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Vāstuśāstra and Indo-Islamic Textual Phenomenology: Comparative Analysis of Spatial Principles in South Asia

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Dr Rajan Kumar Vaidhya

Department of Visual Arts, Assam University, Silchar, Assam, India

RKV, 0009-0000-6689-4746

Correspondence: Dr Rajan Kumar Vaidhya, rajan.k.vaidhya@gmail.com

Abstract

The study aims to analyse the ideological and spatial implementation of the integrated Indo-Islamic architectural methods and materials that evolved through periods of cultural interaction with Sanskritic traditions in India and South Asia. This has led to the development of distinct and hybrid structures that reflect the artistic and spiritual values of both societies. Vāstuśāstra and Islamic archetypes of architectural design are widely employed to design and reflect philosophical ideas of spirituality, harmony with nature, spatial aesthetics, and environmentally compatible spaces. Methodologically, the study has been conducted through informal interviews, field visits, and rigorous content analysis, focusing on the fundamental concepts of convergence, divergence and common ground for implementing Vāstuśāstra and Islamic architectural principles in the context of Indo-Islamic architecture in India. Since both Vedic Hinduism and Islamic ideologies emerged from distinct religious, cultural, and geographical backgrounds, they intermingled in the pan-Indian context. Their architectural traditions apparently share standard design and utilitarian objectives; nonetheless, in the Mughal architecture of India. It foregrounds the historical events of racial amalgamation that shaped the Indo-Islamic culture, art, and architectural heritage, as reflected in South Asian architectural aesthetics and proficiency.

Keywords: Architectural symbolism, Cultural syncretism, Indo-Islamic architecture, Geometric implications, Vāstuśāstra

Introduction

Architecture has not always been conceptualised as mere utility; instead, it persists as a cultural artefact that reflects a belief system, power, and social structure, as well as science, engineering, and aesthetic values of a particular time and place. In oriental societies, architectural expressions were not only spiritual but also functional, serving as a physical manifestation of spiritual and philosophical beliefs. [1] *Vāstuśāstra*, the ancient system of Indian knowledge of architecture, is deeply rooted in Vedic epistemology, emphasising overall human well-being, cosmology, planetary systems, predictions of the future and fortune, celestial cycles, nature (flora and fauna), and the interconnectedness of all living and non-living entities.[2] This system of knowledge emphasises the specific guidelines for the orientation, layout, proportions, and spatial geometry of buildings to promote well-being and spiritual balance. According to Indian knowledge systems, its principles are based on the belief that every structure is part of active energy influenced by natural elements and planetary forces, and therefore should be constructed to enhance the flow of positive energy, or *'prana'*.[3]

Islamic architecture, on the other hand, derives from the theological and monotheistic principles of Islam, which emphasise unity *(tawhid)*, humility, and the omnipresence of divinity. Spanning from Spain and North Africa to India and Southeast Asia, Islamic architecture is characterised by its complex geometric patterns, axial plans, and calligraphic ornamentations designed to inspire reflection on the divine.[4] Despite regional diversity, Islamic architecture maintains a unifying spiritual principle that shapes both religious and civic structures.[5] The Indian subcontinent, with its long history of cultural confluence, provides a distinct landscape where these two architectural paradigms have coexisted, contradicted, and amalgamated. From the Delhi Sultanate to the Mughal Empire, Islamic architectural concepts emerged against the backdrop of indigenous *Vāstu*-influenced traditions, resulting in integrated forms that embodied a diverse interplay of form, function, and belief. [6]

Objectives of the Study

Exploration of the convergence and divergence between the two traditions, especially in terms of spatial layout, orientation, use of geometry, and resilience with the natural environment. Simultaneously, an investigation of amalgamation in religious symbolism, iconography, and design elements within both architectural spaces.

Methodology

The ideology and belief system that influenced the development of both the Indian knowledge system of architectural orientation, design elements, and three-dimensional planning. The use of geometry and proportion, as well as the symbolic and functional significance of architectural fundamentals, are significantly contextualised and compared in this study through the methods below.

Comparative Analysis: The study employs a descriptive and comparative approach to examine primary discourses, such as the *"Manasara"* and *"Mayamatam"* of the Sanskrit tradition, and fundamental Islamic approaches to architecture, alongside relevant secondary literature on both *Vāstuśāstra* and Islamic architectural theories.

Historical Contextualization: The research draws upon historical records to examine cultural exchanges between Hindu and Islamic communities in South Asia, tracing the evolution of integrated architectural styles.

Visual and Spatial Analysis: Physical observations, informal interviews and qualitative analysis are employed to understand and compare spatial and structural patterns across the two traditions.

Limitations

The study primarily focuses on Indian contexts and may not fully capture the full spectrum of regional variations, theoretically in both *Vāstu* and Islamic architectural traditions.

The research emphasises fundamental historical developments, offering limited engagement with how these traditions are being reinterpreted or applied in contemporary global contexts.

Theoretical Frameworks

An established Hindu temple's spatial orientation is rooted in the concept of Vedic Altars, but it is unclear when the Indo-Aryan groups began temple-building. The idea of building temples is basically associated with the concept of Vedic liturgical worship. Since the Vedic period and the proliferation of Sanskritic epistemology, Hindu deities have been venerated in a well-defined structure as their dwelling place, textually and then spatially.[7] The earliest temple structures were built by the Guptas and their associated vicinities, dedicated to the Hindu faith system in the fifth and sixth Centuries. Initially, Gupta Hindu Shrines emerged as cave-temples at Udayagiri in Madhya Pradesh, one of which bears a record dated to 401 AD of Chandragupta II. It was during the Gupta period that the solid stone blocks were used to construct temples.[8]

The small shrines they erected generally comprise a square Garbhagriha or Inner sanctum preceded by a columned Porch. The Fifth-century Temple at *Tigawa* in Madhya Pradesh has smooth exterior walls supported by a balanced flat roof. Porch columns display pot-and-foliage capitals with pairs of Back-to-Back Seated Lions.[9] Then, ceremonies and practices became more complex and advanced over time, deities and other elements were added to temple construction, and temples grew larger, with more sculptural motifs.[10]

The concept and technique of Building Hindu Temple Architecture are based on an Indian knowledge system of Scriptures that are broadly defined as *Vāstuśāstra* and *'Āgamas'*. Both the *Shikhara* and *Vimana* styles of Architecture are based on these scriptures. *Āgamas* are closely derived from the Tantric sect, which prescribes exhaustive Principles of Temple construction, including the selection of Stone, soil, and other materials vital to the construction of a temple.[11] *Vāstuśāstra* delineates the vital principles for creating the Layout plan for Temple construction, from selecting the ground to planning and the final building phase. The ground plans for constructing a Hindu Temple are based on certain design patterns, which essentially refer to *Mandala* Plans (geometrical compositions). Among these, '*Vāstupurusha Mandala'* is the most vigorous. Every aspect of the *Vāstupurusha Mandala* creates a fundamental manifestation of Tantra. [12]

***Vāstuśāstra,* The primary canon**

According to the Vedic tradition of spatial planning, *Vāstuśāstra* is the foundational treatise, a combination of two words: the term '*Vāstu'* originates from the syllable *'Vas'* meaning dwelling or to reside, and '*Shastra'* translates to science or treatise, together referring to the 'science of living space or dwelling construction', which integrates traditional *Vedic* interpretations with principles of design, layout, geometry, and directional alignments primarily originates from '*Sthapatya Veda*' *which is a supplementary text*

(Upaveda) of Atharva Veda. [13] *Vāstuśāstra* is considered not merely a design guideline for physical and spatial construction but also a metaphysical interpretation that aligns human dwellings with cosmic energies. It prescribes procedures for constructing different buildings and towns in accordance with its very purpose and the five cardinal elements (*pancha mahabhutas*) of cosmic creation: Earth (*Bhumi*), Water (*Jala*), Fire (*Agni*), Air (*Vayu*), and Space (*Akasha*).[14] Whereas *Mandala*, a core concept and geometric diagram- primarily a sacred square divided into 64 or 81 smaller squares, is mechanised to plan the layout of spaces. This vigorous mandala conception is the "*Vāstuurusha Mandala"*, which depicts a cosmic being sprawled across the grid, symbolising universal energy. [15] *Vāstu* emphasises the significance of orientation and cardinal directions, rooted in the solar cycle. The East (direction) is considered auspicious as it is the direction of the dawn, associated with the deity *Surya,* the sun. Accordingly, entrances and imperative rooms, such as the prayer room or living room, are often recommended to face east. The *Brahma-sthana*, or the prime centre space of a building, is regarded as the most sacred zone and is left considerably open, free from roof coverings and heavy structures above or below, and free from obstructions, facilitating the connection between the earthly and the cosmic energies.[16] Though *Vāstuśāstra* originated in religious and cultural contexts, its principles reflect a deep understanding of environmental factors, including natural light, wind direction, and topography. Those beyond the time seem relevant to the contemporary notion of environment and sustainability, as evidenced by a resurgence in acceptability among architects and homeowners experimenting in blending traditional understandings with modern architectural practices.

Vāstuśāstra, established circa 1500 BCE-6th Century CE, and Canonical texts, such as the *"Manasara"* and "*Mayamata"*, derived principles for designing spaces and architecture that resonate with natural forces and the cosmic order, mention *Vāstupurusha* as the presiding deity of all land structures, including temples and houses. According to *Āgama* scriptures, the square is a mystical form, and the ground plan is constructed from a 64 (*Manduka mandala*) or 81 (*Pramasaayika mandala*) grid pattern. *Vāstupurusha Mandala* is a conceptual plan of a temple that provides a map for installing various deities in their respective positions. Kramrisch mentions, "The *Vāstu-Purusha-mandala* represents the manifest form of the cosmic being upon which the temple is built and in whom the temple rests. The temple is situated in him, comes from him, and is a manifestation of him." [17] The *Vāstupurusha Mandala* is both the body of the cosmic being and a physical device that possesses the requisite knowledge to achieve the best results in temple building. The *Vāstupurusha Mandala* serves as a central reference to this spatial geometry; it is akin to a spiritual map, depicting a cosmic being within a grid. This grid develops the foundational plan, guiding how spaces are organised to bring harmony among the building, the universe, and cosmic phenomenology.[18] The *Brhadisvara* Temple in Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu, is a remarkable example of these principles in action. Its layout, massive implementation, precise alignment, and symbolic details all reflect *Vāstu* ideals. The central sanctuary, the garbhagriha, aligns with the cardinal directions and is topped by a tall vimana, representing a spiritual link between the cosmos and the earth.[19]

Spatial implantation of a Temple

Hindu temples are built according to established mathematical and geometrical principles mentioned in *Āgamas, Vāstuśāstra and Śilparatna. Śilparatna*, a canonical 16th-century text of Srikumara, emphasises that a Hindu temple project is an enormous undertaking that involves a group of artisans, a patron termed '*Yajamana*', and a spiritual guide, known as *'Sthapaka'*, who dictates the necessary principles for temple construction. The architect who designs the entire ground plan and layout of the temple is known as '*Sthapati'*. A surveyor who supervises the event is called '*Sutragrahin'*. The workers, masons, painters,

plasterers, and managers come under the category of '*Vardhakins'*, and the sculptors who were employed in the construction are called '*Takshakas'*. Temple construction begins with a search for a proper site. The soil and location are tested and selected by the *Acharya* and *Shilpi.* The process of selecting and testing the soil and location through different methods is called '*Bhupariksa'*. The location and dimensions of the temple are determined through calculations based on the town's layout, its size, the length and breadth of the different street levels, and the location and sizes of the town's waterbodies.[20]

The site, which is auspicious and appropriate according to the calculations done by the *Acharya*, is chosen for Temple construction and is termed *'Brahmasthana'*. In the term *Brahmasthana*, where *'Brahma'* denotes the deity of the initial creator and *'sthana'* means place, it refers to the place dedicated to the cosmic creator. Confirmation of the temple's size is a vital, calculated decision, and the decision is supposed to be made in fixed multiple ratios of the deity's Idol to be housed within it. Materialistically, the idol of the worshipped deity is divided into three categories: the cardinal image of the deity is known as *' Vigraha'*, the pedestal of the deity is called *'Peetha',* and the platform is termed as '*Adhisthana'*. The stone used to construct all three components is selected in accordance with the *Agama* scriptures' set standards, which specify three kinds of stones for carving the deity's idol: Male *(purusha)*, Female *(prakriti)*, and Neuter *(Snigda)*, identified through a stone-testing process that includes striking the stone with an iron bar. If a stone produces a spark and a sound, it would be considered male and recommended for carving the image of a deity (*Vigrah*). If the Stone produces no spark but makes a sound, it is regarded as female and utilised to form the pedestal of an Idol. The ground plan, laid down by the Architect or *Sthapati,* symbolically represents the cosmos, based on a Mandala Pattern composed of squares and equilateral triangles. [21]

The relationship between the Symbolic spatial form of the temple and the shape of cosmic man, or *'Vāstupurusha'*, is attributed to the temple's Physical appearance. It supersedes the positioning of the inner sanctum and the main Tower *(shikhara or Vimana)* as human forms, symbolically conceived in human proportions, based on the mystical number eight, which represents cyclic infinity. The Hindu temple tradition is mainly divided into two broad categories: the *'Nagara'* and the *'Dravida'*, with a third category, *'Vesara'*, combining elements of both. The *Nagara* style of temple is characterised by a curved spire, termed *'Shikhara'*, and the *Dravida* temple has a tiered pyramidical structure with a crowning top, termed *'Vimana'*.[22] The Temples are considered to be the embodiment or manifestation of the deity; therefore, the names of the fundamental parts of a temple, as referred in Sanskrit, are anthropomorphic: *'Griva'* denotes neck, *'Skandha'* denotes Shoulder, '*Uru'* refers to thigh, and *'Jangha'* refers to the lower leg. The *Chakras,* or subtle energy fields, which form an integral part of *Tantra yoga* or *Kundalini Yoga*, are represented physically and symbolically in South Indian temple architecture.[23]

Islamic Fundamentals of Spatial Construction

Islamic architecture refers to the architectural styles and practices associated with the expansion of Islam, which emerged after its advent in the 7th century CE and was shaped by the Quranic ideology. It spans a wide geographical area- from Spain and North Africa in the west to India and Southeast Asia in the east- and reflects a blend of religious, cultural, and regional influences. Though diverse in form and expression, Islamic architecture is unified by certain ideological and symbolic elements derived from Islamic principles and its practices.[24] However, the Qur'an and Hadith do not prescribe specific architectural or spatial principles for construction. Rather, Islamic architecture is deeply influenced by religious concepts such as unity *(tawhid)*, modesty, and a primarily qibla-oriented positioning toward the Kaaba in Mecca. Mosques, as the fundamental structures of Islamic communities, are designed to facilitate communal

prayers, with essential elements such as the mihrab (a niche indicating the qibla), minbar (a pulpit), and minaret (a tower for the call to prayer).[25]

Islamic architecture is frequently venerated for its profound integration of geometric patterns, arabesque (vegetal motifs), calligraphy, and minute decoration, which reflects Islamic views on avoiding idolization and emphasising monotheism through the abstract ambience of space. The conception of domes, *iwans* (vaulted spaces), courtyards, and *muqarnas* (stalactite-like ornamentation) is also a distinctive feature.[26] A significant structural innovation in Islamic architecture is the horseshoe arch, first introduced in early Umayyad buildings and later developed in regions such as Al-Andalus and North Africa. Another recurring element is the courtyard garden, often modelled on the Quranic vision of paradise (*Jannah*), featuring fountains and flowing water within a symmetrical layout, as seen in the *Charbagh* pattern of Persian and Mughal gardens.[27]

Development of Islamic Styles

The Umayyads (661–750 CE) constructed early Islamic monuments, such as the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem (685-692 CE) and the Great Mosque of Damascus (705-715 CE), combining Byzantine and Sasanian influences. In Persia, the Safavid dynasty built monumental structures such as the Shah Mosque of Isfahan (1611-29 CE), which is pigeonholed by its blue tilework and double-shell domes.[28] The Ottoman Empire developed a distinct architectural identity, characterised by the central dome and elegant proportions, exemplified in Sinan's works, such as the Sulaymaniyah Mosque, built between 1550 and 1557 CE in Istanbul. Mughal architecture represents the epitome of Islamic art and engineering in South Asia by blending Persian sophistication (geometry, domes, and gardens), Central Asian structural engineering (large scale and twin-domes), and indigenous Indian craftsmanship (red sandstone, corbeled arches, brackets, and *chhatris*), all creating a distinct, globally recognised aesthetics. The style evolved from the early 16th to the mid-18th century, not merely an architectural advancement but a thoughtful, fundamental dominance. The Mughal emperors used monumental construction to legitimise their rule, synthesise a diverse empire, and reflect complex Islamic cosmological beliefs. In India, it is best exemplified by the Taj Mahal (1631-1653 CE), which fused Persian, Indian, and Central Asian elements, reflecting both imperial power and spiritual symbolism. [29]

Structural Ideas & Architectural Vision

Islam fundamentally avoids figurative representations in religious contexts; instead, intricate arabesques, *muqarnas* (honeycomb-like decorations), geometric patterns, and calligraphy are used to express Allah's attributes and Quranic verses, apparently. The way light and shadow play, often through domes with perforated screens (*jali*) or high windows, simultaneously creates a mystic environment, symbolising meditative illumination.[30] The Alhambra Palace in Granada, Spain, exemplifies its repeating geometric patterns, arabesque designs, and calligraphic inscriptions, showcasing the core Islamic principles of order, beauty, and unity. In India, the Jama Masjid in Delhi is a notable example of Islamic architectural ideology combined with local materials and building techniques. It is oriented towards Mecca and embodies both symmetry and grandeur (less imaginative towards human life and attributes, but focused on the Qur'anic lore).[31]

Comparative Analysis

Foundational creeds

Both the *Vāstuśāstra* and Islamic architectural idioms place great importance on the orientation of a building, though their reasons and approaches differ due to their distinct cultural and spiritual backgrounds. The ancient Vedic system emphasises, to a considerable extent, aligning buildings with the cardinal directions to create harmony between the living space and the flow of natural energies around it. Each direction in the Vedic system is believed to be influenced by a specific deity or elemental force, and positioning particular spaces accordingly is considered a way to invite positive energy, which can lead to improved health, wealth, and overall well-being. For a typical home, having its main entrance face east, as the direction symbolises new beginnings, energy, and abundance, is simultaneously believed to bring light, growth, and enlightenment into the home. *Vāstu* principles also guide the placement of rooms within a house, taking into account the Sun's path and the influence of the five basic elements. The kitchenette is ideally placed in the southeast corner; it is associated with the fire element, which is considered strongest in that direction. The worship room, or prayer space, is traditionally located in the northeast and is considered sacred and spiritually commanding as it is linked to the elements of water and space.[32] These guidelines were primarily applied in the design of temples, community palaces, and public constructions, and they continue to influence modern architecture across India.

In Islamic architecture, the orientation of a building is significant, as it is influenced solely by religious considerations. Accordingly, the alignment of the structure towards the Qibla - the direction of the Kaaba in Mecca, Islam's holiest site is endorsed. Mosques and prayer spaces worldwide are oriented toward the norm, apparently symbolising the unity of the global Islamic community. Environmental considerations of celestial or natural objects (light, air, fire, water, or space) are not emphasised in Islamic structures, which are delineated primarily with respect to the Kaaba. This orientation impacts the overall layout of a mosque. The *mihrab*, a prayer niche, symbolises the qibla wall and visually directs the worshipper's focus. The *minbar* (pulpit), where the *imam* (preacher) gives sermons, is also typically placed near this wall. Together, these features guide the congregation towards Mecca, reinforcing a sense of collective devotion or standardisation.[33]

Geometry, Proportion and Symmetry

Vāstuśāstra and Islamic architecture engrossed geometry more than just a design element or spatial facilitation- it carries profound symbolic meanings. It is crucial in shaping the spiritual and aesthetic character of their built spaces. In *Vāstu*, geometry is closely linked to cosmology and the flow of universal energies. The *Vāstu Purusha Mandala*, a sacred geometric grid often divided into 64 or 81 squares, is the core concept of this system. More than just a floor plan, the Mandala is a spiritual diagram that reflects the universe and succeeds in the layout and stability of homes, temples, and other sacred structures for eternity. This alignment is particularly evident in Hindu temple architecture, such as the Sun Temple of Modhera, among others, which follows a precise geometric layout that embodies *Vāstu* principles. Every element of the structure, from its alignment to its proportions, offers a space where devotees can connect with the divine.[34]

In Islamic architecture, geometry is depicted as a language that expresses the nature of creation; geometric patterns such as star polygons, arabesques, and intricate tessellations embody the concept of *Tawhid* (uniformity) within multiplicity. These designs use repetition, symmetry, and mathematical relationships to

develop a sense of perfection and transcendence. Instead of directly depicting the physical world, Islamic geometry and forms aim to express an abstract spiritual infinity that transcends human form and earthly limitations, presumably. A remarkable example of Indo-Islamic architecture is the interior of the Fatehpur Sikri complex, built by Emperor Akbar. The palaces and mosques here feature intricate Jaali screens, geometric tile work, and muqarnas-style ceilings. These repeating patterns and symmetrical designs create a sense of visual harmony. The aesthetic beauty serves not just as decoration, but as a spiritual expression through structured form and sacred geometry.[35]

Symbolism and Iconography

Vāstuśāstra primarily embraces a compound anthropomorphic iconography as a central part of spiritual architecture. Temples built according to its principles are often adorned with detailed sculptures depicting Hindu deities, mythological narrations, and cosmic themes. These images are not limited to just subtle, animated representations of heavenly, otherworldly, and imaginative imagery; nonetheless, they are also a mundane sensory experience. They are depicted as simpler means or bridges for devotees to connect with the divine and sublime aspects of textual philosophy, as well as with the notions of core experiences of life, enlightenment, existence, and salvation. By interacting with these delicate symbolic forms, worshippers embody a deeper spiritual and sensory connection. For instance, the Khajuraho temple monuments in Madhya Pradesh, India, are epitomised by their intricate carvings, including the zenith of sensory divinity. Apart from being purely sensory, these figures are part of a larger symbolic language that represents the cycles of life, death, and rebirth. They express the unity of the physical and spiritual realms, illustrating how the material world is deeply intertwined with the divine. [36]

In contrast, Islamic architecture takes a different symbolic path. Islamic traditions generally repudiate depicting living beings in religious art, based on the belief that such images could lead to idolization and distract from the worship of Allah. As a result, Islamic artistic traditions focus on non-figurative forms - especially calligraphy, geometric patterns, and abstract motifs - as a means of spiritual expression.

Environmental and Climatic Considerations

Both *Vāstuśāstra* and Islamic architecture demonstrate a reflective understanding of environmental sustainability, creating comfortable climates and incorporating passive design strategies that correspond with nature to regulate temperature, improve airflow, and create livable, energy-efficient spaces. In *Vāstu*, integrating natural elements is the core idea of architectural planning. The placement of windows, doors, and open courtyards is considered in relation to the sun's movement and the predominant wind and directions. These spatial decisions aim to optimize ventilation, natural light, and indoor temperature, ultimately supporting mental, physical, and spiritual wellness. Many traditional structures also feature a central courtyard, an open space that enhances cross-ventilation and allows natural light to enter, thereby moderating the indoor climate throughout the day.

In regions with hot, dry climates, Islamic architecture employs principles similar to those of other Indian architectural traditions to maintain a calm environment. It features courtyards, wind catchers, and thick masonry walls, all standard features designed to naturally soothe and ventilate interior spaces. A notable innovation is the *Badgir*, or wind tower, found in traditional Persian and Iranian architecture. These towers are designed to capture even the slightest breeze and channel it into the building, providing relief from extreme heat without mechanical systems.[37] Humayun's Tomb in Delhi, commissioned by his wife Hamida Banu Begum and designed by the Persian architect Mirak Mirza Ghiyas, combines the Charbagh

(quadrilateral garden layout) with *Vāstu*-aligned symmetry and orientation. Whereas the Taj Mahal, often referred to as the epitome of Islamic mausoleum architecture, incorporates Indian elements such as the lotus finial on its dome and Pietra dura inlay with floral designs. These reflect the *Mughal* appreciation of local aesthetics. [38]

In western Rajasthan, traditional havelis subtly combine *Vāstuśāstra* and Islamic design elements. Havelis of Jodhpur and Jaisalmer use internal courtyards and latticework to manage airflow and reduce heat, demonstrating a practical understanding of local climate conditions. They also feature *jali* screens, intricately carved in stone or wood, inspired by Islamic architecture. These screens allow air to pass through while blocking harsh sunlight, keeping the interiors cool. An appropriate example is Jaipur's Hawa Mahal, also known as the 'Palace of Winds', which was built in 1799. It features 953 small windows, or *jharokhas,* with *jali* work that allows breezes to enter while providing privacy for royal women. [39] The climate-adaptive design keeps the building naturally ventilated and comfortable, even in the intense summer heat. Compared with the Jama Masjid in Sawai Madhopur, which showcases passive cooling through its rectangular windows and open design, allowing cool air to flow in and hot air to outflow. This reflects traditional Islamic architecture, adapted from the Rajputana style, which is suited to its hot climate.[40] Both architectural traditions demonstrate an intuitive understanding of environmental conditions, using wind and solar orientation not just as abstract ideas, but as practical design tools.

Results

As both traditions are ethically grounded, their philosophies about how sacred space is organised internally deviate in their own optimistic customs. In *Vāstu,* the concept of the residing or prayer-space structure is imagined as a penetration of life *(Prana or Chetna)*, corresponding to the cosmic or supreme creator *(Brahma),* as *Brahmasthana* refers to the place dedicated to the supreme originator. Accordingly, the whole doctrine considers the contemplative resort to be in optimal alignment with vital sources of nature, energy and elements, allowing cosmic potency to flow spontaneously. On the contrary, Islamic architecture does not principally emphasise a central sacred space and natural elements; it prioritises axial orientation, focusing mainly on the Qibla wall. The primary difference between these two distant ideologies lies in their respective focuses.

Vāstuśāstra advanced into massive, wide-ranging, imaginative, iconographic, anthropomorphic, and theomorphic imagery on various themes and narrations corresponding to textual traditions. These intricate deity sculptures and mythological reliefs offer a tangible, everyday sensory experience and translate profound, complex text-based philosophies regarding life, existence, and salvation (*moksha*) into accessible visual forms. Whereas in Islamic traditions, idolisation and formal representation are believed to be a distraction in spiritual determination and suggest absolute submission and focus on Divinity. This philosophy flourished into animated non-figurative aesthetics primarily through calligraphy, intricate geometrical symmetries, and decorative vegetal motifs. All these sophisticated and non-representational design lexicons are primarily considered to channel the worshipper's spiritual concentration and submission towards abstract and transcendental divineness.

Centuries of coexistence and interaction between Hindu and Muslim communities, particularly during the Delhi Sultanate and Mughal Empire, resulted in a dynamic fusion of architectural traditions. This Indo-Islamic style emerged as a creative blend of Persian and Central Asian influences, aboriginal Indian building practices, and elements drawn from *Vāstuśāstra*. Mughal architects, for instance, seamlessly incorporated indigenous features like '*chhatris*' (elevated domed pavilions), '*Jharokhas'* (ornamental

overhanging balconies), and elaborately carved brackets and floral and vegetal design motifs, all hallmarks of Hindu temple design - into the fabric of Islamic architecture. The result embodies a distinctive, harmonious architectural language that reflects the cultural diversity and artistic innovation of the time.

Conclusion

Vāstuśāstra and Islamic architectural styles emerge from distinct metaphysical contexts; they converge on several fundamental aspects, including orientation toward a cosmological axis, the use of geometry, and sensitivity to environmental conditions. Their primary divergences are evident in the domains of symbolism, iconography, and formal representation. *Vāstuśāstra* encourages humankind to connect with nature, compassion, wisdom, enlightenment, salvation, and human consciousness, while Islamic architecture emphasises decoration, submission, and collective space. Understanding the dialogue between these systems offers more than a historical insight - it provides a more sustainable framework for contemporary architecture that is inclusive, context-sensitive, and reverential of society and culture.

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