



CHAITANYA CHARAN DAS

Resting place for mind

Question: Why are you building a temple? What does a temple contribute to society?

Answer: Just as food, clothing and shelter are the basic needs of the body, peace is a basic need of the mind. Today's society offers very little facility to provide this basic mental need. Instead, our fast-paced, stress-filled lifestyle does a lot to take away our peace of mind. No wonder the WHO declared that the greatest medical challenge of the current century is not AIDS or cancer, but mental health problems.

Peace of mind is not a luxury, but a necessity that creates the foundation for us to effectively execute our duties. If we have to lift a 5-kg bag for a few minutes that's not difficult. But if we have to lift it continuously for the rest of our lives, it will soon become an unbearable burden. Only if we take periodic breaks that allow our muscles to rest and regain strength can we lift the weight lifelong. Similarly, our duties - and the anxieties that they inevitably cause - are like burdens on our minds. If we let these anxieties weigh on our minds constantly, they will drain our mental energy and may even cause a mental breakdown. The temple is a place where we can take off that mental burden and refresh our minds with the healing serenity that pervades the temple.

Of course, not all temples are equally potent. The more the divine vibrations that pervade a temple, the greater the tranquility that we can experience there. Those vibrations result from:

- The presence and worship of the lord in his deity form
- The constant chanting of his holy names
- The broadcasting of his empowering message, as taught in the sacred scriptures
- The association of saintly personalities who share god's love with one and all

Hundreds of people go to temples every evening to de-stress themselves after a hard day's work. They take *darshan* of the deities, attend the *arti* and take in the divine atmosphere. Thus mentally rested and recharged, they resume their duties with greater effectiveness.

Those who unfortunately don't take such breaks become confused or lethargic in their personal functioning and irritable or overwhelmed in their interpersonal dealings, leading to many avoidable problems. That's why temples are situated right in the heart of the city so that a maximum number of people would have easy, quick access to the tranquility that the temple offers.

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