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VISIT TO MARTAND TEMPLE

One of the most remarkable architectural monuments I've seen so far have been in Kashmir where scores of Temples are unfortunately either in ruins or in dilapidated conditions (1)

My visit to Martand Sun Temple last week made me speechless and left me to think that this Temple once was a scintillating piece of architecture to those who witnessed its glory in full form. (2)

Little bit of history to this awe-inspiring masterpiece:

The Temple is dedicated to Surya Bhagwan, is the only Sun temple in the north. Two other Sun temples are at Konarak in Orrisa and at Modhera in Gujarat (3)

The sprawling campus of the temple was surrounded by 84 smaller shrines on the boundary. One can still view these shrines & make out their significance. The central temple rose above the ground as if guarding the entire valley. The walls across are carved with several deities. (4)

This is how the original structure of Martand Sun Temple must have looked like (5)

The real date of construction of Martand Surya Mandir is disputed and historians have varied views on the same. Some articles suggest that it was Raja Ramdev of the Pandva dynasty first who built the original temple in 3007BC and was devoted to Surya Bhagwan (6)

Many Rajas and Monarchs repaired and renovated it later but it was Maharaj Lalitaditya Muktapida (8th century AD) of the Karkota dynasty who gave a complete facelift and made it known to the world (7)

WHO DESTROYED THE MARTAND SUN TEMPLE?

Martand Sun Temple was destroyed in early 15th century during the rule of Sikandar Butshikhan (Sikandar, the Iconoclast") who was responsible for forced conversion of Hindus into Islam (8)

Sikandar Butshika's zeal behind the Islamisation of society is attributable to Sufi saint, Mir Mohammad Hamadani who influenced him to commit crimes on the then majority population, Hindus in a strategic move to convert them to Islam by force (9)

He won the sobriquet of "but-shikan" or idol-breaker, due to his actions related to the desecration and destruction of numerous temples. He forbade the Hindus to apply a tilak mark on their foreheads. Did not permit them to pray and worship, blow a conch shell or toll a bell (10)

Eventually he went on burning temples and all Kashmiri texts to eliminate Shirk (11)

Although one can view the signs of the destruction all over the place but Sikandar clearly failed to damage the strong temple despite his passionate efforts. The central shrine of Martand Sun Temple still stands tall (12)

BOLLYWOOD ENCASHED IT TOO...

The Martand Sun Temple has been featured in 3 Bollywood songs & unfortunately all of them have been portrayed in a very negative tone

Haidar (2014) – Unfortunately, the temple depicted the Martand temple as evil (Shaitan Ki Gufa) (13)

Aandhi (1974) - The popular song 'tere bina zindagi se koi shikwa to nahi' which is still popular with people with broken hearts was shot here.

Man Ki Aankhen ((1970)- song "chala bhi aa aaja rasiya" depicts sadness and longing too (14)

The Temple that still stands tall is under least care even today, with antique pieces of Hindu deity carved structures lying on the ground. An utter disrespect to Hindu religion & heritage.

So much so that the place is referred to as "Mattan" instead of Martand by locals.(15)

@ASIGoI with its board 'shining' at the entrance claiming to be the CARE TAKER of this Hindu heritage with a Muslim guide who only narrates the partial narrative to the visitors & doesn't mention a word on how this masterpiece was fell to the ground. (16)

In the last i can only say that Kashmir is more than just Dal lake, Gulmarg or Pahalgam.

The valley is enriched with history that speaks of our glorious past provided one is keen to know and therefore recommend this as a MUST VISIT whenever you visit the place.

Sources :Various