

## **Omkaramamaleswaram;**



**Mamleshwar Jyotirlinga**



**Omkareshwar temple view**

Omkaramamaleswaram is the fourth Dwadasa Jyothirlingam. It actually refers to two Lingas, Omkareswara Linga and Mamaleswara (also known as Amaleswara) Linga. Although the temples of these two Shiva lingas are in two different places both these forms of Lord Shiva are considered as one Jyothirlinga. A special feature of the location of Omkareshwar Temple is that the river Narmada branches into two streams and forms an island Mandhata or Shivapuri. Because the river and the island are shaped like OM, Lord Shiva here is known as Omkareswara. It is a natural phenomenon. The Mandhatha Island is located at a distance of about 12 miles from Mortakka in Madhya Pradesh. The temple can be reached by ferry from the banks of the river. There is a cantilever bridge 270 feet above the river for the convenience of pilgrims. Mamaleswara Temple is situated on the southern bank of the river Narmada.

According to a legend in Shiva Purana, once when Maharishi Narada was visiting Vindhya Parvata or Mountain, Vindhya gave him a warm welcome and enquired what was going on in the world of mountains. Narada said that everything was going in the usual way with all the mountains but Meru Parvata was very proud of his possessions and was boasting of his greatness. After hearing this news Vindhya felt jealous of Meru and wanted to become greater than Meru. Vindhya to fulfill his desire did severe penance for Lord Shiva, and worshipped Parthivalinga. Lord Shiva was pleased with Vindhya's penance and gave him the boon of growing greater than Meru with a condition that Vindhya's growth should not be a problem to the rest of the world. Vindhya also requested Lord Shiva to reside on his head always as Omkareswara, and Lord Shiva accepted. But on the request of all the Gods and the Sages Lord Shiva made two parts of the linga, one half being Omkareshwara and the other Amaleswara or Amareshwar.

It is believed that the first temple for Omkaramlewara was built by the King Mandhatha. This place was a famous pilgrimage in ancient times. For a long time aboriginal Bhils lived in the island of Omkareswar. In the Twelfth Century A.D. King Bharat Sing Chauhan won a battle over Bhils got the island, and improved the grandeur of the temple. Soon after that the temple was completely destroyed by Muslim invaders. The temple was again rebuilt by Peshva Baji Rao II.

The present temple structure was built by Maharani Ahilyabai Holkar of Indore in the Eighteenth Century. It is a five storied soft stone building with Nagar style architecture with a lofty Sikhara. The beautiful Omkareswara Jyothirlinga is situated on the ground level. It was naturally installed there. There is always water around the Linga. It is believed that Narmada water flows invisibly around Omkareswara. The Linga is not situated under cupola, and the idol of Shiva is on the top of the temple. On the back side of the Jyothirlinga, there is idol of Goddess Parvati Devi. There are many other shrines in the temple complex and some of which are Panchamukha Ganesh, Nandi, and Goddess Annapurna. These shrines are on the second floor of the temple. There are many shrines for other deities on the third, fourth, and fifth floors of the building. The temple holds a huge fair every year on Kartika Poornima.  
(Excerpt from the book: Hindu Sanskriti by Chaman Lal Gadoo)