

The Concept of Sanatan Dharma in the Temples of Khajuraho: A Historical Analysis

Monika Gupta

Assistant Professor, Department of History, D.B.S. College, Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh, India

Abstract

Beyond historical boundaries, encompassing the essence of all spiritual paths, is the thought-current of Sanatan Dharma. The word 'Sanatan' means eternal, beginningless – that which never began and will never end, the sole source of universal welfare and an eternal tradition. Sanatan Dharma, based on the Vedas, is the most ancient among all living religions. It is unique in the depth of its philosophy, purity, and grandeur. At the core of Sanatan lie truth, love, compassion, and non-violence. The soul of Sanatan reflects its beliefs, philosophy, and the creative spirit of its cultural heritage. An integral part of this Sanatan tradition is the Indian temple, which, due to its diverse forms, styles, and realistic expression, is admired and unique worldwide. Sanatan Dharma has assimilated all sects within itself. The temples of Khajuraho are also an inseparable part of this Sanatan Dharma tradition, representing nearly all sects of Hinduism – Shaiva, Vaishnava, Shakta, and Jain. The sculptures here beautifully depict movement and rhythm along with the symbols of Sanatan Dharma. The temples and sculptures of Khajuraho, along with the essence of Sanatan Dharma, manifest the cosmic energy and divinity pervading architecture and sculpture.

Keywords

Sanatan Dharma, Khajuraho, Shaiva, idols, symbolism, sculpture, Ganesha, Vishnu, Shakti, Surya, temple.