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## REMINISCENT OF HINDUISM: AN INSIGHT OF KATAS RAJ MANDIR

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**Abstract:** Katas Raj Mandir is a Hindu temple located in Choa Saidan Shah, Chakwal. Most of the Hindu pilgrims visit this temple to worship and pay pilgrimage. The research paper is an attempt to study the historical significance of the temple and its current stature in Hinduism. The study aimed to inquire why people visit this ancient temple. The nature of the study was qualitative while the data was collected using two key informants and in-depth interview from Hindu visitors and local people who live near katas raj mandir.

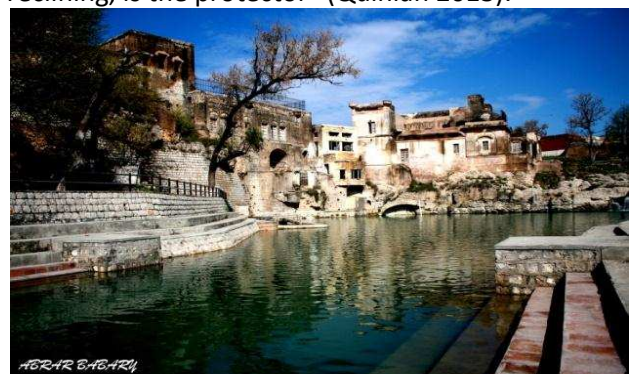
**Key Words:** Katas Raj Mandir, Temple, Shiva, Shiva linga

### INTRODUCTION

*Katas Raj Mandir*, speaks of its grandeur from the glory of its past. The word “*Katas*” or “*kataksha*” is from Sanskrit language, which literally means “spring eyes”. The pond itself is held to have been calling by a variety of names. Initially it was “Vis-Kund” or “poison spring” as its waters was unpleasant. It was next described as “Amar-Kund, after that Chamar-Kund and finally Kataksh-Kund, or the spring of raining eyes” (Cunningham 1875). It is located on the way from Choa Saidan Shah to Kallar Kahar, this Hindu temple has dichotomous anecdotes of Shiva and Pandav brothers associated to its historical existence. “The former story tells that it is a Shiv temple; lord Shiva who stands as a very power full god in the Hindu religion. His energy is called Shakti which can destroy everything but is also a symbol of new life. Shiva’s power was as in the form of his wife Parvati and her avatars Durga and *Kali*. Sati was the first wife of Shiva.” (Gibson and Wootten 2002). When his beloved wife Sita died, he was so miserable and inconsolable that the tears literally “rained form his eyes and formed two pools one is Pushkara near Ajmer and second is Ketaksha in the salt range” (Qaiser 1998).The later narrative tells that “according to Mahabharata dates back to five Pandavas brothers who stayed in Katas Raj when they were exiled from their homeland. Ketaksha means the “raining eyes” and now a day’s its name is Katas” (Adamson and shaw 1981).

“Katas is located on the northern part of the salt range about 40 kilometers away from Chakwal. The height of the Katas is more than 2000 feet above sea level. It is 27 kilometers away from Kallar Khar”

(Hasan 2008). Mandir or Temple is a place of worship, the house of God in Hinduism. There are different types of temples in Hindu culture where Shiv temples stand out the most. “Quinlan relates temple to not only a place for worship rather its very role temple has been shifted from solely a religious place to that of a cultural centre where the local community gathers for religious and socio-cultural events” (Quinlan 2013). The temple is an indication of the beliefs of Hinduism, and works as a communal, cultural, and religious nexus for the community. In order to completely identify the meaning of the temple, initially it is necessary to look at the foundation of Hinduism the word of the god. In the “Hindu Trinity, Brahma, Siva, and Vishnu are three diverse gods. Brahma, the four faced god gazing against the four orders, is the originator; Siva create in the thoughtful position is the destructive force and Vishnu, who is frequently described reclining, is the protector” (Quinlan 2013).



Before the separation of Indo- Pak subcontinent, Hindus used to visit this temple twice a year and did *Puja*; worship and bathed in the waters of the pool. Thousands of pilgrims visited this place to take bath

in its holy water to purify. The pool looks partly artificial due to its clean water. According to Hindu belief, *Ashnan*; taking bath in the holy pond washes away sins since the holy water is associated with the tear of Shiva.

Katas raj was an important temple in Hinduism standing as locus of center for Hindu pilgrims. Thousands of pilgrims and visitors visited Katas in April to take bath in the holy pool (Adamson and shaw 1981).

“The majority of the Hindus worship the Siva linga. Linga was the chief practice in the shiva’s supporter. The meaning of linga is “mark” or “sign” that’s why “penis”, that is the indication of manhood. The core or essential figure in several Shiv temples is a standing duct that is a picture of phallus. Though it is not supposed the equal by the current worshippers” (Heehs 2002). Another reason for Hindus pilgrims’ attraction is the “*shiv linga puja*” and its holy worth in Hinduism. Shiva linga is a stone that represent the power of the lord *Shiva*. It is made in different stone but most of the black marble used. The lingam or Shiva Lingam is a phallic-formed image that is a major purpose of Shiva worship. “The lingam every point situate on a surrounding base, which is courier of the YONI or vagina of the deity. The gods labeled upon the devi or deity to present her *yon*i at the same time as a secure position on behalf of the Shiva lingam to relax hence it is that each Shiva lingam rest on a symbol of the vagina of the deity” (Quinlan 2013).

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

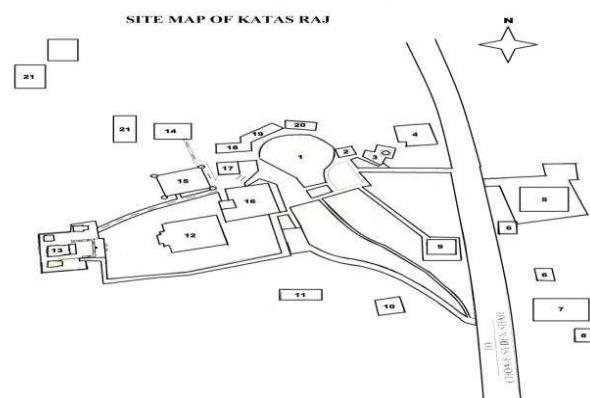
The nature of the study was qualitative. The data was collected through participant observation and two major key informants “Aamir shahzad” and “Muhammad Shakeel”. Further, in-depth interviews were filled from 13 Hindu visitors, out of which one was an Indian higher commissioner and 15 locals who lived in closer proximity and also worked in the Mandar, as care takers.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Katas Raj Mandir holds a sanctified place in Hinduism because of its scared water and the story of the Pandavas exiled from their kingdom who took refuge here. It is considered the second most important Hindu temple around the globe (Minhas 2010). Hindus believe that when shiva wept his tear dropped in two places; one drop fallen down in Ajmer Pushkara and second tear fell down in Katas. “Its illustration of a lot of numerous tales, the Katas sub-shrine be able to measure a kind of proto-Nagara tower” (Meiter 1996).

Katas Raj Mandir is considered equally consecrated for Hindus as Makkah and Madina are for Muslims. The area of the Katas is situated in the salt range. Katas is having Satghara temples ranging between 8<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> century AD, Hari Singh Nalwa’s Haveli, Bairagi house, ancient Buddhist Structural Remains (5<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> century AD) and other small temples. “The temple is spreaded across the whole expanse of the range- from mari on the west to near Jhelum in the east. Malot, Nandana, Shiv Ganga, kalaar, Amb and Ketas are among the best known. Most of them date back to a period stretching from the eighth to tenth century (Aslam 1991).

Pandavas were sent to Punjab in Kuro kingdom for punishment because at that time Punjab was considered as a dirty place. “According to Mahabharata, five Pandavas brothers resided into Katas Raj when they were separated from their native soil. The five Pandava brothers (Yudhisthira, Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva) lived fourteen year in Katas Raj when they expelled since their native soil” (Geer, et al. 2008). The five pandavas brothers were a common wife name “Draupadi”. Draupadi was the princess of Pancala who detained a competition to decide her own partner (svayamvara). Arjuna struggled in cover for the reason that he and his brother had been banished from their empire of Ayodhya. Draupadi turned into the combined wife of five pandavas brothers, though Arjuna forever remained her desired (Williams 2008). It clearly reflects the concept of fraternal polyandry being present in Hinduism. Danton was an area where pandavas were sent for punishment. Pandavas spent 12 year there, and for 10 year they did not see the kingdom and stayed hidden, kept their identity obscured in their escape period.



**Table.1: Details of Map**

No	Name	No	Name
1	Holy pool	8	Cave
2	Baradari Building	10	Fortification wall

3	Shiva Temple	12	Stupa Remains
4	Old Police Station	13	Sat- Ghara Temple
5	Reception Block	15	Hari Singh's Haveli
6	New Temple	16	Hanuman Temple
7	Haveli	17	Ramachandra Temple
19	Brragi Haveli	20	Old Library Building

The sacramental water of Katas Raj adds to its sanctity where thousands of pilgrims come for their purification and perform their religious rituals. Katas sacred water has the same importance as that of Ganga's river in Hinduism. This holds second most significance in terms of Holy waters of Hinduism since Katas water fell from shiva's eyes and Ganga's water fell as an offshoot of shiva's hair. It was Brahma who provided the benefit to Bhagiratha to make possible Ganga to stream on Earth. To hold her fall, Shiva permitted Ganga to collapse on his head and protected her in his knotted hair therefore underhanded the flow. Ganga turned into component of Shiva and prettifies Shiva's head (Chandrasekharanm 2007). There is a Shiv linga inside this temple which is said to date back to 5<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> century AD. Shiva linga is a stone. It is usually made of black marble but this linga inside the Katas temple is made of sand stone. It represents the power of shiva which according to Hindu belief is so encompassing that it covers the land from within and reaches the sky. It is a manifestation of the shiva. Hindu women believe that worshipping him will bring them good spouses since they relate it to *Parvati* who worshiped *Shiv* linga and she got shiva in return. Ram Chandra temple was modernly constructed temple. There also exists a belief that when Hindu cannot come to shiva temple, they alternatively perform worship in Ram Chandra temple. Hindus were performing the puja here since 1947. There is a residence area in the first and second floor and then the third floor there is temple. There also exist some sculptural remains of Hindu Gods. Red stone is used in the entrance of the temple also cited in the Cunningham report. Some people believe that there is a stair case that goes through the Ram Chandra temple to the pond. People were of the view that Hindu women visit it for bathing. The Satghara temples are attributed to the Pandavas. It is also narrated that there were seven temples initially, three were vanished and four still exist. It is formed of six small temples and one large central fane. Hindus believe that when Pandavas were exiled from their homeland then they lived in Katas for 12 years. If we trace it to Sanskrit language,

"Sat" means true, which means houses. Their general style is similar to that of the Kashmiri temples, of which the chief characteristics are dentils, trefoil arches, fluted pillars and pointed roofs, all of which are found in the temples of Katas. Highest structure has three levels and a steep and a narrow stair climbs to the roof.

#### CONCLUSION

Shiva's temple dates back to 5<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> century AD yet the progressive development of the site continues till the construction of the Ram Chandar temple which is considered as the latest amongst all reminiscent of Katas. Regular worship continued there before the partition time. The very significance of the site from archaeological perspective stands at par with its sanctity being a religious monument. Department of Archaeology and Museums Government of Pakistan hand over the Katas Raj Complex to Directorate General of Archaeology Government of the Punjab in the year of 2005. There exist a wide potential of this location being a land mark for Hindus in Pakistan if taken proper care of, and promoted through tourism, the way golden temple is in India. Special attention for the renovation and promotion of this site is needed to stop it falling apart and growth of tourism.

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