TEMPLES
A DOORWAY TO
THE BEYOND...

India is a vast land of myriad cultures, languages and ethnicities, each with its own pantheon, and temples, shrines, and places of worship dedicated to them. Now, why were these temples built, and what was the purpose behind them? What sets aside the most ancient ones that were constructed and consecrated millennia in our past from those built by modern civilisations? The author addresses the conceptual underpinnings of our places of worship, their significance, role and pole-position in society in his own down-to-earth way. Read on...

The very nature of human perception is such that right now, whatever a human being is sensorily involved with will be the only truth for him in his experience. Perceiving the world through their five sense organs, what comes in through them seems to be the only truth, and nothing else. Senses can only perceive that which is physical, and because your perception is limited to the five sense organs, everything that you know as life is only physical – your body, mind, emotion and your life energies are all physical. If you see this physical existence as a fabric, as a piece of cloth... let us say you are living on the fabric of the physical. You are walking on this cloth, and what you are walking on is all that is real for you. But when you look up, there seems to be a vast emptiness above, and even there you only recognize the physical; you look at a star or a sun or a moon – this is all physical. You do not perceive what is not physical.

What you call a temple is like putting a hole in the fabric, creating a new space where the physical becomes thin, and something beyond becomes visible to you. This science of making the physical less manifest is the science of consecration, so that another dimension beyond the physical becomes apparent or visible to you if you are willing to perceive it. To take this analogy further, it is like the temple is a hole in the fabric of the physical where you could fall through easily and go beyond.

Today, temples may be built just like shopping complexes – concrete, steel and everything, and probably for the same purpose – because everything has become commerce. When I talk about temples, I am talking about the way ancient temples were created. In this country, in our ancient times, temples were built only for Shiva, and for nobody else. It was only later that other temples began coming up – because people started focusing on immediate wellbeing. Using this science, they started creating various other forms, which they could use to benefit themselves in so many different ways – in terms of health, wealth, wellbeing and so many other things. They created different types of energies and different kinds of deities. If you want money, you create one kind of form, which will assist that kind of thing or if you are full of fear, you create another kind of form. These temples came up in the last 1100 or 1200 years, but before that, there were no other temples in the country except Shiva temples.

The word 'Shiva' literally means 'that which is not'. So the temple was built for 'that which is not'. 'That which is' is physical manifestation; 'that which is not' is that which is beyond the physical. So a temple is a hole through which you enter into a space which is not. There are thousands of Shiva temples in the country, and most of them don't have any form as such. They just have a representative form and generally it is a linga. The word 'linga' means 'the form'. We are calling it 'the form' because when the un-manifest began to manifest itself, or in other words when creation began to happen, the first form that it took was that of an ellipsoid. A perfect ellipsoid is what we call a linga. Today modern cosmologists have identified this in so many different ways. One thing is the core of every galaxy is always an ellipsoid. So it always started as an ellipsoid, or a linga, and then became many things. And we know from our experience that if you go into deep states of meditiveness, before a point of absolute dissolution comes, once again the energy takes the form of an ellipsoid or a linga.

So the first form is linga and the final form is linga; the in-between space is creation, what is beyond is Shiva. So the form of a linga is a hole in the fabric of creation. Physical creation is here; the back door is linga, the front door is linga. So that is why I am referring to a temple as just a hole through which you can fall beyond; that is the fundamental of the temple.

You are invited to be part of the unveiling of the world's largest face – a 112-feet face of Adiyogi, the source of Yoga, on the occasion of Mahashivratri on 24th February 2017, at the Isha Yoga Center, Coimbatore. The unveiling will be preceded by a rare mystical happening – the consecration of a unique Yoge shvara Linga by Sadhguru, a Mystic, Yogi and founder of the Isha Foundation. http://isha.sadhguru.org/mahashivratri/