

CONTEMPORARY STUDIES AND METHODOLOGY IN URBAN AND REGIONAL PLANNING IN MALAYSIA



MARIANA MOHAMED OSMAN
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SYAHRIAH BACHOK

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CHAPTER 1

THE CONCEPTS OF GOD, MAN AND THE ENVIRONMENT IN ISLAM: IMPLICATIONS FOR ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE

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INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE?

Islamic architecture is an architecture whose functions and, to a lesser extent, form, are inspired primarily by Islam. Islamic architecture is a framework for the implementation of Islam. It facilitates, fosters and stimulates the Muslims' *'ibadah* (worship) activities, which, in turn, account for every moment of their earthly lives. Islamic architecture only can come into existence under the aegis of the Islamic perceptions of God, man, nature, life, death and the Hereafter. Thus, Islamic architecture would be the facilities and, at the same time, a physical locus of the actualization of the Islamic message. Practically, Islamic architecture represents the religion of Islam that has been translated onto reality at the hands of Muslims. It also represents the identity of Islamic culture and civilization.

Ibn Abdun, an Andalusian judge from the 12th century, is reported to have said, as quoted by Stefano Bianca (2000): "As far as architecture is concerned, it is the haven where man's spirit, soul and body find refuge and shelter." In other words, architecture is a container of people's lives.

Also, Ibn Qutayba, a Muslim scholar of the 9th century, compared the house, as quoted by Afif Bahnassi (<http://www.isesco.org.ma/pub/Eng/Islarch/P2.htm>), to a shirt, saying that just as the shirt should fit its owner; the house too should suit its dwellers. That is to say, the aesthetic and utilitarian ends of the house must correspond to the needs and capabilities of its users. The two must perfectly suit each other.