

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 studies 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 Mr. Nazeer 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.

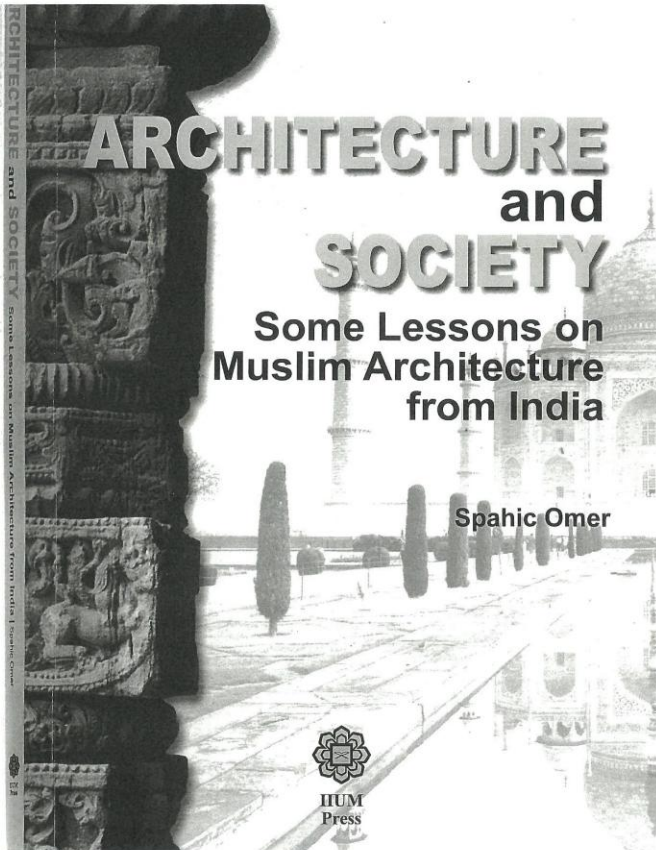
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*To my wife, children,
parents and in-laws*

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- Figure 1.2 : The courtyard and *rivaqs* (arcades) of *Quwwat al-Islam* Mosque. The *rivaqs* were formed by superimposed, or placed one above the other, Hindu columns.
- Figure 1.3 : *Rivaq* (arcade) at *Quwwat 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 *Quwwat al-Islam* Mosque proved problematic, given Islam's injunction against the use of statues and images, the masons 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 : *Quwwat 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 porticoes, on the other.
- Figure 1.6 : Disfigured human sculptures used as the capital of a column supporting the ceiling of *Quwwat 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.