

**The Influence of Mughal Design on Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque:
Architecture, Aesthetics, and Function**

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Abstract:

This paper examines the influence of Mughal design on the architecture, aesthetics, and function of the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. By analyzing the mosque's architectural features, decorative elements, and spatial organization, the study aims to highlight the ways in which Mughal design principles have informed the creation of this contemporary religious and cultural landmark.

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Introduction

Background

The Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, completed in 2007, is one of the largest and most significant mosques in the United Arab Emirates. Its design reflects the diverse influences of Islamic architecture from various regions, including the Mughal Empire, which ruled over the Indian subcontinent between the 16th and 19th centuries. Mughal architecture is known for its intricate ornamentation, elegant proportions, and harmonious integration of nature and built structures.

Aim and Objectives

This paper aims to explore the influence of Mughal design on the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque's architecture, aesthetics, and function. The study will analyze the mosque's architectural features, decorative elements, and spatial organization to demonstrate how Mughal design principles have been adapted and incorporated into this contemporary religious and cultural landmark.



Architectural Features

Domes and Arches

The Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque features 82 domes and numerous arches, reminiscent of Mughal architecture. The central dome, which is one of the largest mosque domes in the world, is particularly influenced by the design of the Taj Mahal, a masterpiece of Mughal architecture.

The domes are made of white marble and adorned with intricate floral and geometric designs, which are inspired by traditional Islamic art. The domes are supported by four pillars and are designed to reflect the natural light, creating a serene and peaceful atmosphere inside the mosque.

Arches: The mosque features several arches, which are an important element of Islamic architecture. The arches are made of white marble and adorned with intricate designs. The arches serve a functional purpose in supporting the weight of the domes and also provide an aesthetic element to the mosque's design. The arches are located throughout the mosque, including the main prayer hall and the outer courtyard, and create a sense of openness and grandeur.

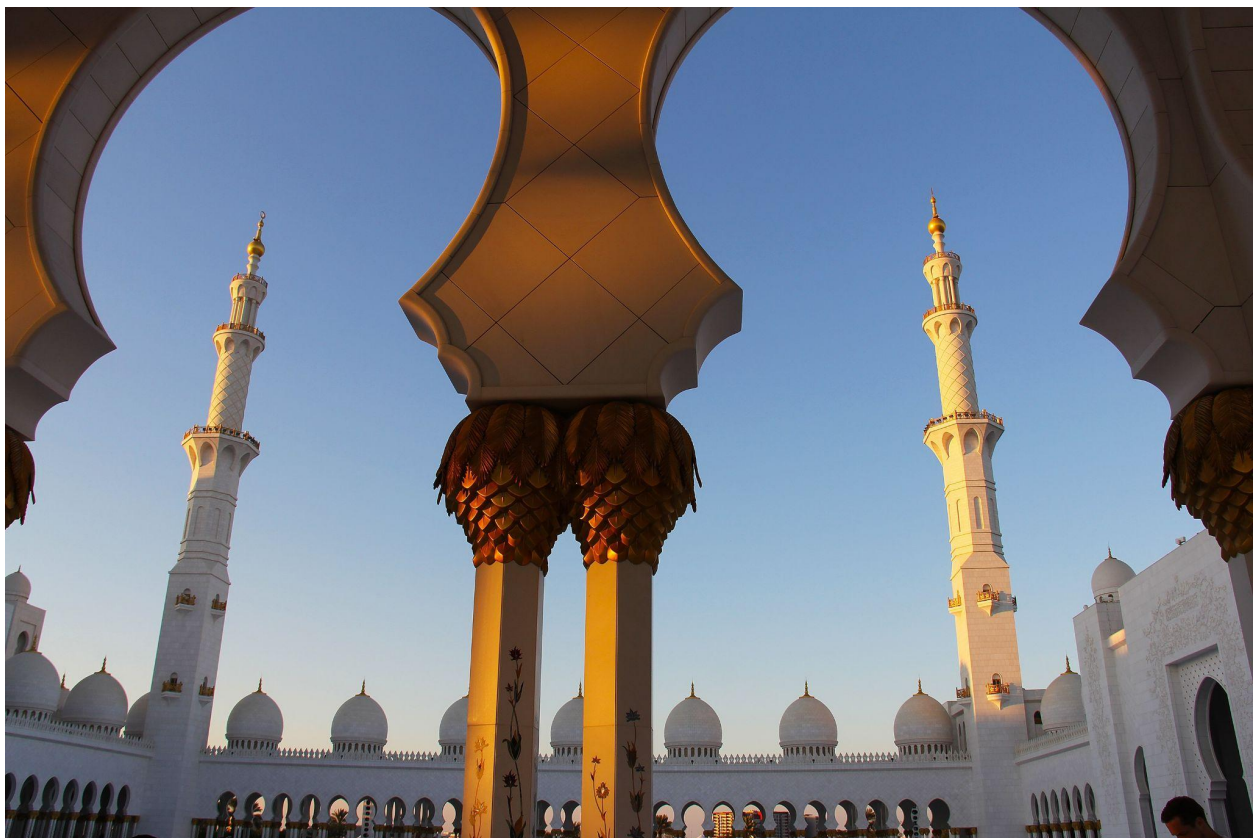




Minarets

The four minarets of the mosque, each standing at 107 meters tall, display a combination of Mughal, Ottoman, and Fatimid design elements. The Mughal influence is evident in the tapering form and intricate ornamentation of the minarets.

The minarets of Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque are all identical in design and are situated at each of the four corners of the mosque. Each minaret is adorned with intricate geometric patterns and Arabic calligraphy, which is illuminated at night, creating a stunning visual effect.

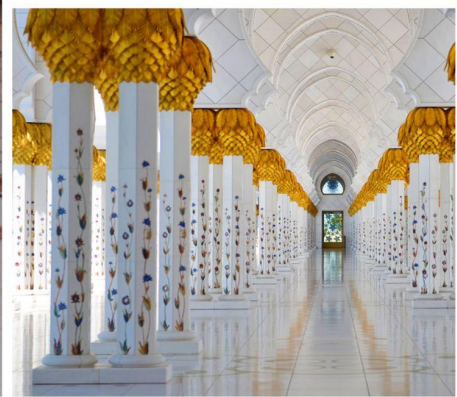


Aesthetics

Decorative Elements

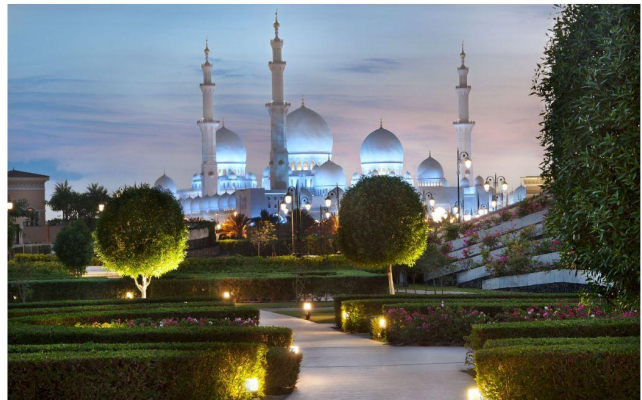
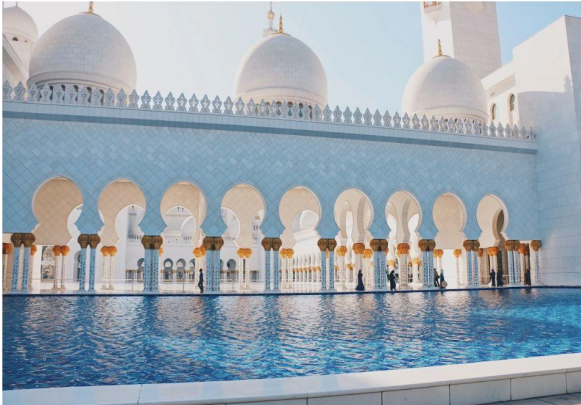
The Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque is adorned with intricate geometric patterns, floral motifs, and calligraphy, reflecting the rich decorative tradition of Mughal architecture. The mosque's exterior features white marble cladding, reminiscent of Mughal monuments such as the Taj Mahal.

The mosque is adorned with intricate Arabic calligraphy, which is considered one of the highest forms of Islamic art. The calligraphy is inscribed on the walls, domes, and pillars of the mosque, and features verses from the Quran, Islamic poetry, and sayings of Prophet Muhammad.



Gardens and Water Features

The mosque complex is surrounded by landscaped gardens, water features, and reflective pools, drawing inspiration from the Mughal tradition of integrating nature and architecture through the use of chahar bagh (four-part garden) layouts.



Function

Spatial Organization

The mosque's spatial organization, including the arrangement of prayer halls, courtyards, and ancillary spaces, reflects the functional principles of Mughal architecture. The main prayer hall is designed to accommodate large congregations, while the surrounding courtyards provide additional space for worshippers and visitors.

Integration of Modern Technology

The Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque incorporates modern technology to enhance the functionality of the space. This includes advanced lighting systems, air conditioning, and audio systems that are seamlessly integrated into the architectural and decorative elements, demonstrating how Mughal design principles can be adapted to contemporary requirements.



Conclusion

The Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque in Abu Dhabi exemplifies the influence of Mughal design on contemporary Islamic architecture. By incorporating Mughal-inspired architectural features, decorative elements, and functional principles, the mosque demonstrates the enduring appeal and adaptability of Mughal design in the creation of modern religious and cultural landmarks.

This study highlights the importance of understanding and appreciating the diverse influences that shape contemporary Islamic architecture, as well as the value of embracing historical design principles in the creation of functional, aesthetically pleasing