Why Temples

BY SADHGURU

Human perception is such that the only truth is personal experience; limited to the five sense organs. Your body, your mind, your emotion and your life energies are all physical, which means everything that you know as life is all physical.

Imagine that physical existence is a piece of cloth. Assume that you are walking on the cloth. When you look up there is a vast emptiness. There too you only recognize the physical - the stars, sun and moon. You don't perceive that which is not physical.

A temple is like putting a hole in that fabric, generating a space where the physical becomes thin and something beyond becomes visible. The science of making the physical less manifest is the consecration, so that the dimension beyond the physical becomes noticeable or perceptible to you.

In ancient times, temples were built only for Shiva. Literally translated, ‘Shiva’ means ‘that which is not’. So the Shiva temple was built for ‘that which is not’. ‘That which is’ is physical manifestation; ‘that which is not’ is beyond the physical. A temple is a hole through which you enter into a space which is not. Shiva temples don’t have any form. 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 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 as a linga. The core of every galaxy is always an ellipsoid. We know from experience that if you go into deep states of meditiveness before the point of absolute dissolution once again energy takes the form of an ellipsoid or linga.

So the first and final form is the linga, the in-between space is the creation and what is beyond is Shiva. Thus the form of linga is a hole in the fabric of creation through which you can fall beyond, that is the fundamental of the temple.

(Sadhguru is a prominent spiritual leader. www.ishafoundation.org)