

Hindu Temple



Jemini Patel



Temple- Purpose

- To help achieve self-realization (the ultimate goal of human existence).
 - Create a religious environment and focus mind on pious and pure thoughts-To connect self with divine
 - Generate feeling of peace and mental calmness
 - Encourage congregational worship which creates religious purity in community
- The deity is treated like a king in his palace, hence the ornate manner and grandness. The priest is there to serve the deity.
- Center of Society- center of culture, govt, hospital, orphanage, etc



Unknown Quote

- “Mandirs preserve the cleanliness of the soul and keep it from becoming diseased. Some diseases can not be seen, only experienced. Our scriptures have shown the medicine to be mandirs.”



Some Symbols

- Saffron flag on dome
 - Saffron-purity, devotion and godliness because it is the color of the sun and fire
- Tall dome to represent the sky and the dome serves as a passage around the deity
 - Shikhara (pinnacles) represent a mountain upward symbolizing upward aspiration.



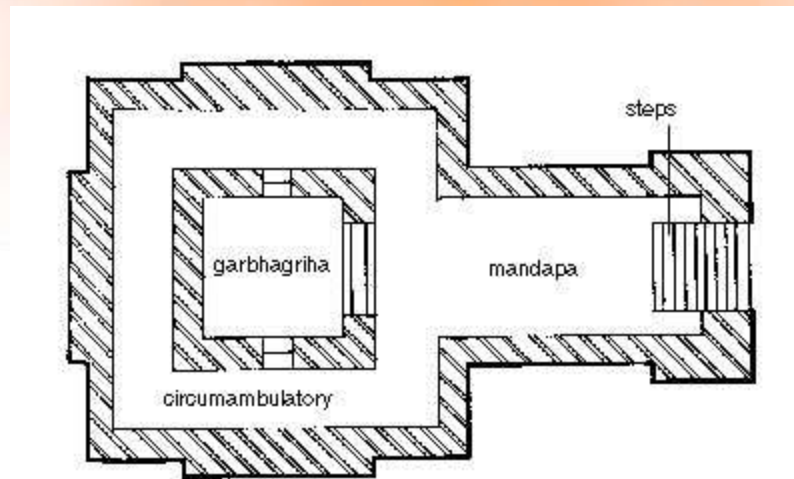
Architecture: Essential Parts

- Garbhagriha
 - comparable sanctum sanctorum- shrine/building inside the temple where the main deity is.
- Shukanasi-nose
- Antarala- adjoining passages
- Mandap- for activities- serves as a multipurpose room
- Dhwaja sthambha- flagpost
- Balipith- pedestal for offerings
- Shrines for other deities- bigger temples



Architecture:

- Everything from the architecture, installation of deities, the worship and other details of many temples are guided by religious scriptures known as Agama Shastras and Shilpa Shastra.





Mandir as God

Structure	God
Garbhagriha	Head
Gopura (main entrance tower)	His feet
Shukanasi (lion)	Nose
Antarala	Neck
Prakaras (high walls)	hands
Gavaksha (ornamental windows)	Ears
Ghanta (bells)	tongue

- Structure primarily symbolizes God as a cosmic person
- Alternatively, some view the temple structure as man with God residing at the heart
- May also represent all creation



Murti

- Not idol worship, but worship God through the idol- concentration- help human mind that needs to focus on a name and form for support(idol worshipper considers idol to be god as if god is nowhere else)
- God's presence is invoked in the statue during puja
- Nirguna (transcendent nature of the Brahman) and Saguna (symbolize Brahman in concrete form so it's approachable)- visible image to symbolize invisible divinity





Darshan

- Means “viewing”
- “religious vision”- hope the worshipper to actually see the deity through the image in a powerful, mystical sense



Circumambulation

- Parikrama and Pradakshina
- Done with a meditative mood (usually there is a mantra)
- Of shrine or holy spot
 - On pilgrimages- trekking around a mountain or hill area for miles
- Part of Hindu prayer symbolizing levels of life
- Go clockwise from entrance to inner sanctum



Pilgrimages

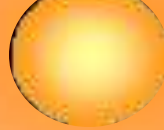
- Aim-seeking moksha, penance for self-purification, setting for soul-searching and self-analysis, discover humility
 - Mostly-taken as a fulfillment of a vow or when birth/death in the family
- Acts-
 - abstain from all meat and alcohol. Purity of thought, word and deed
- Places- Kashi, Ganges, Char Dham, Kedarnath, Ayodhya, etc....





Caverns as Mandirs

- Why? Sites where gods/goddesses have meditated and have left divine energy there. People believe that certain god or goddess is present at that location.





Dwarkadhish Temple





Nasika





Vrindavan





Lakshminarayan Temple (New Delhi)





Temples in USA

- Vedanta Society built early temples in 1906 but not formal temples
- Earliest Temple: 1977- Mahavallabha Ganapati Devasthanam in Flushing, New York City