

ARCHITECT'S VOICE



Mr. Bhanubhai Shah

The Vaastuyogam team met brothers Bhanubhai and Nitesh Shah at their Navrangpura office.

Excerpts from the interview:-

(Bhanubhai) We are three brothers. Myself, Bhanubhai Shah, K J Shah, my elder brother, who is a civil engineer and was working in AUDA but has since retired. Nitesh my younger brother who is a building designer and has to his credit over 500 small and big projects. We were born and brought up in Ahmedabad. Our father had no background of the construction industry; he was a manager in an insurance company.

Business was as usual, with its difficulties until 1995 when the Ahmedabad realty market was severely affected and made a dent in the fortunes of most - if not all- in the builder community of Ahmedabad. Whilst there are always phases of bullishness followed by bearishness, for us 1995 was more than just a bottoming-out. I say this because it was at this time some of us builders began to look up to Vaastu to bail us out.

“As a rule, it is difficult for a builder to be truly Vaastu compliant.”

- Mr. Bhanubhai Shah

Being inquisitive, I began belving into Vaastu. This was not as easy as it may seem today, where we have “nationally renowned” Vaastu consultants at every street corner. Those days, Vaastu consultants were few and books on Vaastu were even fewer. One spoke of Vaastu with hushed skepticism yet looked up to Vaastu consultants as a “charmed” race that was privy to the deep secrets of the earth!

My first tryst with a Vaastu consultant was an eye opener. He was from Jaipur and a very large-hearted man who shared his extensive knowledge ungrudgingly. The first thing that struck me was that Vaastu was a full-fledged science and there was nothing like any magic about it. This enthused me no end and I dived deep into the subject – of course as a hobby and so as deep as an amateur can go! I read more than just a couple of books and persistently questioned many Vaastu consultants. I will now share some of my views on the subject.



Mr. Nitesh Shah

Firstly, Vaastu is a part of our hoary traditions and we must respect it as a larger agenda of respecting all our ancient Shastra. It is linked to our Puranic religion and is therefore respect worthy and an automatic claimant for our allegiance.

(Nitesh) Unfortunately – perhaps because of my ignorance of Sanskrit – I was not able to study its original literature nor did I get the benefit of a formal training under an established guru. Yet, even in my limited

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understanding of the subject, I can assure the readers that Vaastu has straightforward postulations and instead of trying to win arguments, we can all benefit by sharing Vaastu knowledge and experiences and thereby garner benefits.

Having said that, I must warn against half or

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I must warn against half or incomplete knowledge. This I feel is more dangerous than ignorance. In addition, although Vaastu rules may be simple their suitability to a particular site is always a matter of debate. I am aware of cases where implementing imperfectly understood Vaastu rules has landed people into avoidable misery.

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The Capital a project by Nitesh Shah

incomplete knowledge. This I feel is more dangerous than ignorance. In addition, although Vaastu rules may be simple their suitability to a particular site is always a matter of debate. I am aware of cases where implementing imperfectly understood Vaastu rules has landed people into avoidable misery. Therefore, to repeat myself let me reiterate again that Vaastu is far to specialized a subject to be practiced by hobbyists and readers of few English language Vaastu manuals. There is an underlying logic to Vaastu that can only be mastered by serious and first-hand reading of the original texts in Sanskrit. This is my considered opinion after nearly 20 years of travelling the Vaastu path.

(Bhanubhai)As a builder, I am aware that most builders rely on lip service to Vaastu as it helps them in selling their properties. As a rule, it is difficult for a builder to be truly

Vaastu compliant because a truly Vaastu compliant plot and a truly Vaastu compliant structure are a rarity and would surely spell the end of a builder's business if he chooses to remain truly and very faithful to all the Vaastu provisions. Why talk about flats or commercial complexes, even a fully compliant independent bungalow that will 100% satisfy three Vaastu consultants cannot be built.

So, I will now come to a practical solution; a solution that many builders try adhering to today in Ahmedabad. Just as once can pass an exam with 35%, get a first class with 60% and a distinction with 70% so too buildings can get pass marks, first class and distinction in Vaastu. In Vaastu, if our homes are 60%, Vaastu compliant then I will give them pass marks and tell the owners that

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they are lucky to be in a Vaastu compliant house.

Therefore, when a builder is saying Vaastu compliant he does not mean 100%; he probably means 35% to 60%. Though I feel that unless it is 60% Vaastu compliant, it should not be sold as a Vaastu compliant flat/office/shop etc. Now, let me put one more rider. Once a Vaastu compliant house does not mean always a Vaastu compliant house! Even small alterations in the house can cause havoc to the Vaastu with heavy price. Therefore, to be truly Vaastu compliant one has to be wedded to the Vaastu principle, come what may. There is a small twist here. The people who shout from rooftops that Vaastu is nothing are the first to go running to a Vaastu consultant the moment the tide turns against them!

Nevertheless, I must specify here, what are



Project by Bhanubhai Shah

the components that could help get a 60% in Vaastu. One should be careful about water, toilets, staircase, kitchen, and the Brahmasthan. If you have these, five right consider your house a 60% Vaastu perfect

house. Moreover, leave the rest to God! Be content. Anger and Avarice are the two main enemies of a happy life.

Final viewpoint. Supposing you respect me, even love me, and want to meet me but I am a continual smoker and drunkard and my house is perpetually filthy and stinking, even though you want to meet me, you will hesitate and try to avoid. So too, if you want to follow Vaastu, you too must abide by the straight and simple ways of a householder; maintain a clean home and heart and live a life of wholesomeness.

Do I follow Vaastu? Have I consulted a Vaastu person?

I will answer that with my true experience. I once took a Vaastu consultant to my house; the same chap from Jaipur and when he saw my house he said that this house has been designed by a very senior Vaastu consultant; it is almost faultless. Of course, there was no one I had consulted, but I told him "Yes! My consultant is truly a senior most and powerful person". I said that to him because at that very moment I realized that it was God who had sent me to this house. I believe that God has been especially partial to me and so long as he is on my side, why should I be on the lookout for a Vaastu consultant or an Astrologer! ■



The Capital a project by Nitesh Shah