

RELIGIOUS PRACTICES OF THE TEMPLES IN ANCIENT EGYPT AND PURI SHRI JAGANNATH TEMPLE IN INDIA: COMPARATIVE OVERVIEW

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Abstract: Since ancient times, two ancient civilizations of the world such as the Indus Valley Civilization and the Egyptian Civilization though geographically fall apart from one another; they were well connected through the sea routes for maritime trading and cultural exchange as described in the ancient texts and archival records. The maritime trading also resulted in the social and cultural exchange between the two civilizations as well. The article focuses primarily on the striking resemblances observed between the Puri Shri Jagannath temple in India with that of the temples of ancient Egypt in terms of the religious worship of the deities, ritual practices in the temples, arts and architecture, celebration of temple festivals, religious record keeping, the role of king as the first servitor, humanisation of God and daily offering rituals, the concept of the state deity and God-King relationship etc. Though it is very difficult to trace the origin and evolution of the religio-cultural system and ritual practices in the temples of both the regions Odisha in India and ancient Egypt, however this similar system and arrangements might have been originated and evolved at one place at some point in time, might have gradually spread over to the other places in course of time.

Introduction

The Indus Valley Civilization and Egyptian Civilization are the two most ancient civilizations of the world, which have contributed immensely to the world's civilization and culture. Egypt had grown on the banks of the Nile River and therefore was known as "the gift of the Nile". On the other hand, the Indus Valley Civilisation had grown on the bank of the Sutlej River in the North West regions of South Asia including the Indian peninsula,

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Pakistan's Punjab and Sindh provinces. The two ancient civilizations had developed similar characteristic features, human settlement patterns, lifestyles and cultures such as the worship of river gods, crocodiles, cows and caste system. India's interaction with Egypt started well before Jesus Christ. The exchange of trade through the sea route connected the two civilizations, which also resulted in deep social and cultural interaction between them. In around 1500 BC, the Egyptian Queen Hatshepsut sent a naval expedition and mission to India to establish commercial and diplomatic ties, which led to direct sea contact of Egyptian sailors to navigate the Red Sea and the Arabian Sea. During the reign of the Persian king, Darius I, a convoy of ships was commissioned to explore the mouth of the Indus River and the Red Sea in Egypt and a canal was started a century earlier with the aim of linking the north-western tip of the sea with Nile (Sayed, 2008, pp-7). However, the first step toward enhancing trade relations between Egypt and India was taken during the Hellenistic age. The kings of the Ptolemaic dynasty in Egypt cemented the ties between India and Egypt through geographical discoveries. It is said that the mummies of Egyptians were wrapped with muslin imported from India. Hindu trade gave to the land of Nile ivory, gold, spices, tamarind wood, sandalwood, monkeys, plants and animals. The textile craftsmen of Egypt dyed their cloth with Hindu indigo. The Hindu ships brought Indian commodities to Arabian ports or to the Land of Punt, and from there these items were transported to the Egyptian cities of Memphis and Heliopolis. There was indirect trade contact between ancient India and ancient Egypt through Mesopotamian for acquiring valuable materials like lapis lazuli from the Indus Valley.

According to the Skanda Purana, Egypt was known as Sancha-Dvipa as mentioned in Sir William Jones' dissertation on Egypt. The German Indologist Peter V. Bohlen found a connection between India and Egypt in terms of folk art, language and rural culture. Max Muller (1823-1900) observed that the mythology of Egypt (also Greeks and Assyrians) is founded on the Vedic traditions. The Greek writer Eusebius (260-340 AD) recorded early Ethiopians migrated from the Indus River, and first settled in the vicinity of Egypt. (Asiatic Researchers Vol. III,1792). British Lt. Colonel Wilford gave evidence that ancient Indians colonized and settled in Egypt. In the processions of Ptolemy Philadelphus, the Indian women, hunting dogs, cows, and Indian spices were seen. The modelled heads of Indians were discovered at Memphis about the fifth century B.C. showing that Indians were living there for trade. The religious and social doctrines of the Indus people in the region of conjecture. One can infer from the isolated sculptural works the presence of the Siva cult, Sakti worship, and yoga method. An apparent polytheism and a technique of psychological development found also among Hermetic groups in Egypt are indicated (Radhakrishnan, 1939, pp-118). The doctrine of rebirth by keeping all bodily senses in abeyance was accepted in Egypt under Indian influence. Testimony of monuments shown by Herodotus, Plato,

Salon, Pythagoras, and Philo stratus states that the temples and religion of Egypt came from India (Petrie, 1906, pp-90)

The history of India and Odisha started in the lower Palaeolithic Era as evident from rock carvings, paintings and Neolithic tools like hoes, chisels, mace heads, pottery, prehistoric paintings and inscriptions that show the ancient prehistoric existence of Odisha in the name of Kalinga, Kongoda, Koshala and Odra. Frequent references to Kalinga as a powerful kingdom are made in Mahabharata. By the time of Mahavir and Buddha, the Kalinga-Utkal had gained wide recognition in East India. In the early Christian Era, Odisha had trade contact with the western world, especially with the Roman Empire. The Periplus of Erythraean Sea (1st Century AD) Kalinga port of Dosarene is referred to have trade relations with Rome (Patra, 2005,pp-45).). The Pearls and diamonds were exported from Kalinga to the Western World. The best type of diamonds was manufactured in the Hirakud region of Sambalpur on the banks of the Mahanadi River in ancient Orissa which was sold as an attractive item in the markets of Rome, Persia, Egypt and Greece. Odisha is also known for its ancient religious heritage & temple culture. The Golden Triangle of Odisha constitutes three-world famous grand monuments such as the Jagannath Temple at Puri, the Sun Temple at Konark, and the Lingaraj Temple at Bhubaneswar built by royal dynasties of the state. Besides, the other temples in Bhubaneswar such as Rajarani, Mukteswar, Brahmeswar, Megheswar, Bhaskateswar and Baitaleswar temple are ancient monuments crafted skilfully in Kalinga architecture in 11th and 12th Century AD. These beautiful monuments are not just places of worship but testaments of the glorious heritage of the land.

Like Indians, the Egyptians were also religious in nature. Around 1500 Gods and Goddesses were found in ancient Egypt and were believed to have differential powers and influences. Some of them are Ptah, the Father God of ancient Egypt or God of Creation, Sekhmet, Lioness Goddess, Re or Sun God, Osiris, or King of Living, Nun, Sokar, Horus, or God of Vengeance, Seth, Amun, Mut or Mother Goddess, Hathor, Anubis, Thoth or God of Knowledge and Wisdom etc. In around 3400 BCE, two kingdoms of Egypt such as Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt flourished. King Narmer (Menes) unified the two kingdoms of Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt and established Memphis as the first capital of united Egypt. Memphis was known as “the Life of Two Lands” (Snow, 2018, pp 254).). During Pre-Dynastic Period, Egyptian cities like Memphis, Heliopolis and Thebes had grown as a key trading and religious centres of ancient Egypt. A large number of temples, tombs and myths of ancient Egypt are the oldest religious records of the ancient world and narrate the Egyptian culture and society.

It is interesting to note here that, there are many striking parallels and similarities noticed between the Jagannath temple in Puri, Odisha and the temples of ancient Egypt

such as the religious cultural system, andromorphic forms of the deities, ritual practices, temple arts and architectures, worship of Sun God and other deities having similar attributes, royal patronage of the temples, fairs and festivals, religious record keeping in the temple, role of king as the first servitor, humanisation of God and daily offerings to the deities. A state culture had evolved centring around a deity in both regions. The evidence is found from a great variety of sources such as archaeological monuments and houses, painted scenes on the temple walls, papyri documents, mummies, statues, royal stelae and rock inscriptions (Kahn & Shirley, 2009: 11).

Scope of Research Study

Though many research studies have been made by different scholars on both the area of study on the Jagannath Temple in Puri as well as on various aspects of the temples in ancient Egypt, however, there is no such comparative research study has been made between the Puri Shri Jagannath temple in India with that of temples of ancient Egypt. This aspect of the research has not been addressed so far in previous studies. So, the knowledge and understanding of this aspect of the study are very insignificant and minimal. In order to gain a deeper understanding of the problem, the said innovative research approach is made which will spark research interests among the scholars and academia for further investigation on this issue.

Aims and Objectives

- ❖ To study the two ancient civilizations of the world take the Puri Shri Jagannath temple in Puri of Indian Civilization with that of the temples of ancient Egyptian Civilization.
- ❖ To make a comparative study of Puri Shri Jagannath temple in India with that of temples of ancient Egypt selecting some indicators such as religious worship of the deities, concept of state deity, God-King relationship, the role of king as the first servitor, temple festivals, ritual practices, arts & architectures and religious record keeping in the temples etc.
- ❖ To document the best religious and cultural practices adopted in both the Indian Civilization and Egyptian Civilization to generate scholarly interest for further research and investigation in this field.

Research Methods

The research study is based exclusively on the secondary data and information available in the field of study. After framing the basic research questions, certain indicators are chosen on the basis of which relevant comparisons are made between the Puri Shri Jagannath

temple in India with that of the temples of ancient Egypt. The research study is based on works done by different scholars and academia in the field of study. The selected indicators include the religious worship of the deities, the concept of state deity and God-King relationship, the role of the king as the first servitor, temple festivals and ritual practices, arts and architectures and religious record keeping, etc. Accordingly, the collection of essential data and information are made from secondary sources such as books, published reports, manuscripts, documents and journals available in the public libraries, as well as internet and web sources for a broad understanding of the problem. Then the compilation of secondary data and information and research analysis is made in drawing meaningful conclusions and inferences from the research study.

Lord Jagannath of Puri and Ptah God of Ancient Egypt

Lord Jagannath is the primordial deity of the Vedic Hindu Sanatana Dharma in India. The name Jagannath signifies that he is the Lord of the Universe who symbolises Maha Vishnu, the creator and protector of the universe. The origin of Lord Jagannath is quite ancient and shrouded in the mystery. Jagannatha in the present form made of wood has been worshipped for several centuries. Though researchers are yet to provide a clear idea about the exact date of its origin, the site of this magnificent temple where Jagannatha is worshipped has been held sacred since ancient times. Some trace the sanctity of the site to the Rig Veda (Pani, 2017: 55). Similarly, the Egyptian God 'Ptah' is known as the creator God of Memphis and protector of ancient Egypt who is said to have existed from the earliest dynastic periods of Egypt and even earlier. The word Ptah is derived from the Sanskrit word 'Pitah' means father or main God of Egypt. He was the Lord of Truth, knowledge, emblem of Justice and creator of all spiritual beings. It is said that Ptah created the universe from his heart and tongue. The other deities were believed to have been devised by Ptah. The statue of Ptah God was a light-skinned man, who wears a tight-fitting cloak, and a skullcap and holds a sceptre with a *djed* pillar, the sign of stability on top, sometimes green with mummy wrappings and a collar with *menat* as pillars. Although Memphis was the cult centre of Ptah, he was worshipped in all major temples of ancient Egypt.

King Menes built a temple for Ptah God at Memphis in 3000 BCE which was one of the most ancient temples in Egypt. Memphis was supposedly founded by AHA, Menes, 2920 B.C.E. (Bunson, 2002: 211) which was located on the west side of the Nile river, south of modern Cairo. Memphis was the First capital of Egypt from the Early Dynastic Period which was also a seat of political power. From the 1st dynasty to the 5th Dynasty, Ptah was the main deity and father God of Egypt whereas from the 5th Dynasty the Ra or Re (Sun God) was considered as the supreme deity having a religious centre at Heliopolis.

Amun God was popular throughout ancient Egypt and is often associated with Re or sun God and is known as Amun-Re. Further, the Ptah was said to be the patron God of the great architecture of the Old Kingdom of Egypt. He was the God of creative arts and philosophy; Greeks regarded him as the counterpart of their own artisan god, Hephaestus or Vulcan. Likewise, Lord Jagannath remains an embodiment of the heritage and culture of Odisha. The profound influence of Jagannath Culture is found in the art, painting, craft, dance music and sculpture of Odisha. Like the Ptah God in Egypt, the Lord Jagannath have ancient origin and existence and he acts as the core binding force representing the cultural, and spiritual tic ethos of Odisha and plays a vital role in shaping Odia's identity and heritage.

Jagannath Trio & Transformation of Ptah to Triad Deity

Many similarities are noticed between the Lord Jagannath and Ptah God of Egypt, which especially relate to their origin, evolution and influence over state culture etc. Lord Jagannath was worshipped as a Nilamadhab deity and was also called Indra-Nilamani-Bigraha by the Savara tribal community in the remote forest of Odisha. The Nilamadhaba appears to be a Dravid name which was very widespread and influential. It means Nila-Maa-Dhaba i.e Black Mother White. The Nila (blue or black), Maa was the name of Sumerian Mother Goddess and also the name of mother goddess in Asia Minor for more than 4,000 years ago. Dhaba is used for white. Hence, Ma as their mother is non-Vedic. Later, the single deity of Neela-Madhab transformed into a composite triad or sibling deities of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra. Even today among the primitive Savara and Dravid tribes from Orissa to the frontiers of Assam, wooden images with crudely carved and painted faces with or without hands are found in many localities (Das, 1949: 47). The Madala Panji, the Chronicle of Jagannath Temple observes that the deity of Neela Madhav was transformed into Jagannath and was worshipped alone as a unitary figure, not as part of a triad. The early epigraphic and literary sources refer only to a unitary deity Purushottama Jagannath which later transformed into the holy trinity of Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra and are presently being worshipped in the temple of Lord Jagannath at Puri, Odisha. The evolution of Lord Jagannath from the Neelamadhab deity is synonymous with that of the Ptah God in ancient Egypt. Like Lord Jagannath, the Ptah God was worshipped in a cave by the tribal community of South Palestine at the initial stage. When the tribal community came as soldiers to support the Egyptian army in the war at Memphis, they brought their deity Ptah with them.

Jagannath Trio of Puri and Theban Triad of Ancient Egypt

Lord Jagannath is worshipped as a composite triad deity with his elder brother Lord Balabhadra and sister Devi Subhadra and Sri Sudarshan in the Jagannath Temple at Puri,

Odisha. The first historical appearance of Lord Jagannath in 318 A.D. is found when the priests fled with the sacred deity, which remained buried in the dense forest of Subernapur in Western Odisha for 150 years until a pious prince drove out the foreigners and brought back the sacred Log. (Mohanty 1939 pp-12-20) During the reign of King Jajati Keshari II of the Somabansi Dynasty, three main deities were worshipped in different regions of Odisha such as -Goddess Stambeswari Ekanansa Subhadra of the Western Odisha, Valadev or Nagaraj of Toshali in the Northern Odisha and Purusottam Jagannath of Kangoda or Kalinga who were combinedly worshipped at Puri as the state deity of Tri-Kalinga Empire. Further, unlike the other Hindu Gods and Goddesses worshipped in the temple in India are usually made up of either metal or stone, the deities of Lord Jagannath, elder brother Lord Balabhadra and Sister Devi Subhadra and Sri Sudarshan are made of Neem wood indicating the primordial existence of the deities from ancient times. Further, four colours of the deities such as Jagannath in black, Balabhadra in white Devi Subhadra in yellow and Sri Sudarshan in red represent four major races of the world.

Likewise, in course of time, the sing deity of Ptah was turned into composite deities. The Ptah held numerous titles in associations with other deities such as Ptah-Hapi or the Nile god, Ptah-Osiris, and Ptah-Sokar the hawk-headed God of death or Underworld (Remler, 2010:pp-103). The dual form of deity was turned into a triad deity called Ptah-Sokar-Osiris. The triune deity of Osiris-Ptah-Sokar was found when Ptah was united with Soker (Seker) a large-headed God, with heavy limbs and a beetle on his head stood on a cabinet with hawks. In some texts, it is found that the Ptah was united with two other deities such as Sekhmet, the consort of Ptah and the couple's son Nefertem or moon god was worshipped as Ptah-Sekhmet-Nefertem 'Triad' at Memphis. The Sekhmet was the daughter of Ra or Sun God known as "Eye of RE married to Ptah. Like the trinity of Lord, Jagannath worshipped Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra worshipped in the Jagannath Temple, the Amun was also worshipped with his consort Mut and their son Khonsu known as the Theban Triad Amun-Mut-Khonsu were popular Egyptian Gods in 18th and 25th Dynasty. The two major temples at Thebes, one at Luxor, and the other at Karnak were dedicated to the cult of Amun and other deities (Gates, 2011: 32).

Lord Jagannath of Puri and Amun God of Ancient Egypt

Lord Jagannath is worshipped as the presiding deity of Odisha State and the adjoining states in East India. So also, the Amun God at Thebes was worshipped as the chief deity of ancient Egypt known as an all-powerful creator god. Lord Jagannath or Lord Krishna's complexion is dark blue or black with peacock feathers on his head. So also, Amun God was depicted in the funerary arts and temple inscriptions of ancient Egypt as 'blue skin

colour' having two feather head-dresses. Hindu mythology depicts that the holy river Ganga originated from the lotus feet of Lord Vishnu symbolising Lord Jagannath. So also, it is described in the Egyptian texts that the water of oceans, lakes, rivers and seas came from the sandals of Amun.

Lord Jagannath's "unknowable form" pervades the entire cosmos and abides in the heart of all creatures. Purusottama Jagannath symbolising Lord Krishna tells Arjuna in the Bhagawat Geeta that, "there is no one who knows me completely. Yet, no one could understand me. "There is *nothing that exists separate from me*, "the entire universe is suspended from me as my necklace of jewels. Wherever you find strength, or beauty, or spiritual power, these have sprung from a spark of my essence." The birth and dissolution of the cosmos take place in him. Like Lord Krishna the Amun was regarded as "hidden", "unknown", and no one could behold or understand him, except He himself. Amun abides in all; everything happens in him, and nothing exists outside him. Amun is the Supreme Creator and maker of all beings". In Egypt, Amun is written as 'Ymn', 'Yamunu' or 'Yamun' which may be a distorted version of Yamuna (a river associated with Lord Krishna) The wife of Amun is Amunet who is a mother goddess said to be originated from the chest of Lord Amun. Amunet is the Egyptian word for Radha, the energy of Lord Krishna. She is the creator of Goddess Durga and symbolises Goddess Lakshmi representing beauty and affluence.

Lord Jagannath is known as the "Patita Pavan" or "Saviour of the Fallen" the poor, destitute and downtrodden and he listens to the devotee's prayers instantly who pray to him. In *Bhagavad Gita*, Krishna asks Arjuna to regard him as his only protector, he says, "Remembering me, you shall overcome all difficulties through my grace. Lord Jagannath symbolises Lord Vishnu or Sri Krishna, the Supreme Creator God. So also, Amun was the main deity of Thebes in Egypt and was said to be the "champion of the poor" and "personal savior" who took him into his heart. "[*Amun*] *who comes at the voice of the poor in distress, who gives breath to him who is wretched; when I call to you in my distress You come and rescue me.*" Further, the Garuda is the carrier of Lord Vishnu. The Egyptian word for Garuda is Horus who is a falcon-headed God associated with the Amun God of Egypt and acts as a messenger between gods and men. Further, it is found that the cult statues of Amun, the supreme god of Egypt were fashioned in lapis lazuli, turquoise and precious stone. His flesh is coloured in blue lapis lazuli, which was imported as a highly prized stone from Indus Valley and is considered worthy of a god (Hart, 2005: 34). The lapis lazuli is a deep blue stone streaked with glistening pyrite and calcite known to Egyptians as *khesbed*. This was used for jewellery and ornaments which were exported over vast distances to early civilizations of West Asia and north-east Africa during the Naqada II Period (Shaw, 2003: 72).

Devi Subhadra and Mut Goddess

The Mut is a female deity of Egypt who is described as Queen of Goddesses, Lady of Heaven, and Mother of Gods. Mut (wife of Amun) and Subhadra, (sister of Krishna) was regarded as the Mother Goddess. Like Mut, Devi 'Subhadra' is known as the Goddess of good fortune, and auspiciousness and is worshipped as Goddess Durga, the protector from evil spirits who assumed a frightening form to destroy the demons. In ancient Egypt, Mut is also depicted as War Goddess having a crook and flail (nekha) that represents Trishula and Parashu is also found in the hands of Goddess Durga.

The Khonsu is the son of Amun who represents a white complexioned moon God with solace and satisfaction. As depicted on the walls at Karnak, the Khonsu as "*Great Snake who fertilizes the Cosmic Egg in the creation of the world*". He is depicted holding heka in His hands which represents a plough. So also, Lord Balabhadra the elder brother of Lord Jagannath in white complexion is known as the God of Agriculture holding Hala Musala in his hands who made the land fertile. Osiris was a man-headed God of agriculture and His earliest manifestation was *Asar*. Further, the Balabhadra or Balaram is said to be "Ananta-Sesha Naga" (primalval serpent) whose coils Lord Vishnu rests in the middle of the cosmic Milky Ocean at the beginning and end of the creation. In Egyptian mythology, the primalval serpent is also linked with the symbol of creation and associated with the creator God Atum. It is said that the world would fall into a chaotic state at the end when Atum would once again become a serpent (Remler, 2010: 51).

Worship of Sun God

The worship of Sun God was found in many ancient civilizations of the world including India and Egypt. The Suryadev or the Sun God is often compared with the Rig Vedic Vishnu. The two big round eyes of Lord Jagannath symbolising universal supreme Lord Vishnu denote the sun and moon respectively. The Rig Vedic Rishis have described the Night Sun (Black), the morning Sun (Hiranyagraba-Golden) and the Day Sun (White) (Das 1949 pp 42) which can be compared with the three colours of the deities of Lord Jagannath (Black), Devi Subhadra (Yellow) and Lord Balabhadra (White). Sun worship has been widely prevalent in Odisha from ancient times. The Royal dynasties of Odisha have derived their names as the Suryavamsis and Chandravamsis from Sun and Moon respectively. Besides, the tribal communities of Odisha also worship the sun god in different names. Sing Bonga and Singi Arke are the names of the sun god of Bondas of Koraput and Mundas of Northern Odisha, respectively. The common stem *sing / singi* means the sun. Arka is the name of the sun god mentioned in Vedic texts. The name Konark itself bears testimony to the association of the term arka with the sun god. The Brihat Samhita of Barahamihira states that the countries of the Udra and Kalinga were under the direct control of the Sun God (Mahatab, 1981: 36).

The Surya Puja or Sun worship is done every morning in Sri Mandira Puri. In front of the entrance to the eastern gateway, there is a beautiful Sun pillar (Arun Stamba) which originally stood before the sun temple at Konark (Pattanaik, 2006: 41) and it is installed in front of the main entrance called Singha Dwara of the Jagannath Temple at Puri. The Sun Temple at Konark in Odisha has been built in the form of a chariot of Sun God by King Narasimhadeva-I in 13th Century AD. It is a great temple of India with beautiful temple arts and architecture, wheels and horses made up of stone. The sculptures of the deities of Jagannath Balabhadra and Subhadra adorn gold jewellery during the *sun besha* ritual and are found on the walls of Sun Temple in Konark. Though Lord Purusottama was a state-deity, the king Narasimha had special devotion towards the Sun God. Some scholars presume that Surya was Narasimha's personal deity (Istadevata). King Narasimhadeva-I was the first king of Orissa, who hold the title of Gajapati (Lord of elephants) which became a great royal title in Orissa under the late Gangas and Suryavamsis. After the fall of the Surya dynasty, Lord Jagannath was no more conceived officially as a state deity; but had remained and still remains as the main deity of the state of Orissa (Tripathy 2014 pp 13). The Valmiki Ramayana states that Lord Rama advised Bibhisana to worship Lord Jagannath, the family deity of *Ikshvaku Suryavansi* dynasty "Aradhaya Jagannatham, Ikshvaku Kula Daivatam" Ramachandra belonged to Ikshvaku or Suryavamsi dynasty whose family deity was Surya or sun-God. The word Jagannath' is also used as an adjective for Surya which means Lord of the Universe (Tripathy, 2009:16).

Further, the name of Konark in Odisha (where the sun temple is located) and the name of Karnak in Egypt (where the large temple complex of Amun God is found) is more or less similar which shows some common language between India and Egypt. It is found that Egypt is nearer to India than Italy and Greece and has huge literary and artistic treasures. Egypt and Egyptians are even far closer than the so-called Aryans in terms of language, culture and everything (Ray, 1956: 23). Dr Suniti Kumar Chatterji said "Many of our family titles are of Egyptian origin and many caste names have been formed according to their original home town in Egypt or Egyptian caste system.

In Hindu mythology, the Sun God is depicted as Jagat Chakshyu (Eye of the world). Similarly, the Ra or Re the Sun God was an important god in ancient Egypt. The Amun deity was also worshipped as Amun-Re which is a fusion of Amun with Sun God, Re. In Egyptian myths' the Ra is connected with the sacred eye called *Ankh*, the symbol of eternal life. And he has been originated from the sacred syllable of 'Aum'. The holy trinity of Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra are said to have been originated from the syllable of Aum. The Horus God of Egypt whose right eye was the Sun or morning star symbolises power and his left eye was the moon or evening star which was healing power. The *ankh* had special significance in temple rituals and ceremonies. The *ankh* resembled a cross with

a loop at the top in the hands of deities. The cult of Sun-God Ra was widespread in ancient Egypt and sun temples were built in many places by kings in proximity to pyramid complexes. A sun temple is linked to a massive pedestal with a symbol of the sun god and an altar in a court open to the sun. They emphasized sun-god's role as the ultimate giver of life and moving force in nature (Shaw, 2003: 21).

Anthropomorphic Forms of Gods and Goddesses

Some evidence relating to the existence of various Gods and Goddesses in their endomorphic forms i.e. combination of the animal head with the human body is found in the earliest religion in Indian and ancient Egypt as well. The Hindu Mythology depicts that, in the Satya Yuga Lord Jagannath symbolising Lord Vishnu took the frightening form of Nrusimha and protected His devotee Prahalada by killing the demon king Hiranyakashyapu. Similarly, the Sekhmet was a lioness deity in ancient Egypt, having a lion-shaped head with a strong human-like body and a sun disk on her head in a warrior manifestation of Sun flames which destroy the enemies of Pharaoh to protect Egypt. Sekhmet was known as "She Who Is Powerful" and righteous. The appearance of Lord Jagannath as Adi Nrusimha (Lion-faced God with a human body) seems to be similar to that of the Sekhmet Goddess of Egypt. The word Nrusimha is also mentioned in Egyptian literature as Sakhet, the God of lions or war and fire. The Sekhet is seen as a merciful god and in the angry form, he used his destructive power to protect and to create as well. Similarly, the Lord Jagannath is worshipped as Supta Nrusimha in a subtle form on Ratnavedi in the Jagannath temple at Puri. Besides, Jagannath is worshipped as Yajna Nrusimha and Patala Nrusimha during Nabakalebara Ritual to destroy evil forces. Apart from this, Lord Vishnu took another incarnation of Varaha (a boar-headed God with a human body) to kill a demon called Hiranakhya as narrated in Hindu mythology. The Horus was a falcon-headed god and Anubis with a jackal head was found in ancient Egypt. The priests wore heads of animals when personating God (Petrie, 1908: 76). As per the texts available, many such anthropomorphic images of various Gods and Goddesses with similar attributes exhibit the common religious ethos of the two ancient civilizations.

S. N. Rajguru (1949) the epigraphist of Odisha says that in some secluded forest parts of the uplands of Orissa some prehistoric paintings have been found which are being suspected by pictographs to be hieroglyphic writing representing expressive limbs and organs of men. These paintings as they say may be the specimen of indigenous picture writing at least as if not older than the pre-dynastic Egyptian and proto-Sumerian picture writing but developed in a different form in Egypt. The images of Jagannath might have been originated and fashioned from such hieroglyphic paintings.

Temple Arts and Architectures

The Jagannath Temple at Puri is built with intricate designs and miniature carvings in stones in the Kalinga style of architecture in 12th Century BC which is a Hindu architectural style that flourished in Odisha in ancient times. The Singahdwara or Lions Gate is the main entrance of the temple facing towards the east to Bada Danda (Grand Road) where two lion statues are found standing on either side and it leads to the main temple complex through Baisi Pahacha (twenty-two steps). Besides, three other gates such as Baghra (Tiger) Dwara, Ghoda (Horse) Dwara and Hasti (Elephant) Dwaras facing towards west, south and north are found. A single-faced Lord Jagannath known as Patitapavana, “Saviour of the downtrodden and fallen” is painted on the right side of the temple entrance. The statues of two guards called Jaya and Vijaya standing in the doorway of the temple. The Jagannath temple is broadly divided into four major parts such as Deula (Viman) or Grabha Griha -Sanctum Sanctorum of the Temple where the deities are seated on a stone pedestal, Mukhasala (porch), Jagamohan or Natamandira (Audience Hall) and the Bhoga Mandap (Hall for Residuary Offerings) (Tripathy 2015: 34). The outer and inner temple walls are profusely sculpted with diverse architectural motifs and beautifully carved figures of dancing devadasis, images of various Gods and Goddesses, birds, animals, snakes, elephants, horses and temple doors are designed in woods and metals. The *leelas* and stories of Gods and Goddesses like Ram and Sita, Radha and Krishna are beautifully painted on the inner temple walls which reflect the rich cultural heritage, traditional arts and artistry of the land. A spacious courtyard surrounds the shrines of auxiliary deities of more than 30s surrounding the main temple complex which include the Ganesh temple, Vimala temple, Laxmi temple, Sakhi Gopal Temple, Nrusimha Temple and Nabagraha Temple and other deities.

So also, the temples were important religious sites in ancient Egypt, which were considered as the earthly residences for the divinities and dead kings where human and divine realms could mingle. Temples were also associated with the cosmos at its most critical moments—birth and death (Eaton, 2013:71). Two types of temples are found in Egypt: the cult temple and the cult place of a dead, godly king (called mortuary temple). The temple of God Amun and mortuary shrines of Hatshepsut at Deier El-Bahri in Thebes have some common features. As a gift to the king, the cult temples had huge political and economic significance, which enabled the king to place his monuments at the heart of major cities, such as the Amun cult at Thebes in the Eleventh and Eighteenth Dynasties (Lloyd, 2010: 67). The arts and architectures of ancient Egyptian temples were designed in uniquely beautiful paintings portrayed in the Egyptian traditions with naturalism, religious symbolism, scenes of paradise, hunting and descriptions of everyday life of Nile valley and decorative crafts of early dynasties. The statues were compact, solid, serene and

idealized figures made in limestone, granite and wood. All cities were made “after the pattern of Thebes.” which was the nation’s capital, a vast and beautiful necropolis. The New Kingdom period offered a great artistic horizon of art and architecture of the temples display the same features as the pyramids: dignity, grandeur and simplicity, colossal statues, decorative scenes on pylons, crowds in the court and Great Hypostyle Hall in the Temple at Karnak on holidays are evident (Gosse, 1915: 108).

The large temple complex of state gods of Amun at Karnak and Luxor are the most impressive monuments of ancient Egypt, which have been built thousand years ago by the royal dynasties in the New Kingdom and sprawled over 100 ha of land in Luxor at Thebes. The Thebes was the cult centre of Amun is known as the “Great City of the Gods” and Thebes was also a minor trading post during the Old Kingdom of ancient Egypt. Luxor town is located on the eastern shore of the Nile 400 miles south of Cairo. The temples in ancient Egypt were elaborately designed with scenes on the interior walls of Hypostyle Hall and reliefs showing land and river processions of the New Year Festival of Opet (Hart, 2005: 86). The large temple complexes like Karnak have multiple shrines of deities like Amun, Mut, Khonsu, Montu, and Ptah and multiple chambers for storerooms, work chambers for priests, administrative bureaus, a shrine for god, halls, open court, entrance pylons of cult temple added hypostyle hall, courts, and pylons (Gates, 2011: 123). The interior temple walls of Karnak and Luxor Temple are covered with innumerable scenes of rituals of deities and kings which are brightly painted in white, red, green, blue, and yellow colours. Landing stage avenue was connected to dock on banks of Nile River and lakes where barks of gods moor at temple site during temple festival and procession. The Flag Staff called *senut* are tall and made of cedar wood and are displayed in pairs in front of the temple. Pylons were made at the front gates and entrance to different sections of the temple. Forecourts areas adjoin pylons at the entrance of each new section of the temple. The Hypostyle halls were large corridors of the temple where the people assemble to adore kings and gods. The Hypostyle Hall of Karnak complexes was columned and roofed slabs brightly illuminated and opened to air. The Sanctuaries is the sacred part of the temple where the god’s statue placed on an Altar is called *kebat* by Egyptians. In the New Kingdom altars were big tables with ramps and steps made of stone or brick blocks.

State Deity and God-King Relationship

Lord Jagannath has been widely accepted as the state deity of Odisha. The Jagannath Culture has gained wider popularity under the royal patronage of the Gajpati kings of Odisha. The Jagannath temple was built by King Chodaganga Dev in the 12th century AD and had gained prominence at the national level. In Jagannath culture, the ‘god-king relationship’ is well cherished over the centuries in terms of day-to-day rituals, customs

traditions and symbolism. The unique articulation of “statecraft” through the symbolism of a specific god. The kings of Orissa are considered at best representative (Pratinidhi) of Madhusudan (Vishnu). As dead king, Yajati was praised by his son (Kulke, 1981, pp-48). As evident from the Madalapanji, the Chronicle of Jagannath Temple Lord Jagannath formerly known as Purusottama became the state deity of the Ganga empire, especially from the time of Anangabhima III. “The year 1230 unquestionably marks the commencement of kingship ideology of Gajapatis, who claims to rule as sons (Putra and Rauta) of Lord Purusottama Jagannatha. In the same year, Anangbhima III acknowledged Purusottama as the sole state deity (Rashtra Devata) of his empire. In an inscription at Lingaraj temple, he described himself as a servant of Purusottama of Puri and regarded Him as the real Lord of the Ganga dynasty. The Draksharama inscription (1216A.D) praises King Anangabhima Deva III as the Depty (rauta) and the son (putra) of the Trinity namely Purusottama, Rudra and Durga.

After the fall of the Ganga dynasty, the founder king of the Suryavamsi dynasty, Kapilendradev ruled Odisha, made an official proclamation in the Oriya language, and declared Lord Jagannath as state-deity of Odisha. The change of name from Purusottama to Jagannath had a popular appeal during his time. He made Lord Jagannath symbolically responsible for all his important decisions and deeds. Further, in the Warangal inscription, he stated that to become king of Utkala country at the command of Lord Purusottama Jagannath. During his tenure, the Odia Mahabharata was composed by Sarala Das where Lord Jagannath is depicted for the first time in Odia literature. King Kapilendradev assumed the priestly function as the first servant (Adya Sevak) of Lord Jagannath. Such service is designated as ‘Gajapati Maharaja Seva’ performed by the king of Puri as per the Temple Record of Rights. In the Raj-Bhoga Itihas of Madalapanji the Jagannath Temple Chronicle, Lord Jagannath is described as “King of the Kingdoms of Odisha”. In Kanchi Kaveri written by Purusottam Das, Lord Jagannath is described as the king of Odisha and is directly brought to the battlefield during Kanchi Abhijan in defence of Odisha. So, Lord Jagannath had become the “Rashtra Devata” the binding force and the symbol of Odia Nationalism.

The concept of a deity for a state is very old that existed in at least the third millennium BCE. In an old civilization like Egypt each region, district and settlement had its own Gods or deities and its own myths which were accepted with absolute tolerance by the official clergy. The Gods personified the forces of nature supervising every event and activity they were responsible for the destiny of the country and every inhabitant of it (Tripathy, 2014: 63). In ancient Egypt from the first dynasty to the fifth Dynasty Period, the Ptah was the state deity and the father God. From the fifth Dynasty Period onwards, the Ra (Sun God) the Ra became the state god in ancient Egypt. In Egyptian history,

during Fourth Dynasty, the designation of the king was “son of the sun god Re” (Eaton, 2013: 127). The rulers assumed their royal titles from Ré and his divine powers. Later, Theban God Amun was united with Heliopolitan God Ra to become Amun-Ra who became the state god and great temples were built at Karnak and Luxor (Tripathy, 2014: 48). The priests who served Ré-Atum were learned and politically active.

The predominant model of Indian kingship appears to be analogous to the Egyptian Pharaoh as God on earth. The Pharaohs, the Egyptian king were truly the source of authority. All official actions both in the secular and religious spheres were based on power which the king had delegated (Mahapatra, 2003: 83). In “Ancient Egypt” Pharaohs were hereditary rulers for more than 3,000 years during three periods of Old, Middle, and New Kingdoms. The pharaohs were officially titled *neter-nefer*, *Neter* (God) and *nefer* (good and beautiful), the godlike qualities. “the good god,” which gave them semidivine status. The Egyptians believed their pharaoh was a living god and his queen was a goddess. The Pharaohs at the top took all major decisions in administrative, political, religious rituals, defending borders, warfare, law and order and a state cult were developed. The Pharaohs were expected to serve as supreme humans, heroic warriors, champions of all rights, dispensers of equal justice, and defenders of *MA'AT* (*harmony*) and the nation (Bunson, 2002: 21). The authority of Pharaohs is evident from the burial sites of ancient pyramids of Old Kingdom. The Pharaohs constructed many temples and tombs in ancient Egypt. The king had his own cult similar to that of gods. In the New Kingdom, the king's cult was celebrated in the temples in Thebes where the alters of gods and altar of the king and often the king's father was found in one place. The Priests conducted rituals to serve the dead kings in the same way as they had when the kings were alive. The king's ancestors were venerated and the continuity that was essential to the Egyptian civilization was preserved (Cavendish, 2011: 95). The wall reliefs in the Temple of Ramesses III at Medinet Habu show the statue of the king with a statue of God in temple processions and festivals.

Ritual Services Offered by the King as First Servitor

The Gajapati Maharaja or king of Puri is the Adya Sevak (first servitor) of Lord Jagannath and is treated as representative of Lord Jagannath or moving idol of God. As the first servitor of Lord Jagannath, the King of Puri perform certain important rituals of Jagannath Temple such as conducting Chera Panhara on chariots during Car Festival, Gua Teka or authorisation ritual during Nabakalebara Ceremony of the deities directing the temple servitors to go in search of the sacred neem tree for construction of the new idols, offering final oblation of fire sacrifice before the transference of Brahma. The practice of the Gajapati or kings of Odisha (Puri) as the first servitors, deputies or sons of Lord Jagannath is analogous to the Mesopotamian practice where the king was never conceived as God

though the king can appear as a child of a number of Gods at one and the same time (Frankfort, 1948: 67). The Mesopotamian king was a mortal marked by divine grace and called as “the sons of gods and goddesses which does not imply that they are divine.

So also, in ancient Egypt, the temple rituals were the responsibilities of the Pharaohs as loyal servants. The diverse rituals and ceremonies attended by the king as God’s first servitor in the ancient Egyptian temples. At times they delegated the ritual duties to the priests. The most important rituals were daily offering services which believed to satisfy the deity and deified kings for nourishment. The Egyptian temples were considered as the houses of gods built by the kings for the worship of gods and commemoration of Pharaohs in ancient Egypt. At times, the king dressed as a priest, applies perfume to the forehead of the statue of Amun Re. All rituals were made in the name of the king by a priest as evident from Chief Priest’s first ritual inside the temple “It is the king who sends me.” As a final ritual, the king performed “Bringing of Foot,” in which he grasped a broomlike plant sweeping his footprints from the room to keep the sanctuary in good order. In India however, the priesthood yielded spiritual powers and was capable of holding rituals without deriving the power from the king who was dependent on the Brahman priest in such matters (Mahapatra, 2003: 84).

Priesthood and Ritual Services

Many priests were engaged in the temple rituals in major religious centres in Egypt. The Priests served full-time or part-time in the temples in ancient Egypt. But, until the New Kingdom, the priesthood was not a full-time job (Eaton, 2013: 72). The king as the first servitor who could alone stand directly before the gods. The priests served at the pleasure of the king. The priestly profession was hereditary and passed on in families, generation after generation. The priests recruited new members from their own families and clans. The priestly title was prestigious. The state of purity distinguished a priest from a non-priest. Each priest has specific duties, privileges and differential access to different parts of the temple. The priests of different ranks kept the temple and sanctuary pure and conducted rituals, festivals and ceremonies. The priests involved in the daily offering were *nabs*, lectors, and God’s Fathers. The majority of priests held the title *nab*, “pure one,” which was an entry-level position. There were also “great *nabs*”. The *ka* priests were custodians of endowments, *Lector Priest* recite religious texts in temple and mortuary rituals and recited spells in funeral service and coronation of the king. The king selected the First Priest of a temple. He usually came up through the hierarchy of priests. The priests managed these powerful institutions and wielded considerable influence subordinated to the kings (Teeter, 2011: 114). The high priest of Memphis dedicated to God Ptah was called as “Great One Who Rules the Artificers,” The high priest of Amun in Thebes was called the

chief prophet of Amun who had great powers. The high priest of Heliopolis was a centre for the solar cult in honour of RĒ'.

Humanisation of God and Daily Rituals of Temple

Lord Jagannath is treated as a humanized God. So different facets of human life are well reflected in Jagannath culture, which gives it a unique status. Like the day-to-day activities of the common man from early morning till late night every day, Lord Jagannath brushes His teeth, takes bath, changes His clothes, wears a wide variety of colourful dresses at definite intervals, enjoys Chapana Bhogas or 56 varieties of food items, goes to bed after night meals. The series of rituals are performed by 119 types of temple servitors as per the Record of Rights of Jagannath Temple. Each servitor is assigned with specific kind of Seva or service to the deities. Every morning the first ritual of Dwarfita opening of the temple doors such as Jay-Vijaya dwara, and Kalahat or Chamu Dwar are made by Muduli and other Sevayats after scrutiny of the seal on the padlock of the previous night. After the opening of the doors, Pratihari utters Manima and Manima to awaken God and Mangal Arati is done. The inner part of the temple is purified in sacred water. Then Mailam (removal of dresses and floral decorations of deities) of the previous evening is done. The Abakasha (cleaning of teeth) and symbolic bath (Mantra Snana) of the deities is done and decorated with apparel, ornaments and flowers called Beshalagi. Thereafter, the Rosh Homa or fire sacrifice is done in the temple kitchen, Surya Puja (worship of Sun God) and Dwarapala Puja (offering prayers and food to celestial doorkeepers Jay and Bijaya) and Garuda Puja or Charioteer are done. The deities are offered food three to four times a day in the temple i.e. Gopal Ballava Bhoga (Breakfast), Sakala Dhoopa (Morning Food), and Madhyahna Dhoopa (Mid-day meal) and Sandhya Dhoopa (Evening food). Finally, Badasimhara Veshha is done when the deities are decorated with a wide variety of flowers and traditional Khandua silk and Badasimhara Dhoopa (Night Food) is offered to the deities as the last ritual of the day. Then, the Khata Seja Lagi is a symbolic sleeping ritual of the deities that are done every night when three small bejewelled beds (Ratna Palankas) are placed in front of the deities in the sanctuary. A golden idol of Laxmi Narayan in sleeping mode is taken from Bhandara Griha and kept on Ratna Palanka of Lord Jagannath for a while and returned to the Bhandara Griha again. At night, the temple is vacated and all doors like the Kalahat and Jay-Bijaya doors are closed and sealed.

Egyptians believed that these rituals for gods were necessary to uphold harmony of the universe without such rituals, the statue was believed to be dead. Since the gods were modelled as humans, they had a physical need for nourishment and the desire for adornment was met by elaborate offering rituals and festivals. The ritual of food offerings to the deity was just like human meal times. The daily offerings rituals to the gods were made three

times a day throughout Egypt. The rites began early in the morning. In everyday rituals in Egypt, the priests followed a traditional pattern of worship, services, cleansing and purification in which different ranks of priests like *nabs*, and lector priests were involved. The ceremonies are performed by the priest on behalf of the king. The ritual begins as the priest opens the doors of the shrine by breaking the seals of the door bolts of the previous night. At first, the priest chants “Awake in peace! May your awakening be peaceful!” to awaken God. He “removed the deity’s outer linen garment and jewellery worn of the previous day and cleansed the statue, wrapped new “garment,” and adorned the deities with bracelets, broad collar, anklets, sceptres, headdress, offered flowers, food and drink, grain, vegetables, wine, meat and fowl etc. The morning rituals are repeated at midday and in the evening. After completion of all rituals in the night, the priest closed and sealed the doors of the temple and interior shrine of the sanctuary to protect the temple against intruders.

The recommencement of Priests towards Ritual Services

The servitors giving food offerings to the deities in the Jagannath Temple are called Kothbhog Supakars; such Prasad called ‘Khei’ are distributed to the temple Servitors towards services rendered by them. The general servitors are paid daily remuneration, which is known as Purashkara (cash reward) according to scales prescribed by Shri Jagannatha temple administration. Similarly, the priests were paid in kind of offerings presented to the Gods in the temples. The greater amounts of offerings were presented during the festivals. All classes of priests were paid by “reversion offerings” as foods reverted to temple staffs found in records from the Old Kingdom in the Ptolemaic era. There was a huge number of priests who depended on the temples for their subsistence and the amount of food circulated for rituals was astounding. For a steady supply of grain as a medium of payment and the temples had granaries that served as ancient reserve banks. The large temple employed thousands of laymen to supply its needs. The people from lower levels of society like men produced goods for the rituals, the women wove cloth and garments for the god and the porters carried grains to the temple. Huge numbers of people were employed for providing daily offering rituals. The priests engaged in ritual received food from the “table of the god” as their wages also included temple porters and craftsmen who prepared ritual objects.

Prestress as God’s Wives and Devadasi Tradition

The Devadasi sings devotional songs and dances are important ritual services at the Jagannatha Temple at Puri. The Devadasis were considered as “the living wife of Lord Jagannatha” and they were not expected to marry anyone during their life. According to

the temple records, the Devadasis were assigned to take care of Jagannatha. The Orissa Gazette of 1956 mentions on some occasions, that the devadasis danced in Sri Mandira and took part in two daily rituals. Firstly, when Lord Jagannath, after *Sakaala Dhupa* or breakfast give Darshan to the devotees, the Bahar Gaaunis use to dance in the main entrance hall of Jagamohan near Garuda Stambha (pillar) at the Kalahat door accompanied by the musicians and Rajguru which could be watched by the audience. The Bhitara Gaunis sing while male servitors decorate and dress Lord Jagannath with flowers ornament called *Badasinghara* Besha which is the last ritual of the temple during bedtime of the Lord at night when the male Sebayats served the Lord Jagannath and fan Him. The Devadasi also perform a dance during the Chandan Yatra.

Similarly, women held higher positions in the religious hierarchy in the old Kingdom of Egypt. In the Old and Middle Kingdoms, the priestesses were associated with the goddess cults. In the Middle Kingdom, few women served as *hemet netcher* of Gods Amun, Ptah, and Min as *wabets* (female *wab*). The Priestesses held titles of “Singer in the Temple of Amun,” or more prestigious “Singer in the Interior of Temple of Amun.” A priestess of Amun held the title of God’s Wife (*hemet netcher*) which was first found in the Middle Kingdom but appeared more consistently in the New Kingdom when the queens and royal women were closely associated with the sacred tradition. The women were exclusive singers accompanied by priests in temple procession. The higher ranks prestress followed the priests into the area near the sanctuary and other women were singers or dancers. The priestesses who held religious titles of God’s Wives remained unmarried. They were in charge of supervising the festival of Amun in Thebes. In this era, God’s Wives were immensely wealthy and influential. As a part of her role, she was thought to please Amun, thereby evoking the concept of rejuvenation and rebirth (Teeter, 2011: 137). Gradually the female sacral titles eroded. A group of forty-nine only eleven women bears priestly title; most of them had no title and were known as “Mistress of the House. The cult remained active during the Roman period in many cities of the world.

Temple’s Religious Documents: Papyrus Roll and Madalapanji

The Madalapanji is a chronicle of the Jagannath temple of Puri which describes the historical events of the Jagannath Temple. Though the actual time of starting of Panjis is not known, but it is presumed that it was started from the 12th to 14th century AD. This classic literary masterpiece in the Oriya language can be compared with the Rajvansham of Sri Lanka, Rajtarangini of Kashmir or Burunji of Assam (Prusty, 2011: 34) was started by king Anantavarman Chodaganga Dev. Historians consider it as a source of history of Odisha which narrates the chronological sequence of royal dynasties such as the Kesharis, the Gangas, the Bhois and the Khurdaraj. It has also referred to several religious centres of

Odisha and has preserved many Odia traditions. The servitors of the Jagannath Temple, Puri such as Deula Karana and Tadhau Karana (a caste of Odisha are history writers of Puri) were engaged in record keeping of chronicles as a tradition which were preserved in the forms of palm-leaf manuscripts. These palm-leaf records are tied in big round bundles like a drum (Madala) for which it is named as Madalapanji. It is said that the Madalapanji was destroyed by the Muslim invaders and Kalapahara and was rewritten by mixing legend with history. All historical records of Jagannath temple particularly of Ganga-Bhoi times throw light on history. The Sanskrit and Telugu version of the Panji is Katarajavamsavali and Jagannatham Kaifiyat.

On the other end, the Egyptians wrote using hieroglyphs and demotic scripts. The official record-keepers held high positions in Egyptian society. The Royal scribes advised pharaohs and helped them to create laws. Egyptians used papyrus made from a reed-like plant that grew on the banks of the Nile River. The plant's stem cut into thin strips was pressed as sheets and writing brushes were made from reeds. The important Papyri papyrus rolls were dried and kept in wooden boxes. The term paper is derived from *pa-p-ior*, i.e. "from the river." The colour of Papyrus varied from dark to light brown. The Papyrus sheets (*tchama* or *djema*) were originally used for religious texts or scribes by the priests in temples and state courts. The Papyri used for official functions had clay seals that designated their origin and contents. Egyptian writing on papyrus and wooden palette as a hole for holding Reed brushes.

Rath Yatra in Puri and Opet Festival in Ancient Egypt

The Ratha Yatra or Chariot Festival of Lord Jagannath is a popular national festival of India which is not only celebrated at Puri in Odisha but also in other parts of India and the world. During this festival, the sibling deities of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra are brought by the servitors from the temple in a ceremonial procession called Pahandi and three deities are installed in three respective chariots and pulled by the devotees on the grand road of Puri to the Gundicha Temple which is three kilometres away from the main temple. The Chariots are newly constructed in wood every year and decorated with colourful Chanduas, minutely carved pillars, horses, doors and charioteers etc. traditionally designed in wood. The Rath Yatra is one of the most ancient festivals in India and the World, the description of which is found in Hindu Mythologies like Brahma Purana, Padma Purana, Skanda Purana, Kapila Samhita and others.

Similarly, the Opet Festival was a popular annual religious festival of Thebes in ancient Egypt from the beginning of the New Kingdom in the 18th Dynasty. This festival was celebrated as the first divine commemoration as a sacred marriage of Amun with Mut held every year from mid-August till mid-September for 24-27 days during the flood of the

Nile River. Like Pahandi of Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra and Subhadra, the statues of Amun his consort Mut and their son Khonsu were also carried on the priests' shoulders from the sanctuaries of Karnak in a procession and are kept in the shrines of sacred boats to visit Luxor temple at Thebes. The procession includes soldiers, chariots, musicians and acrobatic dancers (Hart, 2005:104). The civil administrator, provincial governors, border officials, heads of economic departments, officers of the commissariat, city officials, and upper ranks priests arranged the festival and a military official pronounces a hymn in honour of the king in front of the procession as it heads to Luxor. Besides, the people of Egypt and travellers from distant cities participated in the festival. The boats were decorated with gold-plated jewelled adornments and moored at Nile piers. In the ancient inscriptions of the Opet Festival found on the walls of Karnak Temple, navigation of God or Goddess made to consummate the union resulted in the birth of a divine child in the birth chamber of the temple. During the festivals along with the deity of Amun, the king was also taken in procession and the queen and high-ranking woman escorted or greeted the statue of God and the drums, horns, and other musical instruments were played during the cultic ceremonies.

The Opet festival at Karnak is identical to the Ratha Yatra of Lord Jagannath which is celebrated every year at Puri, India. The worship of Lord Krishna (Jagannath) and observance of Ratha Yatra festival is an Indian festival, which has been observed for thousand years before the establishment of the cult of Amun at Thebes. This implies that the divine triad of Krishna, Balarama and Subhadra might have been transferred from India to Egypt sometime prior to the beginning of the New Kingdom (Mishra, 2012: 57). The similarities between these two festivals are striking. There was no doubt in my mind that the Opet festival of Karnak is identical in form and spirit to the Ratha Yatra festival of Puri (Mishra, 2011: 46).

Chandan Yatra in Jagannath Temple in Puri and Bark Festival in Ancient Egypt

The Chandan Yatra' of Lord Jagannath is an important Sumer festival which falls on Akshaya Trutiya i.e, 3rd day of the bright fortnight of Odia month of Baisakha during April-May. The 'Chandan Yatra' means Sandalwood festival during which the deities are smeared in sandal paste. The Chandan yatra in Puri is observed in two phases i.e, Bahar Chandan which continues for the first 21 days when representative deities such as Rama, Krishna, Laxmi and Saraswati (Biswadhatri) five Shivas Panchu Pandavas, namely Lokanatha, Jameswar, Markandaya, Kapala Mochana Nilakantha and Madan Mohan or representative idol of Lord Jagannath are taken in a public procession from Jagannath Temple to Narendra tank (locally called Chandan Pokhari). The Madan Mohan, Laxmi and Saraswati are placed in a boat and on another boat Rama, Krishna and Pancha

Pandavas (five shivas) are placed. The boats are decorated with a wide variety of paintings. The deities enjoy an evening cruise in the Narendra tank and various types of religious worships, music and dance etc. So also, the Bhitara Chandan or Chandan Festival inside the temple continues for another 21 days in the second phase, when the deities are smeared in sandal paste inside the temple.

Similarly, in ancient Egypt, the god was carried on barks or ships in the streets or sailed on the Nile River. It is believed that the RE Sun God sailed across heaven on solar barks by Mandet to ascend the sky every morning and Musket to descend at twilight. He used the bark for his night voyage through Tuet (Underworld). The sacred barks /boats used in religious ceremonies were in miniature or full-size form. The barks were used for nurturing life in the Nile River in Egypt for centuries. The religious significance of bark is traced to the belief that the spiritual Nile carried the dead or deceased out of the mortal world to eternal paradise and bliss. The Egyptian deities had different barks for different rituals. The bark of Osiris called *neshmet* or *Khembet* was an elaborate vessel decorated with gold, precious metals and stones. The bark of Ptah was *neb-beh*, Amun's bark called "Mighty of Brow is Amun," was Egypt's famous ritual boat made in the cedar wood of 200ft length and ornamented with gems and cultic objects carried in procession from the temple and sailed on Nile River or lakes every year. Like the Chandan Yatra, the bark used for Amun in Thebes specially built for rites of the temple was replaced or redecorated every year. Most of the barks were designed as floating temples with miniature obelisks, flag staffs and cabins that served as a sanctuary of the god.

Conclusion

The Indus Valley Civilization and Egyptian Civilization are two ancient civilizations of the world which are interconnected with one another from ancient times. As a whole, it is evident from the religious systems, ritual practices, fairs and festivals in the temples and worship of andromorphic Gods and Goddesses and offerings to the deities in the Jagannath Temple in Puri, India are quite synonymous with the religious system, ritual practices, fairs and festivals of temples in ancient Egypt. The Lord Jagannath symbolizing Lord Krishna is found to be much similar to the Gods like the Ptah and Amun in ancient Egypt. The worship of Lord Jagannath at Puri and celebration of Rath Yatra, which is also observed for thousand years prior to the establishment of the culture of Amun at Thebes in Egypt. In fact, the Theban triad of Amun, Mut and Khonsu are related to the divinity triad of Krishna, Balarama and Subhadra - worshipped at the Jagannath temple at Puri, India. Lord Krishna's elder brother, the fair-skinned Balaram, is considered to be an incarnation of "Ananta-Sesha" the primaevial serpent of the abyss in whose coils Lord Vishnu rests in the middle of the cosmic Milky Ocean. The Ananta-Seshanaga himself is a powerful

agent of creation who co-exists with Lord Vishnu at the beginning and end of the creative cycle. The popular legend of “Samudra Manthan” (Churning of the ocean of milk by the demons and the devatas on two opposite sides keeping Mandara mountain at the mid axis narrates about the creation by Lord Vishnu. The holy city of Puri known as the abode of Lord Jagannath existed not only as an ancient religious centre but as a trading centre in ancient India that is more or less contemporaneous with the ancient Egyptian Civilization. This implies that the triad of divinities of Lord Krishna, Balarama and Subhadra might have been transferred from India to Egypt, prior to the beginning of the New Kingdom in 1550 BC. From the narration in this article, it is concluded that the two deities with their religious, cultural systems and ritual practices in two different parts of the world such as India and Egypt might have a common origin at some point in time. However, more rigorous research and investigation need to be taken up in future to explore the core dimensions of the research study.

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