



This is a legend of a devotee of Lord Jagannath like so many legends on various other devotees of fame. Many of these legends are well known and found in different scriptures and Puranic literature like the book *Dardhyata Bhakti* which is considered as an embodiment of many such legends. But some legends are yet to find their pride of place in scriptures. Such legends live as spoken folklore and transferred from generation to generation vocally. The present piece comes under such category as it is less known. As regards its authenticity it is linked to the then historical events of Odisha. As such this is taken as a historical legend. Again I had discussed about



The Legend of the Devotee Bisar Mohanty

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this legend with some of the more knowledgeable personalities who corroborated with my views and description from A to Z. This made me not only confident about the authenticity of the legend but a legend, par excellence in view of its nature of the rarest of rare of course me judice. I therefore wanted to share this legend with my valued readers who might not have access to it. Since this is a historical legend, it needs little elucidation of the history of Odisha of that period which is ut infra.

The period of history is precisely from 1568 to 1572 AD. Then the country was under the rulings of Mughals and the region of Gaur was

under the administration of a Sultanate. The kingdom of Kalinga was ruled by the king Mukunda Dev II. The kingdom of Kalinga was then famed as an el dorado which lured the greed of sultanate, Sulaiman Karrani to grab the kingdom. As such he planned for a battle. But the proverb goes “man desires and god despairs”. As planned, he fought with his mighty army but was defeated in the battle. He couldn’t reconcile with his defeat. He believed in the saying “after clouds comes fair weather”. But again he also knew that a sleeping fox catches no poultry. He searched as an impasse to find out weakness and strength of the enemy as a posteriori. Sulaiman



Karrani arrived at a right point i.e. until the general of the enemy army is there it wouldn't be possible to defeat the enemy in the battle. Now, Sulaiman Karrani planned in a different way of diplomacy. He invited the general of the enemy army to sit on the negotiation table for peace talk in his palace. The general accepted the invitation of Sulaiman Karrani and proceeded to his palace. General was a Bengali Brahmin named Rajiv Lochan Roy (or Kalachand Roy Bahadur?). Rajiv Lochan was received warmly by Sulaiman Karrani with red carpet reception in the palace. Evading the usual protocol Sulaiman engaged his own daughter to take care of the general. The damsel was extremely beautiful and the exposition of the girl was spotless from cap-a-pie, as if the god has bestowed all the beauty of His creation on her. It was but natural that the youthful general, Rajiv Lochan fell in love with the girl at the first sight. Observing the affaire d'amour of the general, Sulaiman succeeded in his plan and Rajiv was entrapped. It didn't take much time when Rajiv proposed to marry the daughter of Sulaiman Karrani. Sulaiman was waiting for this opportunity and didn't oppose to the proposal. But then there was a mural obstacle to proceed on this regard since Rajiv Lochan was a descendant of a Hindu Brahmin family and the girl comes from a Muslim community which was considered as a misalliance. So Rajiv Lochan requested Hindu pundits to convert the Muslim girl to Hindu religion. He ran from pillar to post to seek co-operation in this regard but none did cooperate with him saying Hindu religion doesn't allow conversion of persons to Hinduism from any other religion as per *lex scripta*. This decision of the Hindu priest enraged Rajiv not only against the so called pundits of Hindu religion but against the Hinduism as *lex talionis*. He was so much in lust for the love

that in order to fulfill his desire he himself converted to Islam and became a destroyer of Hinduism, a black chapter in the history of Odisha and Hindu religion as well. On conversion to Islam, Rajiv was named as Mohammed Farmuli. But he was then widely known as Kalapahada (black mountain). Madalapanji describes all his notorious activities and damage done to the Hindu temples, wherever he went and compelled the Hindus to convert to Islam. Thus Kalapahada conquered the battle of Triveni. Here it is my prime duty to remind my readers that the state lost its border since 1568 AD till 1936 AD (precisely April 1st). After he conquered the battle of Triveni, Kalapahada proceeded to Puri. Kalapahada did not face any significant resistance en route to Puri. On the way to Puri he destroyed all the temples he came across. Kalapahada also destroyed the temple of Konark by displacing the Dadhinauti and demolished all the temples annexed to it. Then he proceeded to Puri without any resistance as Kalapahada was then became a terror to take with. Since he came from a Hindu-Brahmin descendant he knew very well that Lord Jagannath was worshipped as Gloria in excelsis by the Hindus throughout the world. As such he planned to burn the idol so as to avenge his past frustration. A blue print was prepared by Kalapahada for the *modus operandi* to destroy the idol. There was an ardent devotee of Lord Jagannath named Bisar Mohanty, a young man. Somehow Bisar Mohanty smelt the blueprint prepared by Kalapahada. Bisar Mohanty was sure that nobody would dare to challenge against Kalapahad's operation as planned. He decided to do something himself alone. As rightly expected cooperation from any quarter of Hindu community was not possible in anticipation of the wrath of Kalapahada, which might cost their lives.



However, he was determined and did not mind for his own life in order to do something to see his revered God is not completely destroyed. Before the execution of the plan of Kalapahada to burn the idol of Lord Jagannath, pretending to be a mad man Bisar Mohanty erratically moved in the street carrying a Dhola on his shoulders and playing it unmusically on the appointed day.

As planned, Kalapahada along with his coteries and Jawans dragged the idol of Lord Jagannath tied with leather ropes before a lot of onlookers who were hurt mentally and heartily but did not dare to raise their voices. However, Bisar Mohanty in the disguise of a mad fellow followed the party playing irregularly his Dhola sans souci and it was grace adieu that nobody from the party of Kalapahada had an inkle of suspicion about his intention. Kalapahada with his party arrived at the particular place previously arranged probably near about a river or a rivulet. They burnt the idol of Lord Jagannath. The ray of fire went high and high to the sky. That made Kalapahada and the entire party with his Jawans happy with the satisfaction of a villainy triumph and laugh. The party left the place assuming that idol had been burnt to ashes. But Bisar Mohanty remained there surreptitiously after the departure of the party. Now Bisar Mohanty came to his real self and began his activities which he had planned in his mind. He brought water from nearby source and put out the fire and searched out for any portion of the idol left unburnt. His

prayer was heard by the Lord and he could find the navel portion (NAVI BRAHMA) of the idol which did not catch fire. Bisar Mohanty carefully recovered that Navi Brahma of the Lord and hid it inside his Dhola. Then he returned to his disguised status. In this fashion he could bring the Navi Brahma safely to his native place namely Kujanga Garh. With his initiative the then Zamindar of Kujanga constructed a temple in the village and the recovered Navi Brahma of the Lord was installed inside an idol of almost a replica of the original one. The fact of having been done so was kept top secret so as to avoid the attention of Kalapahada or any of his cronies.

In the latter period, it is said that this Navi Brahma was returned to Puri and have been transferred to the renewed idol of Lord Jagannath during every Nabakalebara.

Bisar Mohanty did a herculean task taking life risk to save the Navi Brahma. As such he deserves a salute by every devotee of the Lord Jagannath and by the entire Hindu community of the world as well.

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