



## S.K.S. SWAMINARAYAN TEMPLE (LONDON) – BAL YUVAK MANDAL

Westfield Lane, Kenton, Harrow, Middlesex, HA3 9EA Est. 1966 Charity Reg. No. 271034

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### MAHIMAA OF JAGNNAATHPURI)



#### DESCRIPTION OF JAGNNAATH PURI MANDIR:

**Jagannaathpuri** is also known as **Purshottampuri**. It is in the part of *Orrisaa*, *Jagannaathji's* temple is very big, and *Jagannaathji* is residing on the Purva (East side). The idols of *Balbadhraa* (fair), *Subadhraa* (fair), *Shree Krishna* (dark) and *Sudarshan Chakra* are present in the temple. In addition to the above, the temple's *shikar* (pinnacle) is 121 haath (214 feet or 65 m) long.



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At the time the *raajbhog thaal* is offered or any *thaal*, mountains or rice is offered and served by the *pandyaa's* However, there is no harm having the *prashaad* at *Jagannaath puri* as Lord Shree Swaminarayan has stated in *Shikshapatri shlok* 19 that;

***No one shall eat food prepared by a person, taking (cooked) food from whose hands prohibited in the Shastras or drink water from the vessels of such a person even as a prasada (eatables offered to a deity) of Shri Krishna, in any place, except at Jagannathpuri (where prasada of Shri Jagannathji can be taken)***

The question here arises – ‘Why is *Jagannaathpuri* free from these laws?’ To answer this question we must realise the greatness of *Jagannaathpuri* and the greatness of *Prashaad* (sanctified food) of *Jagannaathpuri*.

During the installation ceremony of Lord *Jagannaath*, the main thirty-three God's came to witness the ceremony. *Brahma*, *Vishnu*, and *Shiva* were present. During the ceremony, cooked rice was offered as *Prashaad* to the congregation. However, in the hustle and bustle of things, much of the *Prashaad* fell to the floor, not reaching many of the Gods, saints and people. Though the *Prashaad* was on the floor and crushed by the feet of those present, many picked the cooked rice from the floor and ate the *Prashaad*.

Lord *Shiva* also picked some *Prashaad* from the floor and ate it. Lord *Brahma* who began to ridicule *Shiva*, refusing to eat it himself witnessed this. *Brahma* then looked towards the idol of *Jagannaath* but could not see it – it had become invisible to him. He began to question “Where has Lord *Jagannaath* gone?” *Shiva* then spoke, “We can all have *Darshan* (sight of) the Lord, why is it that you cannot?” *Brahma* deluded, then came to the conclusion that, “May be it is because I did not partake in *Prashaad*, I did not have faith in the *Prashaad*.” So saying he picked up some rice from the floor and ate it. Instantly the vision of Lord *Jagannaath* came to him and so he was finally able to have *Darshan* of the Lord.

The *Prashaad* seemed unacceptable to *Brahma* for the greatness of such *Prashaad* deluded him. For this reason the *Prashaad* at *Jagannaathpuri* is considered to be prominent and great and so *Rishis* have praised it adequately by allowing such *Prashaad* to be taken regardless of restrictions otherwise. Taking of such *Prashaad* has great benefit and results in great *Punya* (good deeds).

Indeed any *Prashaad* in accordance with *Shastras* (scriptures) have great benefits to those who partake in it. Such blessed food leads to the person who eats *Prashaad* to be also blessed. Many say that the power of *Prashaad* is beyond comprehension, deriving *Punya* equivalent to numerous fasts (*Upvaas*). *Prashaad* is said to contain spiritual powers or even miraculous powers and hence the greatness of *Prashaad* can never be fully praised. It is



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food or drink that is first offered to God and then consumed by us and so it is divine food, pure food or sanctified food. Thus *Prashaad* should never be under estimated as 'just ordinary food or drink.' For such reasons it should be a point for all households, that they always make offerings to God before they themselves eat in the home as a family.

*Shatanand Swami* says, "I write this because many are unappreciative of *Prashaad*. Many fail to see greatness and so end up not taking *Prashaad* or even throwing it away and ridiculing it sometimes. There is a saying, '*Jevu Ann Tevu Mann*' – The mind is affected by what you eat. Thus by eating such *Prashaad*, the mind also becomes pure and healthy.

### **LEELA AT JAGANNAATH PURI:**

Once, *Nilkanth Varni* reached the outskirts of *Jagannaathpuri* and he heard someone calling, "Oh *Nilkanth varni*." *Nilkanth* turned back to see who was calling him. It was *Jairamdaas*. He came running and panting and shouting. Seeing *Jairam*, *Nilkanth* stopped.

*Jairam* came running and fell at the feet of *Nilkanth*. He begs *Nilkanth*, "Oh Lord, please forgive us of our faults. Oh kind hearted one, please pardon our mistakes. Come back to our house. I shall not allow you to proceed any further. My parents are very unhappy. They do not eat or drink. They cry all day long. The whole village is sad. Please hurry up, and return to my house. I shall not leave you alone." *Nilkanth* calmed him and gave him a lot of advice. It was only then that *Jairam* became silent.

*Nilkanth* and *Jairam* entered the city of *Jagannaathpuri*. This city is a very holy place pilgrimage. A big temple has been built there on the sacred ashes of *Shri Krishna*. Thousands of pilgrims crowded this place for darshan daily. There was, however, much trouble from the *asuras* (devils). A large band of naked *bawas* lived there. They were very cruel and merciless.

Even the priest of the temple was deceptive. He used to steal the ornaments and vessels of the deity and sell them. He did not strictly observe the norms of purity by taking ceremonial baths. He extorted money from the devotees in the name of the worship of the deity. *Nilkanth Varni* entered the image of Lord *Jagannaathji* daily by his divine powers and observed the devotion and deceit of the priest.

One day he buked the priest and ordered him to perform the services of the deity devoutly. He narrated to him all his secret deceitful deeds. The priest was amazed to hear this. He thought, "*Nilkanth* is surely the incarnation of *Shri Krishna*." He apologised to him. *Nilkanth* forgave him for his sins. The priest then became a true devotee, and began to perform the worship of the deity with devotion and without deceit.