



Lord Balarama

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Balarama, the elder brother of Srikrishna was one of the ten incarnations of Vishnu as stated by Bhagabat and other Puranas. His father was Vasudeva of Yadu clan but he had two mothers Devaki and Rohini. Maharaja Kamsa, the king of Mathura killed all the six issues of his sister Devaki as one of her sons was to kill him according to some forecast. So Goddess Yogamaya had made some miracle for her seventh issue, while Devaki was pregnant. Yogamaya extracted the foetus from the uterus of Devaki while she was eight months pregnant and placed it inside the uterus of Rohini. Rohini at that time hide herself in Nanda's house at Gopa for the fear of demon Kamsa.

It is said in Bhagabat that -

*'Devakya Jathare Garbham Shesakhyam
Dham Mamakam,
Tata Sanni Krushya Rohinya Udare
Sanniveshaya'*

Bhagavat [10-3-(8-10)]

It is said in Bhagavat that the supreme power called Shesha which is the abode of Lord Krishna (Vishnu), took birth as a human in the form of foetus in the uterus of Devaki. Goddess Yogamaya had extracted the foetus of Balarama and placed it safely inside the uterus of Rohini, the second wife of Basudeva. So after birth his name was Sankarsana.

The story is told in Vishnu Purana differently that Lord Vishnu being satisfied with the prayer of Devatas gave two bunch of hairs-black and white separately for the benefit of humanity, these two bunch of hairs converted to Balaram and Srikrishna.

Balaram took birth after two months from Rohini on the day of Shravan Purnima (Gahma Purnima). He was called Sankarshan as he was extracted from others womb. He killed Pralambasur by fisticuffs in the forest of Bhandir. He threw the Dhenukasur whose body was just like an ass from the top of stiff mountain and killed him.

King Raibat established the kingdom of Kususthali now called Dwaraka, which is twenty four kilometers from Pore-bandar inside the sea. King Raibat gave his daughter Rebati in marriage with Balarama. he had two sons from Rebati named Nishastha and Ulluka. He had also three brothers and one sister Subhadra from Rohini. Afterwards when Jarasandha attacked Mathura again and again, King Raibat donated Dwaraka to his son-in-law Balarama and Srikrishna.

Balarama once sealed the mouth of River Yamuna as she disobeyed him. He dug a channel with his plough to divert Yamuna. She begged appology to Balarama for her disobedience. Hala



(Plough) and Musala (Club) were his main attributes. So he was called Hali. He pardoned Yamuna for her sin.

In other occasion Samba, son of Srikrishna abducted Lakhyana, daughter of Duryodhana from her Svayambar Sabha but he was kept in custody by Kauravas, Balaram knowing this, gave a proposal for the marriage of Samba with Lakhyana. But Kauravas dishonoured Balaram. Angry Balaram threatened Kauravas, to throw their capital in holy Ganges by his plough. When he sacked his capital Duryodhan agreed the proposal and gave his daughter Lakhyana in marriage with Samba.

The Saura Puran states that -

*Matsyah kurmo varaha schah
Narasingho atha vamanah*

Ramo Ramascha Krishnascha Buddhah Kalki

Cha Te Dasha 11. 15/25 (Soura Purana)

Matsya (fish), Kurma (Turtle), Baraha (Boar), Narasingha (man-lion), Vaman (Dwarf-man), Rama, Balaram, Krishna, Buddha and Kalki are ten incarnation of Vishnu. Here Balaram is regarded as Vishnu. Now he is regarded as Debata or God. So Balarama became (Bala+Deva) Baladeva. Krishna and Balarama are regarded as Hari and Hara. Here Balarama is regarded as Lord Siva. Siva is helping Vishnu in every incarnation like Rama-Laxman in Tretaya Yuga. In Dwapar Yuga as Krishna-Balarama and in Kali Yuga they are Jagannath and Balabhadra. Balarama like Laxamana is a yogi, traveller, silent worker, renunsation, truthful and Sanyasi as described in different Puranas. Poet Yosabanta Das said in *Prema Bhakti Brahma Gita* that Rudra-Siva is Balarama or Balabhadra :-

*"Tahum Se Ambhe Tini Bhrata
Yekante Bhaliu Gupata.*

*Rahilu Se Purusottam
Nitya Rahasa Arupam.*

*Ye Rudra Balabhadra Rupa
Atanti Ananta Swarupa.*

*Ambe Shree Jagannath Dehi
Brahma Subhadra Hoi Tahi.*

*Radha Gupata Anga Heu
Atma Sangate Puja Pau.*

Poet Yosobanta Das, one of the great poet of Panchasakha group told that Balaram, Srikrishna and Subhadra took rebirth in Purusottam Dham as Balabhadra, Jagannath and Subhadra who are the Supreme Gods Rudra, Vishnu and Brahma respectively.

Sarala Das one of the greatest poets of medieval India in his magnum opus Sarala Mahabharat in 15th Century AD already told the same thing-

*"Rama Krishna Subhadra Je E Tini Pratima
Shree Purusottame Bije Hali Hari Brahma"*

Here the poet told that Balaram, Krishna and Subhadra in Dwapar Yuga are the same Balabhadra, Jagannath and Subhadra in Nilachala.

Accordingly to Prof. Prabhat Mukherjee in about 5th Century AD Sankarsana and Vasudeva came to be known as Jagannath and Balabhadra in Orissa. Brihat Samhita of Varahmihira (6th Century AD) enjoins to place Ekanamsa (Subhadra) between Baladev and Krishna. A stone image of Balarama which is now preserved in Lucknow Provincial Museum is a sure proof that his worship was prevalent in Mathura during the Sunga period (2nd century BC). The deity holds club (Masala) in his right hand and Hala (plough) in the left.

The earliest representation so far available of the holy triad of Krishna-Vasudeva, Subhadra



(Ekanamsa) and Sankarsana-Balarama is preserved in Karachi Musuem, Pakistan (2nd century AD). Here two armed Balarama is in standing pose and holding a colossal plough (hala) in his right hand. The association of Krishna Balaram in a few Jain reliefs from Mathura Museum and datable to the Kusan Period is also worthy take note of.

Besides image of Balarama, some carvings representing some incidents of the life of Balarama and Krishna of 2nd or 3rd Century AD have been discovered from Tumain (ancient Tumbavana) in Gwalior State. It is found in an ancient building decorated with beautiful and interesting carvings.

Worship of Balarama are found from the archaeological excavation at Paharpur in Rajshahi district of Bangladesh. One gray sand-stone sculpture of Balarama, one of the ten incarnation of Vishnu depicted here with plough (Hala) under snake-hood is found there. Fight of Balarama and Krushna with Chanura and Mustika the two wrestlers of Kansa is depicted clearly. Another scene of dragging of Kamsa by Balarama and Krishna is found there which shows that the Balarama worship spread to Bengal.

From Imadpur in Muzaffarpur district of Bihar one bronze image of Balarama having four hands with snakehood along with Ekanamsa and Krishna were recovered which now adorns the King Edward VII Gallery of the British Musuem showing the Balarama worship in Bihar.

In Orissa Balarama, Ekanamsa and Krishna are worshipped at Ananta-Vasudeva temple at Bhubaneswar and Balaram (Balabhadra), Subhadra and Jagannath are worshipped in Jagannath temple at Puri.

Swarupa of Lord Balarama is described by Balaram Das, one of the poets of Panchasakha

group in his Dandi Ramayan so magnificently as follows:-

*"Jaya Tu Srihari He Ashesa Janadhari
Rohini Nandana Tu Pralamba Hotakari
Rebati Kanta Kalandi Jale Tora Khela
Nilabastra Paridhan Ayudha To Hala
Talaadvaja Aharam Sirare Kundali
Jara Pade lule Sarba Devanka Mauli
Sudha Spatikaku Jini Tora Deha Varna
Swarna Kundali Sobhita Tora Beni Karna
Mastaket to Sapta Phani Kirita Mukuta
Mukuta Kadamba To Shohai Kantha Tata"*

Balabhadra you are Vishnu, Rohini Nandan, Pralamba Killer, Rabatikanta, playing inside the water of Kalindi, wearing blue dress your attributes is Hala (plough), riding Taladhvaja chariot having headdresses. All devatas worship you. You are as white as *spatika* and wearing gold ornaments in the ears with snake hood in head and jewel nakelace on your neck.

Puri is called Shreekhetra or Purusottama khetra. Here Lord is Uttama-Purusa having his wife Laxmi, elder brother Balarama and sister Subhadra. Shree is Laxmi, when Shree left Shree khetra only Khetra (field) remains there. Poet Balaram Das describes in his 'Laxmi Puran' that when Laxmi left Uttam-Purusa, the Purusha became helpless and lived without food. Once elder brother Balarama showed his admistrative power over his family members. One day a untouchable lady Sriyachandaluni worshipped Mahalaxmi deeply. Laxmi went to Sriya's house. Elder brother Balaram knew the fact and directed Lord Jagannath to drive Mahalaxmi from Shree-Mandir as she went to a chandal house. Mahalaxmi left Shree-Mandir, as a result of which Balaram and Jagannath could not get Mahaprasad (rice) as they were anti-Laxmi (Laxmidrohi). Nobody gave them food. At last they went to Sriya Chandaluni's house where Mahalaxmi dwelt. They were satisfied with usual food and Podapitha (cake) distributed by Shreeya. Mahalaxmhi came



back to Sri Mandir again. Here in the Laxmipuram the greatness of Laxmi has been established. She is the cause of all happiness of Lord Balaram and Jagannath.

Balarama, the elder brother of Srikrishna went on tour to different places during Mahabharat War without supporting either Kauravas or Pandavas. Pravachana Yagnya was organised by Rishi Lomaharshana in the holy forest of Naimishyaranya. Rishi Lomaharshana sat on the sacred chair of Vyasa. Balarama after returning from his travel trip entered Naimishyaranya during the course of Pravachana programme. All Rishis and devotees paid respect to Balaram except Rishi Lomaharshana. Balarama threw his sharpened mace to Lomaharshana and he was killed. All Rishis denounced Balaram and ultimately he went to different holy places to have bath in holy water to wave out his sin.

It is said that Balaram went to Jajapur to dip in water of Baitarani river to wave out his sin. He fought with demon Kandarasur at Kendrapara and killed him on Kartika Akadasi day. Balaram married his daughter Tulasi on Dwadasi day of Kartika. Every year Tulasi Bibaha festival is performed on this day at Baladev Jew temple at Kendrapara.

According to Srimad Bhagabat, it is said that while Akrura was returning from Gopa to Mathura along with Balaram and Krishna, he saw the miracle inside Kalandi water during his bath. He saw Srikrishna sat on the lap of Ananta (Balaram), the bright white Sheshanag having thousand snake-hoods:-

*"Sahasra Shirasam Debam Sahasra Phana Maulinam
Nilambar Bisashvetam Shrungeih Shvetamiba Sthitam
Tasvota sange Ghanashyama Pitakausheya vasasam
Purusham Chaturbhujam Shantam Padma-
Putrarunekshyanam."*

(Bhagabat-10-40-(45-46))

Here Balarama is called 'Ananta' or 'Shesa Naga'. Balaram while on death bed, was

described as in Naga (snake) form. When Jadu clan was destroyed one Anantanaga emerged from Balaram's mouth and entered into the ocean. Jagannath Dash, one of the greatest poet of Orissa describes like this:-

*"Jadaba Bala Nasta Dekhi ! Rama Bujhile Beni Akhi
Takhyane Nija Yogabale ! Ananta Paseele Patale"*

Now Balarama, Subhadra and Krishna are worshipped in Shree Mandir at Purusottama Khetra Puri as Lord Balbhadra, Subhadra and Lord Jagannath.

Famous Indian Poet Bidyakar Mishra Bajapayee in his "*Nityachar Paddhati*" prays Lord :-

*"Namasteastu Jagannath Namasteastu Pitamaha,
Narayan Namasteastu Balabhadra Namostute"*

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