ARCHITECTURE and SOCIETY
Some Lessons on Muslim Architecture from India

This book deals with the subject of the relationship between Muslim architecture and society and how they influence each other, taking some social and historical segments of complex Indian society as a case study. The book consists of three independent analyses which cover three vital aspects of Muslim architecture, especially in India:

1) Converting Hindu temples into mosques;
2) The royal funerary architecture of the Mughals;
3) The social significance of the Naaz Khan’s architecture.

The book aims to reflect on the three mentioned aspects, emphasizing in the process some notable at once spiritual and social qualities of Muslim architecture in general and in India in particular. The lessons expounded in the book revolve around the universal, fluid, multi-dimensional and value-loaded character of Muslim architecture that always eventually comes to the fore in any given socio-economic, religious and cultural context.

Dr. Saphe Omer, a Roman currently residing in Malaysia, is an Associate Professor in the Department of Islamic Studies and Human Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia. He studied in Russia, Egypt, and Malaysia. His research interests cover Islamic history, culture and civilization, as well as the history and theory of Islamic built environment. He can be reached at saphe@ic.unimelb.com; his website is: www.medininet.org
To my wife, children, parents and in-laws
## Contents

**Figures**

**Introduction**

**Chapter 1:**
**Rationalising the Phenomenon of Converting Hindu Temples into Mosques**
- Introduction
- The Expediency of Converting Temples into Mosques
- Muslim Tolerance towards the Conquered Peoples
- Converting Temples into Mosques as a Relative and Qualified Trend
- Converting Hindu Temples into Mosques and the Spiritual Disposition of the Natural Environment
- Converting Temples into Mosques and the Identity of Islamic Architecture

**Chapter 2:**
**Some Observations on the Royal Funerary Architecture of the Mughals**
- Introduction
- The Origins of Muslim Funerary Architecture
- The Mughals and Monumental Royal Mosques
- Contextualising the Royal Funerary Architecture of the Mughals
- Revisiting the Main Thrusts of the Royal Funerary Architecture of the Mughals

**Chapter 3:**
**The Social Significance of Mr. Nazeer Khan's Architecture**
- Introduction
- Why this Study?
- Who is Mr. Nazeer Khan?
- Kerala Muslims' Economic Transformation
Figures

Figure 1.1: Remains of Qowwat al-Islam Mosque in New Delhi. Materials from 27 Hindu and Jain temples demolished in the neighborhoods were used for constructing the mosque.

Figure 1.2: The courtyard and riceyq (arcades) of Qowwat al-Islam Mosque. The riceyq were formed by superimposed, or placed one above the other, Hindu columns.

Figure 1.3: Riceyq (arcade) at Qowwat al-Islam Mosque with materials, especially columns, from Hindu and Jain temples.

Figure 1.4: According to some theories, since adapting the columns from Jain and Hindu temples to use them in Qowwat al-Islam Mosque proved problematic, gave Islam's injunction against the use of statues and images, the reasons were forced to plaster over the highly sculpted Hindu columns and presumably cover them with geometric designs. However, after centuries of neglect the plaster has fallen away, revealing the original Hindu carvings.

Figure 1.5: Qowwat al-Islam Mosque is a brilliant amalgamation of Hindu and Islamic architectural styles. While, on the one hand, there are beautifully carved ceilings and pillars decorated with numerous Hindu motifs like divinities, bells, cows, branches and leaves, there are many examples of arabesques and calligraphic inscriptions of verses from the Holy Quran carved on the piers, on the other.

Figure 1.6: Disfigured human sculptures used as the capital of a column supporting the ceiling of Qowwat al-Islam Mosque. Statues and sculptural representations of people and even animals are prohibited in Islam. By statues is meant complete, solid figures which have not been disfigured or otherwise defaced. Statues are to be defaced or disfigured by breaking off their heads.