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A REVIEW OF ENDURING ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF AL-HIKMAT AL-MOTA'ALIA

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ABSTRACT

Lack of attention to the roots of contemporary architecture caused the alienism of contemporary architecture of Iran with its conceptual fundamentals. Though in some cases exploiting the somatogenic elements and forms affected from traditional architecture of Iran is intrinsic of attention but is not enough for preserving spiritual values of traditional architecture. By contemplation in Iranian traditional architecture, the basics and special thought hidden in Islamic reasoning of Iran is uncovered. Therefore for appearance of these concepts in temporary buildings, accreting in the basics of traditional architecture and recognition of objectives which are extracted with regard to the preservation of conceptual values are necessary. For analysis and cognition of hidden concepts in Islamic architecture we may use the ontological view point of Mulla Sadra, the great scholar and philosopher of Iran which were presented in Al-Hikmah Al-Mota'aliyah. Now this question arises whether by using Mulla Sadra's thoughts one can identify the conceptual principals of indelible architectures and represent them for using in temporary architecture?

This descriptive research which is done based on the structuralism point of view and in the theoretical framework of Al-Hikmah Al-Mota'aliyah puts emphasis on documentary data collection method and is placed in the range of qualitative researches. The result of this research shows that in recognition of traditional pieces of architecture from Mulla Sadra's point of view some principals can be found for cognition of contemporary architecture. Analysis done state that in indelible traditional architectures originality is along with the existential dimension of architecture and beside attention to the existential dimension the factual dimension of the construction is also designed in detail and precisely. Furthermore it can be concluded that the crystallization of valuable concepts of Islam are recognizable in the module of principals such as simile and inspiration and emanation in traditional buildings.

Keywords: *Al-Hikmah Al-Mota'aliyah, Existence of Architecture, Essence of Architecture, Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque, Khan School*

INTRODUCTION

One of the most important issues that are neglected in contemporary architecture of Iran is paying attention to the spiritual concepts hidden in Iranian traditional architecture. This issue caused the contemporary architecture in most cases to have just sophisticated sense of the body of traditional architectures of Iran and not the hidden concepts and purpose of it. In regard to review the traditional architecture and by taking a glance to the hidden concepts and purposes in it, some studies have been done so far by scholars such as Seyed Hossein Nasr and Nader Ardalan who were seeking for cognition and understanding of the concepts of Islamic architecture in Iran. Also some researches were presented in the form of academic researches which have stated noteworthy methods for better understanding of hidden concepts in traditional architecture meanwhile there is gap in explanation of purposes and new principals for contemporary architecture and analysis of samples of traditional Iranian architecture and comparative analysis of them with the gained principals. To reach the explanations, goals and modern principles of architecture we might use the thoughts of great scholar and philosopher of Iran; Mulla Sadra. After explaining some principles for contemporary architecture design in this research, two samples of traditional Iranian architectures with different applications are studied and the principles are presented and recognized so that the universality of this theory can be studied. The first sample is among

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constructions which own complex application and relations (Khan School of Shiraz which was the instructor of Mulla Sadra himself too) and the second sample is among constructions which have relatively simple application and its body environment enjoys intuitive modes and spirituality (Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque). Comparative analysis of the characteristics of these two constructions from the point of view of Mulla Sadra's Al-Hikmah Al-Mota'aliyah is the goal of this study.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Method of Research

The general method of this research is combinative qualitative and is included among the interpretive–historical and descriptive researches. The data is mostly collected using visualization and archiving studies (documentary - library). The necessary principles for design in contemporary architecture are collected using analysis of information. This research is done in the search order of structuralism with orientation of the effect of philosophic thoughts on architecture and the analysis of information is also based on the qualitative measure analysis method.

Introduction of Eternal Architecture from the Philosophic Point of View of Mulla Sadra

In the view point of Hikmat of Sadra, each phenomenon consists of two dimensions which are referred to as existential and substantive. Therefore cognition can be understood of two sections; "Being" as it is present and "essence" which differentiates in description from other phenomenon and answers the question of Al-mahiyat and states the essence. In fact each phenomenon can be viewed from two landscapes and therefore two questions can be answered (Sajjadi, 1984): one is the question of Al-wojud and the other is the question of Al-mahiyat. Existence confirms the being of a phenomenon and quiddity and essence explains the features of the item and explains what it is Diagram 1.

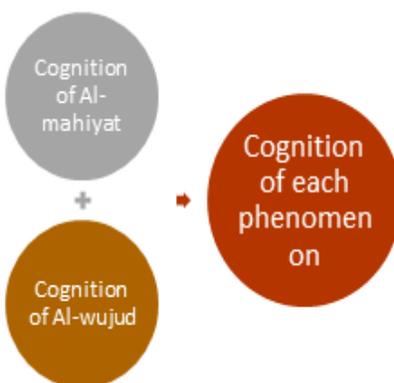


Diagram 1: Dimensions of cognition, source: Authors

If we try to observe architecture from this point of view, two dimensions of architecture would be represented as such: Its essence and its appearance in reply to materialistic needs which belong to specific time or place and takes variety of forms at different times and place. This substantive dimension is linked to being of architecture which is derived from the being dimension of architecture leads a truth from the universe of meaning to emergence and promotes the being of human Daigram2. The essence of an architecture masterpiece has also a being which deterring and recognition of essence is in regard to its existence. The being dimension of architecture has features of beyond materialistic world. Because of existentialism relation of it with the architect and the logic of existence unity. In this order it has intermediate essence in which earth and sky, angle and heaven, material or appearance come together and unit (Tajer, 2010). It means that the being dimension of architecture is related to the world of sense. The higher the architect becomes at existential level the higher and heavenly would become his architecture. Considering the principle of the originality of existence of Mulla Sadra, in existential description of architecture and archaic works it can be claimed that the originality is with the existence of architecture and not with its essence.

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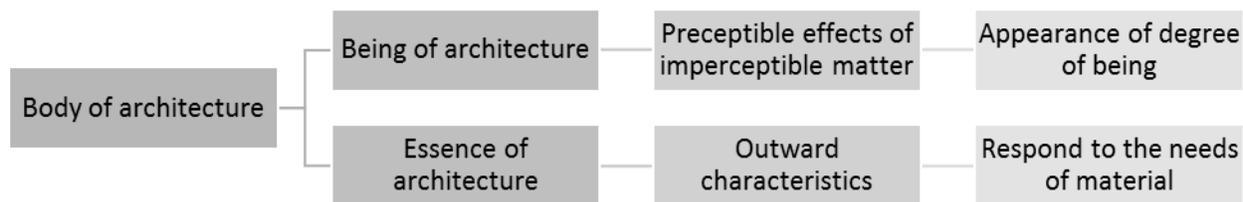


Diagram 2: Cognition of architecture, source: Authors

Of course it doesn't mean that the architects who set existence as the basis for their work don't pay attention to what or how or essence of architecture. From this point of view, existence appears itself in the stable form of the natures which are the external face of the architecture. While most of architectural scholars have granted the originality to the nature of the architecture which means the acceptance of current descriptions of architecture (Tajer, 2010). However some of temporary thinkers have contrary votes.

It can be assumed that the difficulty with the contemporary architecture is that in today's world only quantity is important. As Shultz states, the modern Man have lost his dependency to places and this issue has led to anonymity in temporary architecture. Since there exists no place for inspiration or dream in architecture, and no attention is paid to meanings in places, the modern Man is inattentive to his self-existence and following to the absolute existence and has lost his identity, social understanding, and sense of cooperation (Schulz, 2004). It can be claimed that in architecture, human being never gains originality using quantities and can only find aspect of architecture art using understanding and attention to existence. Such inattentiveness is also visible in temporary architecture of Iran to some extent. And it seems that understanding and attention to existence is the solution for this difficulty. In planning the items and Skelton elements of architecture based on existence, the maximum of inspiration can be received from concepts and basics of existence. Such a structure from the skeleton of architecture is only possible by coding or simile.

From the other side, analysis done shows that, it seems Mulla Sadra have referred to the philosophy of Sohrevardi in stating his philosophical theories. "The philosophy of Sohrevardi was that existence is nothing but light and everything in this world and all things which would come to existence in future would be light. But some lights are thin and some lights are thick and some lights have dispersed particles and others have dense particles" (Corbin, 2012).

Mulla Sadra also believes existential dimension for all phenomenon which the same light in the philosophy of illumination seems. As Sohrevardi believes in God as the absolute light, Mulla Sadra also describes absolute existence and believes that: "the existence is common among all creatures but the degree of strengthen and weakness differs and the same difference in strength and weakness causes dissention in description and the limits of objects and their nature from one another and creates multiplicity in its philosophical meaning and we may reach the principle of being graded and gradation of existence"(Khameneyi, 2004). According to this, the subject of multiplicity in unity and unity in multiplicity is presented which can be described as follows: the official viewpoint of transcendent wisdom which according to that tough it believes in multiplicity in individuals of existence but it doesn't believe in multiplicity in classes of existence and regards all creatures of an unit class and believes them all creatures whether Fundamental or conceivable as gradation levels of one fact and somehow daresay in multiplicity beside unity and unity beside multiplicity both in actual figure"(Mahmoudian, 2009).Therefore it can be concluded that the manifestation of light is the manifestation of absolute existence in fact and the presence of absolute existence can be felt by manifestation of light and multiplicity in unity. Crystallization of these two concepts in the skeleton of architecture can help the architect to reach the improvement of human being level and grants originality to the existential dimension of architecture.

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Inspiration, Coding and Metaphor

Code, is the inspired description and necessary for meaning and therefore architecture from the point of view of ontology is inseparable from inspiration. It means the body of architecture with coded surface, is the eternal level for formal expression of the features of meaning. Mircea Eliade believes that "code, in current experience of life, grants extra person thoughts and experiences which the individual might not be able to gain by conscious or will"(Sattari, 2008).

Attribution of physical and factual feature to the meaning by art and architecture is the spiritual need of public, because if the special individuals need more description and interpretation for connecting meaning and facts, the public need art more rather than fiat, philosophical and mystic ideas. For encoding architecture metaphor can be used. Aristotle was the first who pointed the effective role of metaphor in creation of work. He also describes the importance of metaphor as follows: the ordinary words only transfer what is tangible at present and that is metaphor which gives better and novel reception of everything (Ayiran, 2012).

In fact metaphor brings about opportunities for the revision of the work and makes the addressee to takes in to consideration a new set of questions and to observe new interpretations and finally lead the mind of addressee to undiscovered territories (Antoniadis, 2003). The great difference of human beings with other creatures is based on its power to create symbols and to decode. "Symbol as a metaphor tries to keep the comprehensive power of traditional subjects and culture of the society or its groups or move them forward" (Hasanzade, 2003). Symbols make human beings to understand the metaphoric meanings of concepts but in fact "symbols consist of information carries which enable us to use information in a way that is impossible for other creatures"(Lenski, 1995). Therefore, code, inspiration and metaphor come in to a symbolic frame and play an important role in the understanding of conceptual architecture. Inspiration in fact is seen in elements and features which set necessary mental readiness for addressee and observe his attention to the absolute existence.

Manifestation of Light and Unity:

In analysis of presented concepts in meaning oriented architecture based on Sadraei Philosophy is one of the outstanding principles of manifestation of absolute existence. But the manifestation of absolute existence is gained in two ways. Manifestation of light and manifestation of existence unity, which both of them are like inspiration and is detached along with the guidance of addressee for improvement of his existence level. Light itself is the symbol of absolute existence and its crystallization in the architecture brings the body of environment ready for the presence of absolute existence. Manifestation of unity in architecture takes place in multiplicities which remind us of multiplicity in unity of Mulla Sadra as other traditionalists believe: "in visual system of a set of regulated geometric images inscribed in a circle or set of regular poly surface images inscribed in a circle, there is no coding to state the inner codes of the Uniqueness, passing the Uniqueness or inseparable and comprehensive unity in multiplicity or multiplicity in unity"(Burckhardt, 1990).

Understanding the coding of architecture depends on the understanding of valuation of supernal environment and cognition of the eternal structure of the place. For example the rotund roof in Islamic architecture is the code of the unity of earth and sky and also the rectangular foundation and frame of the mansion is in accordance with earth and the circular cupola is in accordance with sky. Islamic architecture has observed this sample with reduction and transformation of it to the purest and brightest common form of it"(Burckhardt, 1990).

In this architecture the medium level between earth and sky of the architecture takes place in stem of the rotund which is the level of transformation of circle to square. This feature also has a coded structure and in this structure as Eliade believes: "codes transfer their message and cover its special job, even if its meaning on self-awareness is still remains covered" (Sattari, 2008). Furthermore rotund inspires some other deep meanings and as Nasr states "the center of the rotund is the symbol of the principle of unity and in some lower level is the symbol of Spirit and octagon walls which lay on that are the symbols of eternal regulation and tetrahedron legs are the symbol of earth and vale" (Nasr, 1996). These are small examples of secrets hidden in traditional architecture.

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Underlying Concepts of Architecture from the Point of View of Mulla Sadra in Construction of Khan of Shiraz School and Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque:

Considering the determination of factual dimension of architecture in transcendental wisdom, proper answering to performance and environmental features in accordance with needs of day are the necessity of architecture. In the construction of Khan School and Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque, like other masterpieces of traditional architecture attention is paid to this issue. As it is visible in the plan of both buildings all functions are replied correctly and both of them had followed the common methods of that era environmentally and the conditions of environmental relaxation are gathered in them. Determining the features of these two constructions as the random cases for stating the principles of architecture based on Sadraei philosophy are as follows.

Khan School of Shiraz is one of the best schools built on Isfahani method and its architect was Hossein Shama" Shirazi (Pirnia, 2008). In Islamic architecture of Iran school is one of the most important public civil places after mosque and because of the condition of individuals studying in them had different educational and residential spaces. Solving the connection of these spaces and their correct function was of great importance (Pirnia, 2008). These features determine the factual dimension of this school figure 1.

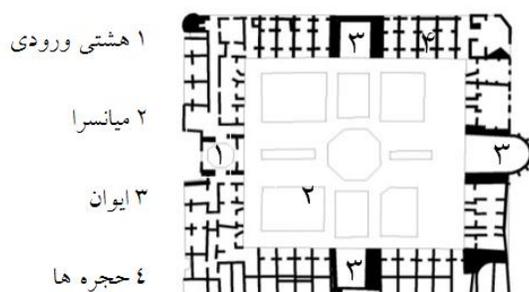


Figure 1: Plan of Khan School in Shiraz, Source: Detailed design for Shiraz

- 1. Entrance (Hashti)**
- 2. Yard (miyansara)**
- 3. Ivan**
- 4. Rooms (hojre')**

From the existential dimension in Sadraei wisdom, in each construction the presence of human and appearance of a level of its existence was one of important goals of architecture and in construction attention to the absolute existence was very important. In the construction of Khan School attention to the spiritual dimension of education and training of spirit needs an environment with the possibility of the presence of human and his guidance and attention to the absolute existence.



Figure 2: Ivan of Khan School, a place for presence, source: website of tourism

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These features are understandable analyzing factual dimensions of the architecture which reveals a level of fact by the architect. In details and general construction of the school, more attention is paid to visual understanding of human due to the details which represent unity in multiplicity and originality of existence (figure2).

Emanation of the concept of unity in multiplicity is significant in drawings and decorations like Mogharnas and designed drawings inside rotunda. Metaphoric role of rotunda for the inspiration of slightly concepts are set beside the structural role of that which were used to cover the wide gaps which had not the possibility to be covered by smooth roof (Petersen, 2002). Also using elements and decorative drawings in different parts like facade of entry, porch, vestibule and chambers all make the concept of unity in multiplicity tangible. Mogharnas is the symbol of the relationship between earth and sky and acts as mediate (Golabchi,2012). This mediator shows the existence of multiplicity. The emanation of light in spaces with emphasis on absolute existence and stylizing of spiritual spaces for making the minds ready in addressees in the construction of the school is significant. (figure3) All these inspiring elements are the spiritual presence of absolute existence and lead the minds towards it. Because all symbols are for emanation of self-existent and here "symbols awake a personal experience and transform it to a mental act to understand supernatural. By understanding it, individual will become successful in completing the logic"(Eliade, 2008).

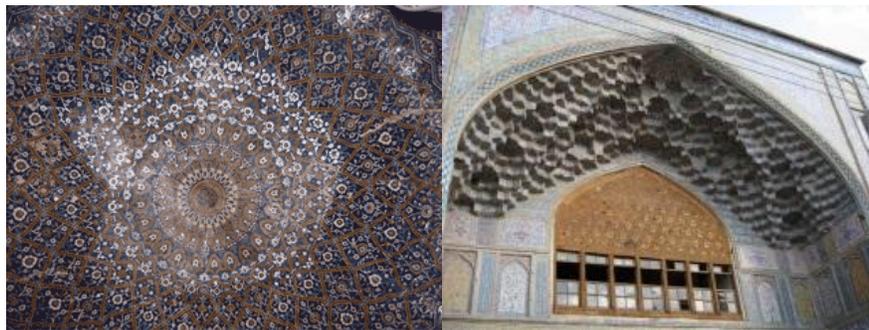


Figure 3: Images and regulatory motifs represent unity in plurality
Left: Motifs under the dome, source: Tourism website
Right: Mogharnas of the entrance, source: Tourism website

In the construction of Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque like other indicator traditional architectures an appropriate answer is given to function and environment. As Arthur pop states: the function of this construct is simpler comparing to other Islamic Mosques and is easily comprehensible (Pop, 1987). The issue in the plan of this Mosque is its simplicity along with its alignment (figure 4).

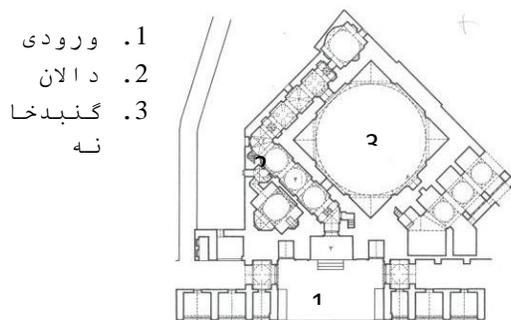


Figure 4: Plan of Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque, source: sodagar website
1. Entrance
2. Corridor(dalan)
3. Dome

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In the design of Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque, the importance of spiritual environment of the Mosque and the importance of attention to the absolute existence is extremely emphasized. In this architecture like other masterpieces of architecture of Iran, the rotunda above the altar is one of the most persistent indicators of traditional Islamic architecture (Cantacuzino, 1985). Emanation of the concept of unity in multiplicity shown in the sharp arrow rotunda which is the symbol of unity of absolute existence at the summit and in the circle of the stem of the rotunda which shows the multiplicity and emanation of the concept of unity in the decorative drawings underneath the rotunda which are multi surface drawings and at the entry and mogharnas and other details are strong signs of this importance (figure 5). Besides the emanation of light in the entry porch and in the dome house from the reticular and emanation of the presence of light at the highest point of rotunda which is like the tail of peacock shows the emphasis and attention of architect to the mentioned principles (figures 6 & 7) (table1).

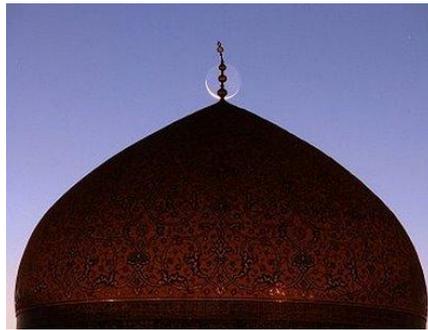


Figure 5: Dome of Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque, peak emanation of the concept of unity in plurality
Source: Iran shenakht website



Figure 6: Emanation of light in the peak point of the inside of dome of Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque,
source: set yar website



Figure 7: Emanation of light in the entrance corridor of Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque, source:
arcamirmah website

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Table 1: Comparative analysis of the architecture of Khan School and Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque

Existential architecture	Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque	Khan school
Factual dimension (AL-Mahaiat)	Architecture should respond to the function of public prayers and besides because of being located in a hot and dry environment it needs to consider the effective environmental factors which are executed correctly by the architect of this building.	Because of the importance and sensitivity of the function of the school, architecture shall correctly answer the relationships and collisions of teaching and training spaces and because of being built in a hot and dry environment attention to the effective environmental features is important which the architect has responded to all of them correctly.
Existential dimension (Al-Wojoud)	Consideration to the spiritual and eternal dimensions of Mosque as a place for the presence of human beings before the absolute existence explains the importance of emphasis on existential dimension of the architecture of Mosque and the architect has responded to the spiritual needs of architecture by appearance of tangible display of the intangible case of world of wisdom.	Attention to the moral dimension of education and training of spirit needs the design of space with the possibility of presence for human and his guidance to the absolute existence which is understandable by analysis of the existential dimensions of the architecture of the building.
Originality of existence:	While responding perfectly to the function and environment, the existential dimensions which strengthens the visual understanding of addressees is a priority. This case is because of the importance of spiritual environment of Mosque and attention to absolute existence and comparing to the architecture of school is of greater importance.	Beside responding correctly to the function and environment, factual dimensions which strengthen the visual understanding in addresses has the responsibility of training the soul of addresses and are in priority.
Emanation: Light	the emanation of light in the entry and the space of rotunda is more tangible by reticular and the pitch of the presence of light at the summit of rotunda which is like the tail of a peacock.	the emanation of light in spaces by emphasis on the absolute existence and stylizing the moral space for making the minds of addressees ready.
Unity	emanation of the concept of unity in multiplicity in the peak of the summit of rotunda shows the unity of absolute existence and in the circle of the stem of the rotunda shows multiplicity. Furthermore	emanation of the concept of unity in multiplicity is tangible in paintings and drawings and decorations like Mogharnas, and designed paintings in side rotundas.

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Coding and inspirat

the emanation of the concept of unity is visible in decorations under the rotunda and entry and Mogharnas and other details and is more emphasized comparing to school.

Different elements like rotunda roof which is the code of the connection of earth and sky for Mosque, set of regular drawings inside the circle which shows the code for the internal explanation of Hadith, the inspiration of the concept of unity in multiplicity in the rotunda and decorations and inspiration of spiritual readiness and the concept of traction and extension in the entry which from the tight and dark space of porch leads to the open and light space of the yard is tangible and recognizable.

The existence of elements and decorative drawings in different parts like the entry, porch, vestibule, and chambers all show the concept of unity in multiplicity and remind us of the absolute existence.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In recognition of traditional architecture from the point of view of Mulla Sadra the findings show that for an architectural work to become insoluble it should have the originality of existence. To have originality of existence means that the existential dimension of architecture must be upper hand its factual dimension. It means that it can be concluded that in an indicating architectural work we need to seek for the appearance of intangible aspect of the world of wisdom in the tangible case of nature. To reach this objective the conceptual principles are set inside the frame of architecture's body. These principles can be analyzed in two subjects of inspiration and emanation. It means in an insoluble architectural construction it is proper to use symbolic elements and metaphors for inspiration of eternal concepts and to draw the attention of addressees to the absolute existence. Furthermore for increasing the effect of visual aspects on addressee we may use the concept of emanation. This concept can be crystalized in the form of emanation of light for stylizing the space and to strengthen the moral sense and emanation of the concept of unity in multiplicity using drawings and other set of multi surface drawings in architecture.

In analyzing the cases chosen, findings show that the principles stated and driven from the point of view of Mulla Sadra are perfectly recognizable in these two constructions. Therefore in both two samples examined, besides answering to the function and environment, the superiority was with visual aspect and factual aspect. In both architectures the concepts of inspiration and emanation is recognizable in the structure and generalities and decoration and details.

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