Chapter - I
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Evolution of Mosques Architecture in the Islamic World
(Middle East.)

Significance of the Mosques; ‘Islam,’ frequently translated as “submission” (though ‘unconditional surrender’ comes nearer the semantic content of the word in Arabic), is a contractual relationship between man and God, where a man acknowledges the governorship of God, a recognition that logically entails his own vassalage or slavehood. It also means ‘acceptance to the will of God’. The word ‘Islam’ must be considered in conjunction with the fairly common use of the verb ‘aslama’ in the two meanings which merged in to one an other, ‘surrender to God’ (an inner action) and ‘profession of Islam’. Islam is a ‘Call’ from God, which must prohibit from the falsehood and which places whoever receives it ‘in a light from his Lord’. The message of Islam was propagated by the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH), to the entire mankind. This message of peace had changed the life of the nomad Arabs and brought them from the darkness of ignorance (Jahiliyyat) in to the enlightenment. Literally, Islam means ‘Devotion to God,’ more specifically to Allah, the only one God. Those who practice such devotion and submit themselves to the will of Allah are Muslims.

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3 Ibid., XXXIX: 22
5 Markus Hattstein and Peter Delius, *Islam Art and Architecture*, Konemann, p. 9
"Islam is based upon the teachings of Quran and Sunnah of the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH)."伊斯兰是信仰独一真神以及先知穆罕默德的使者，它是通过《可兰经》所揭示的信息。有五个基本和主要的义务（farz）属于伊斯兰教，以及阿拉伯古典语言用于所有穆斯林社区的宗教纽带，因为《可兰经》也是用阿拉伯语言编写的。伊斯兰教的信仰（Iman）分为两部分：

1. Iman-i-Mufassal 意味着信仰
   这些信徒必须对 Iman-i-Mufassal 有无条件的信心。有六条信仰准则。
   - 对唯一真神“ALLAH”的信仰
   - 对所揭示的书籍的信仰
   - 对先知的信仰
   - 对即将来临的审判（Qayamat）的信仰
   - 对真主的命令（绝对秩序）的信仰
   - 对天使的信仰

2. Amal or Iman-i-Mujamal/Ibadat - 有五个实践在伊斯兰教。

   (i) Kalima- La Illaha Illalah, Mohammadur Rasul Allah - 意味着，
       没有神除了‘ALLAH’和穆罕默德（PBUH）是他的先知（先知意味着 Nabi 或 Paighamber）。

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6 Ibid.
(ii) **Namaz** *(Salat in Arabic)* (To offer five times prayer in a day.)

(iii) **Roza** (To perform thirty days fast in the month of Ramadan.)

(iv) **Zakat** (The Payment of legal Alms)

(v) **Hajj** (To go for Pilgrimage to Mecca, at least once in a life time.)

*Namaz* is the most important worship (*Amal* or practice) which is performed by a Muslim five times a day, through the simple doctrine of absolute monotheism. Muslim religious consciousness should be identified with intense feelings of absolute submission to the Almighty Allah of the entire dependence of His grace. The prayer, *(Salat)* in Arabic, *Namaz* in Persian (the language of the ruling elite and official communication) is a devotional service whose performance is compulsory *(Farz)* for every Muslim, five times a day.

- **FAJR**, *Namaz* (performance of prayer at the day-break in early morning)
- **ZUHR**, Meridian, (when the sun begins to set.)
- **ASR**, Afternoon (mid way between Zuhr and Maghreb.)
- **MAGHRIB**, Evening *Namaz*.
- **ISHA**, Night *Namaz*.

**Importance of the Namaz:-**

'The truth believers both men and women, are friends to each other. They enjoin what is just and forbid what is evil, they attend to their prayers and pay the alms-tax and obey Allah and His apostle. On there Allah will have mercy. He is might and wise.'

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9 Al-Quran, chapter, IX, Verse, 71, op. cit.
These timings are precisely denoted by a call to prayer (Azan) by the Muezzin (caller of azan) there are some additional prayers like the Friday prayer and Eid Prayers. To perform the Namaz, it is necessary that clothes and body of the worshippers (As much as the praying place) should be clean therefore, it is preceded by Wazu (ablution means the act of washing oneself) of face, hands and feet. It is performed on mat, it is called Ja-i-Namaz or Musallah, and it is performed only in Arabic language. In various prescribed postures, facing towards the Qiblah (Kaba) which is situated in Arabia, it is led by Imam (prayer leader).

Namaz, it is obligatory for every Muslim, it can be performed anywhere, privately or in a mosque, but worship in a mosque (particularly to offer farz namaz) is ordained to be more meritorious (deserving praise).

Thus it has been predetermined:

“The prayers of a man in his own house are equal to the reward of one prayer, But prayers in a Masjid near his home are equal to 25 prayers and in a Jami Masjid they are equal to 500 prayers, and in Jerusalem (i.e. in the Al-Aqsa masjid) 5000 and in my Masjid (Masjid-un-Nabi at al-Medinah) 50,000 and at the Kaba (at Mecca) 1,00,000”.

The mosques, or the prayer house of Islam, became a symbol of sublimity and purity and above all, of one pure devotion. One definition of a mosque could be a building erected over an invisible axis, an axis which is none the less the principal determinant of its design. The Muslim world is spread out like a gigantic wheel with Mecca as the

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10 Desai, Z.A., Mosques if India, op. cit.p.8
12 Desai, op. cit., Pp.8-9
center, with lines drawn from all the mosques in the world forming the spokes.\textsuperscript{13}

Therefore the Arabic term ‘\textit{Masjid}’, “a place where one prostrates oneself” (through worship) in front of God and in the other words, completely surrenders to God.\textsuperscript{14}

In Spanish ‘\textit{Mezquita}’, Italian ‘\textit{Moschea}’, German ‘\textit{Moschee}’, French ‘\textit{Mosquee}’ and in English. Mosque or Mosk. \textit{Masjid} became Islamic place of worship and an essential feature of the religion of Islam.\textsuperscript{15} It also covered the private and social life of the people. Besides the \textit{Masjid} gradually assumed the character of a socio- religious forum. The Maulvis and Muftis issued fatwa on social as well as religious matters in the mosque. The \textit{Jami masjid} (Friday Mosque) of a town was meant for weekly assembly (\textit{Jumah}) of the whole Muslim community. \textit{Khutba} (Friday sermon) was read by Imam or Sultan. Sultans and Governors began to use it for political announcements, along with \textit{Khutba}. Mostly Madrasas were attached to the mosque. Madrasas (schools) was built for the purpose of providing education and these Madrasas were the learning centers of knowledge.

Prophet (Hazrat) Mohammad (PBUH) did not allow the women to attend the public prayers in a Mosque. But it was pronounced better for them to offer prays in Private particularly at her house.

Do not prevent your women from coming to the mosques, but their homes are better for them (and they must stay at home).\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{13} George Michell, \textit{Architecture of the Islamic world}, op. cit., p. 16
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., p. 644
\textsuperscript{16} T.P Huges, \textit{A Dictionary of Islam}, op. cit., p.330
In order to regulate public charities, *Bait-ul-mal* (Treasury of the public) was also established in the *Jami Masjid* of a town. It must be noted that the ruler of a Muslim state is not allowed to use money of the *Bait-ul-mal* for his personal expenses, but it could be used for public welfare. The following income of the state is deposited in *Bait-ul-Mal*.\(^{17}\)

1. *Zakat*: it is the legal tax imposed upon land, personal and merchandise which after deducting the expense of collection, should be expended for the in support of poor and destitute people.

2. *Khums*: the fifth share of spoils or the war booty.

3. State tax on the produce of mines and treasure trove.

4. Property for which there is no Owner.

5. *Jazia*: levied on non-Muslims for the security of their life property.

The development of the mosque architecture before the construction of the Dome of the Rock, the major monumental remains are only from the first years of the eight century at Medina, Jerusalem, and Damascus.\(^{18}\)

However in this way gradually, 'Masjid' assumed a dominating importance in Islam. The Holy Quran thus laid down:

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"The mosques of God
Shall be visited and maintained
By such as Believe in God
And the last day, establish Regular Prayers, and fear
None (at all) except God.
It is they who are expected to be on True guidance".\(^{19}\)
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\(^{17}\) Desai, *Mosques of India*, op. cit., p. 5


\(^{19}\) Al-Quran, Chapter. IX, Verse, 18, op.cit.
A famous and oft-inscribed Hadith authenticated by al-Muslim also represents the overall importance of mosque. In this Hadith the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) had said,

"He who built a mosque for Allah,
Allah would build a house for him like it in paradise".  

As far as later architecture is concerned, the major contribution of early Islam in Arabia was the development of a specifically Muslim masjid or mosque. All mosques are very important in Islam but there are some Mosques having much more importance in Islam. The following are some most crucial mosques having their unique identities.

(1) *Masjid-ul-Haram* (connected with God or Sacred Mosque) at Mecca and transformed it into the *Qibla* (place towards which prayer is directed from all over the world). It is also called *Bayt-ul-Allah* (The House of Allah). The *Kabah* stands in an oblong square, two hundred and fifty paces long, and two hundred broad, none of this sides of which runs quite in a straight line, though at first side the whole appears to be of a regular shape. This open square is enclosed on the eastern side by a colonnade; the pillars stand in a quadruple row; they are three deep on the other side, united with pointed arches, every four of which support a small dome, plastered and whitened (the *Kabah* is black washed in colour) on the outside. These domes are one hundred and fifty two in number. Along the whole colonnade, on the four sides, lamps

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are suspended from the arches. Some are lightened every night, and all during the nights of Ramadan.\(^2\)

(2) *Masjid-un-Nabi* at Madina, it is Prophet's Mosque, which was built by Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) himself in 622 A.D. It is first Mosque of Islam. It is built with the same technique as applied in the other mosques.\(^3\)

(3) *Masjid-al-Aksa* or *Al-Aksa Masjid* at Jerusalem it is erected by Soloman, called also *Al-Bait-ul- Muqaddas* (the holy house) also known as *Qubbat-al-sakhrah* (the rock), from which it is believed Prophet Muhammad ascended to heaven on the occasion of his celestial journey (*Meraj*).\(^4\)

The history of the mosque in the early centuries of the Islam shows an increase in its sanctity, which was intensified by the adoption of the traditions of the church and especially by the permeation of the cult of saints.\(^5\) The main features of mosque are that a preacher (to give religious talk in a Public place or Imam) delivers an address to the congregation from a pulpit (*Minbar*) raised by the side of the prayer Niche (*Mihrab*) which is an arched recess set up into the western wall of sanctuary.\(^6\)

Essential feature of the Muslims prayer is that it indicates the direction (*Qibla*) towards which all Muslims must turn their faces while offering prayers, this distinction of Being the *Qibla*-the spiritual centre of the Muslim community- a goal leading to the greatest good as well as unity of purpose was conferred at the *Kaba* in in the holy city of Mecca. It has

\(^{22}\) T.P. Huge, *A Dictionary of Islam*, op cit., p. 346
\(^{24}\) Op. cit., p. 345
\(^{26}\) *Encyclopedia of Islam*, Vol.6, p.654, also see Desai. Z.A, op. cit., p.13-14
to be assured that, in the Mosque; the Mihrab must correctly point to the direction of Mecca.

Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) had migrated to Medina in 622 A.D (Hijrat from the Holy city of Mecca to Medina therefore from 622 A.D Hijra Era starts and his migration from Mecca to Medina is called ‘Hijrat’. It marks the beginning of the Muslim era known as ‘Hijri’). He felt that the unavoidable need of a particular house of prayer for the believers the Muhajirin and Ansar both, so he decided to lay foundation of a mosque at Quba near Medina. Thus he laid the foundations of the first mosque of Islam. It is situated at Quba near Medina; its walls were made of rough stones and mud-bricks. It was surrounded on all sides by residential houses except the western wall. Hujras or residing chambers are built on both the sides of the courtyard. Ornamentation regarding the construction of the mosque was strictly prohibited. In the beginning the mosque architecture was quit simple. It consisted only of a courtyard encircled by a wall.

Mihrab is an apse (In the shape of a semicircle), niche or arch in the centre of the wall (of the mosque) which marks the directions of the Qiblah (Kaba) and which the congregation faces while praying. Mihrab is the central Point of the Qiblah wall. When the Imam leads the prayer, he takes his position in front of it. Mihrab was not there in the early mosques of Islam but it was added later on. But Mihrab has been found in the tombs of Madina.

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27 Encyclopedia of Islam, Vol.6, op. cit., p. 645
29 Desai, Mosques of India, op.cit., Pp.12-13
30 Encyclopedia of Islam, Vol.6, op. cit., p. 654
Minbar/Pulpit is a staircase of three steps, made of wood or masonry of brick or stone, attached to the Qiblah wall, located in one side with the Mihrab. Khutba (sermon) is recited from it.

Hence the ‘Minbar’ was the invention of a Madina, by the men of the ‘Banu Najjar’ the pulpit (Minbar) assumed its present form from about (709 A.D) during the artistic age of “Caliph-al-Walid.” Mihrab and Minbar are two indispensable and essential features of mosque architecture. There may be differences in forms in accordance with the availability of the building material and stylistic variations, but they have necessarily to be incorporated in the prayer hall (liwan) in all mosques throughout the world.\(^{32}\)

The \textit{chahar-taq} of the fire temple of the Sassanian period was a square structure having four arches on the four sides, supported on the four pillars or piers, covered by a dome. The whole of it, as a single element, was adopted and absorbed in the mosque architecture and as its most important part, became the Nave (‘Bahu’ called by R. Nath) or the central square hall of the main sanctuary (‘Liwan’). It contained the Mihrab and Minbar.\(^{33}\)

According to some authorities, the \textit{Minaret} was borrowed from the Syrian church initially in a purely architectural way; it was soon taken pressed into service for the purpose of Azan call- a most natural thing to do. In the beginning, the mosque structure was quite simple. It consisted only of a courtyard encircled by a wall. It was, in fact, modeled after the Prophet’s house in Madina, which consisted of a courtyard surrounded by a brick wall, with residing chambers and out houses.

\(^{32}\) Desai, op. cit., p. 14
\(^{33}\) Mosque Architecture, op.cit., p. 33
The first military campaign of Sultan Muizuddin Bin Sam towards India in 571A.H/1175A.D. He attacked the Carmathians of Multan and captured it. But after some time they had regained their position, after it Turkish came again in India and captured Delhi in 1192 A.D. (in the 2nd Battle of Tarain). With the establishment of Delhi Sultanate, there were many changes took place in various aspects of life, like political, social and especially the cultural life of India. Mosques, Madrasas, Dargahs, Sarais, Shifakhanas (Hospitals), Baolis, and Dams etc were constructed.

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35 Ibid., Pp.170-171