

By: Vijai Singhal, Director, Hindu Council of Australia.

Millions of households had plunged into darkness after Cyclone Fani, which had packed wind-speeds of about 200 kmph, made a landfall in the State of Odisha on 3 May 2019. Almost a million people from the state were evacuated to nearly 5,000 temporary shelters hours before its landfall. Puri, Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, and Khurda were among the worst-affected districts. The Archaeological Survey of India said there is no structural damage to the Konark Sun Temple, a world heritage 12th Century edifice.

There is also no major damage to the Shri Jagannath Temple at Puri, a top Hindu pilgrim spot, as well. The repair and restoration of the Jagannath Temple will be completed ahead of the Rath Yatra on July 4, 2019.

It is very interesting to note that similar thing had happened in June 2013 to the 8th Century holy Kedarnath Shiva Temple, highest among the twelve Jyotilingas. The heavy rainfall caused massive flash floods and landslides resulting in the death of over 5000 people. A large rock among the debris acted as a barrier, protecting the temple from the flood. The surrounding premises and other buildings in the market area were heavily damaged. I was visiting Rishikesh at that time. I witnessed the devastation that was caused due to the heavy floods.

We can attribute this to the Divine intervention only to save these ancient holy places from destruction. One may question why God did not save thousands of human beings who lost their lives. It is hard to explain but we may say that it may be the result of their Karmas. There are many things we cannot logically explain. We have to have faith in that supreme power.

There is a book written by Gerald Schroeder, an MIT-trained scientist, entitled "The Hidden Face of God". He explains the wonders of nature and in detail the underlying wisdom and design found in all living things. He argues that there is a single consciousness (we Hindus call it Paramatma), an all-encompassing wisdom that pervades the universe. He says that science, properly understood, provides positive reasons for faith. - Vijai Singhal

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