

# NEWSLETTER Vaastuyogam

Connecting Vaastu to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century



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## EDITORIAL



Welcome to the March 2014 issue of Vaastuyogam.

As a departure from our regular policy, from this issue we will discuss corporate failures and the role of the corporate logo. We begin with India's massive automobile failure – the Hindustan Motors and their Ambassador car.

I want to draw attention of my many clients and the vast readership of this magazine to the importance of sound business and quality practices in running companies. There is no substitute for genuine, innate and methodical business acumen. The corporate logo can help you with the business. It cannot run it!

Our Saptapuri series takes us to the ancient holy city of Kanchipuram this month. At the risk of sounding repetitive I urge all readers to make time and travel to these holy places. Get lost in the by-lanes of India's hoary past – maybe you will find your true self!

Happy reading! Happy travelling!

Dr. Ravi Rao ■



Jagat Guru Shankaracharya of Kanchi

## ARCHITECT'S VOICE

### “Vaastu today is a book of lucky charms”

-Architect Mr. Bhaskar Nirula

This month we continue our conversation with Architect Bhaskar Nirula of Placekinesis Associates, Ahmedabad.

Readers will recall that we spoke to him last month in the context of the Satellite Police station that he designed.

*Excerpts from the interview:*

placekinesis associates pka

According to me Vaastu is a body of text written to make life simpler for people building palaces, temples and towns. It also doubled as a do-it-yourself manual for the uninitiated who were planning to construct dwellings for themselves.

The logic of the text is specifically Indian in as much as it is suitable for the hot tropical climate of our country. The text is a culmination of the accumulated experiences of its various uncredited authors, especially their observations about the weather, the wind directions and the topography of the plot.

I am not an expert on the subject but I presume that it was the Brahmins of the day who introduced the astrological angle to what must have been an architectural treatise. The Brahmins also could not resist adding their own rules of do's and don'ts along with a layer of retribution psychosis in the event of non-conformity to the texts.

I must add here that the advance of construction technology and the introduction of air-conditioning as well as modern cooking appliances have more or less overtaken the Vaastu tenets as far as architectural aspects of Vaastu go. However, Vaastu is still adhered to because of its other output; the betterment of one's prospects. That is the subject of the Vastu Shastri and the underlying motivation of implementing Vaastu today. In fact, Vaastu today is a book of lucky charms.

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## “Vaastu today is a book of lucky charms”

-Architect Mr. Bhaskar Nirula



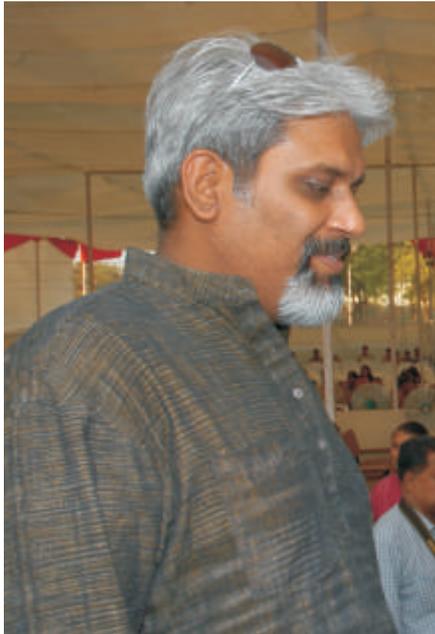
### ARCHITECT'S VOICE

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I follow Vaastu, irrespective of any brief because Vaastu has undisputable design logic in the Indian context. When clients insist on detail Vaastu provisions, sometimes the Vaastu Shastri gets the upper hand in design but I see this as the client's prerogative. The structure being built belongs to him and he has every right to do it his way.

Architects wrongly presume that it is the Vaastu Shastri who is all-powerful.

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Architect Mr. Bhaskar Nirula

**Date of Birth:** 14th of Nov. 1969

**Place of Birth:** New Delhi

**Education:**

- X and XII from Xavier's , Gandhinagar, Gujarat.
- Architecture from CEPT

**Career:**

- Internship @ Atelier Bernard Kohn, Paris (July - Aug of '90)
- Internship @ SDB, Delhi ( Sep - Nov of '90)
- As an architect @ Design Unit (1995 - 2000)
- Started self practice in 2000 under the firm, 'PLACEKINESIS 'later 'PLACEKINESISASSOCIATES'

#### Significant Projects :

- |                                       |                                |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Wide Angle (Ahmedabad)                | Iscon Harmony, Baroda          |
| Monsanto ( regionalcentre, Ahmedabad) | Iscon Habitat, Baroda          |
| Satellite Police Station, Ahmedabad   | Iscon Heights, Baroda          |
| Wide Angle (Mehsana)                  | Shangrila, Alembic, Baroda     |
| City Point (Patan)                    | Darshanam Central Park, Baroda |
| Inox( Bharuch)                        | Awadh Shangrila, Surat         |
| Iscon Megamall (Surat & Rajkot)       | Awadh Park View, Ahmedabad     |
| Poonam Mall, Nagpur                   | R.K. Habitat, Bharuch          |
| Shaligram 3, Ahmedabad                | R.K. Casta, Bharuch            |
| Inder Residency, Udaipur              | Satyam Skyline, Ahmedabad      |
| Royal Orchid, Ahmedabad               | Satyam Landmark, Ahmedabad     |
| Ramada Inn, Ahmedabad                 | Satyam Sarjan, Changodar       |
| Satyam House, Ahmedabad               | Iscon Platinum, Ahmedabad      |
| JBR House, Ahmedabad                  | Archi Platinum, Udaipur        |
| 3rd Eye Voice, SEZ, Ahmedabad         | Dev Aurum, Ahmedabad           |
| 3rd Eye one, Ahmedabad                | Dev aadi blossom, Kheda        |
| 3rd Eye two, Ahmedabad                | Dev aadi seven, Sanand         |
| Regency Plaza, Ahmedabad              | Popular Infinity, Anand        |
| Shivalik 10, Ahmedabad                | Sahara township, Porbandar     |
| Iscon Elegance, Ahmedabad             | Sahara township, Bhavnagar     |
| JBR arcade, Ahmedabad                 | Sahara township, Baroda        |
| Iscon Pride, Deesa                    | Sun Optima, Ahmedabad          |
| Abhijyot Harmony                      | Sun Solace, Sanand             |
| Shailja Club, Mehsana                 | Asian Pearl, Ahmedabad         |
| Iscon Club, Bhavnagar                 | Pearl 36, Ahmedabad            |
| Iscon Club, Baroda                    | Maruti Celedron                |
| The Park View, Ahmedabad              | Maruti Zenobia                 |
| Nysa Courtyard, Baroda                | Maple High street, Bhopal      |

Moreover Vaastu is not just some architectural fix; it is a way of life. People who believe in Vaastu have total faith in the Vaastu Shastri. To them he often comes as a savior who has rescued them from crises of catastrophic nature.



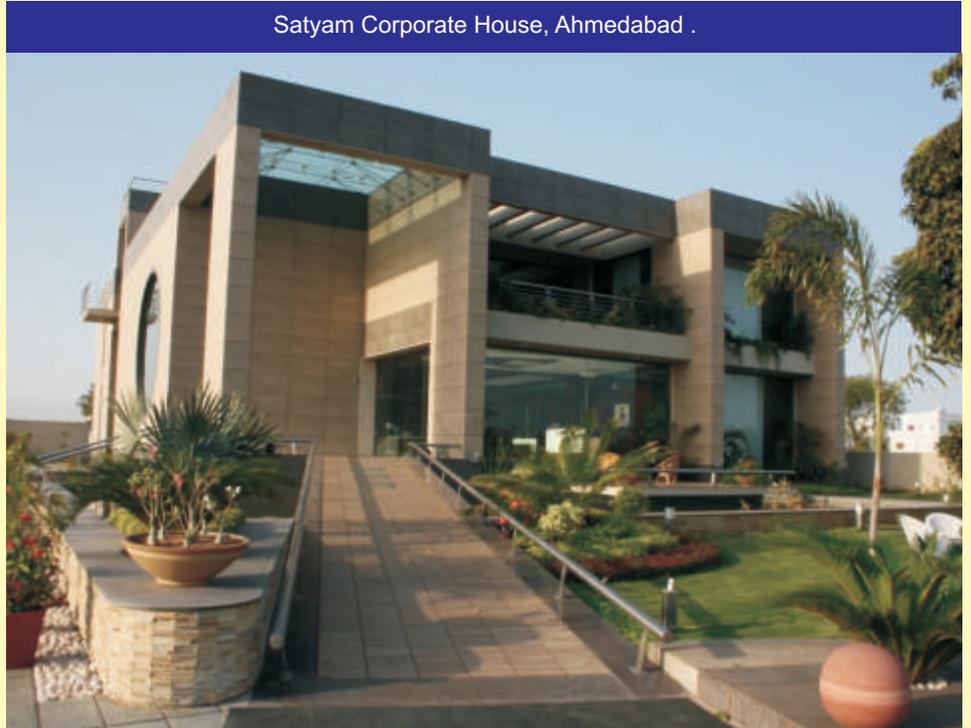
## ARCHITECT'S VOICE



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Satyam Corporate House, Ahmedabad .



Satyam House, Ahmedabad.

*"The solid parallel north-south walls and the simplicity of form was directly influenced by our climatic conditions and the need to have an open, transparent and fluid working environment which would be a reflection of the corporate policies of the group as real estate developers. The skewed ramp juxtaposing over the double height entrance frame covered by a glass floor, cutting through the water body, provided for an interesting shift and lent a lot of dynamics at the onset. The all glass north facade of the building lets in the soft northern sunlight making it an almost see through block. From within, the glass facades help a lot to bring in the landscape and make for a pleasant and comfortable stay in experience.*

*The eastern and western facades do get punctured, albeit in different proportions, respecting the difference in heat and glare that the directions generate, to again bring in the landscape on both sides.*

*The double height atrium like space is acoustically treated that lends a lot of richness to the experience of being inside the building."*

Architect Mr. Bhaskar Nirula



## ARCHITECT'S VOICE

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However, the Vaastu Shastri is only as powerful as the client allows him to be. In addition, there are Vaastu remedies and counter balancing strategies for all but the utterly serious Vaastu infringements.

Architects occasionally use Vaastu as a shield and a license not to design. They take the easy way out by submitting quick fixes in the name of Vaastu, adding that they were helpless, as the design had to be strictly Vaastu compliant.

In my case, sometimes, corners are an issue I have with Vaastu. As an architect it is difficult to accommodate a square every time; there has to be room for other geometrical design options as well. Vaastu's insistence on squares and rectangles make for boring and repetitive design and I will admit to a quarrel or two with the Vaastu consultant.

Having said that, let me add that I am positive about Vaastu because of its sound underlying principles. Of course, one has to understand the whole concept objectively. I have never designed a house with a southern entrance. In fact, even in high-rise residential buildings I have excluded South entrances. I am doing a project with over 500 homes and all of them have either north or east facing homes. Wherever possible, I have put the master bedroom in the south-west and the kitchen in the south-east. Be that as it may, Vaastu anomalies will always creep in when one is designing multi-storey buildings with numerous flats per floor that are facing each other.

### Architecture

Architecture is many things all put together in one. Yet designing a home for an individual is totally a different ball game than designing a commercial complex. While designing a home for an individual I keep telling the client, "Keep talking to me. Put up your demands. The more you speak to me the more will I come to know you and the better idea I will get as to what to design." I see my role as an facilitator for accomplishing the client's aspirations within the framework of significant architectural finesse.

It remains to be said that sometimes the journey takes reverse gear as well as

when I have to impress upon the client that what he wants should fit into a concept of a house and not a showroom or multiplex. The scenario changes dramatically in the case of commercial complexes and public buildings.

### Interiors and Landscaping

Though I don't insist upon it, I prefer whenever I handle the interiors of my projects; It gives me better control over them. Even more so with the landscaping. Here, I do insist on doing the landscaping myself because I firmly believe that landscaping is married to the architecture of the building and should rank as important as the building design.

### Post - Earthquake buildings in Ahmedabad

Architecture in Ahmedabad was jolted after the 2001 earthquake. There have been significant buildings after this period. Some of them are worth mentioning. The Prathama Blood Bank by Gurjeet Matharoo comes straight to mind. Mr Gurjeet Matharoo is a very sensitive architect with an extraordinary body of work. Safal Profitaire by Bimal Patel is another outstanding building. Then, there is the wonderful work done by Apurva Amin.

I have been lucky to have done some excellent projects but I shall restrict myself to one. Satyam House near Rajpath Club, Ahmedabad.

### Satyam House, Ahmedabad

Satyam House was the first occasion on which the Satyam team had approached for a proposal.

It was a free hand that I had and what came through in the first few meetings was the simplicity and the uncomplicated nature of all their personalities. The simplicity and comfort that I shared with the team transpired through in the project and it was a great experience working with them.

The solid parallel north-south walls and the simplicity of form was directly influenced by our climatic conditions and the need to have an open, transparent and fluid working environment which would be a reflection of the corporate policies of the group as real estate developers. The skewed ramp juxtaposing over the double height entrance frame covered by a glass

floor, cutting through the water body, provided for an interesting shift and lent a lot of dynamics at the onset.

The all glass north facade of the building lets in the soft northern sunlight making it an almost see through block. From within, the glass facades help a lot to bring in the landscape and make for a pleasant and comfortable stay in experience.

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The double height atrium like space is acoustically treated that lends a lot of richness to the experience of being inside the building.

The Satyam house experience is a point in my career where I managed to create a great working environment in a building which was easy on the eyes and true to its context.

### Teaching Vaastu

As such, speaking on a pan - India scale there is not enough Vaastu demand to justify the wholesale training of Vaastu and its inclusion and sustainability in the Architect's syllabus.

Apart from Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and parts of the South India there is not much of an insistence on Vaastu. Even in the above mentioned states Vaastu mainly plays a role in private homes and offices. But, there is in addition to this there is a whole lot of population in these states that doesn't care much about Vaastu. Moreover, Public buildings, Commercial complexes, High-rise buildings are all designed outside the purview of Vaastu.

Yet, there is the other truth too, that not a single client has insisted that the Public building, Commercial complex, High-rise building be totally anti-Vaastu!

Moreover Vaastu is not just some architectural fix; it is a way of life. People who believe in Vaastu have total faith in the Vaastu Shastri. To them he often comes as a savior who has rescued them from crises of catastrophic nature.

The Vaastu advice does not stop once the structure is made. Rather, the making of the structure is the starting point of a long and solid relationship between the Vaastu Shastri and the client. Every time there are changes to the building Vaastu advice will be sought and adhered to. So, even if an architect were to learn Vaastu he would never be an acceptable substitute for the family Vaastu consultant. ■

Some of the significant buildings worth mentioning are, The Prathama Blood Bank by Gurjeet Matharoo and Safal Profitaire by Bimal Patel



Prathma Blood Bank, Ahmedabad by Matharoo Associates



Safal Profitaire, Ahmedabad by Bimal Patel