

The Influence of Islamic Epistemology on Mosque Architecture

Authors : Sheba Akhtar

Abstract : The profound importance that Islam places on knowledge has directly influenced the architectural development of the mosque throughout the Muslim world. The masjid is the most important religious building type in Islamic society because, as a place of worship and social interaction, it is the center of both spiritual knowledge and secular guidance. The Quran begins with the emphatic injunction, "Iqra", establishing the central importance of the pursuit of the sacred ilm that is offered to man by Allah. Similarly, numerous hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad emphasize the profound importance of the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge, both spiritual and temporal. The Muslim worshipper must enter the sacred space of the masjid to receive spiritual knowledge, but the transition from the profane realm outside the mosque to that of spirituality within is not merely physical; it is also deeply psychological and emotional. To this end, the architecture of the masjid, from the plan and geometry to the design elements and intricate ornamental details, plays a vital role in creating the environment within which the ritual acts of wudu and salat are enacted to foster the transformative journey, from the mundane reality of this world to the realm of spirituality beyond, in the heart, mind, and soul of the worshipper. It is expected that the paper will provide a better understanding of the ways in which sacred Islamic knowledge has influenced the architectural design of the mosque. The research will draw upon Islamic epistemology, Islamic architecture history, and compositional analysis to demonstrate this philosophical, historical, and formal relationship. In this way, the paper will provide a meaningful bridge between the existing knowledge related to mosque design and the expanding academic discourse about the religious architecture of Islam.

Keywords : Islamic architecture, mosque architecture, religious architecture, sacred architecture

Conference Title : ICRBADA 2023 : International Conference on Religious Building Architecture, Design and Aesthetics

Conference Location : Istanbul, Türkiye

Conference Dates : August 17-18, 2023