

# Martand Sun Temple

The Martand Sun Temple situated in Jammu and Kashmir, India, is a medieval period Hindu shrine near the city of Anantnag. It was devoted to Surya, Hinduism's greatest solar deity; Surya is also called as Martand in Sanskrit language, hence the name. Sikandar Shah Miri had the temple demolished once.

## History of Martand Sun Temple

As per Kalhana, Lalitaditya Muktapida constructed the Martand Sun Temple in the 8th century AD. As per Jonaraja and Hasan Ali, Sikandar Shah Miri (1389-1413) demolished the temple in a bid to Islamize society on the suggestion of a Sufi cleric named Mir Muhammad Hamadani. Multiple earthquakes severely destroyed the remains and relics of the temple.

## Architecture of Martand Sun Temple

The Martand temple is located on a plateau with a panoramic view of the whole Kashmir Valley. It was an exceptional example of the Kashmiri style of architecture, which had integrated the Gandharan, Gupta, and Chinese types of architecture, according to the remnants and associated archaeological discoveries. The temple includes a colonnaded courtyard with its main shrine in the middle and 84 lesser shrines around it, extending 220 feet in length and 142 feet wide in total and integrating a former temple. The shrine is the biggest example of peristyle in Kashmir, and it is complicated owing to its different chambers, which are proportionate in size and lined with the shrine's entire perimeter.

In line with the Hindi Temple architecture style, the main entrance of the shrine is located on the west end of the quadrangle and is of the same width as the shrine itself, establishing grandeur. Because of its lavish design and allusion to the gods revered within, the entryway reflects the shrine as a whole. The main shrine is housed in a centrally positioned edifice (the temple proper) with a pyramidal summit, which is a frequent characteristic of Kashmiri temples. Different gods, like Vishnu, as well as river goddesses, like Ganga and Yamuna, are depicted in the antechamber of the shrine main, in complement to the sun deity Surya.

## Conservation Efforts

The Martand Sun Temple in Jammu and Kashmir has been designated as a site of national significance by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI). Kartanda is the name of the temple in the registry of centrally protected sites (Sun Temple).