

The magnificence of Somnath Temple

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The land of Gujarat is well known for much more than the exquisite Garba and dhokla. Known as the “jewel of Western India”, it is nonetheless one of the jewels of India as a whole. Gujarat’s language, script and its temples are integral parts of its long and glorious history. The oldest written record of Gujarat's history is in a 2000-year-old Greek book titled 'The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea: Travel and Trade in the Indian Ocean'. At this time, Gujarat had already long ago been a part of the Indus Valley Civilization. In fact, the famous and stunning [Dwarkadhish Temple](#) already existed at the time this book was written, before being reconstructed.

One of the temples that add to the significance of Gujarat is the [Somnath Temple](#). It is one of the revered 12 Jyotirlingas of Bhagwan Shiva. This temple has its own story of enduring centuries, undergoing reconstruction several times.



The first form of the temple is so old that it is attributed to an unknown time in the past. The first acknowledged history of the temple dates to the second form of this temple was said to be built at the same site by the Yadava kings around 649 CE. Like many other temples in India and in Gujarat, this second form was destroyed in 725 CE by an Arab Governor, according to some disputed accounts. The temple was resuscitated in 815 CE by king Nagabhata II, who finally created it as a large structure of sandstone.

In 1024, Mahmud Ghazni broke the Jyotirlinga of this temple and looted the temple of a huge amount of wealth. So on, it was continually reconstructed by Hindu Kings and destroyed by different rulers from other religions, intruders, Mughals and by the Portuguese. The temple seemed to regain its glory after the 18th century. However, the temple was still far from regaining its present form.



Somnath Temple in 1869

Only after India's independence, the temple reached its present state. The Temple is believed to be the Primary or the First Jyotirlinga among the 12 Jyotirlingas in Hindu tradition. Lord Shiva is said to have appeared in a fiery column of light from this Linga. The Linga is also believed to be Swayambhu (self – born) in nature and is worshiped by millions of people in India and around the world.

It is called the “Shrine eternal” because it was destroyed six times in history but still every time, through the power of faith and reconstruction, the temple stands tall and beautiful. Dr. Rajendra Prasad himself acknowledges this with the words “the Somnath Temple signifies that the power of creation is always greater than the power of destruction.”

It is said that, Syamantak Mani, or the Philosopher's stone associated with Lord Krishna is hidden inside Shiva Linga in the temple. This stone is supposed to have the magical ability to produce gold. It is believed that it is responsible for creating a magnetic field around itself which keeps the Linga floating above the ground.

The Linga is made of iron, and the roof of the sanctum is made of loadstone. Builder of the shrine assured that the magnetic force exerted by the loadstone kept the Linga floating in the air.



It is believed that you can wash away your sins by taking a dip in the holy water of the Someshwar Kund. This Kund was built in honour of Lord Shiva after he removed the curse on Chandra. It is also believed that Prabhas Pattan here is the site where Lord Krishna was struck by an arrow while resting under a tree. He started his final journey in life from here. Prabhas Pattan has been a pilgrimage since ancient times because this is the holy site of Sangam or confluence of three great mythological rivers – the Saraswati, the Hiranya and the Kapila.

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