



THE SYMBOLIC MEANINGS OF THE MOON IN ARCHITECTURAL EXPRESSION

Saipova Madina Saidaxbor qizi

Dotsent, Department of Architecture and Digital Technologies

Tashkent International University of Management and Technologies

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Architecture

Abstract: *This article explores the symbolic, philosophical, and cosmological meanings of the moon and their reflection in architectural form. Throughout history, the moon has symbolized cyclical time, renewal, subtle beauty, and divine illumination. In Central Asian architectural tradition, lunar symbolism appears not only as a decorative motif but also through spatial composition, domical structures, proportional systems, and the orchestration of light. The study traces the transformation of lunar symbolism from ancient cosmological beliefs to its reinterpretation within Islamic architectural thought.*

Keywords: *lunar symbolism, crescent, cosmology, architectural metaphor, dome, light and shadow, Islamic architecture, Central Asian art, symbolism.*

INTRODUCTION

Natural phenomena have played a fundamental role in shaping human worldview and symbolic thinking. Among celestial bodies, the sun and the moon occupy a central place in cosmological imagination. While the sun is commonly associated with power, activity, and vitality, the moon represents tranquility, introspection, regeneration, and spiritual purification.

The cyclical phases of the moon offered early societies a visible model of time, transformation, and continuity. As a result, lunar symbolism extended beyond mythology and religious narratives into artistic and architectural expression, where cosmic order was translated into spatial form.

Ancient Cosmological Interpretations of the Moon

In ancient Eastern civilizations, the moon was often regarded as a sacred celestial force governing time and destiny. In Mesopotamian culture, the moon deity Sin (Nanna) symbolized cosmic authority and the regulation of temporal cycles. Lunar calendars, based on observable phases, structured social and ritual life.



In Central Asia, representations of celestial symbols, including the moon and stars, appear on ancient coins, seals, and wall paintings. For instance, archaeological findings from Varakhsha reveal imagery associated with cosmic order. These early depictions suggest that architectural space itself was conceived as a reflection of the universe.



The recurring semicircular form of the moon visually parallels the architectural dome, indicating deep cosmological roots behind domical construction.

Lunar Symbolism in Islamic Architecture

Within Islamic culture, the crescent became one of the most recognizable symbolic forms. Although not originally prescribed as a religious symbol, it gradually gained architectural prominence, especially atop domes and minarets. The crescent signifies the heavens, spiritual illumination, and divine guidance.

In Central Asian architecture, lunar symbolism is embedded in structural and compositional harmony. The ensemble of Poi Kalon demonstrates a powerful synthesis between monumental dome structures and the celestial sphere. The hemispherical dome evokes the vault of the sky, while filtered light enhances the perception of sacred illumination.

Similarly, the mausoleum of Go'ri Amir embodies cosmic balance through its turquoise dome and intricate tilework. The dynamic interaction of light and shadow across its surface metaphorically recalls the changing phases of the moon.

The Moon and Architectural Composition

Lunar symbolism manifests in architecture not only through explicit imagery but also through spatial and structural principles:

1. **The Dome** – A hemispherical form symbolizing the sky and cosmic unity. Its geometry resonates with the visual logic of the moon.
2. **Arches and Vaults** – Semicircular forms reminiscent of the crescent, representing transition and spiritual passage.
3. **Light Organization** – Soft, diffused illumination within interiors parallels the gentle radiance of moonlight.

The sacred complex of Shohi Zinda exemplifies the poetic interplay between blue ceramic surfaces and controlled natural light. The dominance of blue tones reinforces associations with the sky and celestial purity.

Philosophical Dimensions of Lunar Symbolism

In Sufi metaphysics, the moon is frequently interpreted as a symbol of the human heart reflecting divine truth. If the sun represents absolute reality, the moon becomes its mirrored manifestation within human consciousness. Architectural space, particularly domed interiors, can thus be understood as metaphors for spiritual receptivity.

The central space beneath a dome signifies an inner spiritual core, while light entering from above suggests transcendental origin. In this framework, lunar symbolism transcends ornamentation and becomes a conceptual principle guiding architectural meaning.

CONCLUSION

Across cultures and epochs, the moon has symbolized renewal, cyclical time, spiritual illumination, and cosmic harmony. In architecture, these meanings are embodied through domical forms, semicircular structures, and the subtle modulation of light and shadow.

In Central Asian architectural heritage, lunar symbolism merges cosmology and spirituality, enriching the metaphysical depth of space. Therefore, the moon in



architecture should be understood not merely as a decorative emblem but as a profound symbolic system articulating humanity's relationship with the cosmos.

REFERENCES:

1. Eliade, M. *The Sacred and the Profane*. Tashkent: Yangi Asr Avlodi, 2004.
2. Losev, A.F. *The Problem of Symbol and Realism*. Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1976.
3. Tolstov, S.P. *Ancient Khorezm Civilization*. Moscow: Nauka, 1948.
4. Rappoport, P.A. *History of Central Asian Architecture*. Leningrad: Nauka, 1971.
5. Karimov, Q. *History of Uzbek Architecture*. Tashkent: O'qituvchi, 1995.