Manifestation of God : Darubrahma Jagannath

Parikhit Mishra

Oh redeemer of honour
Defender of the wretched
Master of the blue-hill
Thy name is Jagannath,
I take refuge
Under Your holy feet.

-Poet-king Upendrabhanj-

He is shapeless, smell-less, soundless, colourless but He is everything of it:

O m n i p o t e n t , omnipresent, omniscient and revered as God, He is the creator, sustainer, destroyer and the ruler of the cosmos. Voltaire said that if God didn't exist, it would be necessary to invent Him. Ever since man has tried to invent Him, the search hasn't reached the closing point. Such exploration never ends.

Of the billions of earth- like or unlike planets in the universe our beloved earth has given birth to life. Evolution of man here is a marvel. Man is the only being favoured with intelligence. Who has favoured man ? Isn't it God ? Isn't it a miracle ? And just making of God ?
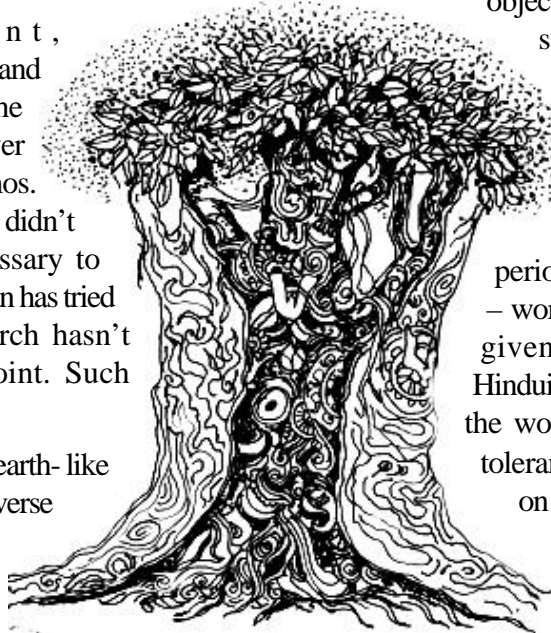
Ancient or civilized man imagined God as deliverer, protector and controller of his life and destiny as his life is ephemeral. The Holy Gita says that God dwells in our heart. The soul or Atma, the finest power ever keeps us alive. When the God belief is unequivocal it needs no fine – tuning. The belief alone accepts with humility the supremacy of God in whatever form He reveals.

Hindus worship animate or inanimate objects which includes stones, trees, sun, moon, stars and unseen spirits to appease a God or multiple Gods for a suffering –free living. The practice goes on from generation to generation. In post-Vedic period about 3000 years ago idol – worship held sway. The east has given birth to major religions. Hinduism being the oldest religion of the world its greatest excellence is tolerance, secularism, co-existence on the basic of teachings of the seers and the scriptures. Hindu philosophy teaches how to escape from the cycle of birth and death, the philosophy of self-realisation. The Jagannath philosophy preaches love, equanimity. Salvation
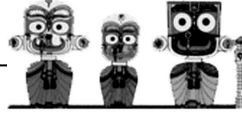
is achieved through total surrender in reposing faith in Him wholeheartedly. The mind ought to be doubt-free, pure and unblemished.

Just imagine what was the geographical status of Puri or Nilachala along the Mahodadhi (sea) 5000 years ago. A clean, virgin, unexploited nature could have enthralled human heart. Thicket or dense forest made the place not easily accessible. In this holy place monks, saints and ascetic persons meditated. Population was sparse, flora and fauna were in its optimal grandeur. Man and animal lived in perfect harmony. A top the Blue Hill or Nilakandar Lord Nilamadhav, an idol of glittering precious stone emitting nose-pleasing fragrance was worshipped by a tribal lord known as Viswabasu.

In Hindu belief Puri, Srikshetra, Nilachal, Sankhakshetra or Purusottam Kshetra is one and the same, the most sacred place as because the inhabitants here are not subjected to the tortuous punishment by death-god Yama. This place is the best among four Hindu shrines founded by the scholar philosopher of Hinduism the first or Adi Sankaracharya.

Bamadev Samhita says that Mahavishnu was worshipped here as Nilamadhav, since when was incomprehensible. Self-controlled, devoted, religious and fifth generation of Lord Brahma King Indradyumna of Avanti city deputed the younger brother of the royal priest Vidyapati to the holy Purusottam Kshetra to locate Lord Nilamadhav. The tribal head Viswabasu who himself was the worshipper of Nilamadhav welcomed the Brahmin priest Vidyapati and led him on the walk way in the thicket, got him bathed and got him pay reverence to the wishes granting Kalpabata and guided him up to the most gracious Nilamadhav. Extremely happy and gratified Vidyapati prostrated again and again before the deity. After the holy darshan he had holy dip in the sea. In the night he took the food offerings made by the Gods of the heaven to Nilamadhav as dinner. Next morning Viswabasu sent invitation through Vidyapati to King Indradyumna to pay visit to the blessed Purusottam Kshetra.

On return back Vidyapati gave out the detailed briefings to the king. The king was pleased. He prepared for his sojourn to the holy place. In the meantime roving monk of gods Narada descended from nowhere. He initiated the king with Vaishnav Dharma which bore a larger meaning: the path or direction of life. King Indradyumna, his selected subjects and Narada rode an exquisite chariot and reached after visiting score of pilgrimage on their way. No sooner had they reached Purusottam Kshetra than they came to understand about the disappearance of Lord Nilamadhav under a devastating sand storm. They visited the place now covered with sand. The king was dismayed. The king built a temple on the recommendation of Narada. Narada ritually established Lord Narasimha in the temple and conducted 1000 Aswamedha Yagna. That night the king dreamt of a fragrant sandal wood log worshipped by Lord Brahma and other gods approaching the shore of the Mahodadhi where the Musa River merged in the ocean. Next morning the dream turned out true. The king and Narada witnessed, in their own eyes, the supreme soul in the shape of a sacred log. Now the king resolved to carve out idols of gods from the divine wood. Coincidentally an unsophisticated looking, emaciated old man surprisingly appeared there. In trying to remove the worries of the king he assured to make the idols in fifteen days. He set conditions that he would work in closed doors and he must not be disturbed during that period. The conditions were acceded. The man was said to be none other than God Viswakarma, the heavenly architect. On day fifteen as the doors were opened, three idols were revealed, but the

old carpenter vanished. That was the irony of it. Then the king and Narada went to Brahma Lok to invite Lord Brahma for the ceremonial and scriptural sanctification of the temple and establishment of the holy idols.

In the meantime aeon passed off. The king and Narada returned to earth at the instance of Lord Brahma. They saw that the temple built was no more. King Galab was the ruler. On hearing the admiration of Indradyumna, Galab accepted his suzerainty. A new temple was built. Now Lord Brahma appeared in the scene. He got the sacred idols boarded on to the decorated chariot. The idols were ceremonially installed on the jewelled platform. Lord Brahma named them Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra. Then other deities were housed ritually in smaller temples and mode of worship was codified. The episode relating to the disappearance of Nilamadhav and emergence of Lord Jagannath is portrayed along the similar line in Niladri Mahodayh, a scripture in Sanskrit in a later period.

The Nilamadhav chapter had yet another narration; when Vidyapati reached Srikshetra he was baffled. Viswavasu was worshipping Nilamadhav in secret and was reluctant to divulge the identity. Vidyapati befriended and fell in love with Lalita the daughter of Viswavasu and succeeded in having holy darshan of Nilamadhav. But before Indradyumna came here Nilamadhav was non-existent.

Origin of Lord Jagannath is shrouded in mystery. History, scriptures, hearsay and shruti attempt to unearth the unknowable. The mystery is unresolved but the researcher doesn't stop here. The hunger for truth and knowledge on God is insatiable. Lord Jagannath, the Supreme God, is an object of love, reverence, trust and surrender. His beauty is unparallel. He is four in one thus:

Hare is Balavadra, Subhadra the spirit of Rama, Krishna is Jagannath and another Hare is Sudarshan.

Today the majestic chariots hurtle through Badadanda with the chanting of His holy name. More than a million strong devotees sing, dance, prostrate and pour out their heart seeking mercy, salvation; nothing is comparable to spiritual joy. Where there is Lord Jagannath, the master of the universe, there is joy.

References :

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Parikhit Mishra, Rajendra Nagar, Cuttack.