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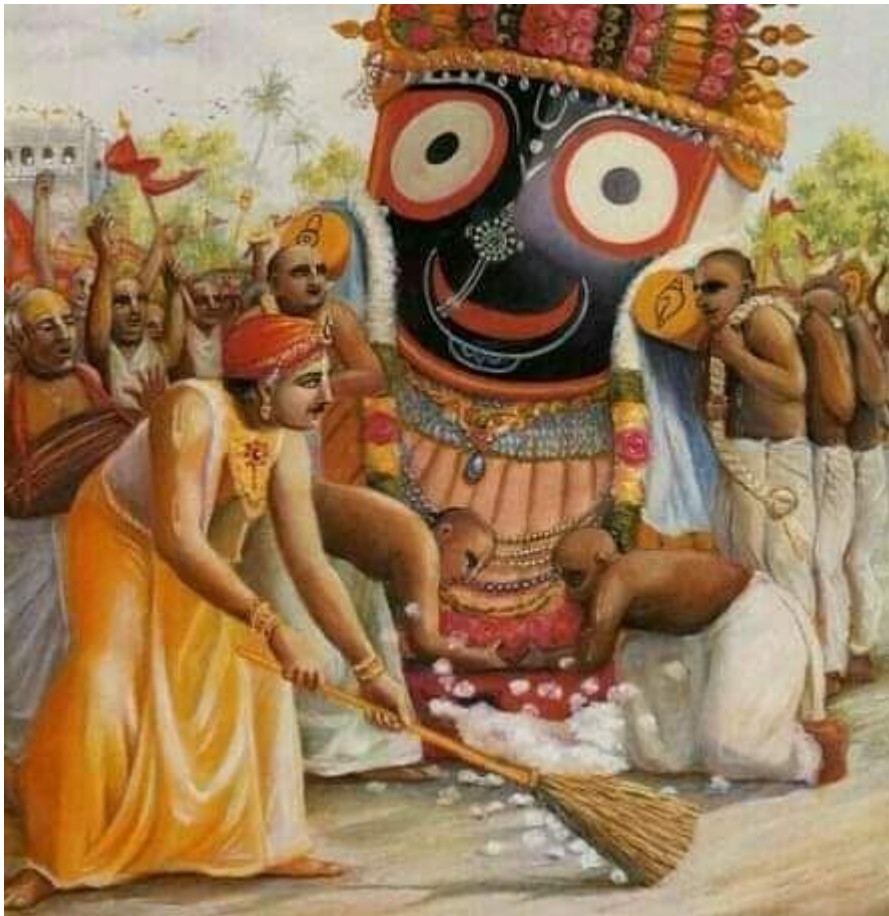


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The significance of "Chhera Pahara" - at the Rath Yatra Festival, Puri, Odisha.



There is a saying "rathe ca vamanam dhrstva punar janma na vidyate" which means that a person who sees Lord Jagannath on the Chariot on the auspicious day of Puri Rath Yatra attains Moksha (salvation from the Birth-Death cycle)

Rath Yatra is celebrated every year on the occasion of Ashad Shukla Dwitiya that falls between the months of June-July.

This is the only time when Lord Jagannath and his siblings, Lord Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra, are brought out onto the Bada Danda (main street of Puri) and travel (3 km) to the Shri Gundicha Temple (the Mausima Temple) in huge chariots.

Also known as Shri Gundicha yatra or Car festival, it is celebrated to commemorate the annual visit of Lord Jagannath triad to their aunt's house, where they enjoy nine-day stay and are served with sweet pancakes.

There is one more significant ritual associated with the yatra.
It is called "Chhera Pahara", which is held on two days.

Firstly, on the day on which deities are taken to garden house at Gundicha Temple & then on the last day of festival, when they are brought back to Mandir.

Lord Jagannath treats all devotees equally and during this festival, the Gajapati King, most powerful king of Kalingan kingdom, wears sweeper's outfit and sweeps around the deities and chariots in the 'Chera Pahara' (sweeping with water) ritual.

Before the chariots are carried out, the road is cleaned by the King with gold-handled broom and sandalwood water is sprinkled everywhere.

Jai Jagannath!