

Darubrahma Jagannath – An Embodiment of Moksha

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Lord Shree Jagannath is only Kaliyuga Avatar of Lord Shree Vishnu who represents the link between unmanifested Brahman and manifested Brahman, knowing both of which together, but not in isolation is said to be moksha / salvation according to Upanishads. This is Upanishadic Jnanam. Nowhere in India rather in the world - the Vishnu temple has idols, carpentered out by Brahma himself in the guise of Viswakarma. Hence Lord Shree Jagannath, according to Skanda Puranam, is famously known as Darubrahma Jagannath. Before explaining how is Lord Shree Jagannath an embodiment of Moksha, it is necessary to know what Upanishads explain about the concept of salvation.



Moksha is not at all alien to the man. Man is always liberated, but creates bondage for himself due to Avidya (ignorance). It is paradox that he thinks how to get liberated, as if somebody is preventing him from being liberated. He thinks of salvation only when he is in thick soup and hence in dense sorrow. “Prasuti Vyragyam” is one of such situations at the time of birth pangs when salvation is sought instantaneously until the delivery ends in happy note. The life goes on and on. Slowly Moksha becomes a word in the dictionary to such people.

Another category of people who lack objective study of Vedas, cannot distinguish ‘Atma’ from the gross body. Such people do penances and perform Agnihotras to please various Devatas, Pancha (five) bhutas and even evil spirits for getting spiritual powers and also sensual pleasures. Thus they do Karma, reflecting Avidya (ignorance) which does not fetch salvation. Mentioning such people, Isavasya Upanished says :

‘Andham tamah pravisanti ye’
vidyam upasati” — Mantra - 9

(Those who are devoted to ‘Avidya’ or pure rituals only enter into blinding darkness).

Isa Upanishad further states that Moksha is not achieved when one does worship the

unmanifested Brahman only or worships only manifested Brahman". Thus Isa Upanishad says :

“Andham tamah pravisanti ye’ sambhutim upasate
tato bhuya iva te tamo ya u sambhutyam ratah”
(Mantra 12)

(Those who worship unmanifested Brahman (Asambhuti) enter into blinding darkness. Also those who are devoted to manifested Brahman (Sambhuti) (Hiranyagarbha) enter into greater darkness).

According to Sri Adi Sankaracharya, Asambhuti means “Prakriti” or “Maya” which is non - intelligent first cause of the universe in a state of equilibrium before creation. It is the seed of desire and work. Asambhuti or unmanifested also means ‘Nirguna Brahman’ It is negation of everything belonging to this Jagat. It is absolute silence where nothing moves and nothing changes. It is changeness from which ever changing Jagat evolves It is sudha (pure) chaitanya shakti, It is like sugar which is essential ingredient of any sweetmeat. If asked whether you relish ‘Sugar’ or sweetmeat, like “Podopitha”, Rasagola” or “ladu”, your choice would be for the latter.

Contrary to “Asambhuti” is “Sambhuti” / manifested. It means the quality of being born. It signifies “Hiranyagarbha”, the first manifestation of Brahman. By worshipping “Sambhuti”, you may attain eight fold yogic powers, but you will be subjected to births and deaths, thus moving endlessly in the wheel of creation. “Therefore you do not get Moksha even by worshipping ‘Sambhuti’”. So what is Moksha? The same Isa Upanishad says :

“Sambhutism Ca vinasam Ca yas ted ved obhayam Saha
vinasena mrtyum tirtva sambhutyam mtam as nute
(14 Mantra)

(He who understands these two, viz., unmanifested and manifested (Hiranyagarbha) both together, but not understanding separately attains immortality through unmanifested by crossing the death through destruction or Hiranyagarbha).

It leads to the conclusion that Moksha is Jnanam, possessing of which you know about manifested (Sambhuti) and unmanifested (Asambhuti) in continuation, but not separately. It is continuous, but not discrete. Jnani is Chaitanya Shakti. He does not require support. He is pure bliss — Chinmayananda Swarupam. He has full independence. He does what he thinks Jnanam. This is Moksham or liberation. A man, who attains this stage, will be in “Nirvikalpa Samadhi” even if he is in mundane world. Shree Ramana Maharishi said that Jnanam is like sruti (note) in musical consort where different musical instruments continue to play, changing their notes. But “Sruti” does not change and also not audible in the midst of sounds of other instruments. Like sruti jnani remains composed, not being perturbed or worried, though everything in this Jagat changes.

With this background of Upanishadic version of Moksha, we shall discuss how Lord Shree Jagannath of Puri is an embodiment of Moksha.

It is described in the Utkal Khanda of Skanda Puranam that the origin of Lord Shree Jagannath is Daru Brahman which represents Asambhuti or unmanifested. The story runs like this. One by name, Vidyapati was deputed by the King, Indradyumna to bring the idols of god, Shree Neela Madhav from the village, Kantilo to install at Puri. When Viswbasu, the ardent devotee of Neelamadhav did not allow, Vidyapati to see the location, he went to the extent of wooing

the daughter of Viswabasu by marrying her. After twists and turns of events, he could tract the location of Neelamadhav, but the god disappears from the place. Asheravani (voice from the heavens) said that he would appear in the form of Daru Brahman at the shores of Puri. Accordingly it appears with its roots, extending to the skies only to indicate that its origin is infinite and hence its name, Daru Brahman, it was brought from the sea with the help of Viswabasu. Brahma himself in the guise of aged Viswakarma approached Indradyumna for carpentering Daru Brahman into Lord Shree Jagannath, for the act of which twenty one days were granted. On the instruction of Viswakarma himself the working place would be locked until the end of the stipulated period when he would finish his work. But when no sounds of carpentry were heard before the stipulated time and no response was noticed, the queen ordered to break open the doors to rescue the carpenter. But to the surprise of all, Viswakarma was not found alive or dead, but found only unfinished idols of Lord Shree Jagannath, Shree Subhadra and Shree Balabhadra in the form of which we are now witnessing in the sanctum sanctorum of Lord Shree Jagannath temple.

It is evident that Viswakarma is none other than Brahma himself. The shape of idols which convey philosophical message is the consequence of "Prajnana Brahma" transforming unmanifested Daru Brahman into Purushottam Jagannath. So Jagannath is Prajnana Brahman. Jagannath is not a God, confined to sanctum sanctorum only. He is Jnana Purusha. He is Yoga Purusha, present in all. It is continuous Chaitanya Shakti from Daru Brahman to Jagannath and to you and everybody with Swaruphadha. This Jnanam is reflected in Jagannth culture in the form of rituals of the temple.

The unique ritual is "Pahundi Yatra" in car festival. The original idols of Lord Shree Jagannath, Shree Balabhadra and Shree Subhadra are brought in Pahandi Yatra to be seated in the respective chariots, waiting outside the temple (Badadanda). It is not out of context that nowhere in other Vaishnava temples, the original idols are taken out in car festival for a ride in chariots. A devotee, who participate in Pahundi yatra reminds himself that he is continuation of the same Chaitanya Shakti, but in different forms.

Another unique privilege for a devotee of Lord Shree Jagannath is to touch him and even embrace him. While doing so, the devotee realises that he is 'Dhrasta' ('Seer') and he is no more 'darshak' (viewer) or "Drusya" (scene). At that time Dwaitam disappears. You feel the same Chaitanya Shakti which is present in you, is also present in Jagannath. This is object less Jnanam. He sheds ego/ I-ness. He feels that the whole Viswam is in him, but not vice versa.

Therefore, Lord Shree Jagannath and various rituals of the temple enables you to understand that Moksha is not identifying yourself with unmanifested or manifested, but knowing both entities. Realise Jnana Parusha in you by practising yoga. Moksha is not after death. Jump into water and then learn swimming. How do you learn swimming without being in water ?

Jai Jagannath !