saivism, Saktism, Buddhism and so on. Naturally the roof of entrance passage of Jagamohan exhibits 31 niches for 31 avatars probably in conformity with

the Bhagavata which provides earliest reference to Lord Jagannath at many instances.

A devotee sees Lord Jagannath as the greatest pleasure and the Lord is kind-hearted and unilateral. He comes down to the Badadanda (Grand Road) to offer visual to millions of onlookers devotees of all age, caste, creed, colour, sex, status etc. Infact, in His eyes there is no discrimination. He is worshipped in all forms- may be of Vaishnavism, Saivism, Saktism, Tantricism, Souraism, Vinayak, Ramaite and others. He is prayed as Lord Vishnu, Rudra, Sakti, Surya and Ganesh principally while His 'gem dias' contains other sculptures like Madhab, Sridevi and Bhudevi in addition.

It is an irony of thought that people visit Him to satiate piety, material prosperity, lust and emancipation as four goals of life (Purushartha) when scriptures advise that devotion without any desire is the best way to obtain Him. It is wise to keep mind peaceful, purified action and speech in right prospective, lest devotion and prayer have no meaning. Presently we run after youthfulness, wealth, authority, unconsciousness which will not help to fulfill the real goal of life. To get Purushottam, one is to do moral activities, perform jagna, munificence, austerities, read holy books, control mind, restrain senses, give up bad habits, practise Astangika Yoga, devotion and indifference in right sense, gather spiritual knowledge and see others in same way like self. This is the righteous-way to realise Lord Purushottam-Jagannath.

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