



**CONCEPT OF SPACE BETWEEN EAST AND WEST:
A HISTORICAL MULTIDISCIPLINARY STUDY OF MEANINGS AND
SPATIAL IDEALS SHAPING SACRED SPACE**

By

Sherif Hussein Ahmed

A Thesis Submitted to the
Faculty of Engineering at Cairo University
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
in
Architectural Engineering

FACULTY OF ENGINEERING, CAIRO UNIVERSITY
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Title of Thesis:

Concept of Space between East and West:
A Historical Multidisciplinary Study of Meanings and Spatial Ideals Shaping Sacred Space.

Key Words:

Architectural space; history of architecture; paradigm; sacred architecture; meaning.

Summary:

Our understanding of the world depends, largely, on spatial conception as an important component of any paradigm. Space is an abstract term for a complex set of ideas. It is a central concept, not only to architecture, but to many other disciplines such as philosophy, science, and art. However, while it is shared by all humans, our perceptions of it depends largely on world-view and culture. Therefore, each culture has its own view of space, and reflect it in its art and architecture. The aim of this study, is to explore the relation between conceptual meaning of space, and the built space in historical architecture of major religions, and stating the 'spatial ideals' of each and the differences between them. Throughout this study, human's understanding of space was categorized into three levels/types: Conceptual imagined space, Perceptual experienced space and Physical geometric space. From this categorization, a theoretical framework was adopted. It was applied in an in-depth historical analysis of sample of sacred buildings - within the three major traditions (Western, Islamic, and Asian) - through a set of different properties of space. Through this analysis, spatial ideals in art and architecture of each civilization were identified.

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