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TRUTH written in Poetic Lines

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Thinking

Building stays longer than human life span, it becomes inheritance to the next generation; new buildings should have good structure, timeless language and materials which are in harmony with the environment.

Beauty is born from the truth. A building has to represent itself, where it is born, materials will be used which are available in its surroundings, that’s how Nature intended it. For what people, their needs, their everyday living will determine the programme of the building. The forms and shapes will be a result of that indigenous material which is generously available. How the design details are put together will build the language. This will represent that region, people in the world. It will respond to that particular weather condition. This will be the true architecture. The architect should also be from that region so that he understands the true spirit in the same depth as the people do. When a tourist goes around the world, he should be amazed by the various solutions to various problems. They should be dealt with honesty.

Building may not be a living thing but it supports human life so it has to act like one. As you go around the world people’s features change, languages change, clothing changes and so does/should architecture. So there can’t be one way of building architecture. A building should tell its origin, its climate, its period and about its inhabitants, which means one city or region of similar conditions can have standardization of its own and the next region will change its language because of different conditions just like humans features change in different races. That’s where architecture would harmonize itself with different races and their spoken languages. All the materials should be used to reflect their nature, behavior. Every material has its characteristics, they should be revealed in design details. Nothing should be done for “style”.

Purpose of architecture is not to design for rich and few, it is to improve living of a common man and the environment.

Man is the scale to measure the size of a community; how much distance he can walk or travel, how many people he can meet and have a sense of neighborhood. New cities should be born with their own economic centers to stay in control with traffic, size population etc. At global level, Earth has variety of climates at various geographical locations and the design solution to meet the requirement is right there in that region. So look for indigenous materials, local technology, contemporary tools/methods to build architecture. People have their own history, language, clothing way of living, which should be truthfully followed to provide today’s dwelling, workplace, social, government and religious buildings. An individual’s social life is built how he weaves his way of everyday life of work and home through the space. A city or town should be developed keeping individual’s life in view.

He has 24 hours in his day/night. He has a given time, he should have a proportionate distance to travel. The population of the town should be so that he can have a sense of neighborhood, have a social life, its time to simplify our living style. A worker should not spend more than 15 minutes in the car to get to his work. It will save energy to have work closer to home. Employers should be encouraged to hire from local areas. Eventually as a chain reaction everybody would have work closer to their home. There would be less traffic on the roads, most people could walk to their work places. Some could use bicycles and motorcycles. Cars would be required to go out of town only.

Truth exists in the universe; We don’t need to make it up. There are primary colors and there are colors which exist in between these colors, some of them satisfy our vision and send sensation to our brain, release waves of joy and delight. One needs a sense of color to reveal those colors from primary ones, that’s how one can create architecture into being from not being.

Education passes wisdom of centuries to the next generation so they don’t start from nothing, repeat mistakes to learn. In case of architecture, lives will suffer from a mistake. Until one knows what he is doing, its OK to follow the wise man in the past.

When opportunities are multiple, making decision is difficult, just follow the right one, it will lead to the truth.

Abstract

Earth has its natural features: mountains, valleys, ocean, rivers, lakes, trees, plants, flowers etc. It has inhabitants; Man, animals, insects, birds etc. Man being supreme creature, introduced architecture to provide shelter for himself initially and with the passage of time he brought it to the elegance where it is today. I would like to carry out his legacy with the intent of Romancing the Earth with Nothing but the Truth written in Poetic Lines. My humble approach to create is to carve out TRUTH into being from not being, to stay honest to the site and be noble in the cause. Through my investigation, my objective is to establish a life style with a serene environment. A place where one is tranquil to think about the higher values of life, A place to lose one’s SELF and find HIMSELF, to serve his purpose in the universe which will bring real joy to his mind, enrichment to his soul and contentment to his body.
My Gratitude:

To my professors:

Jaan Holt; for his spirituality and wisdom
Susan Piedmont Palladino: for awakening our senses thru experience of DC
Paul Emmons; for his devotion to architecture
Marco; for sharing his philosophy and knowledge with us

My mother; for her bravery and perseverance

Mystic verses from Quran
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Rebirth of Pedestrian Street

Indigenous Plan
At urban level ORIENTATION of street was considered against solar path and wind direction.
Wind catchers brought the cool breeze in and ventilators released heat from atrium to control micro climate. Architecture was heading the right direction; true to its roots and time.

Pedestrian Street
without a vehicle was safe place for pedestrians to have a social interaction among people living behind the walls and doors.

The street is a connection between two facades communication among diverse minded individuals living behind two opposite pieces of puzzle to complete each other at a time of need, leisure religious and social celebrations.
The Region
Lahore, Pakistan

Climate: Steppes; Hot and Dry
Pleasant Spring and Autumn, mild Winters, hot hot summer

For years I lived thru that heat, really felt life very strongly. It made me awake. Years later I studied to become an architect, I felt the severity of climate differently in our various houses and somewhat relief in our three centuries old brick walled, large college studios with high ceilings and skylights. That gave me hope that it is possible to achieve climatic comfort thru architectural design. I was in the right profession. I wanted to make life pleasant for the common man.
Materials:

I believe design solution to any problem
lies within its roots. For Lahore
Pakistan BRICK is the true material which
responds to climate well. It resists heat and
it is aesthetically appealing not to mention
it comes from earth itself.

Features of Pakistan: Architecture, People

Features express a sense of belonging to a certain part of the world, just like human faces, architecture represents its region as well. It has a self expression.

Modern architecture of Lahore, Pakistan would be evolved thru its indigenous architecture using indigenous materials, current tools and technology of the time.
Movement System and The Site Plan

Mosque is proposed to be in the heart of the colony. Most of the Muslims walk to the Mosque five times a day for their daily prayers.

Pedestrian Streets lead a straight path to the Mosque from home and vice versa, which keeps walkers safe from vehicles, traffic pollution, dust etc. These streets are oriented to receive shade from North Facade.

A bridge is proposed to link the Mosque and school building to the Garden, suggesting a romance between architecture and landscape. East facade of this bridge is sculpted to perform as Qibla Wall since its oriented perpendicular to Mecca axis. It guides Muslims to face House of God while they stand shoulder to shoulder, rows after rows, in straight lines, a display of discipline and UNITY.

Mosque is tilted from the world and is centered on Mecca axis.
Approach to the site coming from the city, Lahore. This is Canal Road, on the left are the housing colonies, and on the right is the canal with a series of trees in between.
Study of Built and Unbuilt; Finding a romantic connection between what I was proposing and its ground.

This is first of the three models, I sculpted for my project. This is where I studied and tested my design theories. I analyzed the program of the building, argued with myself, my professors and my peers. And most important of all this is where I started to learn. I did not stop myself from thinking. I knew this was not it. It was a beautiful beginning of something even more beautiful. I liked the direction I was heading, I had fun with the material I was using to sketch my thinking into three dimensional forms. I drew lines with my soft B pencil in a wandering infinite movement portraying the free spirited person walking in the garden. MINAR; the tower, vertical icon of a mosque, I located it in the garden balancing it with horizontal bridge and rest of the masses and voids to admire each other in harmony.
Composition

I felt proud at the accomplishment of harmonious composition of all architectural elements. This is the plane where I saw the power of third dimension, I experimented with geometry, mass, negative space, straight lines, curves etc. I played with the scale of all elements and agreed on them when I felt I reached a romantic composition; just like by looking at an attractive face our senses approve of its beauty. I imagined living in these spaces, I felt that I should introduce water as a reflective pool to reveal a heavenly dimension of ‘Mehrab’ and Qibla wall, also it will add joy for the observer on a dry hot day. I felt how the cool breeze will come from the garden and tell what flowers are blooming in that season. A student studying at the school terrace will be refreshed right before his exam. Catching a glimpse of Sun bathing in the reflecting pool will awake observer’s senses after his morning prayer, colors and beauty of the flowers in the garden will refresh his mind, he will experience the romance between architecture and landscape.
Program of the Building and the Garden

This is the 2nd of three models of my project. My favorite dialogue is between straight and curved lines. By now I was in love with my project. I was living in the spaces I sculpted. I felt the scale of every space. I could see how the light was washing the walls so that every student could see what was written on the blackboard which is located on the South wall of the classroom. Windows are on the North wall opening towards the courtyard which faces the garden. During recess students will walk over the bridge to refresh their mind and body in the garden; between 12:00 to 1:00 PM. After 2:00 starts the second prayer of five. This garden will see all ages of people at various times. Morning walk and exercise are some of the activities seen by this park, romance is another one.
Massive South wall is curved to harmonize with lower long curved wall of the school colonnade, and is straight from inside to respect the interior space. Thickness of this wall slows down the heat transmission from the South Sun. North wall is sculpted to accommodate the meditation cells extruding into the large prayer hall. There are five large windows on the ground floor opening to the small garden, when open exterior will become part of the interior allowing the perfumed breeze in along with the subtle light from North. There are two lower boundary walls; straight respecting the site and the curved one guides to the Mosque entrance by smoothing the sharpness of the corner. It ends by stopping short to the first of the five free standing Qibla walls in the Mosque courtyard. Both curved and straight walls stand independently, they come close to each other but they don’t physically touch leaving a vertical slit of silence between them. That moment is captured here and frozen leaving a strong chemistry between the two.
**Sun Clock**

South wall of the Mosque offers a sculpted window taking advantage of its depth, guiding the light as a shaft thru the space casting on Qibla wall. This beam of light travels along with the Sun. There are five prayers in one day, at every prayer that beam of light is at a different position, washing the interior with a unique hue of rays, changing the mood of interior space as the day progresses. People in meditation cells get the glimpse of blessings and are grateful to the Creator.
**Bones of Architecture**

This model is erected from the plan to study the anatomy of architecture. I wanted to keep this model to show off the bare bone structure. As you can see the footprint of the building on the ground of the model, I could visualize what it was going to be and what it can be. I established the composition of all architectural features based on their hierarchy, Mecca orientation and taking advantage of the site opportunities. It all came together complimenting each other spontaneously and effortlessly. The design of 'Minar' was inspired by the first alphabet of Arabic 'I' representing Allah(God) and His singlehood. So far I approve what I see, I wanted to live in that space. Mostly to find the rhythmic beats of music in the tectonics of the elements. And confirm their spatial relationship to each other.
<table>
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<th>South wall provides shade to pedestrians and facade of the classrooms.</th>
<th>Minar (tower) stands in the park. Historically used for ‘Azaan’ the call for prayer, the person with a melodious voice would go up the stairs at the highest point to call for prayer.</th>
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<td>Stairways located within courtyard link all three levels of administration areas, library and class rooms. Curved arcade connects school to the mosque. The bridge leads the children from school to the park over the busy traffic at recess. Overflow from the mosque prays in the garden.</td>
<td>These days loud speakers are placed at the top of Minar, for the call to be heard through the whole neighborhood. This sound system is also used for important announcements like missing children, death, funeral and other urgent community issues.</td>
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Five

Five is a significant number in Islam and in Nature.

There are five pillars of Islam; 1. Shahadat 2. Salaat (prayer) 3. Fasting 4. Pilgrimage (hajj) 5. Zakat (Charity)

There are five prayers in one day

There are five senses; See, Touch, Hear, Smell, Taste. There are five fingers in a hand, five toes in a foot, in humans that is.

I placed five Qibla walls, five windows towards the North garden, to echo the Five Pillars of Islam.
Horizontal and Vertical

Bridge unites three important spaces; Mosque, School and Garden to become part of UNITY at various occasions as needed i.e. Friday Prayer, Eid gatherings and weddings etc. It allows public to use these buildings and open spaces for community service and creates an atmosphere where built environment weaves into outdoors seamlessly. My intent is to create architecture which responds to the surroundings and humbles itself to follow the site and love the Earth. As a result it becomes a pleasant experience for the mind, body and soul. The sculpted architecture; vertical Minar and horizontal bridge create a drama for our senses. Every element is strongly connected to Earth as if growing out of it and meeting the sky at high and low notes of melody to satisfy the appetite of music for the eyes and soul.
Admiration of Scale

Five free standing Qibla walls offer a space of solitude at individual scale. Minar stands alone with a contrast scale; symbol of grandeur and singlehood of God. It's an icon to locate a mosque from a distance.

This Urdu poetry by Faiz Ahmad Faiz

sung by Iqbal Bano, was an inspiration behind my work, it describes the essence of the space above. anyone interested can listen to this ghazal on you tube.com, by typing lyrics:

Dasht e tanhai mein
Bridge

Bridge has two facades; East facade serves as Qibla wall towards which Muslims face during Salat. West facade coming from the garden lowers itself in humbleness as it connects to the stairs leading down to the mosque courtyard. There is seven feet wide walk way in the middle; starting from the garden East facade is solid to offer the barrier as Qibla wall. There is an opening in the West facade with extruded balcony to catch an early glimpse of the Mosque underneath which is a reflecting pool to add a heavenly dimension to this wall. Thru this opening sun rays reflect water waves on back of Qibla wall. For the observer in the balcony it is a surprise to enjoy the moment and then continue the path to offer his prayer in the Mosque.
Meditation

A spiritual path to purify the self from desires and fears and get in harmony with Divine Nature*. Meditation rooms are sculpted out of North wall open to the prayer hall. During the holy month of Ramadan, some Muslims choose to stay in mosque for certain days. They live on minimum food while fasting during the day completely. They study Quran, pray five times a day and meditate. These rooms are part of the large prayer hall. Individuals have space of solitude yet part of UNITY when the whole neighborhood unites for daily prayer. *Sufism by Dr. Javad Nurbakhsh

Individual Qibla walls provide space of solitude for those who desire it, at the same time connected to the Brotherhood. Opening between them at ground floor are looking into the North garden which also brings cool breeze in. Exterior staircase leads to the meditation rooms cantilevered from the wall into the garden. Mosque building provides shade in the garden all day along the clock.
Courtyard is an outdoor space surrounded by architecture. It is natural for human beings to live most of the day outdoors exposed to the elements of nature; wind, shade, breeze during summer and it is relaxing to spend time under the sun during winters. Functionally it is strongly linked to the interior space. Whether its a mosque, school or a house; daily activities flow from interior space to the exterior space. Its a pleasure to pray in solitude, gather as assembly or study in a courtyard for most of the year. It is good for our health and emotional well being to have a balance in our daily routine to break it between indoors and outdoors. Therefore I designed the interior and exterior spaces to have a complete experience. Its a blessing to sleep under the stars in the privacy of a courtyard provided by architecture.
Qibla Walls

I was touched by this scene in the picture above where each Namazi (person praying salat) is using architecture (column) as a barrier so that no body can come between him and God. It got me thinking to create free standing Qibla walls as part of the courtyard and garden. It provides a place of solitude while still being part of the whole brotherhood. This module is carried also inside of the mosque where on the ground floor large glass wall visually brings garden exterior inside. At 2/3rd height of the prayer hall there are Meditation cells; carrying the same spirit of Qibla walls. In this case there is a glass wall between the cell and the large prayer hall. These cells are used for the people who choose to abstain from the world for few days during Ramadan. They experience the spiritual journey by fasting during the day, study Quran, meditate and still can be part of the joint prayer gathering five times a day.
Poetic Lines:

Writing the footprint of architecture, landscape and hardscape with lines; straight, curved, thick and thin while every line represents a three dimensional element and a part of the whole UNITY. I wanted to create music with my lines. Looking from a bird eye view one can visualize the planning of various spaces coming together as one. They are communicating with each other in a manner that you can almost hear the melody of it with your eyes.

I thought of five dimensions before drawing every line; length, width, height, time and feeling of joy the observer will have when he experiences the gift he was given along with tangible part of architecture. I was very careful with bringing man-made environment to Earth by penetrating into site features as if it was the other half. It is to enhance the beauty of Earth by writing a poetic footprint on it. Every line is touching the Earth with a romantic notion.
Tangible and Intangible

Architecture contains both tangible and intangible elements. Where the former involves all building materials; that can be touched and seen, the later is only felt with other senses; i.e. scale of the space, play of light from the ceiling, North breeze and subtle light, tranquil fusion of landscape and architecture. Two buildings using the same materials can have totally opposite feel; that’s where architecture lives; within intangible elements because they play with human emotions.

Islam does not allow figures to be drawn so I illustrated people in this section with negative space, to represent how an individual would feel at his or her point in space. It reveals the scale of this interior space and provides an opportunity of thinking architecture in vertical dimension. It allowed me to imagine myself at various points in space and feel all tangible and intangible elements.
Mosque and Garden

Mosque is a place for spiritual well being, garden pleasures our senses. I wanted to bring serenity in architecture with fusion of landscape. Mosque is a place where people come five times a day for daily prayers. My intent was to provide observer something new to experience each time of the day, every season of the year. Only nature with its vitality can offer hat. Sometimes with sunrise, shortening or growing shadows, growth of plants and sometimes with changing colors of leaves.
Harmony with Nature

Section thru classrooms inviting diffused light from up above and South Sun, washing the wall with heavenly light for students to see what’s on the black board. Exterior walls are leaning outwards to receive light. North of the class rooms has atrium taking the heat to the top and exiting it. North terraces catch the cool breeze from the garden. Triangular columns support these terraces. Bridge connects school building to the garden.

Students can be part of the second prayer of five; Namaz-e-Zuhr in the mosque. During recess students will walk over the bridge to go to the garden. That establishes an experience of spending part of the day in built environment and part of it close to Nature; outdoors. It is good for our body, mind and spirit to live our life in harmony with nature. Architecture provides shelter when nature gets harsh.
South Sun

South Elevation has massive walls to slow down the heat transmission. Brick is the time tested indigenous material to stand against the Sun. There are no windows on South facade of School but slit skylights are incorporated to gain diffused light for blackboard wall in classrooms; which are operable to ventilate the heat. The wall further South of this elevation ; at the south edge of the property is supporting the ramp serving all floors, is a high wall to provide shade in the alley. Outside the edge tall shady trees are proposed to provide shade to this wall to protect from South Sun. Mosque has a vertical slit window which echoes the Minar; singlehood of God on curved South facade. It flares to become a square window inside to bring a beam of light from South into the space which washes the interior with various hues at different time of the day.
North Breeze

North Elevation: essentially needed to see more towards the garden. Mosque has large openings to breathe perfumed air from roses and other kinds of flowers and to invite the soft light into the interior. One can feel the fusion of architecture with landscape. Exterior stairs guiding to the meditation cells are cantilevered from North wall to the garden. Every step lifts the spirit to a higher level, making it a memorable experience.

School has terraces opening to the garden to entertain the senses. A student studying or sharing ideas with friends on the terrace is not only in physical comfort but is feeling the moment with all his senses and making memories of his life time. He enjoys how architecture rises from Earth towards heaven and stops at rhythmic heights creating music in the air; he smiles.