



तव कथामृतं तप्तजीवनम्  
*tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam*

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## TEMPLE WORSHIP AND SANKIRTAN *His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada*



My advice to you under the circumstances is that at least for one hour you must all go to have *saṅkīrtana* outside on the streets or in the park. That is your life and soul, first business. The next business is completing the chanting of 16 rounds every day. The next business

is your editing. And if you find extra time then you can attend the temple ceremonies. Otherwise you can stop these activities. But outdoor *kīrtana*, your editing work, and chanting of 16 rounds must be done. Outdoor *kīrtana* must be done, even at the cost of suspending all editorial work. That is your first and foremost business. Temple worship is not so important. If need be, the whole temple can be locked. But the outdoor *kīrtana* cannot be stopped. (Letter to Rayarama, 17 May 1969)

We are not much concerned about the temple because temple worship is not the primary factor in this age. The primary factor is *saṅkīrtana*. But sometimes we want a center where people may gather and see, so a temple is required secondarily. (Letter to Mukunda, 27 May 1969)

Actually, temple worship is for the neophyte devotee, and the preacher is in a higher position than the neophyte. That is the definition given in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. The advanced devotee should be very

much enthusiastic in preaching the transcendental message of Lord Chaitanya, and temple worship should be entrusted to the newcomers or neophytes. (Letter to Yamuna, 12 August 1969)

*Saṅkīrtana* and distributing BTG and our other literatures is the fieldwork of this movement. Temple worship is secondary. People are invited to come to the temple to see the behavior of the devotees specifically in the matter of purification. There are two kinds of purification methods, external and internal. In our Krishna consciousness movement, deity worship helps to keep us externally purified and *saṅkīrtana* helps to keep us internally purified. So as far as possible we should execute both of these processes simultaneously. (Letter to Cidananda, 15 December 1969)

That is a fact. This plan of *saṅkīrtana* is the only way, the only way for our success. *Saṅkīrtana*, love feast, and selling BTG, they are our primary engagements, and next is temple worship. Temple worship is needed for the inner section. In the beginning, *saṅkīrtana* is more important for drawing the attention of the people in general. (Letter to Sudama, 8 January 1970)

If there is a scarcity of qualified *pūjārīs*, then each center should be satisfied by only worshiping the *pañca-tattva* of Lord Chaitanya by performance of *saṅkīrtana*.... I am glad to learn that you are continuing your *mahā-saṅkīrtana*. This is our main business. Temple worship is not as important as *saṅkīrtana* on the public roads and selling our literatures. (Letter to Damodara, 1 July 1970)

So far as a location for a temple is concerned, even there is no place, we can sit down underneath a tree and chant as I did in New York. Krishna will give a nice place.... Our technique is that we work sincerely and the dictation will come from within; Krishna is seated there. (Letter to Bali-mardana, 24 November 1970)

Your proposal for a *grhastha* travelling *saṅkīrtana* party is a very good one, but the temple work should not be neglected. Both things should go on simultaneously. Our process is to work on *bhāgavata* and *pāñcarātrikī* systems simultaneously. Deity worship is *pāñcarātrikī* system and preaching is *bhāgavata* system. If we keep both systems in a regular way that will solidly help us in our advancement in Krishna Consciousness. (Letter to Makhanlal and Tilaka, 24 September 1971)

Two men may remain at the temple and clean thoroughly every day, and the rest should go to the streets for *saṅkīrtana*. For spiritual life, chanting Hare Krishna is sufficient. But because we are habituated to unclean habits we must have temple worship. *Saṅkīrtana* will keep everyone's mind clean, and surely this quarreling will cease. (Letter to Visnujana, 4 November 1971)

Concerning installing new deities, I think it is best if you concentrate your energy on *saṅkīrtana* and book distribution for now; and as your temple grows and facilities are there for very opulent deity worship, then this can be considered. I have made it a policy that there must be at least ten initiated *brahmins* in a temple before deities are installed. (Letter to Patita Uddharana, 25 March 1972)

The actual fact is that worshipping the deity and chanting the glories of the Lord are both within the nine processes of devotional service recommended by Rupa Goswami. Besides chanting and hearing and remembering there are six other recommended activities in devotional service. So if we are able to practice even only one of these activities perfectly, the result will be the same. Or we may execute more than one, we may execute several, or even all nine activities in devotional service. But even if we execute one perfectly we shall be completely successful in devotional service. So there is no question that one activity is more important than another or that deity worship is more important than *saṅkīrtana*, but one individual may be able to perform one activity more satisfacto-

rily than another, so to him that activity will be more important. But in general we cannot say that any of the nine processes is more important than the others, except that if hearing, chanting and remembering are there, that is the most vital consideration for the general class of men in this age. Service to the deities, as you are asking me, begins whenever you remember them and offer all your services by remembering at the same time. All activities, words, everything should be offered as service to the deities, and this offering with remembering will gradually increase as you practice it. (Letter to Prajapati, 16 June 1972)

If you close the temple, what is the management? Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu pushed the *saṅkīrtana* movement, but he never said to close the Jagannath temple or the Govindaji temple. (Letter to Hamsaduta, 12 September 1974)

The reason book distribution is greater than chanting is because the effect is wider. A purchased book goes into a person's home and will be read by others, whereas street *kīrtana* only benefits those in the vicinity who hear. Two cases are cited: In Portugal, one boy, only 11 years old, has become a devotee. He offers *prasādam* and is translating *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is* into Portuguese with the help of his mother. He got several of our books at a bookstore in Lisbon and has asked his father who is just now coming to the USA to get him all the available *Śrīmad Bhāgavatams*. Prabhupada remarked that our books went to Portugal, we did not go, but still he has become a devotee. Then in the Tokyo airport, Prabhupada told how one Japanese youth asked him, "Where do you get all the knowledge that is in your books?" So by comparative study, book selling is more important.

The birthplace of the Lord is not as important as the place of his activities. Kurukshetra is more important than Mathura because the whole world knows the *Bhagavad-gītā*. It is because of the activities of the Lord that people take interest in his birthplace. The "*karma*" is more important than the "*janma*." Even when Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was present, people went to see him at Jagannath Puri. But they did not come to his birthplace because his activity was more important. To his birthplace we offer our obeisances, but from the place of his activities we get inspiration. And what was the Lord's activity at Puri? It was preaching. Our temple

must be active with preaching and not a dead place. (Letter to Ramesvara, 25 October, 1974, initialed by Srila Prabhupada and written by his personal secretary Brahmananda Swami) ❀

**SRIMAD BHAGAVATAM IS EVERYTHING**  
**Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati**  
**Thakur Prabhupada**

The essence of all scriptures is found in *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. There is no need to study any other literature, as *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* is inclusive of everything. The word *śuśrīṣubhiḥ* refers to persons who are attached to service. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* it is also stated, *tad viddhi praṇipātena paripraśnena sevayā*, that one should approach a bonafide spiritual master, offer obeisances to him, inquire from him, and render service to him.

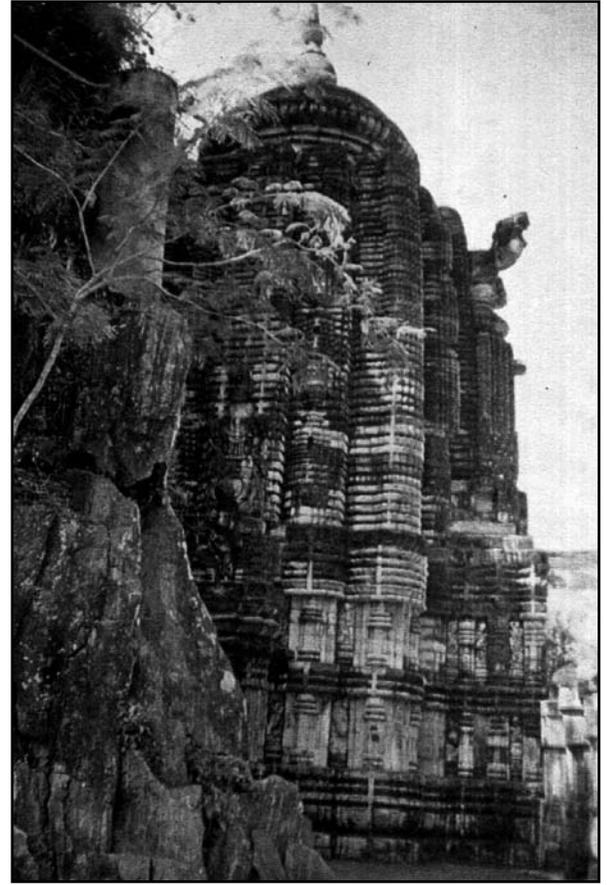
If we serve a horse, we will be known as a *sa-hisa*, a caretaker of a horse. If we serve dogs, we will be called a *bhangī*, or a caretaker of dogs. If we work in an iron workshop we will be called a blacksmith; if we work with gold we will be known as a goldsmith; and if we work for Krishna, we will be known as a *bhakta*, devotee.

The people of this world are busy accumulating things for their sense gratification. Instead of considering *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* as one of these things for our sense gratification we should lead our life based on the teachings of *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*. If we proudly claim that we have become pure devotees, or if we think that we have finished studying *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam*, we will certainly be ruined. ❀

— From *Śrīmad Bhāgavat Tālparyā*, by Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur. Translated by Bhumipati Das. Edited by Purnaprajna Das. Rasbihari Lal & Sons. 2005. Lecture 3, p. 10-11.

**THE CAT FORM OF THE LORD**  
**Marjara Kesari at Nrusinghnath, Orissa**

In the Bargarh district of extreme western Orissa is the ancient temple of Lord Nrusinghnath, also known as Bidala Nrusingha, Marjara Kesari, and Marjara Nrusingha. (In Oriya language, *bidāla* and *māṛjāra* mean “cat”, and *keśarī* means “lion”. Also, Orissans pronounce “*nṛsimha*” with a distinct “u” sound, hence the different spelling.) Situated about 300 kilometers from the famous temple of Lord Jagannath in Puri, the Nrusinghnath temple is on top of the famous Gandhamadan Hill, where ancient rishis are said to have



*The ancient temple of Nrusinghnath in Orissa*

come to meditate. Some literatures say that Gandhamadan Hill was originally in the Himalayas, but fell down in this place when Hanuman was carrying it to Lanka with the herbs required to heal Lakshman. Gandhamadan Hill is also said to be one of the places where the Pandavas visited during their exile.

The local tradition about this deity was compiled in the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century by the poet Yuga Das Kondh in his *Nṛsimha-carita*. It is said that in *Tretā-yuga* there was a rishi named Udanga who was performing austerities on the bank of the Godavari River. He had an attractive young daughter named Malati. One day, Ravan happened by that place and saw the beauty of the young girl. Ravan raped her and threw her into the Godavari River. The Godavari took compassion on her and brought her to the shore. When Malati came to her senses, she began searching for her father and crying. Indura, the mouse carrier of Ganesh, heard her cries and offered to help her reach her parents if she would agree to enjoy with him. From Ravan and Indura, a demon was born named Mushika Daitya (literally, “mouse demon”). The new-born baby was so ferocious that as soon as

he came from the womb he immediately devoured his mother. Then he began to perform austerities to please Lord Shiva. Shiva was pleased with him and gave him the boon that he would have no cause of fear from anyone except for Lord Nrisinghadev from *Satya-yuga*.

Seeing his power, the *devas* became frightened and appealed to Lord Ramachandra to rescue the universe. Accordingly, Lord Ramachandra manifested the form of Nrisinghadev to catch the demon. Mushika Daitya became fearful and ran from place to place seeking shelter, until finally he appealed to Gandhamadan Hill. The personified Gandhamadan granted shelter to Mushika Daitya, who then entered within a crack in the hill. When Lord Ramachandra later arrived, Gandhamadan requested him not to enter inside of the hill to seek out the demon. Lord Ramachandra then assumed the form of *māṛjāra-keśarī*, with the head of a cat and the body of a lion, and began guarding the area by the *sudāṅga*, or inner door of Gandhamadan. Just as a cat sits quietly by a hole, waiting for a mouse, similarly, Lord Marjara Kesari is said to still be sitting and waiting for the demon Mushika to come out.

Thousands of years later, in Kali Yuga, there was a tribal man named Hari Kondh and his wife Yamuna living near the Gandhamadan Hill. They used to go out every day to collect roots, which they would sell to

maintain themselves. One day, Yamuna was digging for roots when she saw blood coming from the ground. She became frightened and ran to tell her husband, when the couple came back to the spot they found milk pouring out. Then they heard a voice, “I am pleased with you. I am Narayan in my cat-lion form, waiting to kill the demon Mushika. Take me from the ground here and have a temple built to protect me.”



*Marjara Kesari, the cat-lion form of the Lord*

They dug in that place and unearthed the deity, and they informed the Chauhan king Baijal Dev, who built a temple for the deity in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The descendants of Hari Kondh are said to have carried on the worship of Lord Nrusinghnath since that time.

There are many interesting and unusual features to this temple. Without anything else to offer the Lord, Hari Kondh and Yamuna are said to have given local wild oranges to Bidala Nrusingha. To this day these fruits are offered to the Lord and are considered as sacred as water from the Ganga. Nrusinghnath is considered to be sacred for both Vaishnavas as well as the followers of Lord Shiva. On the southern side of the hill is a deity of Shiva named Hari Shankar, who is considered to be an incarnation of Lakshman. There are also deities of Shiva named Gupteswar and Jala Mahadeva on the tops of two nearby hills. The *Nṛsimha-carita* describes that Bidala Nrusingha has the goddess Chandi on his chest, Somlai on his back [Somlai is a deity of *śakti* worshiped in western Orissa], and 64 *yoginīs* in each one of his hairs. — MD ॐ

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